



EuroMed Feminist Initiative
المبادرة النسوية الأورومتوسطية
Initiative Féministe EuroMed



Regional Observatory on VAWG
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Republic of Lebanon

Report

2024 Regional Index on VAWG

SCORING RESULTS 2024 REGIONAL INDEX ON VAWG

2025

Report - Lebanon
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Introduction

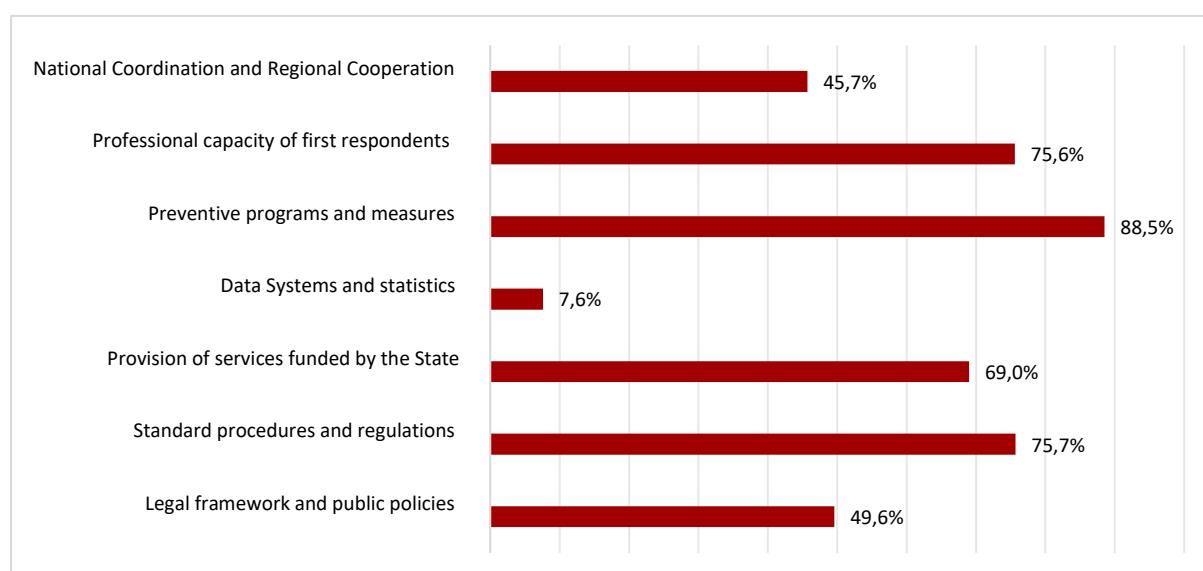
This national report assesses the country's progress made in combating Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Lebanon across seven key categories: legal framework and public policies, standard procedures and regulations, provision of services funded by the State, data systems and statistics, preventive programs and measures, professional capacity of first respondents, and national coordination and regional cooperation.

Lebanon achieved an overall balanced performance across most categories, reflecting a policy environment that has undergone significant reform in recent years but continues to face implementation gaps and institutional constraints. The legal framework and public policies achieved 49.6%, indicating the existence of several laws and strategies but limited constitutional protection and persistence of reservations to CEDAW. The standard procedures and regulations category reached 75.7%, demonstrating notable progress through established reporting systems and inter-ministerial procedures, though consistency and coordination remain limited.

The provision of services funded by the State achieved 69%, reflecting partial government support and strong reliance on civil society organizations (CSOs) for shelter and psychosocial services. The data systems and statistics category recorded a low achievement of 7.6%, highlighting the absence of a national system for data collection, dissemination, and monitoring of VAWG-related cases. The preventive programs and measures achieved 88.5%, showing notable progress in integrating gender equality topics in education and awareness campaigns.

The professional capacity of first respondents scored 75.6%, indicating growing but still non-institutionalized training efforts for police, judicial, and health personnel. Finally, national coordination and regional cooperation achieved 45.7%, pointing to the existence of coordination mechanisms between ministries and the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW), yet hindered by the absence of gender-responsive budgeting and limited regional engagement.

