

# Code of Conduct

## Foreword by the General Director of General Security

Ever since I assumed my duties as the General Director of the General Directorate of General Security (GDGS), my major concern was to issue a Code of Conduct that could become a new social contract. The objective of this code is to build confidence and trust amongst the Lebanese citizens, the residents, and the officers of general security of all rankings. This Code of Conduct is founded on the principles of rule of law, integrity, transparency, and respect of the international agreements and conventions that Lebanon has signed and ratified.

The present Code of Conduct upholds the values of the oath that we all took, the oath that consecrates Lebanon as the ultimate homeland for all its citizens, the country of liberties, democratic diversity and coexistence among the different cultural, religious, and social components. Its goal is to protect Lebanon at all levels as stipulated in the establishing decree of the GDGS, namely, preserving security, public order, border control, combatting terrorism and espionage, protecting freedoms, public and private property, and providing services to citizens and residents alike, without any discrimination.

The GDGS issued this Code of Conduct because of its keenness on enhancing the principles of human rights and the rule of law. At the same time, no one can argue about the important work that the officers and staff of the General Security perform, in terms of both the tasks they are entrusted with and the mandate granted to them by law, which have a direct impact on individuals, society and the state as a whole. The present Code of Conduct is not a mere repetition of the content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. Rather, it also includes the principles, laws, and values that should control the conduct of the GDGS' officers and the qualities they should enjoy. The principal goal of this Code of Conduct is to build mutual confidence and trust between the General Security and the Lebanese society in all its religious, cultural, and intellectual facets. It is addressed to all employees of the general security so that to abide by it in their conduct and performance of their duties. It is also directed to the Lebanese people and the residents of Lebanon to take it as a guide when dealing with the GDGS; they should insist on its implementation, holding accountable all those who overlook or violate it.

The motto I adopted for myself since taking office – “a secure state, NOT a security state” – lies in the heart of this Code of Conduct as to its protection of individuals, their human rights and dignity. It also determines and regulates the cases in which legalized forms of violence can be used. Building a secure and safe state requires trust and existence of laws in as much as it requires equipment and techniques, so both citizens and residents would truly feel that they live in an environment that safeguards their dignity and protects them at the same time.

Everyone should realize that this Code of Conduct is not another publication added to the GDGS's list of publications. It is rather a set of values and obligations that must be literally complied with to cement the rule of law state and its institutions, founded on the respect of laws, human beings, and human rights; and to consecrate the concepts of justice, right, and good based on the respect of national laws and international conventions and standards ratified by Lebanon.

General Director of General Security  
*Major-General Abbas Ibrahim*

## Preamble

Maintaining security is an honorable and meticulous mission. It is an old, new, and continuously ongoing mission. It is indispensable to any human society aspiring for development and progress to live on the bright side of the world. It is a necessity for a state that wants to avoid wrongdoing, tensions, and disintegration. People view those working in the security field with suspicion and distrust due to the important grave tasks and mandates the latter is assigned that have extreme impact on the security of state, communities and the lives, beliefs and properties of individuals.

Everybody is aware of the sanctity of the tasks and duties entrusted with the GDGS, both officers and subordinates, and the critical and diverse missions assigned to them. At the same time, no one can deny the important mandates they exercise at the borders and in the country, all of which have great, direct and immediate impact on the security of individuals, society and the state. Given all this, principles of freedom, justice, equality, and values of human rights and the supremacy of law have been deep-rooted in the minds of human rights advocates and social activists from across the nations worldwide. In fact, these are the same principles that should govern the conduct of individual working in the General Security Directorate, whether officers or staff, with a view to gaining the trust of citizens and residents.

We began, in the past five years, to adopt the steps and procedures necessary to develop, modernize and improve the competencies, capacities, performance, and achievements of the GDGS. We have found it necessary for everyone in the General Security to understand and be aware of the characteristics and traits that they should enjoy in terms of knowledge of the laws, values, and principles that regulate and control their work.

The content of the Code of Conduct is neither new nor alien, especially as Lebanon is a founding member of the United Nations and the League of Arab States. It is thus committed to executing the ratified international human rights conventions and agreements.

Our endeavour is an integral part of our conviction, upbringing, and of our national, military, security and administrative values. It clearly reflects the preamble and provisions of the Lebanese constitution, as well as the provisions of Article 1 of the General Security Regulatory Decree, which states:

“The mission of the General Security is to gather information on behalf of the Lebanese government, notably political, economic and social information. GDGS is entrusted with carrying out judiciary investigations in violations committed against the state’s internal or external security. It also contributes, along with security forces, to monitoring the land, air, and maritime borders, and monitoring foreigners on Lebanese territories, and issuing travel documents. This is in addition

to the law dated 10/7/1962, which vested the General Security with “the mandate of regulating the mechanism of foreigner’s residence in Lebanon and the process of entry to, and exit from, Lebanon.”

