



## 19 June 2023: International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict

### Statement by Legal Action Worldwide Lebanon

#### **Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in Lebanon call for the recognition of this crime and adequate support to all survivors**

19 June 2023, Beirut, Lebanon: Victims and survivors of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) committed during the Lebanese Civil Wars (1975-1990) are still waiting for justice. SGBV crimes were among the many crimes perpetrated by parties to the conflict. However, to date, SGBV that occurred during the Civil Wars remains a taboo without any legal action taken to address the impunity of perpetrators or secure justice for victims and survivors.

A 55-year-old SGBV Lebanese survivor stated: *“Society is going through a crisis, and they don’t want to open closed books. The war is still going on, our practices and our speeches are still similar to that of the war. We must take action to break this cycle.”*

Three decades have elapsed since the Civil Wars ended, and no transitional justice has been implemented.

During the Lebanese Civil Wars, SGBV was committed on a systemic and widespread scale by state and non-state actors. The crimes included rape, gang rape, mass rape, genital mutilation, sexualized torture, such as the electrocution of breasts and genital areas, murder of women and girls after rape, abduction and forced prostitution. Yet, failure to recognise all forms of SGBV as crime deprives victims and survivors of access to essential assistance and denies their basic human rights.

Legal Action Worldwide - Lebanon supports victims and survivors of SGBV in Lebanon and echoes their message. Together we call on the Government of Lebanon to respond to its legacy of armed conflict and provide adequate support to victims and survivors. The Government of Lebanon must:

- Publicly acknowledge the sexual and gender-based violence committed during the Lebanese Civil Wars,
- Provide adequate services to victims and survivors of SGBV, including legal assistance and appropriate healthcare,
- Contribute to efforts seeking truth by providing information, including the locations of burial sites, the names of perpetrators and the names of those in command positions,
- Promote memorialization avenues to unite stories and scenarios from a diverse range of communities, regions, religions, and social characteristics,
- Establish an online and public archive for all available Civil War material to contribute to increased collective awareness,
- Ensure that those most responsible for SGBV are held to account for these crimes. Impunity for SGBV must end.

This statement is endorsed by following delegations:



Embassy of the Kingdom  
of the Netherlands



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office



Embassy of Finland  
Beirut

Canada 



**Australian Embassy**  

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**Beirut**