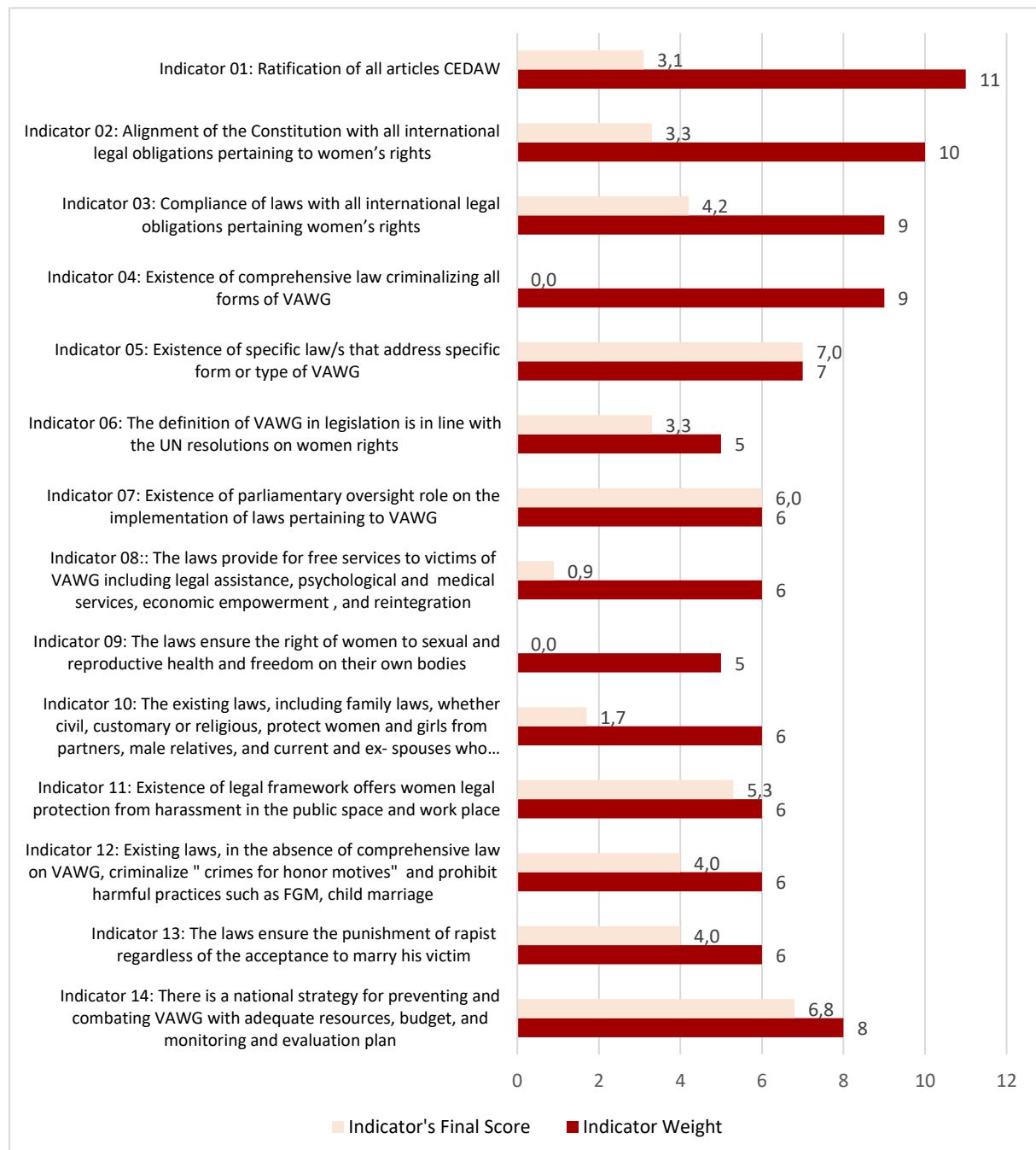
Level of achievement per category



❖ **First Category: Legal Framework and Public Policies**

The legal framework and public policies category achievement reached **49.6%**. This is a moderate level that reflects the existence of some laws and national strategies. However, the Constitution and legislation still lack comprehensive protection and guarantees for equality, while reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) continue to persist.

First Category: Legal Framework and Public Policies



The CEDAW has been ratified, however, the Lebanese government placed reservations on the following articles, resulting in a limited score under indicator 1 (3.1/11).

1. Article 9(2) relating to granting of women equal rights with men to pass nationality to their children.
2. Article 16(1) relating to equality between women and men in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. (c)(d)(f)(g): (c) relating to equal rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution; (d) relating to equal rights in matters relating to their children; (f) relating to equal rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship and custody; (g) relating to equal right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation.
3. Article 29 relating to the administration of the Convention and arbitration in the event of a dispute over the application of treaty provisions.

Moreover, the Lebanese government has not ratified the **Optional Protocol** to the CEDAW which allows for the submission of individual complaints to the CEDAW Committee.

Regarding the **Constitution**:

- a. The Lebanese Constitution does not recognize that international women's rights treaties and conventions prevail over the Constitution itself and national laws, reflected in indicator 2 score of 3.3/10.
- b. The Constitution does not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sex. Article 7 states that all Lebanese are equal before the law and enjoy civil and political rights equally, without mentioning sex.
- c. The Constitution does not contain specific provisions on women's rights and gender equality, nor sections recognizing or protecting women's rights. In addition, Articles 9 and 10 grant each religious community the right to regulate the affairs of its members, which results in discrimination not only against women and girls but also between women and girls because they are not subject to the same legal rules.
- d. The Constitution does not adopt any affirmative measures to achieve equality in participation between women and men.

At the level of **national legislation**, the main laws that do not comply with international legal obligations related to women's rights are as follows:

1. The Penal Code does not explicitly criminalize marital rape,
2. Under the Nationality Law, a Lebanese woman cannot grant her nationality to her children or foreign husband in the same manner as a Lebanese man.
3. Articles 539 to 546 of the Penal Code prohibit abortion, including for women who have been raped. Abortion is permitted only if the pregnancy endangers the woman's life.
4. Articles 487 to 489 of the Penal Code consider sexual acts outside marriage a crime.
5. Article 523 of the Penal Code criminalises prostitution but while punishing clients, does not guarantee protection for women in prostitution.

6. The Personal Status Law for Muslims does not guarantee equality in rights between women and men in marriage and divorce regarding:
 - o Polygamy: polygamy is permitted.
 - o Guardianship: fathers are the sole legal guardians of the children.
 - o Inheritance: Islamic inheritance rules provide that a woman's share of inheritance is less than a man's; inheritance rules also vary across the Personal Status Laws of different religious communities.
 - o Divorce: a man can divorce his wife verbally without going to court, while women only access limited forms of divorce through court procedures.
7. The Labor Law prohibits women from working in certain occupations deemed "arduous" or "dangerous."

The above points lowered the overall compliance level under indicator 3 (4.2/9).

