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GENDER, SECURITY AND SSR IN LEBANON

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SUMMARY

This report examines the role of gender in Lebanese security perceptions, Lebanese perceptions of security institutions, as well as gender dynamics within security institutions. Using gender as a category of analysis allows for a deeper understanding of broader security perceptions, including of those related to the Syrian refugee crisis, to vulnerability and domestic violence, but also points to areas for further research areas, such as male vulnerabilities, addressing sexual and gender-based violence and concerns over environmental degradation. Lebanese gendered perceptions of security institutions include confessional and political power structures comprising mostly male-dominated patronage networks, and a 'masculine' public image, which is reflected in perceived behaviours and responses. Gender dynamics play a role in defining how Lebanese security institutions act and react to different security-relevant situations, but also directly affect working conditions within the institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Based on a review of the material produced as part of the broader project as well as additional research, this report examines some of the ways in which security issues in Lebanon are gendered. For this report, we reviewed the material collected on perceptions of security in general and perceptions of security sector institutions (SSIs) using a gender lens – that is, examining how and if being a woman or a man, together with other social identity markers such as age, class and place of residence, played a role. In addition, using additional interview data and a review of available secondary literature, we examine a range of gender issues within SSIs themselves and what possible implications these might have for security sector reform (SSR). The focus will be mainly on the Internal Security Forces (ISF), which are in charge of internal security provision and policing, while other SSIs will be examined to a lesser degree.

SSR processes have in the past tended to be regarded by donors and implementers as technical, gender-neutral processes. Since the mid-2000s, however, gender has been increasingly regarded as a key component of these processes in order to enhance local ownership, effective service delivery and oversight and accountability – areas where a large majority of the Lebanese population would like to see improvement in their SSIs, as documented in the broader research of this
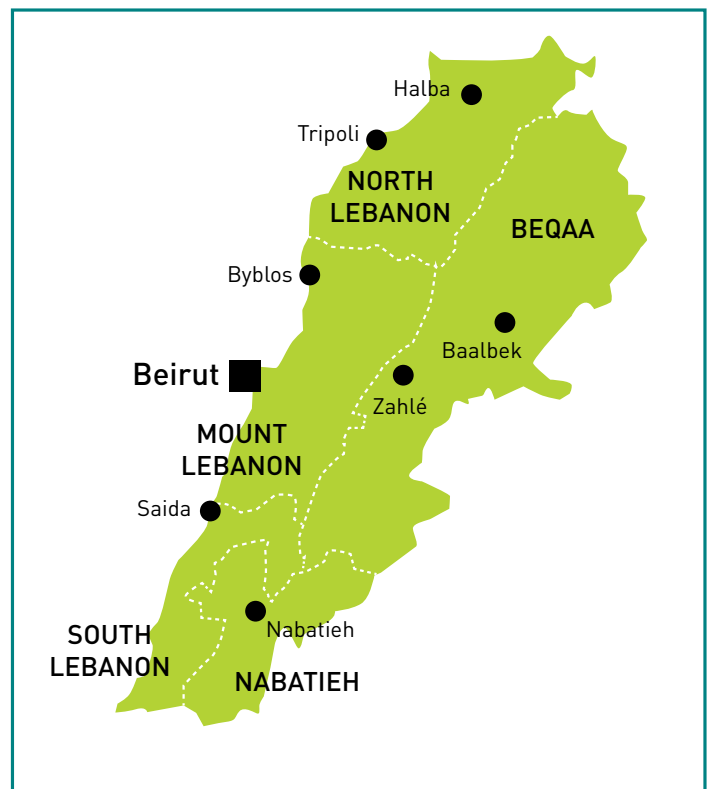
project.[1] A key challenge of examining gender in relation to SSR has been to go beyond merely seeking to increase the number of women in SSIs, instead examining both women's and men's gender identities and how these impact on security needs, security provision and public perceptions of the institutions.

Although increasing the number of women in SSIs is important, it is not enough as it does not reflect women's potential to advance in the ranks, their job satisfaction, retention rates, or if certain female officers are relegated to certain tasks or, officially or unofficially, barred from others.[2] Focusing on the number of female officers also fails to examine how the SSI responds to the different security needs of the citizens it seeks to serve – women, men, the rich, the poor, sexual and gender minorities (SGM), children, people with disabilities, young people and the elderly.

A narrow focus on women also excludes men, who tend to form the majority of SSI personnel. Moreover, the way men are expected to act and behave as male members of these institutions tends to be relatively narrowly proscribed. It is often characterised by overt displays of toughness, disdain for perceived weakness (often projected onto civilian men, women and SGM) and aggression. In many situations – such as riot control, responding to a victim of domestic violence or building community trust – these attributes, which are often embedded in institutional cultures of SSIs, can actually hinder effective security provision.

GENDER AND SECURITY PERCEPTIONS

Security and insecurity are perceived differently in Lebanon depending on various identity markers such as social class, urban/rural residence, geographical location, confessional and political affiliation, as well as gender. The importance of one's gender identity in relation to other identity markers depends on given societal circumstances. Various political, socio-economic and cultural aspects of the Lebanese context produce diverse patterns of gender relations. Hence, a young, unmarried, rural and low-income girl in South Lebanon will have different perceptions of security threats from a middle-aged, married and middle-class man in Beirut. These security perceptions will be further filtered, albeit at different levels, through people's confessional affiliation, political association and other variables.

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Men and women are socialised to see security differently. Moreover, women and men of different ages and social classes face different expectations of how to respond to threats. Boys and girls, men and women tend to be socialised into protecting (and therefore fearing threats against) those attributes associated with their gender roles that society values highest at a given point in time. For women, there is often the expectation of sexual chastity and, through it, family or community 'honour'; for men, they may be expected to be the protector and breadwinner of their family or community, and thereby to have a sense of personal 'honour'.

The ways in which different women and men are expected to respond also differs. For example, women may be more easily able to draw on others for protection, while men may be expected to 'fend for themselves'. Class and age also matter: a young, lower-class male may be expected to respond directly and physically to perceived threats to his 'honour', while his upper-class peer may be expected to show restraint; older and more established men might expect to be able to draw on other, subordinate men through patronage networks to do their bidding for them.

Gendered perceptions of safety and security

While security perceptions tend to reflect primarily geographical, socio-economic and political/religious community dimensions of identity, some interesting gender dynamics emerge from our data collected in September 2013 across Lebanon. It is worth noting that some of the perceptions reflect longer-term issues and trends, while

1   The following were important milestones in this respect: M. Bastick and K. Valasek (eds.) (2008). *Gender and security sector reform toolkit*. Geneva: DCAF, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW); and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/ Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (2008). *Handbook on security system reform: Supporting security and justice*. Paris: OECD. For the benefits of integrating gender, see: K. Valasek (2008). 'Security sector reform and gender', in M. Bastick and K. Valasek (eds.). Op. cit. For Lebanese perceptions, see: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) (2013a). *People's perception of security in Lebanon: Developing national capability for security and stabilisation*. Beirut: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

2   Different tasks (or attributes linked to them) are often 'coded' masculine or feminine in a given society: thus, women may be assigned to victims' support units, as caring is 'coded' feminine; on the other hand, their male colleagues may be assigned to riot control, as this is associated with 'masculine-coded' characteristics such as toughness and aggression.

