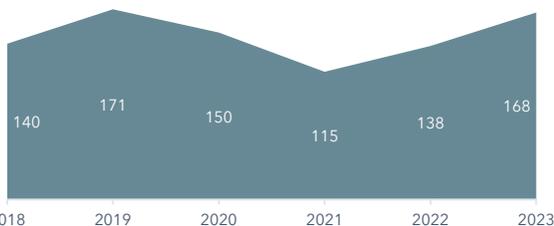


LEBANON'S 2023 SUICIDE RATES: WHAT DO THIS YEAR'S NUMBERS TELL US ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN THE COUNTRY



Prevalence Rate of Suicide in Lebanon in 2023

In 2023, Lebanon witnesses a concerning surge in suicide rates, reaching a total of 168 deaths as reported by the latest data compiled by the Internal Security Forces in the country. Currently, the Lebanese Internal Security Forces' data stands as the sole source of information providing insight into the prevalence rate of suicide in Lebanon. The recorded 168 deaths in 2023 reflect a worrisome increase of **21.7%** from the previous year (2022) and a significant **46%** rise from 2021. These figures approach those of 2019, a year that marked the highest number of suicides in the past decade. This trend underscores the urgency of addressing mental health concerns and implementing effective intervention to curb the escalating rates.



Why have the numbers increased?

The increase in the incidence of suicides cannot be attributed to a singular cause. Moreover, it remains uncertain whether this increase is indicative of a genuine rise in the number of suicides or if it reflects an improved reporting mechanism on suicide cases. Suicide remains a taboo topic in Lebanon that is often concealed by family members and communities. Notably, not all deaths by suicide are accurately documented as such, and some families may choose to or request that the cause of death of a person be reported differently, concealing the true nature of the demise. This reluctance to openly address the issue of suicide continues to present a challenge in obtaining accurate data and emphasizes the needs for fostering more open dialogue surrounding mental health concerns in Lebanon.



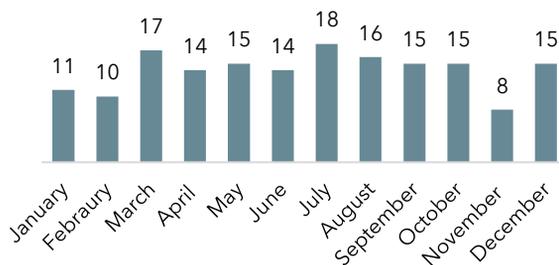
On average, 1 person dies of suicide every 2.1 days in Lebanon.



It is however important to note, that in May 2023, Embrace published a [policy brief](#) in collaboration with the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy at the American University of Beirut, sounding the alarm that 2023 could possibly witness an increase in the annual rate of suicide. The warning was grounded in the observation that in March of 2023, Lebanon witnessed a surge of media coverage on suicide deaths in the country and these media reports notably failed to adhere to the ethical reporting guidelines. In the same month (March 2023), 17 suicides were reported.

Extensive research has shown that when media reports on suicide deaths do not adhere to international ethical guidelines, it can trigger a phenomenon known as suicide contagion, potentially contributing to an elevated national prevalence rate of suicide.

In May 2023 and in response to these concerns, Embrace collaborated with national stakeholders including the National Mental Health Programme, the Lebanese Psychiatric Society, and the Lebanese Order of Psychologists and held a press conference in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Ministry of Public Health aimed at communicating to the media the critical importance of following ethical guidelines when reporting on suicide.



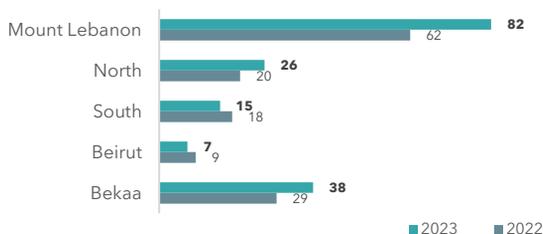
Number of recorded deaths to suicide per month in 2023.

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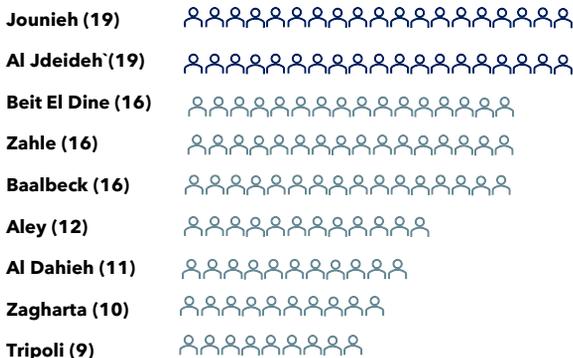
Saturation of suicide deaths by region

Similar to 2022, the Mount Lebanon region continues to register the highest number of deaths, likely because it represents the most densely populated region in the country, with 82 deaths recorded in 2023.

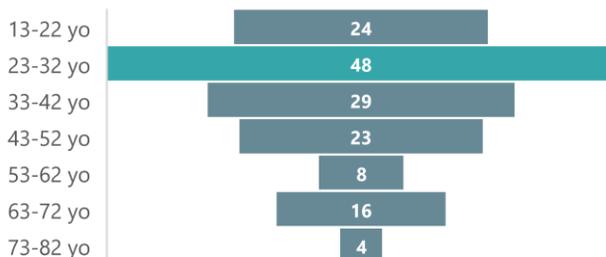


Number of recorded deaths to suicide per governorate, between 2022 and 2023.

Notably, cities with elevated rates of suicide encompass Al Jdeideh, Jounieh, Beit El Dine, Zahle, Baalbeck, Aley, Al Dahieh, Zagharta and Tripoli. Conversely, cities with the lowest rates of suicide comprise Amioun, Nabatieh, Beirut, Halba and Baabda. This geographical breakdown sheds light on the variations in suicide rates across different regions and cities within Lebanon.



Prevalence of suicide deaths among age groups



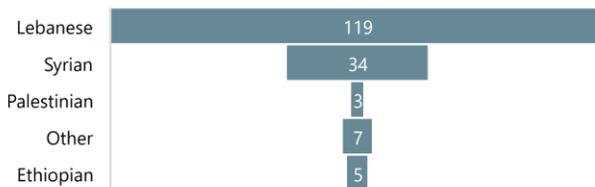
In 2023, individuals aged between 23 and 32 years old were most likely to die of suicide, closely followed by those in the 33 to 42 years old age bracket. This pattern has been consistent over the past years despite changes in the age brackets employed by that the ISF each year when reporting suicide deaths. Typically, the age group of 24 to 38 years old has consistently recorded the highest rate, followed by the age group of 9 to 23 years.

Suicide deaths by gender

When examining suicide deaths by gender, the data reveals a notable disparity, with the majority being males. In 2023, the breakdown indicated that 81% of suicide deaths were male, while 19% were female. This has also been a consistent pattern, that can be attributed mostly likely to the fact that men utilize more lethal weapons to end their lives.

Suicide deaths by nationality

Regarding suicide deaths by nationality in 2023, individuals of Lebanese nationality accounted for the largest group, totally 119 deaths. They were followed by individuals of Syrian nationality.



1564 is the National Hotline for Emotional Support and Suicide Prevention in Lebanon. If you or someone you know are experiencing suicidal thoughts, the National Lifeline operates 24/7 and provides persons experiencing emotional distress or suicidal thoughts with emotional support and referrals to specialized mental health services. **If you are a journalist reporting on suicide, mentioning the National Lifeline number (1564) at the end of your report will help save lives and reduce the risk of suicide contagion.**

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