There is no comprehensive law that criminalizes all forms of VAWG. (Indicator 4 score of 0.0/9). Some forms are criminalized under the Penal Code, such as sexual harassment in public spaces and rape, reflected in indicator 5 score 7.0/7. A law criminalizing sexual harassment, providing for victim rehabilitation and penalising the perpetrators was adopted in December 2020. (Anti-Sexual Harassment Law No. 205)

Lebanese legislation does not include a unified definition of VAWG. Nonetheless, the Penal Code and the Law on Domestic Violence define some forms of such violence, (Indicator 6 score of 3.3/5). Sexual harassment is defined in Article 1 of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law No. 205 as: "Any repeated, unusual and unwanted behaviour, arising from sexual intent, which may constitute a violation of the victim's body, privacy, and feelings, in any place."

National Parliament has a Committee on Women and Children, which aims to integrate gender equality principles into all parliamentary committees work and the Parliament as a whole, and to monitor whether the existing national system is sufficient to promote such equality. (Indicator 7 score of 6.0/6).

The laws do not provide for support services nor guarantee access to legal aid, psychological and medical support specifically for women survivors of VAWG. Such a provided predominantly by civil society. Therefore, indicator 8 scored 0,9/6. Various laws address sexual and reproductive health issues, including family planning services, medical care, and access to contraception. However, abortion remains illegal, even in cases of rape, and is only permitted when the pregnancy endangers the woman's life, pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 13187 of 1969. These restrictive provisions are reflected in indicator 9 score of 0/5.

The Penal Code criminalizes certain "indecent acts" related to harassment in public spaces. It also criminalizes the sexual exploitation of minors under Articles 507, 509, 510, 519, and 520. The Anti-Sexual Harassment Law No. 205 includes stricter penalties for harassment in the workplace, public institutions or educational facilities, contributing to indicator 11 score of 5.3/6.

The law also criminalizes "honour crimes" and no longer allows reduced sentences on grounds considered "honourable motives." Article 562 of the Penal Code allowing such mitigation was repealed in 2011. There is no legal prohibition of female genital mutilation, and the practice is believed not to exist in Lebanon, as it is not reported.

The minimum age of marriage varies across religious sects, negatively affecting girls. Although most religious communities set the minimum age of marriage for boys at 18, all religious communities allow girls to marry under 18. Hence, indicator 12 scored 4/6.

Rapists are punished regardless of agreeing to marry their victims. Article 503 of the Penal Code criminalizes rape, and if the victim is under 15, the penalty is increased to a term of not less than 7 years in prison. Article 475 of the Penal Code, which once allowed rapists of girls to avoid prosecution by marrying their victims, was repealed in 2014. Article 522 of the Penal Code, which allowed men convicted of sexual assault to avoid punishment if they presented a valid marriage contract, was repealed in 2017. Accordingly, indicator 13 scored 4/6.

National Strategies:

The former Office of the Minister of State for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth launched the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2019–2029) in February 2019. The NCLW developed the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2022–2030), with its first objective being the elimination of VAWG, and the provision of legal and psychological assistance and protection for victims and survivors. However, the strategies do not include specific resource allocations or an approved budget, nor a monitoring and evaluation plan as shown in indicator 14 score of 6.8/8.

Additionally, the Ministry of Social Affairs launched a Strategic Plan for Protection of Women and Children (2020–2027), which includes measures with a specific focus on protection from violence. There is no national health policy addressing VAWG. However, in 2018, the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs developed a strategy for achieving equality and reducing violence against women, including a healthcare policy for responding to referrals of VAWG. The Ministry of Health also has protocols for providing services to women and girls. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health developed the National Health Sector Strategy: Vision 2030, which includes the provision of sexual and reproductive health services for women.

Main Gaps

- Persistent reservations to key CEDAW articles (9,16,29) and lack of constitutional guarantees of gender equality.
- The Constitution does not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sex.
- No comprehensive law defining and criminalizing all forms of VAWG including marital rape.
- Discriminatory provisions remain within the Personal Status and Penal Codes.