Figure 1: Perceived threat of theft among women and men in Lebanon, by region (%)
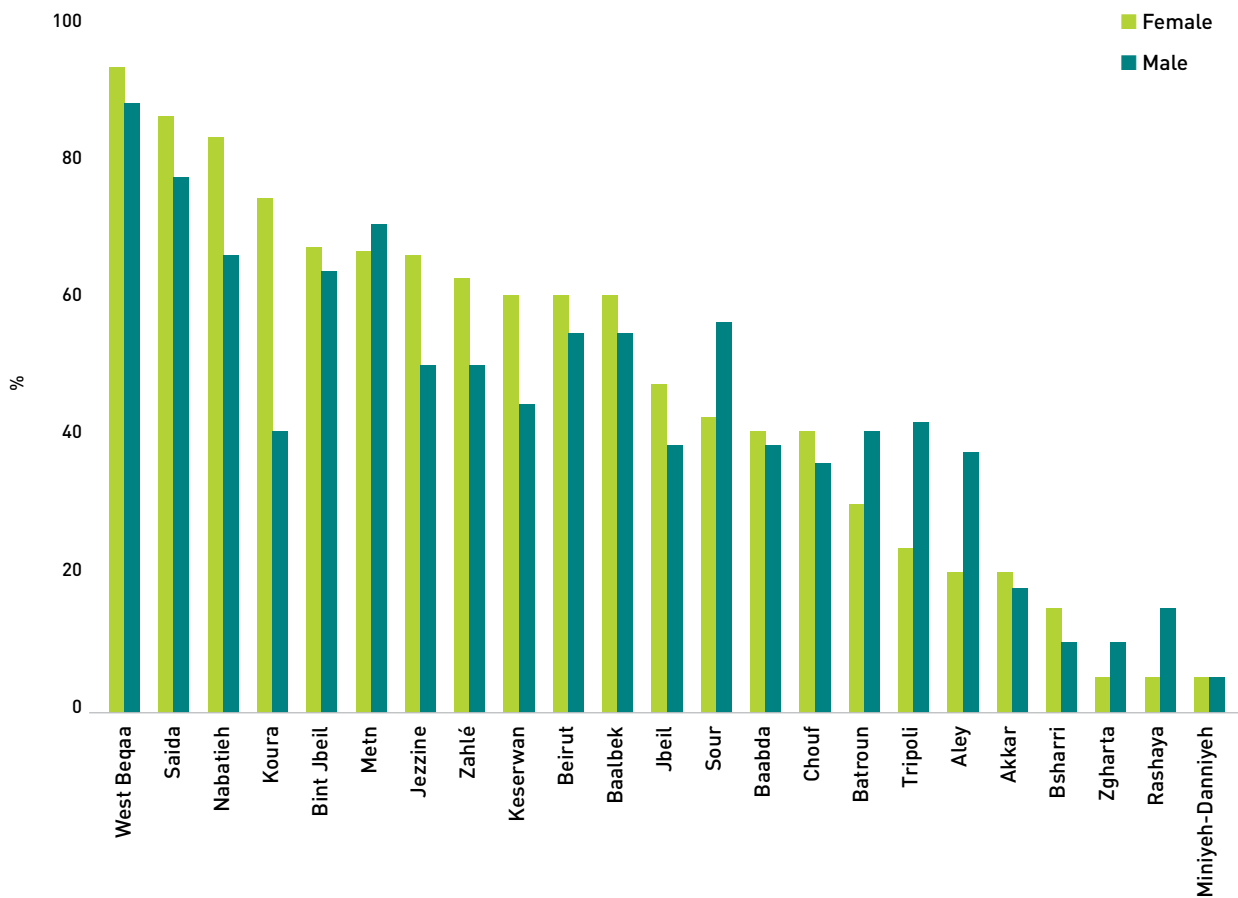
Source: LCPS (2013b). Op. cit.

others may be in response to contemporaneous events. In a security environment that is as dynamic as the one in Lebanon, these perceptions thus need to be seen also in the particular temporal context.

The threat of theft was perceived as being more serious by women in Mount Lebanon, the South and South East of the country, with the exception of Sour. In the North, however, men were most concerned about theft, with the notable exception of Koura, where women were almost twice as likely to perceive the threat as being serious (see Figure 1).[3]

Lebanese who felt that assaults, attacks as well as bombings and assassinations were the most serious threats either lived in areas bordering Syria or in areas considered sectarian and political hotspots (that is, places with significant tensions and potential violence). Perceptions were roughly similar between men and women, with women perceiving these threats as more acute than men, especially in Koura and Nabatieh. Notable exceptions where men were more concerned overall were found in Sour in the South, in Rashaya on the Syrian border and in Aley in Mount Lebanon.[4]

Perceived threats of sexual assault and rape were disproportionately high in West Beqaa, bordering Syria, among both women and men compared with the rest of the country. Women in Jezzine and Koura perceived the threats of sexual assault and rape as significantly higher than men there, with the opposite in Aley and Sour.[5] The perceived threat of sexual assault and rape can stem from internal local power dynamics, but also from external elements such as the perceived threat of foreign fighters. However, there is no clear correlation one way or another between gender and fear of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV): in some areas, more women than

3   LCPS (2013b). *Types of threats Lebanese face: A gender perspective*. Beirut: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.
4   Ibid.
5   Ibid.

men are clearly more concerned, while in others more men than women are concerned. These dynamics would warrant more in-depth, micro-level studies in these particular areas.

Compared with 2010, Lebanese felt significantly less safe at the time of the survey, especially in Northern areas bordering Syria as well as the South. Men in Zgharta, a district bordering Tripoli, felt considerably less safe travelling at night than women; this could be explained by the highly militarised and intensified security situation in the area due to the large influx of Syrian refugees, tensions between pro- and anti-Assad groups, as well as the Lebanese military involvement in Tripoli. Understanding this significant difference in security perceptions among men in this district would require further investigations at the local level.

The levels of insecurity perceived across the country emanating from undisciplined party members, religious extremists, Syria-related armed factions and Palestinian camps range mostly between 60% and 80%.[6] The areas with the highest insecurity levels, where 80% to 100% of survey respondents felt threatened by the abovementioned threats, are also areas close to the Syrian border (Nabatieh, Rashaya and Zahlé) and political hotspots (Saida and Zgharta).[7] Both men and women perceive threats related to 'hard' security as very serious, overshadowing more 'everyday' security concerns – although, as mentioned, perceptions of these threats can often be highly time-bound and impacted on by individual events.

