



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

16 - 22 OCTOBER, 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

16 October 2023

Israeli raids injure 3 Lebanese Army Forces

Over the night between Sunday and Monday, Israeli forces carried out bombing operations in Lebanon, reportedly targeting Hezbollah positions. Strikes in the Al-Balat area lightly injured 3 Lebanese Army soldiers. Israeli warplanes also flew at very low altitudes in Lebanese airspace, reaching the cities of Sidon and Beirut, and carried out mock raids. For the first time documented, one of the Israeli aircraft approached the flight area in the vicinity of Beirut Airport.

Tuesday

17 October 2023

Lebanese border town abandoned after Israeli white phosphorus attack

Residents fled the town of the Lebanese-border town of Dhayrah after hours of Israeli shelling, which included the use of white phosphorus, a munition criticized as “unlawfully indiscriminate” by rights groups. Phosphorus shells reportedly hit homes, pushing residents to take shelter in schools and hotels in neighboring cities. Human Rights Watch earlier reported that “any time that white phosphorus is used in crowded civilian areas, it poses a high risk of excruciating burns and lifelong suffering”. Though Dhayrah may have been the Lebanese town hardest hit by Israeli shelling, numerous towns along the Lebanese-Israeli border have fled en-masse to Beirut, fearing being caught in the escalating tensions between Israel and Hezbollah.

Wednesday

18 October 2023

Lebanese protesters direct anger at US embassy over Gaza hospital blast

Lebanese protesters and Palestinian refugees have taken to the streets to express their anger after the blast of Al-Ahli Al-Arabi Hospital in the Gaza Strip. Official administrations and institutions raised flags at half-mast and educational and trade union institutions were closed amid national mourning. Some demonstrations targeted the UN headquarters in Beirut and the US embassy in Awkar. A violent confrontation ensued between the protesters and riot police and army units, which used tear bombs and water cannons to disperse the protesters who tried to penetrate the barbed wire fence. The West was accused by many of supporting Israel even in war crimes; for example, Mufti of Baalbek-Hermel Sheikh Bakr Rifai said: “The reaction of the free world is what encouraged the Israeli enemy to continue its aggression and assaults on innocent people. It is escaping forward by committing massacre after massacre”.

Thursday
19 October 2023

[The Lebanese economy, a collateral victim of the war in Gaza](#)

The Lebanese Business Leaders Association (RDCL) warned that “extending the conflict to Lebanon would have catastrophic consequences”, in particular on already failing infrastructure and on the supply chain. The mere prospect of an imminent war already seems to affect the national economy. The Secretary General of the Lebanese economic Organizations and President of the Beirut Traders Association Nicolas Chammas stated that following October 7th, “the country’s economic activity suddenly took a nosedive” and “the consumption cycle instantly stalled”. In the short term, the tourism sector will bear the brunt of the losses, after a boom this summer. Restaurants have witnessed a decrease in their activity by up to 80%. Merchants are also experiencing a sharp drop in activity compared to before the war. On the other hand, the population is starting to stock up on some basic necessities in anticipation of an escalation.

[UN provide support to the Ministry of Health](#)

Due to the increased tensions along the Blue Line, the UN’s World Health Organization (WHO) rushed to assist the Lebanese state. The Ministry of Health reported having received medical aid from the WHO’s logistical center in Dubai to meet the needs of up to 1,000 wounded. Other medical shipments will arrive in the coming days so that the health sector can meet the needs of thousands of wounded. This support comes after 4 years of economic collapse, which left the health sector “in crisis” and with an “acute shortage of specialized doctors, health workers, medicines and medical equipment” according to the WHO. Eight medical teams were sent training the medical staff of hospitals targeted by the Ministry of Health, to enhance their capacity to deal with emergency situations.

[Tensions continue in the south: Israel surrounded journalists and killed a Lebanese](#)

Israel bombed the vicinity of the area where a group of 6 foreign journalists and three Lebanese were present, prompting the group to hide and take cover. Bombings continued, killing a Lebanese man who was accompanying the group. Contacts made between the Lebanese Army and the UNIFIL succeeded in preventing new Israeli bombings, letting the Lebanese army reach the group and transporting them to a safe place. This new event raises the death toll in South Lebanon to at least 22 persons, including 4 civilians.

[Pro-Palestine and Hezbollah supporters attack AUB and US companies in Lebanon](#)

Amidst the ongoing war in Gaza and to protest against the US’ support for Israel, groups of young men vandalized several US-franchised stores and institutions over the past few days. A Starbucks branch in Raouche, the American University of Beirut, and McDonald’s branches in Saida and Ain el-Mraiseh were targeted. Protests and riots also took place around the US Embassy in Awkar after the deadly bombing of the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza.

Friday
20 October 2023

Lebanese agriculture disrupted as border clashes with Israel intensify

The production and transport of Lebanese agriculture products have been disrupted by the intensifying clashes between Israel and groups in Lebanon, raising fears on food sovereignty. Fighting has displaced workers, preventing them from harvesting, marketing their production, and preparing next year's crops. The back-and-forth rocket exchanges have interrupted the peak of olive and tobacco harvest season. Farmers have also moved their equipment to other Lebanese regions for fear of further escalations in the South. An escalation into a full-scale war could further endanger Lebanon's food sovereignty. In particular, logistical challenges and damage to infrastructure could endanger high-needed food imports.

Saturday and Sunday
21 and 22 October
2023

Dangerous escalation of tensions in South Lebanon over the weekend

Since Saturday afternoon, Israeli bombings in Lebanon have scaled up, reaching a record since the beginning of the war in Gaza on October 7th. Whether tensions were until then limited to border areas, they extended deeper into the Lebanese territory. The National News Agency reported that an Israeli drone launched a missile in Jezzine, more than 15 kilometers from the border. Israeli military aircraft continued to violate the Lebanese airspace, flying over the coast at low altitude from South to North, passing by Beirut. Most of the border villages were targeted by intense Israeli airstrikes, leading to heavy material damage and displacing around 1500 families to Tyr. Israel added 14 cities to the list of border areas it evacuates. The recent rise of tensions has led to new injuries and deaths: Hezbollah reported the death of 25 of its fighters (half of them died only during the weekend), and Israel reported 3 soldiers injured, including one severely. However, observers report that the escalation remains within the limits of the "tolerable" for both sides, as structural infrastructures and major cities have not yet been targeted.

Schools in Lebanon prepare crisis strategies

School institutions in Lebanon are preparing for a possible extension of the attacks on Lebanon. The Ministry of Education promised a crisis strategy, which is yet to be published, leaving schools in uncertainty. Private institutions are able to deploy important means, as they earn part or all of their fees in dollars. Some have issued security plans, with measures to be taken in case of bombings. Since the 10th of October, about 50 schools in border areas have already been closed; internally displaced families were asked by the ministry to join new schools temporarily. Distance learning is expected to be difficult for many families who do not have reliable electricity and internet sources, with heavier likelihood of such difficulties for children attending public schools.



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