The General Security is required to live up to its name; that is, it must protect the state and its institutions, and all those residing on the Lebanese territories. This, in itself, is what grants the Code of Conduct an added value, and this is the reason to insist on issuing it and abiding by its provisions.

## Our Vision

A General Security that respects and protects human rights, bolsters security and public order, and preserves the state and its institutions.

## Our Mission

- Serving citizens, guaranteeing their satisfaction, maintaining their safety and security, and reflecting the bright side of Lebanon.
- Implementing the laws and regulations without prejudice to the freedoms and rights of citizens, Arabs, and foreigners.
- Non-discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, religion, language, gender, political opinion or national origin, or any other grounds.
- Protecting all rights and freedoms and defending them from any violation whatsoever.
- Providing safety, security, and service to all citizens and residents of Lebanon.
- Exerting utmost efforts in collecting information, executing field missions, combating terrorism and crime, and enhancing security and safety.

## Our Principles

- Respecting human dignity
- Justice and equality in enforcing law
- Protecting vulnerable groups
- Leading by example
- Professionalism and objectivity
- Integrity and uprightness

## Conduct of General Security Officers <sup>1</sup> and Staff <sup>2</sup>

The present Code of Conduct defines the ethical, human, and legal standards that govern the work of all GDGS officers and staff members during the execution

<sup>1</sup> “General security officer” means all commissioned and non-commissioned officers and privates.

<sup>2</sup> “General security staff” means all civilian employees, retired personnel, and workers.

of their different job duties:

- The General Security officer and staff member shall perform their duties without any discrimination or bias.
- They shall respect and preserve human dignity while granting each person his/her due right.
- They should commit to seriousness, enthusiasm, and transparency in the course of executing their functions.
- They are prohibited from disclosing any information obtained when they are on duty and they shall respect individuals' right to privacy.
- They shall strive for the public interest and rise above personal interests in the course of performing their tasks.
- They shall consider themselves concerned with any act violating the law; thus, they shall immediately inform the competent authorities as per their mandates and the oath they took.
- They shall not accept any gratuities or presents in return for performing their duties. They shall not commit or connive any act of corruption.
- They shall not abuse the power vested in them.
- They shall uphold their dignity and that of their institution by not committing any act that violates the law or degrades the institution.
- They shall exert sufficient efforts to build a relationship of trust with others.
- They shall refrain from performing, enticing, or overlooking any act of torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment during investigations or the execution of any functions they are entrusted with.
- They shall show utmost respect, never acting with condescendence, yet always with a firm attitude, while performing their duties.
- They shall refrain from resorting to force except where it is necessary and in a way that is proportional to the foreseen risks, without exaggeration in assessing risks, in line with the lawfulness and the necessity of the situation, and after exhausting all non-violent means.
- Firearms are only used in cases of utmost necessity according to the law, in a way proportional to the risks, and after exhausting all non-violent means.
- In using firearms, the General Security officer shall ensure that damages and human injuries are as limited as possible and he/she shall provide the necessary first aid to the injured.
- The General Security officer shall refrain from engaging in politics, joining any political party, association, or syndicate, or attending partisan, political, syndical, or electoral meetings.
- The superior shall lead by example in implementing the provisions of this Code of Conduct and in building the capacities of his/her subordinates.
- The superior shall refrain from issuing illegal or illegitimate orders.
- Illegal or illegitimate orders are not exempting from criminal responsibility.
- The Superior shall deal with his/her subordinates with respect and appreciation.

- The General Security staff is entitled for respect; he/she should not be demeaned, defamed, slandered, or attacked during the execution of his/her duties under penalty of legal and disciplinary action.

## Dealing with Right-holders

In dealing with right-holders, the conduct of Security General officers and staff is governed by humane, professional, and legal obligations:

### A. Human Obligation:

- Respecting all individuals as a human value, preserving their dignity, and upholding their rights.
- Non-discrimination or favoritism on the grounds of nationality, race, or region and treating all individuals in the context of respecting all human, ethical and legal obligations.
- Observing and being sensitive to the human needs of «the elderly, minors, children, the ill...» and especially people with special needs.
- Sufficient efforts and care should be exerted in treating vulnerable groups (such as the stateless or non-IDs, IDPs, refugees into a third country, and victims of human trafficking and exploitation).
- Maintaining composure at all times and never overreacting.

### B. Professional and Legal Obligations:

- Timely and prompt execution of required tasks within the applicable laws.
- Receiving people in a good way, treating them respectfully, and assisting them in completing their applications.
- Abiding by the international human rights commitments as stipulated in the agreements ratified by the state of Lebanon when dealing with right holders.

## Border Crossings

- General Security staff shall receive passengers at border points and crossings appropriately without any discrimination and he/she shall leave a good impression on them.
- He/she shall strive to be precise and courteous in treating passengers. He/she shall not show boredom of the passengers' enquiries, and he/she shall not over-react to some of their behaviors.
- He/she shall facilitate the movement of people with special needs.
- He/she shall not discriminate against passengers based on their gender, colour or nationality.
- He/she shall provide services to visitors and passengers in accordance with the laws and rules in force, within a reasonable and justifiable timeframe.

