

Country overview

Lebanon

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lebanon **04**

Context **05**

The Survey **06**

Experience of Sexual Harassment **07**

Reporting and Action **08**

Sexual Harassment in the Media

This research is the product of a collaboration between WAN-IFRA Women in News, BBC Media Action and City St George's, University of London. It was produced thanks to support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK FCDO) under the Public Interest Media and Healthy Information Environments (PIMHIE) programme.

We are grateful to our colleagues and partners in the 21 countries of the study for their support in disseminating the survey to respondents.

Women in News is a media development programme of the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA). Its mission is to close the gender gap in news media. It works with 80 media organisations from 17 countries in Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia.

BBC Media Action is the BBC's international charity. With our partners, we reach more than 100 million people in need around the world, in more than 30 countries and 50 languages. We work to provide impartial, impactful, trustworthy media to people in need so that they can make informed choices to transform their lives.

City St George's, University of London has a mission to generate world-leading research on global social justice and inclusivity in journalism that brings lasting benefits to the industry through its Department of Journalism. We partner with journalists, think tanks, NGOs, and policymakers to explore how ethical, public interest journalism can be reimagined and protected for future generations.

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Lebanon

This report is part of a 2025 international study on sexual harassment in media workplaces¹, examining experiences of sexual harassment among women, men and gender non-conforming media professionals across 21 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab region, South East Asia and Ukraine.

Conducted by the World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) Women in News (WIN) in partnership with City St George's, University of London and BBC Media Action, this is the largest study of its kind. It builds on earlier research conducted in 2020 that identified persistent gaps in evidence on sexual harassment in media workplaces.

The 2025 survey in Lebanon revealed an overall media workplace sexual harassment rate of 44% – the highest in the Arab region among the countries surveyed.² While this appears to indicate an increase since 2020 when the overall prevalence was 29%, differing sample sizes in 2020 and 2025 make direct comparisons difficult.

Data shows that women media professionals in Lebanon tend to experience significantly more verbal sexual harassment than their male colleagues.

¹ This study defines sexual harassment as “unwanted and offensive behaviour of a sexual nature that violates a person’s dignity and makes them feel degraded, humiliated, intimidated or threatened”. For definitions for specific types of sexual harassment, see the [methodology page](#).

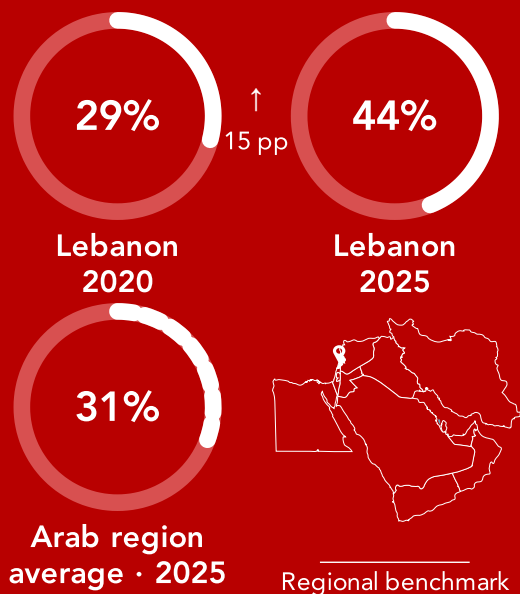
² The prevalence of sexual harassment for a given country/region is calculated as the mean average of the percentage of respondents from that location who reported having ever experienced verbal harassment, online harassment, physical harassment and/or rape while at work.

”

“Most of the time, when we work in the field we are subjected to verbal [sexual] harassment... For example, I was once harassed by a soldier in the army! And another time by the organiser of an event we were invited to.”

Female digital journalist aged 18–24

Overall rates of sexual harassment in newsrooms



Context

In 2020, Lebanon adopted the landmark [Law 205](#), which criminalised sexual harassment, marking a significant shift in the formal recognition of sexual violence in the country and the wider Arab region.