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These threat perceptions can partly be explained by the prevalence of hearsay, through which many Lebanese hear about and spread real or perceived threats,[8] and their consumption of local media with its daily, often politicised and repeated portrayal of security threats.[9] While women in rural areas felt more at risk of SGBV than women in urban areas, the latter category felt more threatened by the various informal security providers (political parties).[10] The reason for this could be the presence of a wider range of parties in more densely populated and diverse areas. Rural areas, such as smaller villages, tend to be more homogenous in terms of political/religious affiliation. Women living in rural areas might feel more threatened by the risk of SGBV due to their geographical location in more remote places, which are potentially more difficult or lengthy to access by SSIs, although whether the risk actually is higher is difficult to establish due to gaps in data and reporting (see also below).

SGBV and security perceptions and responses

SGBV and domestic violence (DV) are two forms of violence and insecurity that are intrinsically linked to gender. While public awareness is increasing and the responses of state and non-state actors are improving, many challenges remain. Such challenges include lack of reliable data, attitudes regarding DV in particular, a taboo or private issue, lack of resources and difficulties in accessing existing services by many victims, including male survivors, SGM or refugees.[11]

SGBV

Addressing SGBV – and especially DV, which is perceived as being a problem 'inside the family' – is often difficult for state agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs). In a context where confessional affiliation plays a central role in social and public life, most cases of SGBV and DV were in the past exclusively dealt with by religious courts.[12] In April 2014, the Lebanese parliament passed a national law[13] against DV, which established important protection measures, such as the possibility of applying for a restraining order against an assailant and the provision of emergency accommodation for victims of abuse, as well as related policing and court reforms.[14]

6   Ibid.
7   Ibid. For a deeper discussion of gender and threat perceptions emanating from the increased presence of Syrian refugees, see: C. Harb and R. Saab (May 2014). *Social cohesion and intergroup relations: Syrian refugees and Lebanese nationals in the Bekaa and Akkar*. Save the Children report.
8   Beirut Research and Innovation Center (BRIC) (2014). *Survey of perceptions of security threats stemming from the Syrian refugee presence in Lebanon*. Beirut.
9   Samir Kassir Foundation (June 2013). *Media consumption and security perceptions in Lebanon*. Beirut.
10   LCPS (2013b). Op. cit.
11   Interview, Lebanese CSO working on gender equality issues, 13 August 2014.
12   IRIN (2009). 'Lebanon: Move to take domestic violence cases out of religious courts', 23 September 2009. Available at http://www.irinnews.org/report/86247/lebanon-move-to-take-domestic-violence-cases-out-of-religious-courts
13   KAFA (2014). 'Comments of the National Coalition for Legislating the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence'. Available at http://www.kafa.org.lb/FOAPDF/FAO-PDF-10-635104472735253782.pdf
14   E. Bramley (2014). 'Why does the Lebanese bill on domestic violence fail to tackle marital rape?', *The Guardian*, 9 April 2014. Available at http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/apr/09/lebanese-bill-domestic-violence-marital-rape

However, the law does not criminalise marital rape due to pressures from religious establishments, which interpret sex as being an obligation in marriage.[15] As a compromise, the law criminalises a spouse's use of threats or violence to claim the 'marital right to intercourse', but it does not criminalise the violation of physical integrity itself.[16] Focusing on DV, the law does not address broader issues of SGBV. Furthermore, the law was amended to include "all family members, and is no longer specific to women".[17] While it does so in theory, the content of the law is still very much focused on women, and does not refer to men or SGM specifically.

Facing the pressure to conform to social ideals of masculinity, such as being able to protect themselves, means that seeking help and risk of making the issue public when reporting cases of SGBV and DV constitute major hurdles for the men affected.

While the ISF can talk to both the perpetrator and survivor of violence, the former is not necessarily arrested and the case not always pursued.[18] DV and SGBV survivors – often women and girls – risk more violence as well as social stigma by reporting their husbands to the police.[19] If the case was to be pursued, women face another range of challenges. Lebanese personal status laws, which govern marriage, divorce, inheritance and other matters for Lebanon's confessional communities, make it very difficult for women to obtain a divorce or custody of their children, thus often trapping women in violent relationships.[20] In addition, women in these situations are often not empowered and lack independent financial income.

Men, SGM and refugees

While SGBV and DV against women and girls are increasingly perceived as serious security issues, the perception is different for male survivors. As a predominantly patriarchal society, the cultural ideals of masculinity involve characteristics and behaviours such as providing for his family, being a decision-maker, toughness and strength as well as being a protector,[21] qualities that are internalised and reproduced by society and individuals. Male survivors of SGBV and DV face a range of social and psychological ramifications. Facing the pressure to conform to social ideals of masculinity, such as being able to protect themselves, means that seeking help and risk of making the issue public when reporting cases of SGBV and DV constitute major hurdles for the men affected.[22] There is little understanding of issues or referral and support mechanisms for male survivors.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans- and intersex (LGBTI) persons face additional hurdles if they seek to report cases of SGBV, DV or intimate partner violence (IPV). While homosexuality is not explicitly outlawed, Article 534 of the Lebanese Penal Code states that "any sexual intercourse contrary to the order of nature is punishable by up to one year in prison". While homosexuality is not punishable by itself but rather same-sex acts, the article has been used on occasion against SGM persons, but not systematically.[23] Given these circumstances, reporting of DV as well as SGBV potentially puts SGM at risk of prosecution themselves.

Palestinian, Iraqi and Syrian refugees in Lebanon face different but serious types of legal precariousness. This makes the reporting of SGBV/DV to security providers almost impossible even though it is a serious concern among refugee communities.[24] The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is the main relief and health provider for Palestinian refugees and increasingly also for newly arriving

15 Ibid.

16 Human Rights Watch (2014). *Lebanon: Domestic violence law good, but incomplete*. New York. Available at http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/03/lebanon-domestic-violence-law-good-incomplete

17 KAFA (2014). Op. cit.

18 Telephone interview, Lebanese CSO working on gender equality issues, August 2014.

19 Based on discussions with Lebanese CSOs working on SGBV issues, reporting of cases to the police can be seen as bringing shame to the family or wider community and, as in many other countries, victims of SGBV may face accusations of having brought the violence on themselves. Women may also often feel socially and culturally constrained from visiting police stations without a male relative present, which may complicate reporting.