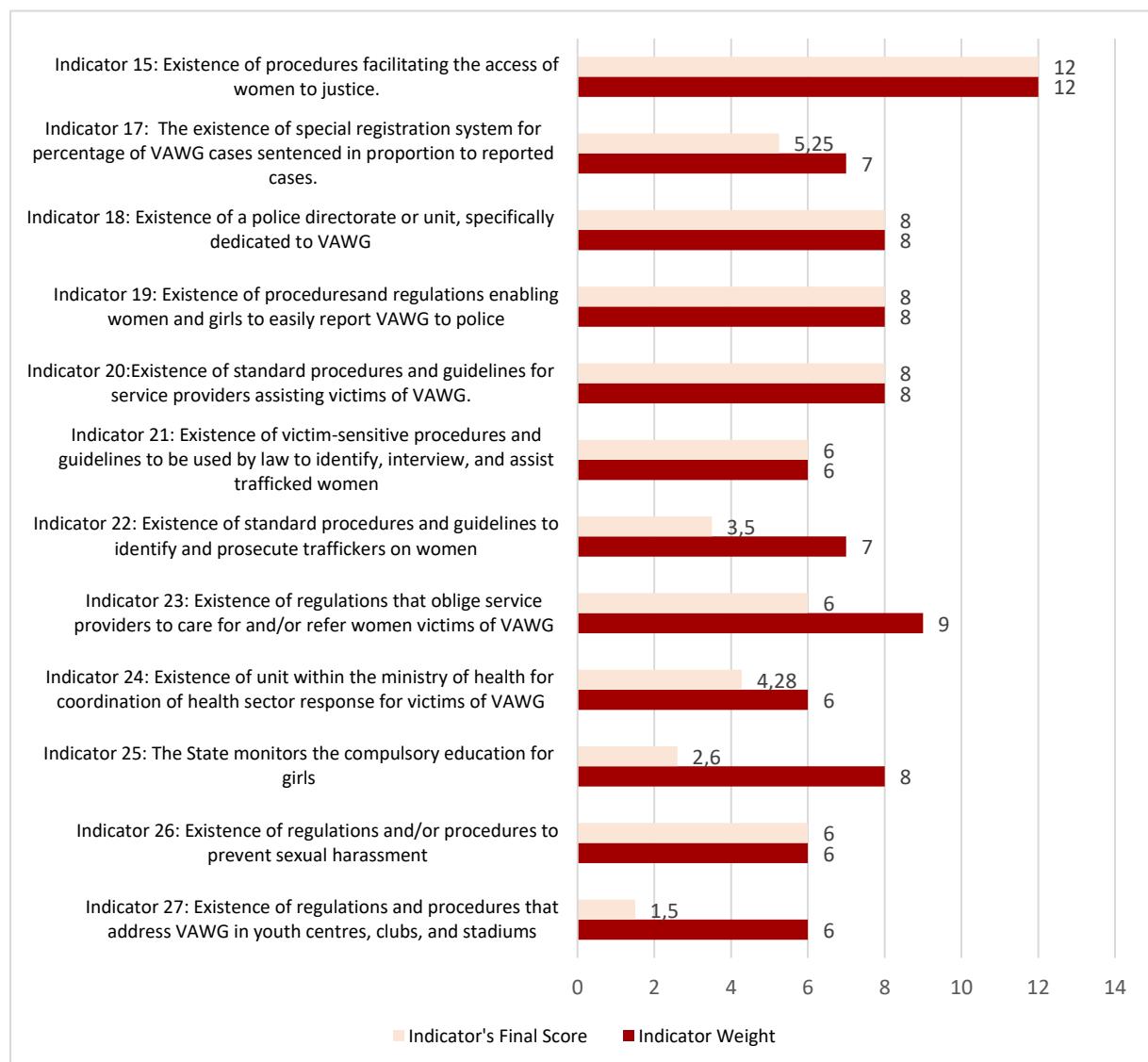
Recommendations

- Lift all CEDAW reservations and ratify the Optional Protocol.
- Amend the Constitution to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sex and ensure gender equality provisions, including affirmative measures.
- Develop and enact a comprehensive VAWG law, defining and criminalizing all forms of VAWG and aligned with international standards.
- Reform the Personal Status and Penal Codes to eliminate gender-based discrimination.

❖ **Second Category: Standard Procedures and Guidelines**

The category achieved a level of accomplishment of 75.7%, having made a notable progress through reporting systems and some guidelines.

Second Category: Standard Procedures and Guidelines



Justice

Procedures are available to facilitate the access of women and girls survivors of violence against them to justice, reflected in indicator 15 full score of 12/12. These include reporting systems managed by the police, courts, and hospitals. In addition, the General Directorate of Internal Security Forces (ISF) provides a hotline and an online form that enable reporting any case of violence and crime, including cases of VAWG.

A special registry exists to record the cases of VAWG that have been adjudicated compared to those that have been reported, indicating partial functionality in tracking judicial outcomes, reflected in indicator 17 score of 5.3/7.

Police

Law No. 293 of 2014 on the protection of women and other family members from domestic violence, requires a special unit on domestic violence to be established within the Directorate General of the ISF to examine complaints. (Indicator 18 score of 8/8.) However, this unit has not yet been established, showing that implementation remains incomplete.

In 2013, the General Directorate of ISF issued Service Order No. 164/204, which specifies the measures that should be taken by various entities and institutions when dealing with women survivors of violence against women and girls. The Code of Conduct of the ISF stipulates that police officers must give special attention to women and minors who are victims of human trafficking and domestic violence. Procedures also provide women survivors of violence the option to communicate with female officers when filing complaints, reflected in indicator 19 full score of 8/8.

There are no specific guidelines for identifying women victims of human trafficking, but Law No. 164 of 2011 criminalizes human trafficking. Section 7 of the law concerns protection procedures in human trafficking cases. However, the text or section does not include procedures or guidelines to be used in identifying women victims of human trafficking and assisting them, corresponding to indicator 21 full score of 6/6, which captures legal coverage, however, without operational detail. A guidance manual was issued in 2014 with the participation of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the General Directorate of ISF. The manual aims to explain the legal framework and procedures to identify perpetrators, deal with witnesses, and provide support to victims of human trafficking crimes. Additionally, the "Reference Guide for the Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Lebanon" was launched under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice in March 2024.

The General Directorate of ISF, in cooperation with CSOs, developed a "Training Manual for Trainers of ISF Personnel on Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault Crimes in Lebanon" in 2017. The manual provides guidance to ISF personnel on how to reduce human trafficking and deal with its victims.

There are no standard governmental procedures or guidelines for identifying human traffickers and prosecuting them. Law No. 164 of 2011 concerning "punishment of human trafficking" imposes penalties of up to fifteen years' imprisonment against perpetrators of human trafficking crimes (Article 586-4). The law does not include explicit provisions imposing standardized procedures or guidelines for identifying the perpetrators of this crime, reflected in indicator 22 partial score of 3.5/7.

Health

Systems are available that oblige healthcare providers to care for women and girl survivors of VAWG and/or refer them, however, not fully institutionalised, reflected in indicator 23 score of 6/9. Service Order No. 164/204 issued by the General Directorate of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers relates to the measures to be taken by the various concerned parties, including obligating service providers in the health sector to deal with women survivors or those at risk of violence.

Focal points exist in all ministries, particularly the Ministry of Public Health. The NCLW coordinates the efforts of the focal points. However, the NCLW focuses on mainstreaming gender considerations and differing needs and does not specialize in providing support for women and girls survivors of violence, reflected in indicator 24 score of 4.3/6.

