



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

30 OCTOBER - 05 NOVEMBER, 2023



***Human Rights are inherent to all human beings, regardless of the nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language or any other status without discrimination. These rights are all universal, inalienable, interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.***

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## LEBANON

**Monday**  
30 October 2023

### **IIF says Lebanese economy is vulnerable to the war in Gaza**

The Institute of International Finance (IIF), an organization gathering banks worldwide, published a study measuring the economic impact of the war in Gaza on the region. In the event of extended and prolonged attacks, the Lebanese economy would collapse, with Lebanon's GDP falling by a third in 2023. Even if the war stays in Gaza, the IIF predicts the Lebanese economy will not emerge unscathed; it could contract by 4 percent in 2024, compared to a growth of 1.2 percent planned before the war broke out. The IIF also studied the impact of the war on the Central Bank's foreign currency reserves, concluding that they could decrease to \$6 billion in 2024 if tensions remain focused on Gaza and to \$3 billion if the war escalates further, compared to \$8 billion as planned before the war.

### **Snowball effects of Lebanon's economic crisis fall hard on Syrian children**

The estimated 660,000 Syrian refugee children living in Lebanon are among those hit hardest by the public education crisis, as services for Syrians are often the first to be cut. More than half of Syrian children aged from 3 to 18 are not in school, and many have never stepped foot in a classroom. After the ninth grade, UNICEF does not subsidize public education, so more than 99% of non-Lebanese students (most of them Syrian) do not attend class after that. Lack of legal residency papers and the cost of school materials are highlighted as the major barriers. On paper, Syrian students may enroll in public schools up to the ninth grade without legal residency, though some schools require in practice valid residency permits, while others request other types of documents, like birth certificates. Increasing hostility and violence against Syrian refugees in Lebanon have also trickled into classrooms. International funding is decreasing, including for schools, leaving schools to rely solely on the government's insufficient support.

**Tuesday**  
31 October 2023

### Israel's unlawful use of white phosphorus in southern Lebanon could amount to war crime, says Amnesty

The Israeli army fired artillery shells containing white phosphorus in Lebanon on several occasions between 10 and 16 October. Amnesty International calls for the investigation of one attack as a war crime; the village of Dhayra was targeted by an “indiscriminate attack that injured at least nine civilians and damaged civilian objects”, said Amnesty based on testimonies and videos verified by its Crisis Evidence Lab. The organization specifies that it also investigates attacks by Hezbollah in Israel to determine whether they comply with international humanitarian law. The usage of white phosphorus in wars is not unlawful in itself, but only when fired at, or near a populated civilian area or civilian infrastructure. Due to the high likelihood that the fires and smoke it causes spread and affect civilians and civilian objects, such attacks are indiscriminate and therefore prohibited. In Dhayra, it led to several homes and cars being burnt and several civilians being hospitalized. Amnesty had already documented the use of white phosphorus by the Israeli army in Gaza, reporting that some of them could be considered indiscriminate attacks and therefore unlawful.

**Wednesday**  
01 November 2023

### Syrians displaced by Lebanese border clashes suffer from lack of support, racism

The Access Center for Human Rights condemned the Lebanese government's discriminatory speech on Syrians displaced by clashes between Israel and Hezbollah. Caretaker Minister of Social Affairs Hector Hajjar refused to welcome Syrian refugees in shelters, claiming that “they will not leave when the situation returns to normal”. Re-displaced Syrians have to face a lack of state support, increasing anti-Syrian racism, in addition to already harsh poverty. Several municipalities have directed services toward displaced Lebanese and restricted them for Syrians. Border towns like Rmeish and Ein el-Ebel have organized night vigilante patrols to prevent Syrians from coming in search of shelter, but claim to be keen on welcoming “any Lebanese with open arms”. Rumors of Syrians acting as spies for Israel were shared in social media, sparking expulsions of Syrians from towns such as Rmeish and Bint Jbeil. Some Syrians are reluctant to coordinate with authorities and access resources that are available to them because they fear deportation. Shelters in Sour accepted over 100 Syrians in the first days of displacement, but they all left after seeing police patrolling nearby.

