



## #CALLITRIGHT

**ABAAD launches national campaign to reform and strengthen penalties for sexual assault crimes in Lebanon.**



### **BEIRUT, LEBANON**

At a time when sexual crimes in Lebanon remain surrounded by a culture of “shame” and “honor,” a new national study conducted by **ABAAD** clearly highlights the fragility of protections for survivors and the urgent need for legal reform to ensure justice for all. The results show that **80.9%** of Lebanese believe current penalties for sexual crimes are insufficient, while **71.4%** call for replacing the term “indecent assault” with the more accurate and dignity-affirming term “sexual assault.” Additionally, **97.9%** support stricter penalties for perpetrators of sexual crimes.

These results reflect that sexual assault can affect anyone, regardless of gender, age, or identity, and that a culture of shame, fear, and blame remains a major barrier to reporting and seeking justice.

**“Anani: Sexual assault crimes cannot be approached through the lens of ‘honor’... They are acts of violence that require deterrence.”**

#### **Ghida Anani, Director of ABAAD, says:**

“Sexual assault crimes in Lebanon are still tied to notions of ‘honor,’ shame, and family reputation. Since **ABAAD** was founded, we have emphasized the need to remove these crimes from the grip of traditions and to place them within a strict legal framework that protects all Lebanese women and men. Today, we continue what we started after the repeal of Article 522, working to amend and strengthen penalties to ensure they are fair and just for every survivor.”

**Anani also affirms that “tightening penalties is a fundamental step to ensure that perpetrators do not escape accountability.”**

“The absence of legal deterrence directly contributes to the rise in sexual assault crimes. Strengthening penalties is a fundamental step to ensure that perpetrators do not escape accountability, and to rebuild the trust of survivors in institutions and in the law. The law must be fair to all, must restore confidence in the justice system, and must guarantee that offenders will not evade accountability.”

“We rely on the legislative authority to carry out the necessary amendments and to ensure justice for survivors.”

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## **KEY RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL SURVEY ON PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD SEXUAL CRIMES AND LEGAL REFORM** (Chapter One of Section Seven) - October 2025

- 81%** of Lebanese women and men believe that the current penalties for sexual crimes are insufficient.
- 78%** of Lebanese women and men believe that forcing a wife into sexual relations without her consent should be considered a crime.
- 51%** of Lebanese women and men believe that reporting sexual violence brings shame to the family.
- 71%** of Lebanese women and men support changing the legal terminology from “honor-based abuse” to “sexual crimes.”
- 98%** of Lebanese women and men support increasing punishments for perpetrators of sexual crimes.
- 86%** of Lebanese women and men support increasing the penalty for those who force others, through violence or threats, to have sexual intercourse from 5 years of hard labor to 20 years of hard labor.
- 95%** of Lebanese women and men support increasing the penalty for sexual abuse of a minor from 5 years of hard labor to 20 years of hard labor.
- 78%** of Lebanese women and men believe that the Lebanese state is currently not doing enough to protect women and girls from sexual violence.
- 95%** of Lebanese women and men consider legal reform of sexual crimes legislation essential to ensuring stronger protection for survivors.

## About ABAAD:

**ABAAD** is a civil, non-sectarian, and non-profit organization founded in 2011 with the aim of promoting sustainable economic and social development in the Middle East and North Africa by upholding the principles of gender equality and justice, and by providing direct services, protection, and empowerment. **ABAAD** strives to advance equality and enhance the effective participation of women through policy development, legal reform, the integration of gender concepts, the elimination of discrimination, and the empowerment of women to strengthen their capacities for active participation in their communities.

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