20 Human Rights Watch (2014). Op. cit.

21 C. Hamieh and J. Usta (2011). *The effects of socialization on gender discrimination and violence: A case study from Lebanon*. Beirut: Oxfam. p.13. Available at http://www.kafa.org.lb/StudiesPublicationPDF/PRpdf46.pdf

22 For more information on masculinities in Lebanon and the Middle East, see: Ibid.; S. Aghacy (2004). 'Lebanese masculinities', *Al-Raida*, Vol. XXI, pp. 104–105. Available at http://inhouse.lau.edu.lb/iwsaw/raida104-105/EN/p002-009.pdf; and P. Amar (2011). 'Middle East masculinity studies: Discourses of "men in crisis", industries of gender in revolution', *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp.36–71. Available at http://mesa.ucdavis.edu/files/documents/link-documents/Amar-Middle%20East%20Masculinity%20Studies.pdf

23 Based on interviews (Beirut, August to September 2014), those perceived as being more visibly non-conformist in their sexuality and as not having socio-economic clout were seen as facing a higher risk of harassment or persecution by individual law enforcement officers.

24 For more information, see: R. El-Masri, C. Harvey and R. Garwood (2013). 'Shifting Sands: Changing gender roles among refugees in Lebanon'. Joint Research Report: Oxfam and Resource Center for Gender Equality, Available at https://oxfam.qc.ca/sites/oxfam.qc.ca/files/rr-shifting-sands-lebanon-syria-refugees-gender-030913-en_0.pdf; G. Anani (2013). 'Syria crisis – Dimensions of gender-based violence against Syrian refugees in Lebanon', *Forced Migration Review*, No. 44. Available at http://www.fmreview.org/en/detention/anani.pdf; ANERA (2013). *Palestinian refugees from Syria in Lebanon: A needs assessment*. Available at http://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/PalRefugeesfromSyria2.pdf

Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS).[25] While a gender-based violence (GBV) referral system is in place in Lebanon, Palestinian refugees are often afraid to contact any kind of public authority such as hospitals or police stations in case they are deported.

Syrian and Iraqi refugees receive aid from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), national and international agencies as well as international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), but human and material capacities are limited and do not reach all of those in need.[26] While discrimination against refugee populations might be a factor preventing response, logistical issues are at the forefront of the lack of response by security providers.[27] A further complicating issue is that, by seeking help from Lebanese state authorities, refugees risk their own or the perpetrator's deportation back to their home countries, which is of particular concern in relation to DV.

Responses to SGBV and DV

In Lebanon, based on our interviews and corroborated by secondary sources,[28] survivors reporting SGBV/DV cases face numerous hurdles: these include family and community pressure not to report; the possible personal social and economic cost of doing so; and, in more remote areas, the problem of accessing services.[29] A further perceived and possibly real hurdle is the perception that SSIs would not take claims seriously, might see the crime as a 'private' issue beyond their remit, or that survivors might face the potential risk of further humiliation and verbal or potentially physical abuse. An additional barrier to reporting that has been observed in other countries, both for female and male survivors of SGBV, is that, if a police force is heavily male dominated and perceived as being imbued with a 'macho' institutional culture, this may well inhibit reporting.

Research indicates that both men and women would feel more secure about women visiting a police station if a women's unit existed.

A further inhibiting factor may be the perception of patronage politics in the SSIs. Women and men reported a widespread assumption that it is necessary to have connections to be treated respectfully in police stations, but also for cases to actually go through and be processed.[30] However, one's 'support' can also be to the detriment of others. For example, if a person's husband is abusive but has political backing or is from a powerful family, it can be very difficult for the ISF to intervene.[31] Similarly, police officers might be informally connected to perpetrators in the community and not process cases against them.[32] When filing a complaint, women may be worried that their husbands could find out and reprimand them for reporting. These real and perceived barriers faced by survivors may even extend to staff of SSIs who could face pressure to drop DV and SGBV cases.[33]

Research indicates that both men and women would feel more secure about women visiting a police station if a women's unit existed.[34] While less than half of women would visit a conventional police station in the event of a crime and less than half of men would permit female relatives to go alone, 60% of both women and men would do so if a women's unit was available.[35] Female officers are thus perceived as being more approachable than their male counterparts and their presence would also alleviate socio-cultural concerns of women entering heavily male-dominated spaces. Having more female officers could encourage more women, and possibly also men, to report SGBV. However, while both Lebanese men and women would hypothetically feel more inclined to visit a police station if a women's unit was available, in practice, the recent recruitment of women police officers has not yet raised trust levels. This is mainly due to the limited direct interaction of female ISF officers with the public.[36]

25   UNRWA (2014). 'PRS in Lebanon'. Palestinian Territory: UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. Available at http://www.unrwa.org/prs-lebanon

26   UNHCR (2014). '2014 UNHCR country operations profile – Lebanon'. Geneva: UN Refugee Agency. Available at http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486676.html

27   Telephone interview, Lebanese CSO working on gender equality issues, August 2014.

28   L. Wetheridge and J. Usta (2012). *Review of gender-based violence research in Lebanon*. Lebanon: United Nations Population Fund. pp.18, 31–32, 68, 84. Available at http://www.unfpa.org.lb/Documents/4-Review-of-GBV-Research-in-Lebanon.aspx

29   Telephone interview, Lebanese CSO working on gender equality issues, August 2014.

30   A. Sayed-Ali (2014). *Building community partnerships in policing: Challenges and opportunities for potential programming*. pp.24–26.

31   Ibid. pp.26–27.

32   Telephone interview, Lebanese CSO working on gender equality issues, August 2014.

33   Ibid.

34   LCPS (2013a). Op cit.

35   Ibid.

36   NI-CO (2014). 'ISF public opinion survey 2013: Executive summary'.

KAFA's[37] outreach campaign, launched with the General Directorate of the ISF in 2013, has increased people's awareness of reporting of DV cases to the ISF. Through the project, KAFA has produced a teaching curriculum on DV and a manual on communication skills, which have both been adopted by the Warwar Police Academy. Cases of DV were referred to judicial attachments, taking these cases out of local police stations to increase people's trust when reporting. While the nationwide campaign was deemed successful in reaching out and increasing awareness of resorting to the ISF in DV cases, there was a perceived disconnect between the outreach and ISF follow-up of cases.[38]

GENDERED PERCEPTIONS OF SSIs

The public's perceptions of SSIs – in this case mainly the ISF and to a lesser extent the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) along with informal security providers – showed many similarities between women and men as well as across other social markers, such as regional factors or confessional background. Nonetheless, there were numerous issues where gendered differences, together with other social dynamics, were visible.