### Rise of civilian-led violence in Lebanon

Citizen-led violence targeting Syrians has been on the rise in the past weeks, reflecting a broader breakdown in law and order which everyone will suffer from, Synaps reports. A state-led crackdown on Syrians, led by the Lebanese Army, has now shifted toward a bottom-up campaign of violence, harassment, and theft in Lebanon. Some people have been stopped in the street, asked if they are Syrian, and summarily beaten. As a consequence, a youngster lost sight in one eye. Checkpoints have been raised, both by law enforcement bodies and non-state armed groups. In some areas, Syrians navigate pervasive checkpoints by trading tips on WhatsApp groups. This increased pressure has pushed Syrians to adopt coping strategies, including self-lockdown at night. Synaps expresses its concern about the unpredictability of the “anger swirling around a country that is deeply disorganized, heavily armed and thoroughly divided”, particularly if tensions with Israel were to expand.

Thursday  
02 November 2023

### To flee or not to flee, do domestic workers have the choice?

Amidst growing tensions with Israel, the estimated 180,000 foreign house employees, mainly from South Asia or Ethiopia, face the choice of leaving Lebanon or remaining. Many fear the repetition of the 2006 war, when employers fled the war and the country, leaving the workers alone, sometimes evicted from their houses without money or papers. The International Organization for Migrations had organized evacuations to Syria, but such a solution is no longer possible due to the continued tensions in Syria and the bombings of Syrian airports by Israel, which regularly leave them closed. Many house employees work under the Kafala or sponsorship system and therefore have little to no choice to decide to remain or leave, as they need the authorization of their "sponsor".

### UN plans to cut number of refugees receiving cash aid in Lebanon by a third

Facing an increasing funding gap, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Program will cut the number of refugee families receiving cash assistance in Lebanon by nearly a third in 2024. This represents a decrease in 88,000 families, lowering the total number of families supported to 190,000. Similarly, extra assistance that used to be distributed to some families for winter heating fuel expenses will be halted despite being "critical for vulnerable families to survive the winter season". UNHCR in Lebanon only received 36% of its annual budget so far this year, even lower than its 2022 budget, which was only 50% funded.

### Two Lebanese shepherds killed by Israeli army

The bodies of two shepherds were retrieved in the border town of al-Wazzani by the Lebanese Army, the Red Cross, and UNIFIL, after they were reported missing on Wednesday. The head of the local municipality reported that the shepherds were killed by Israeli gunfire and that there were clear bullet holes in their bodies. UNIFIL said it was unable to verify the origin of the gunfire. These new deaths raise the death toll in Lebanon to seven civilians and 58 Hezbollah fighters.

Friday  
03 November 2023

### 25,000 people internally displaced by armed confrontations at southern border, reports IOM

The UN's International Organization for Migrations (IOM) reports that the number of people internally displaced by tensions between Israel and armed groups in Lebanon reached 25,708. This represents a slight decrease compared to the peak recorded on 26 October, when the IOM reported 28,965 internally displaced people (IDPs). The organization attributes this decrease "to the fluid nature of the mobility dynamic". 42% of the IDPs are sheltered by their family, 36% rely on rented houses, 18% are in their second house, while only one thousand people (3% of the total) are housed in the 11 designated emergency shelters, located in Sour and Hasbaya. A third of all displaced people reached Sour.

Saturday and Sunday  
04 and 05 November  
2023

### Israel kills 3 girls and a woman in Lebanon by directly targeting their car

On Sunday, November 5, Israeli forces targeted one of two civilian cars moving between the towns of Aitaroun and Ainata, killing 4, including 3 minors, aged 10, 12, and 14. The victims are the relatives of journalist Samir Ayoub, who was driving the other car when they were killed. Earlier on the same day, four rescue workers were injured in an Israeli bombing that hit two ambulances in southern Lebanon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Abdullah Bou Habib stated that a new complaint to the UN Security Council was being prepared.

### A national plan for psychological care for families of border villages

The exchange of missiles over the border over the past month has caused psychological disturbances for children. As the battles intensify during the night, children are deprived of sleep. In general, residents of southern villages are exposed to anxiety and insomnia as they constantly fear dying under the rubble. To respond to this psychological distress, the Ministry of Health worked to activate an emergency plan to provide psychological care for families residing in southern Lebanon, in coordination with several international organizations, including UNICEF. Medical staff were trained on how to deal with special cases of anxiety and panic, including with children, pregnant women, and the elderly. The Ministry is also reportedly working on ensuring the quantity of medications used to respond to addictions and psychological illnesses, so health centers can respond to a large number of displaced people if tensions expand.



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