The legislation defines sexual harassment broadly, and explicitly takes power dynamics into account. The law also includes [several progressive provisions](#) – affording protection to both survivors and witnesses who testify, mandating awareness campaigns, introducing the right to seek compensation, and supporting survivors through a special fund under Lebanon's Ministry of Social Affairs. A [national awareness campaign](#) launched in 2021, directly addressing employers and calling for the implementation of Law 205.

Despite progress on the legal front, [challenges remain](#) – including limited implementation of the law and delays in making the victim support operational. [Human Rights Watch](#) argues that Law 205 falls short of international standards “by addressing sexual harassment solely as a crime and neglecting prevention, labour law reforms,

monitoring, and civil remedies”. Gaps also persist in public awareness of the law.

Against this backdrop, sexual harassment in Lebanon appears to be endemic. Almost half of respondents to the [2022 Lebanon Gender Equality Barometer](#) survey organised by the National Commission for Lebanese Women reported having been exposed to sexual harassment. Crucially, 97% of survivors said they had not filed a complaint, driven mainly by lack of understanding around sexual harassment and the perceived inability of authorities to act.

These legal and structural challenges have unfolded against an increasingly volatile context for media workers. Ongoing regional instability has continued to [constrain journalists' working environments](#), compounding existing risks related to harassment, safety and access to protection.



“What happened to me was verbal [sexual] harassment, as the editor-in-chief was flirting with me in a disgusting way, but I confronted him and told him not to address me in that tone again. Although I told the management what happened, they said that it was his nature and that he did not mean anything bad.”

Female TV worker aged 25–34

The survey

The Lebanese sample for the 2025 survey was small, with 53 media professionals taking part through an online questionnaire distributed among WAN-IFRA WIN and BBC Media Action networks.³ Respondents comprised 45 women, 6 men, 1 gender non-conforming person and 1 individual who preferred to self-describe their gender identity (see Figure 1).⁴

Figure 1: Respondent demographics

All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number

By gender identity

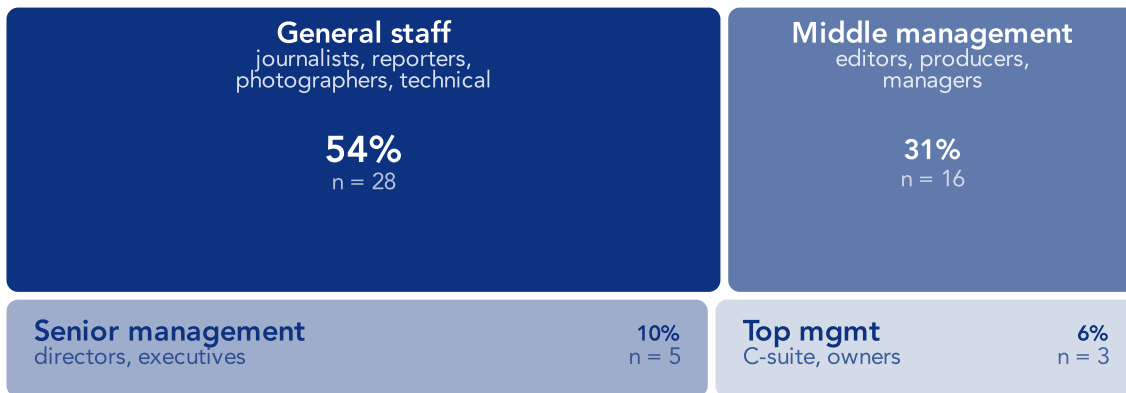
85% n = 45

11% n = 6

4% n = 2



By job level



³This study employed an online survey instrument comprising 33 closed questions and one open-ended question. The latter allowed respondents to provide additional comments, and was the source of the quotes included in this report. Respondents could skip any question if they wanted.

WIN and BBC Media Action regional media networks distributed the surveys. Each network aimed for a balance of respondents by gender, role and media organisation type. Response rates and sample sizes vary by country.