Resorting to whom? Aspiration versus reality

If they were attacked, physically harmed or a victim of a crime, 75% of both Lebanese men and women reported that hypothetically they would resort to SSIs, with women ranking the ISF slightly better than men. This high percentage, exhibiting a desire by the Lebanese to make use of state services, sharply contrasts with actual practice. While 47% of women did indeed resort to SSIs, only 38% of men did so.[39]

For those Lebanese who did not resort to SSIs, the results are highly gendered. While women mostly resorted to their families (24%), a third of men resorted to no one and did not seek help.[40] This gendered dynamic can be explained by pervasive gender norms. Women's larger support networks within the extended family draw on the gendered notion of their protection by a male relative and their more socially acceptable victimisation. The lack of seeking help by men may be related to expectations of conforming to societal ideals of masculinity such as strength and being able to defend oneself. Therefore, men who seek help may risk facing ridicule or resentment. Interestingly, while 4% of women would resort to political parties in theory, in practice, none does.[41] Conversely, while 6% of men stated that hypothetically they would resort to political parties, in practice, 22% do.[42] This statistic points towards a gendered imbalance in relation to accessing and resorting to informal security providers, which would seem to be more accessible to men.

Ultimately, incidents of attack and crime have a higher economic and livelihood impact on men than on women. While 63% of women did not report any economic and livelihood impact, for men the figure was 43.2%.[43] Usually the heads of families and the breadwinners, men are perceived as having to be economically and emotionally self-reliant. The pressure to rely on themselves and to be able to provide for their families highlights their vulnerability if they fail to live up to the existing gender norms. Although still faced with some social stigma, it is nonetheless more socially and culturally acceptable for women to fall back on a male relative or a wider familial support system than it is for men. Thus, in practice, prevalent notions of 'strong' masculinity leave men potentially more vulnerable, possibly leading to frustration, substance abuse or negative coping mechanisms such as increased DV.

Both women and men raised issues of partiality, partisan influence and perceived corruption and nepotism as major concerns undermining trust in SSIs.

Gendered perceptions of the ISF: institutional culture and public image

Several factors affect gendered perceptions of the ISF among the Lebanese population, while others tend to be shared across gender lines. Both women and men raised issues of partiality, partisan influence and perceived corruption and nepotism as major concerns undermining trust in SSIs.[44]

37   KAFA, meaning 'Enough' in Arabic, was established in 2005 by a group of multi-disciplinary professionals and human rights activists as a Lebanese non-profit, non-political and non-confessional CSO. It works on gender equality through advocacy for law reform, influencing public opinion, conducting research and training, and providing women and children who have been survivors of violence with social, legal and psychological support.

38   Interview with gender rights activist, Beirut, August 2014.

39   LCPS (2013c). *Who do people resort to and how professional are security agencies? A gender perspective*. Beirut: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

40   Ibid.

41   Ibid.

42   Ibid.

43   Ibid.

44   A. Sayed-Ali (2013). *Political brokers, security provision, and local conflict resolution: Qualitative research findings report*. p.1: "Rather than perceiving state security institutions as serving them, Lebanese citizens regarded these institutions as beholden to the political parties – without political acquiescence, focus group participants said the official security apparati of the Lebanese state would not intervene in security incidents to protect them."

Based on our surveys of security sector perceptions, numerous respondents referred to using 'a connection', or *wasta*, for help if they get into trouble with the ISF or other SSIs. Examples include phoning a connection or relative who knows someone influential who helps them get out of the situation using their position or power.[45] Similarly, the assumption that bribing can be used to by-pass sanctions seems to be internalised to a degree by both women and men in situations where recourse to networks of patronage and power are not available.[46] Both of these assumptions tend to rest on perceptions of street-level police officers being drawn from lower social classes and receiving low salaries.

> *The officers' military camouflage uniforms, combat boots and prominent display of M-16 or AK-47 assault rifles give the impression of a more military than civilian force, and one that is more concerned with 'hard' ('state' or military) security than more everyday tasks of policing and providing human security.*

The ISF lacks both human and material resources, making it difficult for it to cover all areas it is responsible for and to provide techniques and training for responding to different types of SGBV. Police officers are perceived as sometimes abusing their position and power, such as through perceived arrogance, verbal or even physical harassment towards members of the public.[47] Poor relations with the public are compounded by poor working conditions: stations are not equipped with enough vehicles or personnel to deal with matters within their remit. The working conditions of the ISF also affect its performance as stations are often poorly equipped and overcrowded.

Seemingly mundane issues of uniforms and gear affect both working conditions and public perception: the heavy uniforms make working conditions in a cramped office difficult, especially in the summer when there is no air conditioning available.[48] The officers' military camouflage uniforms, combat boots and prominent display of M-16 or AK-47 assault rifles give the impression of a more military than civilian force, and one that is more concerned with 'hard' ('state' or military) security than more everyday tasks of policing and providing human security.

ISF and vulnerable groups

Given the widespread perception that political parties, rather than state SSIs, effectively control 'their turf', Lebanese tend to perceive having the 'backing' of a given political party or other form of clout as being important for security provision. It is generally understood that those 'opting out' of the political patronage system put themselves at risk since they lose the ability to depend on party forces for protection and could experience difficulties in achieving fair settlements where they are victims of injustice.[49]

The situation is even more difficult for vulnerable groups such as refugees, documented and undocumented migrants, SGM persons and sex workers.[50] For these groups, contacting either formal or informal security providers can potentially mean additional insecurity. As with other sections of Lebanese society, vulnerability intersects with gender as well as the person's socio-economic position.

As mentioned above, same-sex relationships, transgender identities or being transsexual or intersexual are not outlawed as such in Lebanon. However, Article 534 of the Lebanese Penal Code is commonly invoked when arresting individuals solely on their appearance or mannerisms without evidence of any sexual act, reflecting a prejudice and homophobic attitude among some members of SSIs.[51] As an activist interviewed by us put it, SGM view the security sector "either with fear [of persecution] or indifference [in terms of service provision]". This is a significant finding, indicating that this sizeable cohort of citizens does not have faith in SSIs to provide them with the security that they are tasked with providing.[52]

45   A. Sayed-Ali (2014). Op. cit. p.26.
46   O. Nashabe (2009). *Security sector reform Lebanon: Internal security forces and general security*, The Arab Reform Initiative. Available at http://www.arab-reform.net/sites/default/files/PDF_SECURITY_SECTOR_Lebanon.pdf. Ultimately, the usage of a connection or a bribe feeds into perceptions of the ISF's corruption. Based on a survey conducted by NI-CO, the ISF is perceived to be among the most corrupt institutions in the public sector, with only ¨4% of respondents denying the existence of corruption inside the institution¨. NI-CO (2014). Op. cit.
47   LCPS (2013d). *Security sector reform: Focus group findings report*. Beirut: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.
48   A. Sayed-Ali (2014). Op. cit.
49   A. Sayed-Ali (2013). Op. cit. pp.14–15.
50   Assessing the gendered security needs and vulnerabilities of migrants, such as Sub-Saharan African, South and Southeast Asian labour migrants, was beyond the scope of this research but warrants far more research.
51   Human Rights Watch (2013). *'It's part of the job': Ill-treatment and torture of vulnerable groups in Lebanese police stations*. New York. Available at http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/lebanon0613_forUpload_1.pdf
52   Interview, Beirut, September 2014.