Education

There is no specific mechanism for monitoring compulsory education for girls. However, Law No. 150 of 2011 states that education is free and compulsory for all Lebanese children aged 6 to 15. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education established the School Information Management System (SIMS), which aims to collect data related to essential elements of the education system in Lebanon and analyse data concerning all students in general, without focusing specifically on girls, leading to indicator 25 low score of 2.7/8. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education launched incentive programs to enhance the access of Lebanese and non-Lebanese children to education through the “Reaching All Children with Education (RACE II)” initiative implemented between 2016 and 2021, which provided scholarships and educational support to children.

There are no internal regulations or procedures specifically to prevent sexual harassment in educational institutions. The Anti-Sexual Harassment Law No. 205 officially criminalizes sexual harassment, includes educational institutions, and punishes it with up to one year of imprisonment in addition to a fine. Article 2(a) of the law provides for harsher penalties of up to two years' imprisonment and fines up to twenty times the official minimum wage (estimated at about 450 USD) if the sexual harassment occurs in a university, school, or nursery, reflected in indicator 26 score of 6/6.

There are no specific regulations or procedures addressing VAWG in youth centres, clubs, and sports stadiums, corresponding to indicator 27 low score of 1.5/6. However, the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2022–2030) aims to promote societal rejection of all forms of VAWG, especially violence in public spaces including youth centres, clubs, and sports stadiums. In general, the Lebanese Penal Code imposes harsher penalties if crimes are committed against minors.

Main Gaps

- The domestic violence police unit required under Law No. 293/2014 remains unestablished.
- Lack of unified registry and standard operating procedures for handling VAWG cases.
- Lack of specific mechanism for monitoring compulsory education for girls
- Absence of mechanisms to prevent harassment in youth centres, clubs, and sports facilities.

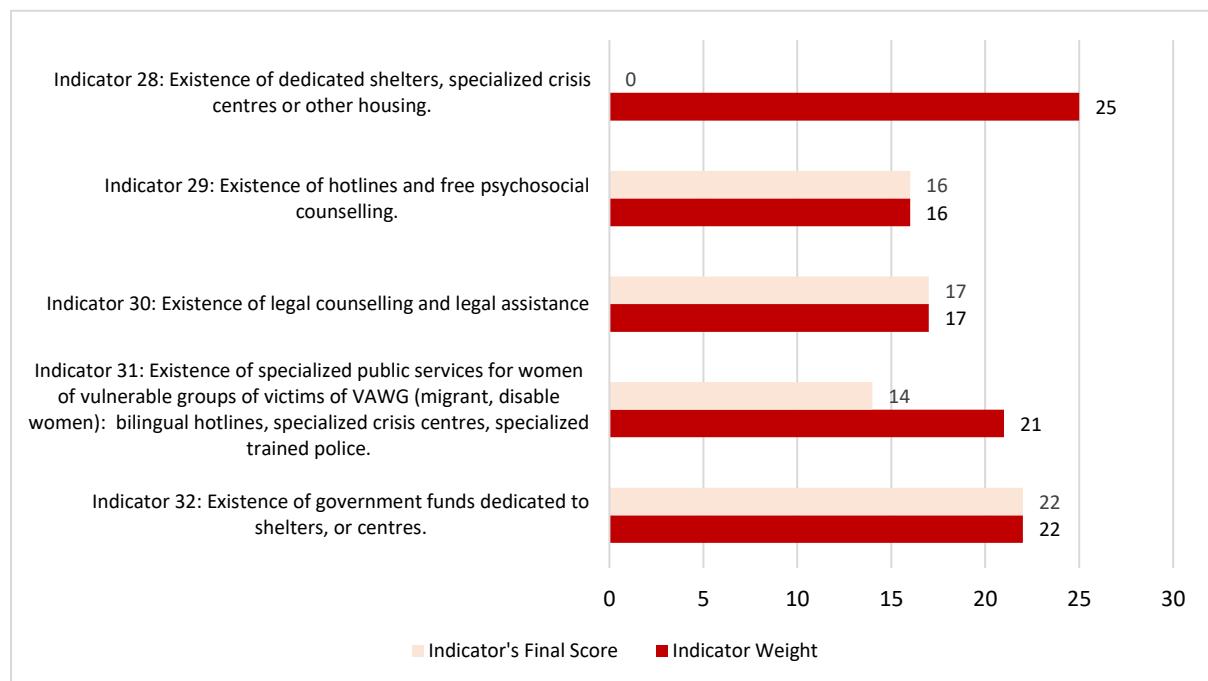
Recommendations

- Operationalize the domestic violence police unit and strengthen coordination among ministries.
- Create a national database to track reported, investigated, and adjudicated VAWG cases.
- Establish specific mechanism for monitoring compulsory education for girls
- Adopt anti-harassment and protection mechanisms in sports, cultural, and youth spaces.

❖ **Third Category: Provision of Services Funded by the State**

This category scored a level of achievement of 69%, **showing** the absence of specialized government-run shelters and reliance on CSOs.

Third Category: Provision of Services Funded by the State



There are no government-run shelters or centres to provide specialized services for women survivors of VAWG, reflected in indicator 28 score of 0/25.

The Ministry of Social Affairs cooperates with existing shelters run by CSOs and the Women's Affairs Division at the Ministry provides psychosocial counselling. There is a hotline (112) available through the police, but it is dedicated to all criminal cases and not specialized in cases of VAWG.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has established a hotline service 01772000, which is operational 24/7, to receive any and all complaints pertaining to instances of violence. (Indicator 29 score of 16/16)

In addition to psychosocial counselling, the Women's Affairs Division at the Ministry of Social Affairs provides as well legal assistance to women survivors through designated social development service centres, reflected in indicator 30 score of 17/17.