Given the sensitivity of the subject, the research team gave respondents access to relevant support resources in their country. Data was handled in accordance with City St George's, University of London's privacy policy and international data protection standards. For further details, see the [methodology page](#).

⁴Totals include gender non-conforming individuals and those who prefer to self-describe their gender identity. Data is not disaggregated for these people at country level. To explore trends for these groups, please refer to the relevant regional or global report.

Experience of Sexual Harassment

The 2025 survey shows that women respondents in Lebanon are around 3.5 times more likely to encounter **verbal sexual harassment** at work than men (see Figure 2).

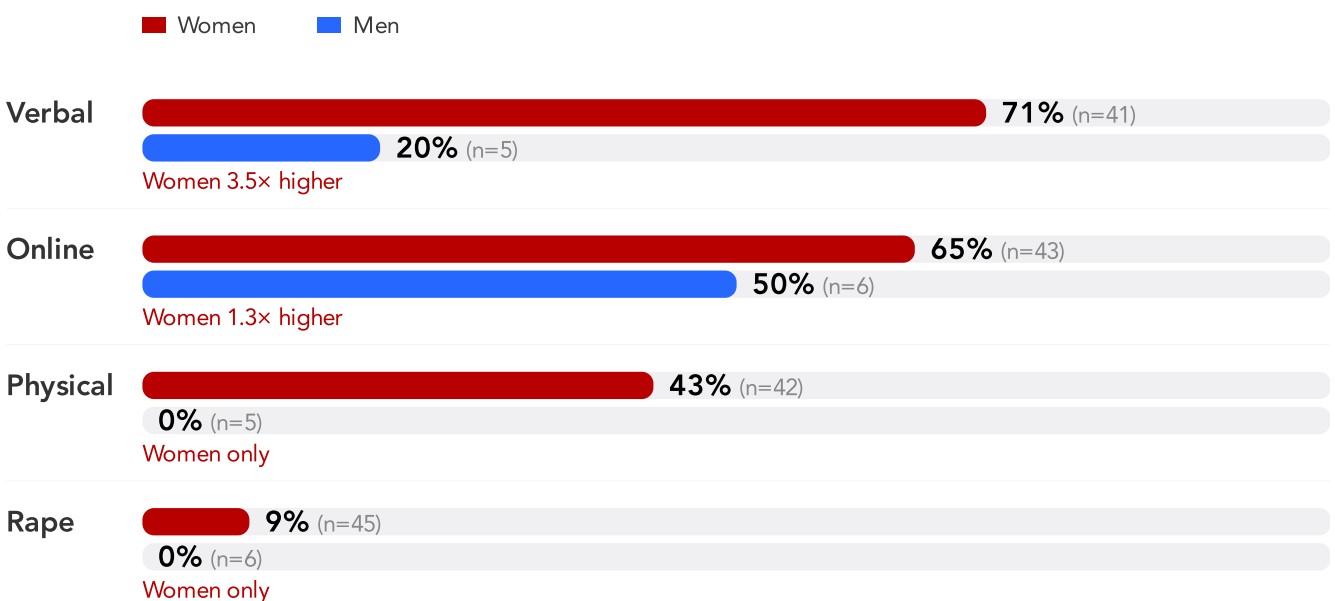
Rates of **online sexual harassment** were relatively similar across genders – this form of harassment has been experienced by 65% of women and 50% of men in the sample.

Almost half (43%) of women respondents said they have experienced **physical sexual harassment** at work, compared with no men in the sample.

Four women respondents said they have experienced **rape**, while none of the men did so.

Figure 2: Experience by type of sexual harassment and gender

Base: all respondents, excluding "I can't remember". All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.