One method that the police use for identifying suspected male culpability in homosexual acts is anal examinations conducted by a forensic doctor on orders from the public prosecutor.[53] In 2012, the Lebanese NGO Legal Agenda launched a campaign to end forensic anal examinations, stating that this practice is medically and scientifically unsound in determining whether consensual anal sex had occurred as well as constituting a form of torture. In August 2012, an order was issued by the Lebanese Order of Physicians banning doctors from conducting this examination.[54]

Detention procedures used by the ISF against suspected SGM violate Lebanese criminal procedure laws and include pre-emptive punishment through lengthy periods of temporary detention. Individuals who hold a well-known family name, have contacts to 'support' them or can access money to bail them out usually encounter fewer problems; those without a support network are the most vulnerable, facing risks of verbal and sexual abuse as well as lengthy periods inside police stations.[55]

While a law regulating sex work has existed since 1931, stipulating specific criteria regulating licences, in practice, the government has stopped issuing these since the late 1960s, making most sex work in Lebanon theoretically unlicensed and illegal.[56] Article 523 of the Lebanese Penal Code punishes "any person who practises secret prostitution or facilitates it" with a prison sentence ranging from one month to up to one year.[57] This regulation is bypassed by 'super nightclubs', which employ female sex workers who must be registered, must undergo medical examinations, cannot be virgins and must be older than 21 years of age. This semi-regulated sex industry employs an estimated 2,500 women, mainly from Eastern Europe, who are granted six-month 'artist' visas. There are strict rules in place regarding the women's mobility and their health: they are only allowed to reside in hotels authorised by General Security, cannot leave the hotel between 5am and 1pm, and can only be absent from work if a physician accredited by the General Security Department diagnoses them as unfit to work.[58]

Workers operating in the unregulated sex work industry are mainly poor Lebanese and refugee women from Arab countries such as Syria and Iraq, as well as from some Asian and African countries.[59] Male and transgender sex workers also fall outside legal frameworks. Poverty for some, but especially the illegal nature of their work and often their precarious migrant status, leave them particularly vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse, extreme labour rights abuse[60] and, if seeking redress, potential police abuse and deportation.

GENDER WITHIN SSIs

The Lebanese security apparatus is characterised by a complex system of multiple authorities and constitutional ambiguity in terms of mandate and functions.[61] The constraints placed by Lebanon's confessional system of governance represent an added difficulty of operation within the security sector, mainly affecting appointments, operationalisation of orders and mandates, and public opinion. The sectarian and political struggle over who controls the security sector plays a major role in how intuitions are run. Article 95 of the constitution stipulates the abolishment of Lebanon's confessional political system, providing for a 'transitional phase' whereby the principle of confessional representation should be replaced by the principle of expertise and competence in public service jobs, the judiciary and military and security institutions, with the exception of grade one posts.[62]

53   Ibid. pp.34–5.
54   A. Withnall (2014). 'Banned anal exam "akin to torture" still being used by police in Lebanon to determine if people are gay', *The Independent*, 16 July 2014. Available at http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/banned-anal-exam-akin-to-torture-still-being-used-by-police-in-lebanon-to-determine-if-people-are-gay-9610309.html
55   In the case of a raid of a suspected cruising hamam in August 2014, well-connected Lebanese detained were allegedly free within hours; conversely, undocumented Syrian workers were detained for around three weeks (Interview with human rights activist, Beirut, September 2014).
56   Ibid.
57   Ibid.
58   Ibid. pp.13–14; United States Department of State (2014). '2014 trafficking in persons report – Lebanon', 20 June 2014. Available at http://www.refworld.org/docid/53aab9da14.html
59   Ibid.; A. Saleh (2014). 'Syrian refugee girls exploited by prostitution networks', *Al-Monitor*, 14 March 2014. Available at http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/ar/culture/2014/03/syria-refugees-minors-sold-prostitution-exploitation.html#
60   As in the case of the Syrians detained in the hamam raid, cited in footnote 55.
61   For more information on the Lebanese security sector as well as SSR, see: Z. Osman and S. Kassis (2014). 'Security Sector Overview: Final report providing overview of the Lebanese Security Sector', International Alert, 15 July 2014; and O. Nashabe (2009). Op. cit.
62   The Lebanese civil service is made up of five grades, with grade one being the highest. Grades are divided into steps: each employee receives an automatic step every two years, which serves as a salary increment and an advancement step within their grade. Source: Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and United Nations (2004). *Republic of Lebanon: Public administration country profile*. p.12. Available at http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan023179.pdf

In practice, however, high-ranking officers in the security sector are perceived as being prone to favouritism for religious and/or political reasons.[63] Although sectarian appointments are limited to the heads of these organisations, there is a widespread belief that promotions and the best posts are reserved for those with sectarian and political connections rather than being based on merit.[64] The interconnection between political parties, to which women generally do not resort, and SSIs can potentially present a challenge for female officers and female recruits in SSIs. The next sections will examine gender policies among the three largest Lebanese security agencies, including the ISF, followed by an examination of gender dynamics within these SSIs.

While the inclusion of more women in SSIs is important and has been seen to have positive impacts on the societal representativeness of the institutions, increased gender equality and responsiveness to gendered needs in society as well as effectiveness, there is a need to look beyond the numbers issue.[65] In terms of looking at women inside the security sector, issues such as rates of retention, promotion, childcare, anti-sexual harassment policies and the existence of 'gender ghettoes' need to be examined.[66] In addition, it is important to assess the extent to which masculinised institutional cultures impact on the work climate and efficiency. It is also important to ensure that internal policies such as those on childcare and sexual harassment also take men into account. Regarding serving members of SGM in the forces, no figures are available due to existing guidelines that require them to keep their orientation secret for fear of losing their job.

GS, LAF and ISF – background and efforts to include women so far

General Security (GS) Directorate

The GS is the oldest security agency in Lebanon, fulfilling both a bureaucratic as well as a security role, which overlaps with other agencies. Established in 1959, its functions encompass a wide range of areas such as media censorship, dealing with foreigners, and technical travel matters such as granting Lebanese passports and issuing entrance visas. While the GS is technically subject to the authority of the interior minister, it also remains affiliated to the president, which causes some tensions. It was the first Lebanese security agency to recruit women in 1974, but female recruitment was halted during the civil war up until 2006. Between 1974 and 2006, several women recruited rose through the ranks to become generals, the highest rank for women in the Middle East.[67]

The main reason why the GS employed women before any other security agency is due to the predominantly administrative nature of the work. Since 2006, women have been trained in armed combat, but are not expected to serve in high-risk situations such as performing raids. Although the GS holds the highest number of females among the Lebanese security agencies, there is little or no gender-sensitivity training for GS staff. Moreover, women are not posted in positions that might require gender sensitivity, such as in departments dealing with foreign domestic workers or sex workers who are in Lebanon on 'artist' visas; instead, they are usually posted in more administrative positions. In 2009, women were stationed at airport immigration counters, a move that was generally well received by the public.[68]