Regarding specialized public services to women from marginalized groups, no specialized units currently exist. However, existing service providers develop tailored services for women from such groups, as migrants, women refugees, women with disabilities, which explains partial progress reflected in indicator 31 score of 14/21.

Regarding shelter budgets, the government does not allocate any funds for financing shelters and service centres for women survivors of VAWG but rather cooperates with civil society. Indicator 32 notes full score of 22/22, based on the recognition of cooperation mechanisms despite the absence of direct State funding for shelters.

Main Gaps

- Absence of government-run shelters for women survivors of violence.
- Reliance on CSOs without dedicated State funding to support them.
- Lack of specialized national hotlines for VAWG.

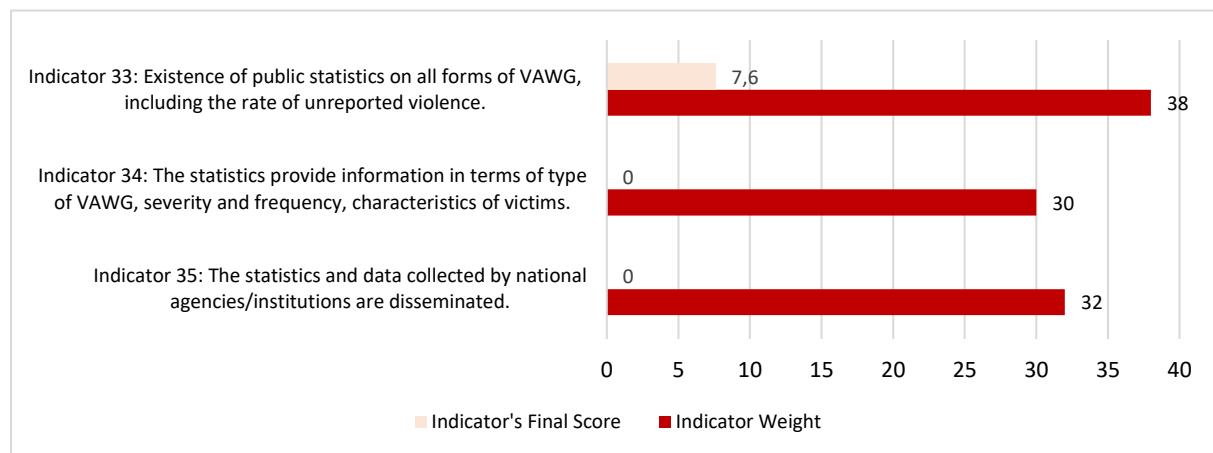
Recommendations

- Establish and fund State-run shelters in all regions.
- Allocate permanent budget lines for shelters and centres run by the CSOs survivor protection services.
- Allocate permanent budget lines for survivor protection services.
- Launch a 24/7 unified national hotline dedicated to VAWG cases.

❖ **Fourth Category: Data System and Statistics**

The achievement did not exceed 7.6% for the Data and Statistics category, reflecting the limited availability of national data and the absence of comprehensive and coordinated monitoring systems.

Fourth Category: Data System and Statistics



There are no regular and up-to-date public statistics covering all forms of VAWG including the rate of unreported cases, as reflected in indicator 33 low score of 7.6/38. The ISF publish annual statistics on the number of complaints they receive.

The Central Administration of Statistics conducts national surveys, but it does not have data nor information specifically related to reporting incidents. Moreover, these statistics do not cover forms and prevalence rates of VAWG, there are no specialized data systems nor mechanisms related to dissemination of information on VAWG, as shown in indicator 34 score of 0/30 and indicator 35 score of 0/32.

Main Gaps

- No national system for collecting or publishing VAWG data.
- Statistics limited to police and administrative records without disaggregation.
- Lack of national prevalence surveys on VAWG.
- Existing information is fragmented and unavailable to policymakers or the public.

