



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

27 February - 5 March, 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
27 Feb 2023

Lebanon - Social Affairs Minister dismisses reforms in regards to women's rights and child protection

Social Affairs Minister Hector Hajjar dismissed social and political reforms in regards to women's rights and child protection, deeming them less vital amid the economic crisis that his government is failing to manage. In an interview with Annahar, Hajjar confirmed he will visit Syria again to meet regime representatives and follow up on the issue of Syrian refugees. He "admitted" that he "previously failed by not visiting Syria" adding "I will not hesitate to go to Syria, I have no regrets and I will work on planning another visit in the coming days."

Lebanon - Third cabinet sessions without a president attempts to address problems

During its third session without a sitting president, the Lebanese cabinet approved an advance for Ogero employees and gave 5L of gasoline to teachers, as part of addressing their demands to return to teaching. It also decided to appoint full-time and part-time teachers at the Lebanese University, although it was not on the agenda, and postponed the decision on transport allowances for public sector employees. PM Najib Mikati further attacked the principle of separation of power, justifying his interference in the work of Judge Ghada Aoun, who is pursuing banks, citing "flaws" in the judiciary.

Lebanon - Riad Salameh deposited embezzled funds in 12 banks

An article in Swiss newspaper Sonntagszeitung published revealed that BDL governor Riad Salameh deposited a large part of embezzled funds between \$300 million and \$500 million in 12 Swiss banks, while his brother Raja deposited \$250 million in HSBC in Geneva. The article states that other amounts were deposited in UBS, Credit Suisse, Julius Baer, AF and Pictet banks, with the transfers done through an offshore company registered in the Virgin Islands under the name Forry Associates. They were followed by transfer of funds to buy real estate in European states. Lebanon is investigating Salameh and his assets and requested assistance from the Swiss public prosecutor in the case of Salameh and his brother Raja's transfers of over \$300 million.

Tuesday
28 Feb 2023

Lebanon - Retired policeman shoots, kills ex-wife in Tripoli street

A retired member of Lebanon's Internal Security Forces killed his ex-wife Tuesday using a hunting rifle in Tripoli, North Lebanon, L'Orient Today's correspondent in the North reported. The crime took place in broad daylight on a street in the Jabal Mohsen neighborhood, Tripoli, where the man allegedly shot and killed his ex-wife, eyewitnesses from the area who said they knew the suspect told L'Orient Today. State Security arrested the man and seized his firearm, according to our correspondent. Video footage sent by our correspondent appears to show the suspect bloodied and surrounded by a crowd during his arrest.

Lebanon – [Lebanon raises customs Dollar by threefold as government struggles with financial woes](#)

The Lebanese government has decided to triple the customs dollar from 15,000 to 45,000 LBP, causing a significant increase in the prices of imported goods subject to customs fees. For example, a car that used to have a customs fee of \$1,000 now has a fee of around \$3,000. The decision was made due to the lack of funds available to the government, with the state's account, known as Account 36, becoming severely depleted. As a result, the government needed to find ways to generate more revenue, and increasing the customs dollar was seen as an essential measure to achieve this goal. Moreover, the government recently approved a series of incentives for the public sector to end their strikes, and securing funding for these incentives has become a top priority. It is worth noting that public sector salaries have not been paid yet for March.

Lebanon – [Supermarkets set prices in dollars following the Minister of Economy's decision](#)

Economy Minister Amin Salam announced on Sunday that supermarkets can set prices in dollars, which will allow them to avoid the risks of the deteriorating exchange rate and increase their profits, as their operating expenses, namely wages and taxes, are still mostly in LBP. This step reduces the ministry's supervisory responsibility, as Salam considered that his role is limited to signing claims related to pricing violations. He said that his ministry has referred "nearly 1,500 claims to specialized courts," but the judiciary "does not support him."

Lebanon – [42 MPs call for fact-finding mission into Beirut Port Explosion](#)

During the 52nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, 42 members of parliament submitted a petition demanding the establishment of an international fact-finding mission into the Beirut port explosion. The MPs detailed how the local investigation is being obstructed and influenced by Lebanese politicians seeking to evade accountability.

Lebanon – [Woman assaulted by her brothers while the police watched](#)

Dr. Zahraa Al Tashem brutally beaten by her brothers Mohamad and Ali because of an inheritance dispute. The severe blows to her head caused bruises and contusions, according to the medical examiner. In a conversation with Megaphone, Zahraa revealed that she sought the help of the Hermel police station during her assault, but the officer who responded to her call did not react although he could hear her screams and the beating. She met him again when she filed her complaint, and asked him: "How could you be so indifferent and neutral while I was asking for your help? What if I died?" The officer argued that he had been unable to leave the premises of the police station.

Lebanon – [Lebanese lira bounces back as regulator improves Sayrafa exchange rate](#)

The Lebanese pound bounced back on Wednesday night on the parallel market after the central bank said it would begin selling US dollars in cash at the improved rate of 70,000 pounds on its Sayrafa trading platform from March 2. The announcement by central bank Governor Riad Salameh came as the parallel market exchange rate for the local currency hit yet another all-time low of 90,000 to the US dollar on Wednesday. But after the move by the much-criticised Banque Du Liban, the local currency quickly recovered to about 79,000 to the dollar in less than an hour on the parallel market. The central bank has undertaken similar moves previously to stem the collapse of the local currency, although such measures have previously only worked temporarily to slow the plummet.

Friday
03 March 2023

Lebanon – [CLDH takes action against in response to the abduction and torture of a minor](#)

The Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH) has taken several actions in regard to the case of the minor G.B. who was abducted and tortured by a municipal officer D.S. in Bezbina, Akkar. On February 28, 2023, CLDH notified the Public Prosecutor's Office and called for summoning, investigating, and arresting all the perpetrators involved in the crime based on articles 401 and 544 as well as articles 569 and 572 and what follows of the Penal Code. Furthermore, it is fundamental to place the child under special legal protection for juveniles at risk and prevent any threats to him and his parents. CLDH additionally informed the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) of the aforementioned on March 3, 2023.

Saturday and Sunday
04 and 05 March 2023

Lebanon – [Teachers strike continues: Uncertainty surrounds students' return to school](#)

After three months of a teachers' strike in Lebanon, students are uncertain whether they will be returning to school on Monday. The Teachers' Union has decided to return to work with morning shifts only, after reaching an agreement with the Caretaker Education Minister to provide incentives, productivity allowances, transportation allowances, and other demands. While the union considers the agreement inadequate, they have chosen to accept it to save the school year. However, the problem is that not all teachers will comply with the union's decision. Therefore, schools will open without the presence of several teachers, and students will have to attend classes taught by whichever teachers show up. The Ministry of Education is expected to take action in response to these developments, which could potentially set the education system back to square one.

Lebanon – [Workers in public administrations strike for two more weeks](#)

Lebanese public administrations will be closed for two more weeks with the aim of exerting pressure on the government to improve workers' salaries and remunerations. Today, 80% of these workers receive a salary ranging from 5 or 6 million Lebanese pounds, amounting to 2 or 3 dollars per day after the deduction of taxes and other fees. The strike is supposed to conclude on the 17th of March, and a press conference will be held in Riad Al Solh on the 15th.