



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

20 - 26 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

20 November 2023

CLDH condemns Israeli attacks on journalists in Lebanon

Exactly a month after Israel targeted journalists in South Lebanon and killed videographer Issam Al Abdalla, Israeli occupation forces targeted a group of journalists again on the outskirts of Yaroun, hitting the area with 2 rockets. These journalists were targeted despite wearing their press vests. This attack is part of a coordinated action by occupying forces to silence the voices of truth. In Gaza, there is a specific pattern of targeting journalists and their families, in direct violation of the Human Rights Council Resolution on the Safety of Journalists, and of Article 79 of Protocol 1 of the Geneva Convention which considers journalists as civilians to protect. Media personnel are not and should never be a target during armed conflicts and wars. Israel should be held accountable for these repeated violations of International Humanitarian Law in Lebanon and Palestine before the International Criminal Court.

Tuesday

21 November 2023

Two journalists among 8 killed as Israel hits targets in Lebanon

Eight people were killed on Tuesday in Southern Lebanon by Israeli artillery shelling and drone attacks. Among them, 2 journalists, including the correspondent for Al Mayadeen TV and a photojournalist, were killed. Civilian Hussein Aqeel, who was with them, also lost his life. Ghassan bin Jiddo, Al-Mayadeen director, said the journalists were deliberately targeted, "It was a direct attack, it was not by chance," he said. Lebanese politicians also condemned the attack. Foreign Minister Abdullah Bou Habib said, "Lebanon will lodge a complaint with the UN Security Council" asking for the condemnation of "this heinous crime". The Lebanese Press Editors Syndicate also condemned the killing and called for "a formal complaint to be lodged with the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice against Israel. The evidence of Israel's crimes has been captured in audio and video recordings." Hezbollah reported that it retaliated with an assault on an Israeli military intelligence unit with two missiles.

Wednesday

22 November 2023

Five people killed by Israeli strike

At least five people were killed in an Israeli strike in Beit Yahoun, South Lebanon on Wednesday evening. Among the five, the son of the chief of Hezbollah's parliamentary group Mohammad Raad, was killed. The total number of Hezbollah fighters killed since the beginning of the Hamas-Israeli war is now 84. In a visit to Beirut on the same day, Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian warned that if the Hamas-Israeli ceasefire starts but does not continue, conditions in the region will not remain the same, and the war will expand.

Thursday
23 November 2023

Independence Day: Time to end France's protection of Lebanon's ruling elite

Eighty years since Lebanon proclaimed independence, on 22 November 1943, France's sense of neo-colonial maternalism endures. A cornerstone of French foreign policy in Lebanon has been to patronize various political-sectarian factions while turning a blind eye to elite misconduct, which facilitated Lebanon's devastating descent into financial and political chaos. Intrinsic to Franco-Lebanese ties is a willingness from the Elysée to put up with the misbehavior of Lebanon's political establishment in exchange for a French foothold in the country. French multinational corporations have scooped up major contracts across the country, especially French shipping giant CMA CGM which has secured near total dominance over Lebanon's import-export infrastructure after acquiring 100% ownership and management rights of the ports of Beirut and Tripoli. After the August 4 Blast, Macron threatened Lebanon's political leaders with sanctions in the absence of reforms but failed to implement concrete measures. The frailty of French sanctions has served as a benchmark for the pitiful accountability measures imposed by the wider international community. HRW has also reported persistent obstruction by the French in international efforts at the UN's Human Rights Council for an investigation into the Beirut Blast.

Inflation on the rise again in Lebanon

As Lebanon enters its fifth year of economic and financial crisis, inflation has increased according to October 2023 official data. The latter reports that prices have risen 17.2% during this month, compared to only 1.4% in September. This increase is mainly due to the education fees, which increased by 580% in one month. Private schools now demand dollars for education fees, while public schools still ask for Lebanese Liras, but had to raise the amount. Over the past year, official data registered an inflation of 215.4%. Housing fees increased by 411%; water, electricity, and gas by 151.8%, and food and non-alcoholic drinks by 218.1%. Inflation was unequal over the territory: Mount Lebanon governorate had a monthly inflation of 22.3%, while the South only experienced a 9.4% increase in prices.

Friday
24 November 2023

Poverty deprives pregnant women in Akkar of medical follow-up

People living in Akkar, one of the poorest regions in Lebanon, face high difficulties benefiting from medical support for pregnant women. Hospitals are priced in dollars, and most families, if they have a monthly income at all, cannot afford it. Some centers, supported by international donors, are able to reduce their fees to a few dozen thousand liras but are limited in the type of support they can provide, especially in terms of medicine, vitamins, or psychological support. For some families, transportation costs alone are too high to reach medical centers. Lack of care for the mother and fetus can lead to serious complications and diseases for both. A specialist in gynecological surgery and obstetrics stresses that "a large portion of pregnant women who do not receive the necessary health care suffer during pregnancy from anemia, premature labor, preeclampsia, and high blood pressure, and the fetus may be born suffering from a nutritional deficiency". Postpartum care is largely considered a "luxury" and does not receive the attention of the Ministry of Health.

Hezbollah-Israel ceasefire violated after less than 24 hours

The de-facto ceasefire established between Hezbollah and Israel on Friday was broken early on Saturday after a surface-to-air missile from Lebanon unsuccessfully targeted an Israeli drone, prompting retaliatory Israeli shelling. Israeli media reported that the Israeli military responded by targeting "Hezbollah infrastructure". Warning sirens were later activated due to suspicions of a drone entering Israeli airspace. Hezbollah and Israel did not officially sign a ceasefire deal but officials from both sides signaled their willingness to extend the terms of the four-day Hamas-Israel truce to the Blue Line. Friday saw the longest period without fighting along the border since daily clashes began on 8 October, enabling Southern residents to return to their hometowns.

Residents return to Lebanese border as cautious calm prevails

As a cautious calm prevailed over the southern border for the first time in 6 weeks, some displaced residents returned to their homes and checked on their belongings and their crops in South Lebanon. Some discovered their house destroyed by Israeli shellings. The informal ceasefire also provided a crucial window for farmers in border areas to harvest their crops and take them to the market. Farmers had to coordinate with UNIFIL to ensure their fields were free of unexploded munitions, reported Mohammed Hussein, head of the Union of South Lebanon Farmers. Hussein added that olives harvested also needed to be subject to new cleaning procedures, as those in border areas could carry remnants of white phosphorus and its highly toxic smoke. Some returnees were not eager to stay, expecting the fragile peace to be broken at any moment.

UN update on escalation of hostilities in South Lebanon

The United Nations report that, as of 21 November, around 55,500 persons were displaced from South Lebanon due to the "hostilities" along the Blue Line, marking a 19% increase since November 14. 52% of them are females. 71% of them are currently living with host families, 23% are renting houses, while only 2% are housed in collective shelters. As of the same date, the Ministry of Public Health reported a total of 85 killed, and 357 people wounded. Among them, at least 13 civilians died, including the latest deaths of an 80-year-old woman and two journalists this week. In South Lebanon, 52 schools remain closed, impacting more than 6,000 children.



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