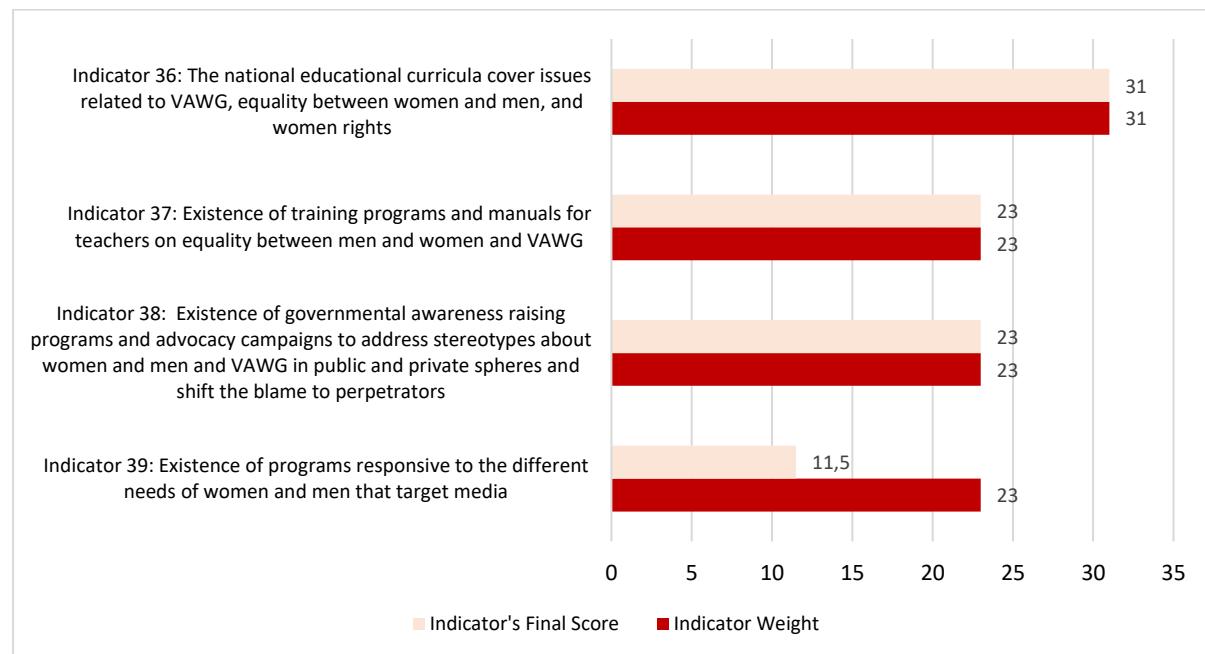
Recommendations

- Create an integrated national database on VAWG under the Central Administration of Statistics and develop standardized data collection tools and protocols across all relevant ministries.
- Ensure annual public reporting with disaggregated data by type, age, type of VAWG, region.
- Conduct regular nationwide surveys on VAWG prevalence and trends and publish annual national reports to inform the public and evidence-based policymaking.

❖ ***Fifth Category: Preventive Programs and Measures***

The category of preventive programs and measures achieved 88.5%, reflecting progress through the integration of topics on gender equality and VAWG in educational curricula and awareness-raising campaigns, although institutionalisation of training programs remains limited.

Fifth Category: Preventive Programs and Measures



National educational curricula cover topics related to VAWG, gender equality, and women's rights, corresponding to indicator 36 full score of 31/31. However, the Ministry of Education and the Center for Educational Research and Development (CRDP) began in 2020 the process of developing the public-school curriculum to address the different needs of women and men. This process is still ongoing in 2024.

There are training programs or manuals available for teachers on gender equality and VAWG. The Ministry of Education has provided training courses for teachers that address issues related to VAWG and women's rights, consistent with Indicator 37 full score of 23/23.

Additionally, annual awareness campaigns are conducted by the NCLW in cooperation with international organizations as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. These efforts are reflected in indicator 38 full score of 23/23.

Meanwhile, indicator 39 score of 11.5/23 shows that while responsive programs targeting media and addressing the different needs of women and men exist, they remain limited in scope and are not yet fully institutionalized.

Main Gaps

- Gender equality not yet fully integrated into curricula.
- Lack of programs targeting media and addressing the different needs of women and men.

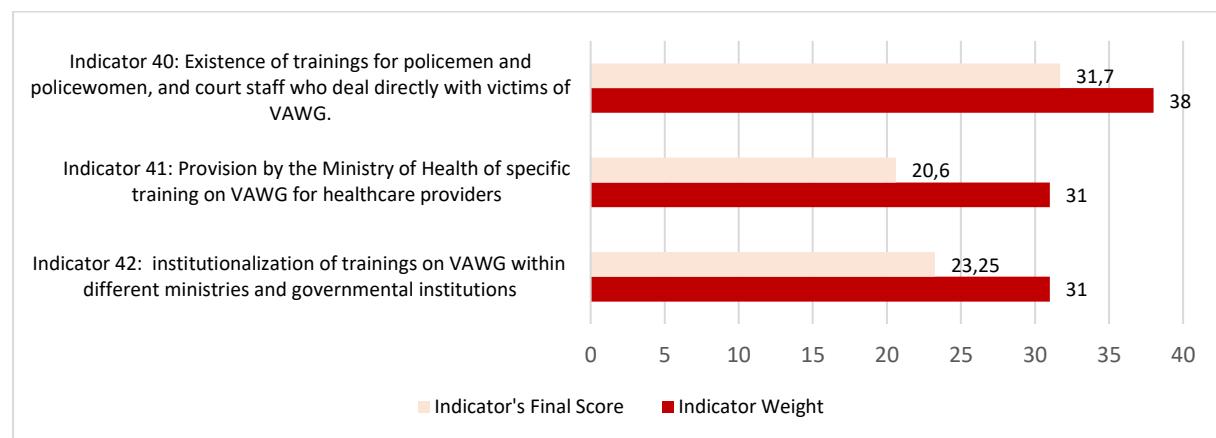
Recommendations

- Integrate and mainstream gender equality, VAWG and human rights across all education levels.
- Institutionalize annual teacher training on gender-sensitive education.
- Establish a government-funded national program for prevention and awareness campaigns.
- Develop awareness raising programs targeting media and addressing the different needs of women and men.

❖ **Sixth Category: Professional Capacity of First Respondents**

The category of professional capacity of first respondents achieved 75.6%, due to the training programs provided to the police, judiciary, and State institutions in cooperation with international organizations. However, these trainings have not yet evolved into a permanent institutionalized pathway.

Sixth Category: Professional Capacity of First Respondents



The Human Rights Department in the General Inspectorate of ISF which is linked to the Minister of Interior and the Directorate of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights of the Ministry of Defence, in cooperation with international organizations and experts, provide training programs on how to deal with women survivors of violence. Police stations and judicial units also receive training on counselling service provision to women and girls survivors of violence, reflected in indicator 40 score of 31.7/38.

However, training for healthcare providers remains less comprehensive, (Indicator 41 score of 20.7/31, which indicates that while the Ministry of Health organizes some specific trainings on VAWG, these remain limited in coverage and scope.

The lack of a unified, institutionalized system for continuous capacity development across ministries is reflected in indicator 42 score of 23.3/31, showing that while ad hoc trainings exist, there is still no permanent or standardized framework to sustain and monitor these efforts within government institutions.

Main Gaps

- Trainings remain ad-hoc and training programs are not yet institutionalized.
- Limited technical capacity among healthcare and police personnel.