Reporting and Action

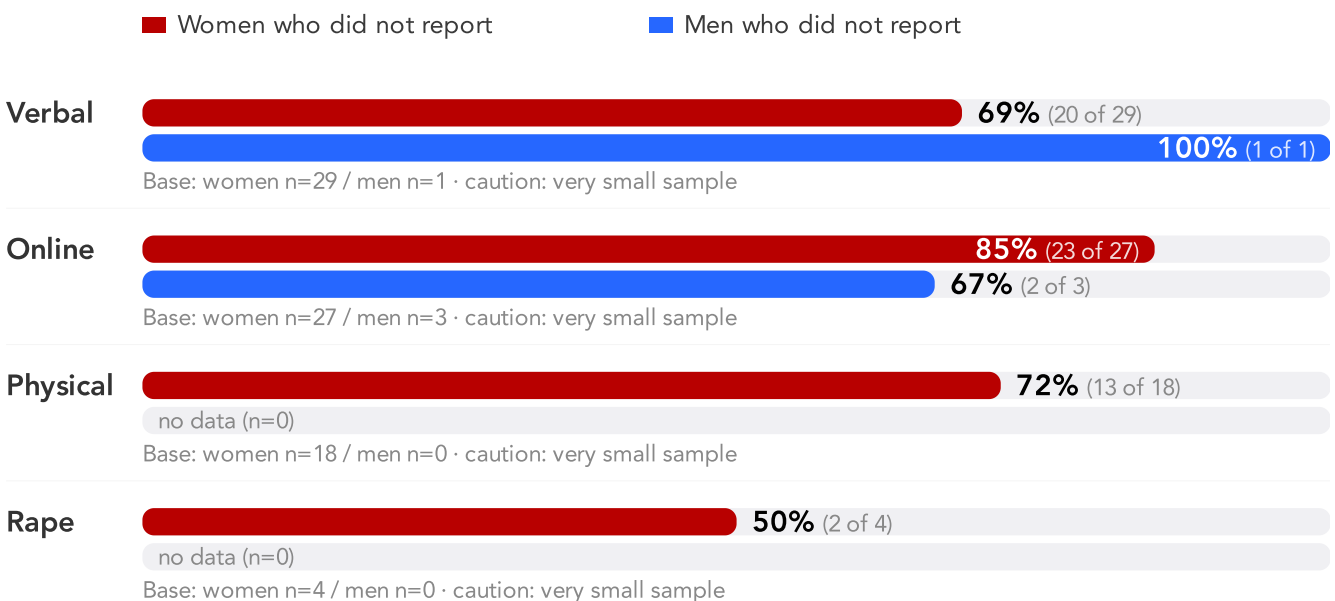
The survey asked respondents who indicated they had experienced sexual harassment at work whether they reported the incident to their organisation. In such cases, the survey asked follow-up questions to assess whether their employers had taken any action as a result.

The majority of women respondents and the sole man who said they had encountered **verbal sexual harassment** did not report the incidents to their organisation (see Figure 3). This was most frequently because they feared it would negatively affect their job, but a lack of reporting mechanisms also prevented them from taking the case to their employer. Due to this, the sample of those who had officially reported this form of harassment was very low, but organisations did take action in five out of eight cases (see Figure 4), most commonly by firing the perpetrator.

The main reasons respondents cited for not reporting **online sexual harassment** at work were thinking it was not a big deal, and that organisations lacked proper reporting mechanisms. Consequently, the number of reported cases remains limited (less than one-third overall). Among those cases, no employer action was taken in over half of instances. In the two cases when employers did respond, one perpetrator was fired and the other was suspended.

Figure 3: Reporting rates by type of sexual harassment

Base: those who experienced each type and answered the reporting question. All percentages rounded.



Most women respondents had not reported **physical sexual harassment** to their employer – only 28% did so. Respondents provided several reasons for not speaking up, with no single factor clearly dominant. Employers subsequently took action in three out of five cases.

Among the four women respondents who said they had experienced **rape**, two reported it to their respective organisations. In one case, the perpetrator was fired as a result.

Figure 4: Action taken by organisations on reported sexual harassment

Base: those who reported harassment and answered the action question (excluding "I can't remember").



"I hope this issue will be given more attention."

Male print journalist/middle manager aged 35-44