LAF

The LAF's remit grants it the authority to defend Lebanese borders against any external threats. It also grants it the licence to function as an internal security force in extreme circumstances. In light of the present context, the LAF has recently militarily intervened in Arsal and Tripoli under its stated mission to "maintain internal security and stability" in combating terrorism within the country's borders. While this has led to tensions with other state agencies, particularly the ISF, the LAF remains widely respected due to its multi-sectarian status and is considered a symbol of the nation's unity.[69]

While the recruitment process for female soldiers started in 1989, the LAF officially announced their presence in 1991. Despite receiving training in military combat, women are not certified to engage in active duty and are

63 O. Nashabe (2009). Op. cit.
64 Z. Osman and S. Kassis (2014). Op. cit. pp.17–18.
65 On the positive impacts of increasing the number of women, see, for example: K. Valasek (2008). Op. cit.
66 'Gender ghettoes' refer to parts of the organisation where either women or men are dominant and to which women/men tend to be primarily assigned – for example, administrative duties and SGBV support for women and anti-terrorism or riot control for men. Often, men will be assigned to 'female' sections as a way of punishment; moreover, funding preferences tend to favour 'masculine-coded' units, which also allow for better career advancement opportunities.
67 Z. Osman and S. Kassis (2014). Op. cit. pp.12–13.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid. pp.8–9.

limited to working in administrative posts. While the LAF does not publish official figures, the number of female soldiers was estimated at around 2,000 out of 53,900[70] in 2008, with 32 of them promoted to colonels by 2010.[71]

ISF
The functions of the ISF encompass administrative policing and judicial policing, as well as guarding public institutions and diplomatic missions, but also prisons if necessary.

The ISF is the last security agency to accept women recruits. In 2001, two women joined 'by mistake' since the recruitment advertising did not specify male applicants only. The perceived lack of necessity to specify 'men only' highlights the gendered understanding of security, especially the police force, as being a masculine sphere. The official opportunity for female recruits was opened in 2011 and there are currently 900 policewomen working in the ISF.[72]

> *The perceived lack of necessity to specify 'men only' highlights the gendered understanding of security, especially the police force, as being a masculine sphere.*

As part of the new police curriculum of 2010, police recruits are required to undergo gender-sensitivity training, which includes a section on the role of women in law and order. In cooperation with KAFA and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a number of ISF officers have undergone training on how to deal with SGBV, and the ISF has issued a training pamphlet on dealing with domestic violence.[73]

Gender dynamics within SSIs
Gendered dynamics and gendered institutional cultures play a critical role in determining and defining how SSIs act as institutions and how they react to security-relevant situations. Assessing these underlying dynamics and embedded cultures is a fundamental part of reforming SSIs both in terms of making them more gender equitable on the inside and more gender responsive on the outside – and thus better able to fulfil their overarching task of providing security to all inhabitants of Lebanon. As our research did not include direct research within the SSIs, the following findings are based on secondary literature, interviews with researchers familiar with the institutions and comparative research on SSIs more generally. The aim of this section is to highlight gender issues common in SSIs, which could be addressed within the framework of future SSR processes in order to improve both service provision and internal dynamics within the SSIs.

Femininities and masculinities within SSIs
Mainly linked to prevalent institutional cultures of SSIs, certain forms of femininities and masculinities are emphasised, promoted and reinforced. Generally, women in SSIs work in administrative positions. While trained in active combat, such as in the LAF and the ISF, women are usually not positioned in roles that require active and physical struggle. Security, especially combat or direct engagements, is perceived as a 'masculine' sphere of work requiring physical force. Since women are assumed by the SSIs to be incapable of meeting these criteria according to gender norms and perceived physiological capabilities, their involvement tends to be grouped in administrative roles. The general perception within SSIs is that women should work in roles that are 'suitable' for them. These include office jobs, working in reception and administrative tasks, as well as dealing with other women.

> *Gendered dynamics and gendered institutional cultures play a critical role in determining and defining how SSIs act as institutions and how they react to security relevant situations.*

The expectations of recent initiatives raising the involvement and inclusion of women in SSIs include the goal to raise trust levels among the Lebanese population. Ultimately, the expectation that a higher number of women in the security force will automatically improve human rights records is in itself gendered, since it is based on the assumption that women are inherently more peaceful and understanding than men. A recent study conducted by Northern Ireland Cooperation Overseas (NI-CO) on ISF trust levels[74] shows that there is a general perception among Lebanese that female ISF officers would be less likely to take bribes, would treat people with respect and

70   A. Nerguizian (2009). *The Lebanese Armed Forces: Challenges and opportunities in post-Syria Lebanon*. Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies. First working draft available at http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090210_lafsecurity.pdf
71   Ibid.
72   Ibid. p.11.
73   Ibid. p.11.
74   NI-CO (April 2014). 'Report on ISF trust 2013'. pp.25–26.

would apply the law equally to all citizens. However, for these perceptions to take effect, female officers would have to be at the forefront and deal with citizens on a daily basis. Crucially, these beliefs contrast sharply with people's expectations of the nature of female officers' work in the police. Only 13% of respondents think that women can do similar tasks to men, and over 50% of men and women believe that female ISF officers can best handle administrative tasks.

The ISF has recently commenced diversifying women's roles. As prominent figures in the community policing project, women were part of the quite visible bicycle patrol and can be regularly seen issuing parking tickets in Hamra, central Beirut. The first female police unit has been established and there is an attempt to mainstream women in most departments.[75] The diverse roles women can take on include women searchers at airport and prisons. The lack of female security personnel has been problematic in the past, since men are not allowed to touch women and could thus not conduct security searches.

The educational level for male police officers is on average lower than that of their female colleagues.[76] This could potentially point towards more perceived competition to get a place in the ISF among women, but is also interesting to bear in mind when looking at gender dynamics within the ISF. Nonetheless, both women and men tend to internalise the predominantly masculine-coded norms and institutional cultures of the SSIs.

Risk of SGBV and sexual harassment

Given the often heavily male-dominated nature of SSIs in general, female officers might experience verbal or physical harassment from their colleagues. While we have not come across studies directly on this issue in Lebanon, there are potential issues of concern that can exacerbate problems. Such issues include a lack of facilities at local police stations and offices for women, including separate bathrooms, shower facilities or sleeping quarters, although these facilities are gradually being incorporated into police stations.[77]

It is important to note that sexual harassment in SSIs may also be targeted at men who are not seen as adhering to dominant norms of masculinity.[78] While we have not found any research on Lebanese SSIs in this respect, it may or may not be an issue of concern. Common tactics of sexual harassment targeted at men involve placing sexually suggestive items in the target's personal space, such as in their lockers or restrooms. Sometimes, the victim's strength or virility is tested through physical acts or by forcing the man to perform or undergo humiliating acts of a sexual nature to 'prove' his heterosexuality.