- He/she shall treat migrant domestic workers in a humane and proper way that takes into consideration their vulnerable situation.
- He/she shall refuse granting all types of favors or nepotism and reject giving ineligible privileges to travelers.

## Detention Centers

The General Security staff in detention centers shall strive to:

- Prohibit the illegal detention of any person.
- Provide a sufficient space to accommodate the detainee in a way that respects their human dignity and privacy.
- Prohibit the commitment, incitement, ordering, aiding and abetting, or overlooking of torture or any form of inhuman, degrading or undignified treatment.
- Prohibit all forms of physical or psychological violence or harassment against detainees during their transportation to and from the detention center.
- Guarantee the hygiene and nutrition of the detainees and taking care of them in compliance with the public safety standards.
- Provide the required medical care to the detainees and respond promptly to emergency cases.
- Comply by the standards of human rights and the Lebanese law in maintaining discipline and order in the detention center.
- Allow detainees to contact the 'outside world', to file complaints, watch television, read books, and practice their religious rites as per the regulations of detention.
- Facilitate the right of the detainees to meet their family, lawyers, and consulate representatives (in case the detainee was a foreigner).
- Seek the representation of lawyer in the cases stipulated by law.
- Invoke women officers to deal and investigate with women detainees in respect to their right to privacy.
- Process the detainees' cases in a timely and prompt manner.

## Migrant Workers

The General Security Staff shall:

- Receive Arab and foreign nationals properly following a service oriented approach and consider them as right holders and not service seekers, within the stipulations of the laws, regulations, and instructions governing each case.
- Adopt unified standards that are in line with human principles that do not violate human dignity, nor encourage favoritism or discrimination on racial, nationality, gender, or religious grounds.

- Allow stakeholders to access information on all regulations and instructions relevant to them. Information should be presented in a clear and easily comprehensible manner (through the GDGS website, circulars, newsletters, and advertisement boards in the different centers and departments, etc.).
- Provide the necessary clarifications for instructions and the statuses of concerned parties he/she shall make sure clarifications are conveyed without any ambiguity clearing any misunderstanding.
- Set up several complaint mechanisms accessible to all (complaints department, call center, email, complaint boxes installed in all general security centers and departments).
- Receive and process all submissions of applications without procrastination or favoritism at the expense of right holders, and adopt neutrality and objectivity in processing applications.
- Provide the necessary services after ascertaining their fulfilment of legal conditions, within reasonable and justified timeframes, and without any delay or favoring a case over another.
- Provide vulnerable groups and the victims of abuse, exploitation and human trafficking with the special assistance they need in their situation.
- Receive applications requesting revision of decisions in the cases allowed by the instructions.
- Act immediately upon identifying any case of human trafficking or exploitation, and take all necessary measures in accordance with the enforced laws.

## Nightclub Artists

The General Security staff in the Artists' Department shall:

- Treat female artists humanely and without discrimination based on race, gender, colour or nationality.
- Interview the female artist coming to Lebanon to authenticate her signature on the work contract, to ensure that she is not a victim of an act of fraud that could lead to her exploitation, and to inform her of her rights and duties as per the enforced regulations.
- Provide the female artist with a hotline to ask for help in any case of emergency.
- Make sure the artist's place of accommodation is safe and complies with all health and human standards.
- Adopt all necessary measures to prevent the exploitation and abuse of the female artist, to prevent her being subject to violence and, ultimately, from becoming a human trafficking victim.
- Adopt all necessary measures to protect and preserve the female artist's financial rights.

- Assist the foreign female artist to return to her country once she wishes to by providing her with the necessary facilities provided for in the laws and regulations her with the necessary facilities provided for in the laws and regulations.

## Works of Art

- The General Security staff shall, while practicing his/her mandate in dealing with works of art, respect freedom of expression and belief as stated in the Lebanese constitution which respects the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The General Security staff shall facilitate the spreading of any work of art that contributes to enriching diversity and freedom of thought; thus, reflecting Lebanon's diversity.
- The General Security staff shall focus his/her work on detecting any incitement to hatred among the components of society, of violent extremism, and of terrorism.
- The General Security staff shall practice these mandates taking into account the principle of proportionality and balance between respecting human rights and maintaining the safety and security of society.

## Final Provisions

- The superiors shall monitor the work of their subordinates, ensure they abide by the provisions of this Code of Conduct, and take all suitable measures against those who breach it.
- This Code of Conduct is binding to all general security officers and staff. They are liable for it and held accountable to it. Accordingly, the GDGS shall commit to implementing the provisions of this Code of Conduct and take necessary measures against those who violates it.

The Government of Lebanon  
General Directorate of General Security



# Code of Conduct



NATIONS UNIES  
DROITS DE L'HOMME  
HAUT-COMMISSARIAT

This Code of Conduct was issued in cooperation and coordination  
with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights