

LEBANON
Universal Periodic Review
Submission on the Independence of Judiciary and the right to due process in Lebanon
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The Legal Agenda is a Beirut-based non-governmental non-profit organization that addresses issues of legal activism, reform, and transformation in the context of social and political change in the Arab world. We aim to challenge conventional wisdom that the law is a 'technical' matter of little social influence. This 'technical' definition hinders public accountability, undermines a rights-based discourse of change, and dismisses legal activism as a tool for advancing the interests of disadvantaged groups in society. We, on the other hand, argue that law is a primary tool of shaping society and establishing different forms of hegemony and control over marginalized groups. By monitoring legal developments and public policy in Lebanon and the rest of the Arab world, we aim to eliminate this ideological barrier between law and society. We hope to turn legal activism from an abusive tool of authority into an emancipatory one for disadvantaged groups including women, laborers, refugees, and LGBT.

In 2014, the LA launched *The civil observatory for an independent and transparent judiciary*, the third such centre in the Arab world that aims to promote judicial independence and transparency. The other two are the Tunisian and Moroccan Observatories for Judicial Independence. *The observatory* has two main areas of focus, first, monitoring the operation of the courts, through examining the rulings they issue and also through direct observation of court hearings. In this regard, the Observatory will depend on the initiative of its own staff, people working in the judiciary and the parties to cases in drawing the Observatory's attention to certain issues or practices. To this end, the Observatory will draw up a chart of courts across Lebanon to cover them all, while giving priority to cases that are most relevant to sectors of society that are most prone to exploitation and abuse.

This submission aims to highlight the obstacles whether in the texts or in practice that hinders an independent judicial body in addition to the violations to the right to a due process that the LA has been monitoring through its work.

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