It is often difficult for male victims to report incidents of verbal or physical sexual harassment, since it risks reinforcing the perpetrator's accusations of his being weak, effeminate or indeed homosexual.[79] Generally speaking, the fear of denouncing or reporting a colleague or a supervisor usually presents a major challenge in SSIs due to existing hierarchies and power structures, coupled with a fear of losing one's job.[80] While we do not have evidence to confirm that harassment is taking place in Lebanese SSIs, these are issues that need to be investigated further since they constitute a gap in current research efforts.

Ill-treatment in police stations and inadequate complaint mechanisms in the ISF

According to a 2013 Human Rights Watch report, ill-treatment and torture in police stations is widespread.[81] Vulnerable groups such as people suspected of drug use, sex work or homosexuality are most at risk of threats, humiliation and torture. Physical violence is used not only to extract confessions, but also as a form of punishment, discipline and behavioural correction. The most common forms of physical torture include beatings on different parts of the body and being denied food, water and medication. A common form of mental torture includes being forced to listen to the screams of other detainees being beaten in order to get a confession or cooperation.[82]

Women, especially sex workers, are in many cases subjected to some form of sexual violence, including sexual assault or receiving 'favours' such as better conditions in cells, cigarettes or food in exchange for sex. Out of 25 women who were interviewed by Human Rights Watch, 21 reported having been subjected to some form of

75   Z. Osman and S. Kassis (2014). Op. cit. p.11; and C. Samaha (2013). *Security sector reform in Lebanon: Women in the ISF*, MA thesis. Beirut: Lebanese American University. Available at https://ecommons.lau.edu.lb:8443/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10725/1618/Christelle_Samaha_Thesis.pdf?sequence=1

76   Email correspondence, Lebanese security sector expert, 18 August 2014; and C. Samaha (2013). Op. cit. p.43.

77   Ibid. p.11.

78   C. Watson (2014). *Preventing and responding to sexual and domestic violence against men: A guidance note for security sector institutions.* Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). p.38.

79   Ibid.

80   Ibid.

81   Human Rights Watch (2013). Op. cit.

82   Ibid.

sexual violence or coercion by the police.[83] While the Ministry of Interior and the ISF have taken some steps to reduce abuse in detention by setting up a human rights unit and a torture monitoring body, as well as adopting a code of conduct for ISF officers, the gendered power dynamics inside police stations that contributed to these problems may still be prevalent.[84]

The internal and external complaints and reporting mechanisms of the ISF are lacking in several ways.[85] The ISF currently has a system in place for public complaints, which includes an internet-based complaint form (e-complaint) as well as a hotline.[86] In addition, the ISF has detailed information on its website clarifying how to submit the complaint form.[87] However, the complaint form is only available in Arabic and it is not possible to make complaints anonymously.[88]

While it is relatively easy to file a complaint against an ISF officer either in person, by phone, through the public prosecutor's office or through an intermediary, since anonymous complaints are not accepted, in practice, it is difficult for individuals to follow up on the complaints mechanisms.[89] No central office exists where complaints are processed and there is no system for the complainant to track the complaint. The lack of a centralised system and name tags on officers' uniforms make it difficult to document the exact number of complaints and to correctly identify their abusers.[90]

The main reasons preventing people from filing complaints are direct threats from the police, not knowing how to go about making a complaint and risk of exposure or retaliation.[91] The Ministry of Interior's human rights department is currently working on a database that will include "all complaints, actions taken and the outcome, and will be available for reference when needed" and which will be focused on "documenting all official and unofficial interactions related to human rights".[92] No information exists on internal reporting mechanisms and further research on this subject is strongly encouraged.

83   Ibid.
84   Ibid.
85   Ibid. pp.48–50.
86   Z. Osman and S. Kassis (2014). Op. cit. p.8.
87   ISF (2014). 'ISF complaint system'. Available at http://www.isf.gov.lb/en/article/1018/ISF-Complaint-System
88   In order to fill out the complaint form, one is redirected on the website to sign up online. Required fields of information are first name, family name, date of birth, gender, email address, mobile number and address. Available at http://ecomplaint.isf.gov.lb/signup.php
89   Human Rights Watch (2013). Op. cit. p.60.
90   Ibid. p.49.
91   Ibid.
92   Ibid.

CONCLUSIONS

Gender is an important factor in assessing security perceptions, SSIs' ways of providing security and SSR, but it needs to be seen in context with a host of other factors. As identified in the first section, security perceptions vary across different areas and different topics. While a large proportion of threat perceptions are influenced by confessional affiliation and geographical location, some significant gender aspects have been highlighted that help make sense of the broader security perceptions on the ground and are related to general threat perceptions, Syrian refugees, vulnerability and domestic violence. The data also point to interesting outliers that warrant further research: higher perceived threats of SGBV by women in one area, but by men in another; concerns over environmental degradation by women; and concerns about travelling by night by men in certain areas.

While women often face immense constraints and challenges in accessing justice and security, this report also finds that men, SGM persons and refugees may face a high degree of vulnerability. Sometimes, this occurs counter-intuitively, when expectations of male strength lead to vulnerability, and sometimes due to a lack of a socio-political acceptance of realities, as in the case of SGM and refugees.

The challenges of SSR in Lebanon have been further highlighted by examining gendered perceptions of SSIs. Limitations perceived by the Lebanese public include confessional and political power structures comprising mostly male-dominated patronage networks and a negative public image of SSIs in terms of dealing with SGBV/DV issues, but also in terms of behaviours and response. Nonetheless, tackling masculine-coded institutional cultures, introducing and improving gender-sensitive policies and dealing with SGBV both externally and internally may prove to be areas where advances in enhancing SSR in Lebanon can move faster than in other

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areas. For example, while addressing confession-based power-sharing mechanisms questions the whole post-war political order of Lebanon, teaching greater civility and less intimidating ways of security provision, but also ensuring that SSIs have the ways and means to do their job, is a far more effective way of increasing trust in SSIs in the long run.

As a final point, the focus of this study has been mainly on the ISF and to a lesser degree on the LAF and the GS. Because of this, much of the critique has focused on the ISF, leading perhaps to an unfair perception that it alone is at fault. This is not the case as the institution is shaped and limited by its socio-political environment. More importantly, however, the ISF, LAF and GS are not the only institutions relevant to security provision. We would therefore strongly urge for further and deeper research to look at the gendered dimensions of other actors and sectors – such as in relation to the judicial system, prison services, immigration and border control, intelligence services, parliamentary oversight of SSIs, media and informal security providers. This would help to ensure that the Lebanese security sector comprehensively provides security to all people within its borders.

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