



Submission by the Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS)

Practical Measures to Reduce and Prevent Prison Overcrowding in Lebanon

Submitted to: UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Organization: Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS)

Country: Lebanon

1. Introduction

The Cedar Centre for Legal Studies (CCLS), an independent Lebanese human rights centre working on legal assistance, torture prevention, and the protection of detainees' rights, welcomes the Special Rapporteur's call for input on practical measures to reduce and prevent prison overcrowding.

CCLS considers prison overcrowding and prolonged detention in Lebanon to be significant human rights concerns, with direct implications for the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Overcrowding, inadequate facilities, and insufficient access to healthcare can undermine detainees' dignity and expose them to conditions that may violate international human rights standards.

CCLS recommends a comprehensive approach combining judicial reforms, alternatives to detention, improved detention conditions, and effective access to medical and psychosocial care.



2. Detention Conditions and Prison Overcrowding

Detention conditions in Lebanon remain alarming, characterized by severe overcrowding, inadequate facilities, and significant challenges affecting the administration of justice and detainees' access to basic services.

According to a report¹ published by a Lebanese online news platform on 23 May 2026, quoting Joseph Eid, Head of the Prison Committee of the Beirut Bar Association, the total number of prisoners and detainees in Lebanon was approximately 8,700, distributed across 25 prisons and 229 detention facilities. The report indicated that around 6,300 individuals were held in prisons and approximately 2,400 in detention facilities, many of which were originally intended for short-term pretrial detention but had effectively become prison facilities lacking adequate infrastructure.

The report further stated that the overall overcrowding rate had reached 340%, while 83% of detainees were awaiting trial. Roumieh Prison alone reportedly held approximately 3,600 prisoners, despite an original capacity of around 1,200.

The reported situation reflects the structural challenges affecting Lebanon's detention system, including judicial delays, shortages of judges, accumulated court cases, inadequate logistical resources, and obstacles to transporting detainees to court. These factors contribute to prolonged detention and deteriorating health and living conditions.

CCLS emphasizes that reducing prison overcrowding requires coordinated judicial and institutional reforms, including the effective implementation of legal limits on pretrial detention, the expansion of alternatives to detention, and guaranteed access to medical and psychosocial care. Addressing these issues is essential to safeguarding detainees' dignity and preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

¹ Janobiyyat, 340% Overcrowding in Lebanese Prisons, and 83% of Detainees Await Trial], 23 May 2026. <https://janobiyyat.com/news145296/340--%D9%86%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D8%B8-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%AC%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9...-D9%8883--D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%82%D9%88%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%83%D9%85%D8%A9/> (Accessed on 18 September 2026.)



3. Reducing Pretrial Detention and Accelerating Judicial Proceedings

Lebanon should ensure the effective implementation of Articles 108 and 111 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which establish provisions concerning the duration of pretrial detention and judicial supervision as an alternative to detention.

3.1 Article 108 – Limits on Pretrial Detention

The following is an English translation of article 108 of the Lebanese Code of Criminal Procedure:

Except in the case of a person previously sentenced to a penalty of at least one year, the duration of detention in a misdemeanor case may not exceed two months. It may be extended for an additional period of up to two months in cases of extreme necessity.

Except in cases involving homicide, narcotics, offences against state security, offences posing a general danger, terrorism offences, and cases involving a detainee previously sentenced to a criminal penalty, the duration of detention in a felony case may not exceed six months. It may be renewed once by a reasoned decision.

The Investigating Judge may order the accused to be prohibited from leaving the country for a period not exceeding two months in a misdemeanor case and one year in a felony case, calculated from the date of their release or discharge.

CCLS Recommendations

CCLS recommends that the Lebanese authorities:

- Fully implement the applicable provisions of Article 108 to prevent unjustified and prolonged pretrial detention.
- Expedite judicial proceedings and review cases involving individuals who have spent extended periods in pretrial detention.
- Ensure that extensions of detention are properly reasoned and subject to effective judicial scrutiny.
- Strengthen access to legal assistance and effective remedies for individuals seeking release or review of their detention.
- Ensure that detention is not prolonged without an individualized and legally justified basis.



The effective implementation of these measures would contribute to reducing the number of individuals held in detention pending trial and help prevent prolonged detention that is inconsistent with human rights standards.

4. Alternatives to Detention and Judicial Supervision

Lebanon should expand the use of non-custodial measures, particularly in cases where detention is not strictly necessary and proportionate.

4.1 Article 111 – Judicial Supervision as an Alternative to Detention

The following is an English translation of article 111 of the Lebanese Code of Criminal Procedure:

Regardless of the type of offence, the Investigating Judge may, after consulting the Public Prosecutor's Office, replace the detention of the accused with placement under judicial supervision and impose one or more obligations deemed necessary to implement such supervision.

These obligations may include:

- a. Residing in a city, town, or village, refraining from leaving it, and establishing a place of residence there.*
- b. Refraining from visiting certain establishments or places.*
- c. Depositing the passport with the clerk's office of the Investigation Division and notifying the Directorate General of General Security accordingly.*
- d. Undertaking not to leave the area of supervision and periodically reporting one's presence to the supervision centre.*
- e. Refraining from practicing certain professions that the Investigating Judge prohibits the accused from exercising throughout the supervision period.*
- f. Undergoing periodic medical and laboratory examinations during the period determined by the Investigating Judge.*
- g. Providing a security bond in an amount determined by the Investigating Judge.*



The Investigating Judge may modify the obligations imposed under judicial supervision whenever deemed appropriate.

If the accused breaches any of the obligations imposed under judicial supervision, the Investigating Judge may, after consulting the Public Prosecutor's Office, order the issuance of an arrest warrant against the accused and the confiscation of the bond in favour of the Treasury.