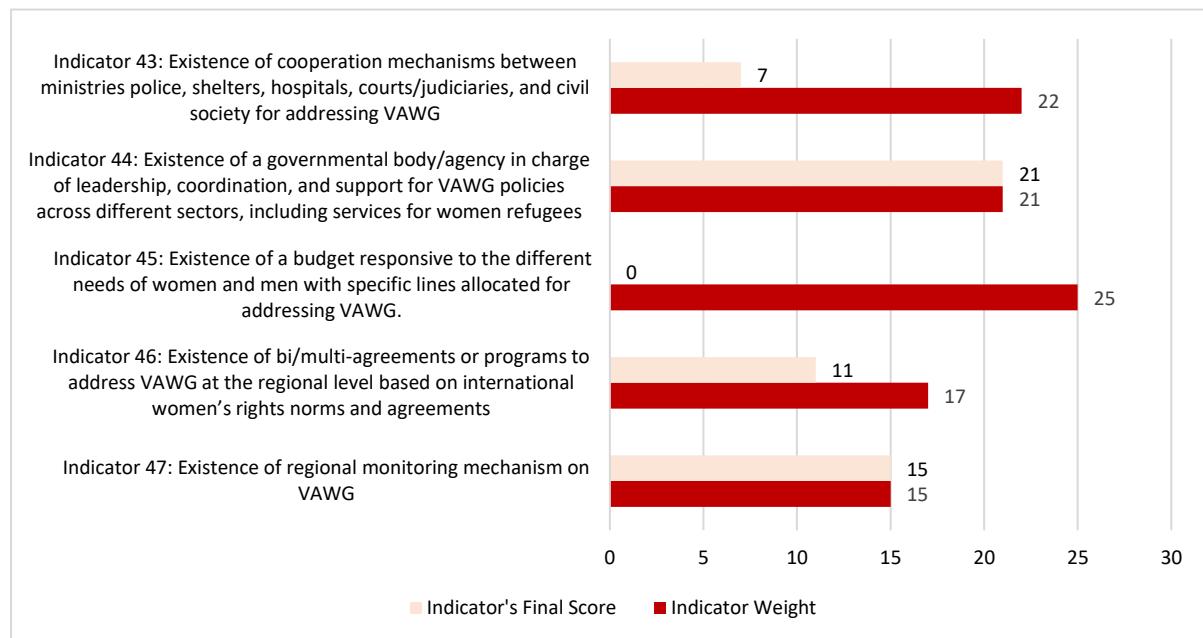
Recommendations

- Institutionalize regular VAWG response training across all ministries.
- Expand specialized medical and psychosocial training for service providers.

❖ **Seventh Category: National Coordination and Regional Cooperation**

The achievement level reached of 45.7%, shows that while there are coordination mechanisms between ministries and the NCLW, there is still absence of gender-responsive budgeting and the weakness of regional mechanisms limits effectiveness.

Seventh Category: National Coordination and Regional Cooperation



There is partial, yet functional cooperation between the police, CSOs-run shelters, hospitals, courts/judicial authorities, and relevant ministries, as reflected in indicator 43's score of 7/22. The General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers issued Service Order No. 164/204 in 2013 on the measures that should be taken by the various institutions dealing with women and girls survivors of violence.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and the NCLW ensure coordination between ministries regarding VAWG. The mandate of the NCLW includes liaison and coordination with all stakeholders on issues of women's equality, consistent with indicator 44's score of 21/21.

The NCLW coordinates policies on VAWG across ministries and sectors. According to Law No. 720/1998, the national tasks and activities related to women's issues were formally assigned to the NCLW, which is mandated to advise the government on women's issues, and to communicate and coordinate with the relevant ministries and public institutions.

Furthermore, the budgeting system adopted by the government is not responsive to the needs of both women and men, nor there any dedicated budget lines to address VAWG specifically. This lack of financial commitment and a major policy gap is reflected in indicator 45 score of 0/25.

At the regional level, Lebanon participates in frameworks such as the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The Ministerial Declaration of the Fifth UfM Ministerial Conference

on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Society" includes four priority areas, one of which is combating VAWG.

The League of Arab States established the Arab Women's Committee, which in February 2020 launched a five-year strategy to define national priorities in Arab countries in line with the Beijing Platform for Action. Additionally, the Arab League launched the "Cairo Declaration for Arab Women: The Arab Women Development Agenda 2030", adopted in 2017. The declaration integrates gender equality into environmental and climate action and disaster response, and includes specific results aimed at eliminating VAWG. This engagement is represented in indicator 46 score of 11/17, reflecting Lebanon's active but limited involvement in regional coordination programs.

Except for the Regional Index on VAWG, there is no other regional monitoring mechanism on VAWG. Lebanon as a member of the UfM follows up on the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Women's Rights (2022, Madrid). In terms of monitoring of the Declaration, the ministers of the UfM States showed willingness in the 5th UfM Declaration to "Pay particular attention to well-functioning monitoring processes in the four priority areas of the Cairo Declaration well as to the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the impact of actions undertaken." Indicator 47 score of 15/15 shows that Lebanon maintains participation in existing regional mechanisms addressing VAWG, which reinforces its commitment to international women's rights norms despite national implementation gaps.

Main Gaps

- Insufficient inter-ministerial coordination and limited institutional capacity of NCLW.
- Absence of gender-responsive budgeting and dedicated funds for VAWG programs.
- Limited bilateral cooperation mechanisms.

Recommendations

- Strengthen the institutional mandate and funding of the NCLW.
- Adopt gender-responsive budgeting with clear budget allocations for combating VAWG.
- Enhance Lebanon engagement in regional monitoring and bi-lateral cooperation mechanisms.



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