4.2 CCLS Recommendations

CCLS recommends:

- The effective implementation of Article 111 and the wider use of judicial supervision as an alternative to custodial detention.
- The adoption of electronic monitoring, subject to clear legal safeguards, judicial oversight, and respect for fundamental rights.
- The use of judicial supervision and reporting requirements that are proportionate to the circumstances of each case.
- The development of appropriate release mechanisms, including bail, while taking into account the individual's financial circumstances and ability to pay.
- Ensuring that alternatives to detention do not result in disproportionate restrictions or discriminatory treatment of individuals who cannot afford financial guarantees.

Article 111 provides a legal framework for replacing detention with judicial supervision and imposing obligations tailored to individual circumstances. Its effective application could contribute to reducing reliance on custodial detention while maintaining judicial oversight.

5. Improving Detention Conditions and Access to Healthcare

Reducing overcrowding should be accompanied by measures guaranteeing humane detention conditions and access to essential services.

CCLS recommends that the Lebanese authorities:

1. Reduce overcrowding in prisons and detention facilities to ensure adequate living space, sanitation, and hygienic conditions.
2. Guarantee timely and independent access to medical care, including general healthcare, emergency treatment, and specialist services.



3. Ensure access to psychosocial and mental health support for detainees, particularly those who have experienced torture, ill-treatment, or other forms of trauma.
4. Establish effective systems for identifying and referring detainees with medical and psychosocial needs.
5. Strengthen independent monitoring of detention facilities and ensure that complaints concerning torture, ill-treatment, or inadequate care are investigated promptly and effectively.
6. Ensure that healthcare is provided without discrimination and respects confidentiality, informed consent, and professional independence.

CCLS stresses that access to medical and psychosocial care is an essential component of preventing torture and ill-treatment and of ensuring that detainees are treated with dignity.

6. General Amnesty Law of August 2026 and Constitutional Suspension

In August 2026, the Lebanese Parliament adopted a General Amnesty Law, identified in reporting as Law No. 70/2026. The legislation provides for general amnesty and exceptional reductions in certain sentences, with specific offences and categories subject to exclusions.

The law was presented in the context of concerns surrounding prison overcrowding, prolonged detention, and individuals who have remained in detention for extended periods without trial.

CCLS recognizes that the General Amnesty Law may contribute to reducing prison overcrowding and alleviating the burden on individuals who have remained in detention for extended periods. Such measures may provide relief to detainees and contribute to improving detention conditions.

However, CCLS considers that addressing overcrowding should also be accompanied by measures guaranteeing individualized justice, fair trials, and effective judicial review. In particular, individuals who have been detained for prolonged periods without trial, or whose proceedings may have failed to meet due process standards, should have access to effective legal remedies, including retrial or case review where legally appropriate.

Rather than relying exclusively on general amnesty as a response to prolonged detention, the authorities should strengthen judicial procedures to ensure that each person's case is assessed individually, including whether the person should be released, retried, or held subject to a lawful and justified detention order.



On 10 September 2026, the Lebanese Constitutional Council issued Decision No. 10/2026, suspending the implementation of the General Amnesty Law pending consideration of a constitutional challenge². The suspension is provisional and does not constitute a final ruling on the law's constitutionality. Consequently, the law's provisions cannot currently produce their intended legal effects while the suspension remains in force.

CCLS recommends that the Lebanese authorities:

- Ensure transparent and consistent procedures for implementing the General Amnesty Law, should the suspension be lifted and the law become applicable.
- Guarantee detainees' access to legal information and legal assistance concerning the law and its implementation.
- Review cases involving prolonged pretrial detention and potential violations of fair trial rights.
- Ensure that individuals whose cases raise credible concerns regarding arbitrary detention or due process violations have access to effective judicial remedies, including retrial or case review where legally appropriate.
- Continue developing long-term judicial reforms and alternatives to detention to prevent the recurrence of overcrowding.
- Monitor the impact of the amnesty law and other detention-related reforms on prison populations and detention conditions.

CCLS recognizes the potential role of amnesty in addressing prison overcrowding, while emphasizing that sustainable solutions require a functioning justice system that ensures fair trials, individualized judicial decisions, and effective safeguards against arbitrary detention.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

² Akhbar al Yawm, *Lebanon Constitutional Council suspends general amnesty law*, 10 September 2026, <https://en.akhbaralyawm.com/news/193022/Lebanon-Constitutional-Council-suspends-general-amnesty-law> (Accessed on 16 September 2026.)



In light of the concerns outlined above, the Cedar Centre for Legal Studies respectfully recommends that the Special Rapporteur encourage the Lebanese authorities to:

1. Effectively implement Articles 108 and 111 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to reduce prolonged pretrial detention, expedite judicial proceedings, and promote judicial supervision as an alternative to detention.
2. Adopt and implement alternatives to detention, including electronic monitoring, with appropriate legal safeguards and judicial oversight.
3. Reduce prison overcrowding and improve detention conditions in accordance with international human rights standards.
4. Guarantee access to medical and psychosocial care for all detainees, including survivors of torture and ill-treatment.
5. Ensure that legislative measures addressing overcrowding, including the General Amnesty Law of August 2026, comply with constitutional and human rights safeguards, while monitoring the impact of the Constitutional Council's suspension and any subsequent ruling.
6. Strengthen independent monitoring of detention facilities and ensure effective investigations into allegations of torture, ill-treatment, and inadequate detention conditions.
7. Develop sustainable institutional and judicial reforms to prevent the recurrence of overcrowding and prolonged detention.

CCLS remains committed to contributing to efforts aimed at preventing torture and ill-treatment, protecting detainees' rights, and promoting reforms that strengthen human dignity and access to justice in Lebanon.