



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

16 - 22 January, 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 Jan 2023

Lebanon – Lebanon blast relatives questioned by police after protest

Several relatives of the victims of the 2020 explosion at Beirut's port have been questioned by police after they were accused of rioting and vandalism during protests over the stalled investigation into the blast. Thirteen family members answered a police summons on Monday while hundreds more relatives of blast victims, politicians, and activists protested outside Beirut's police compound, where the questioning took place. Some relatives threw rocks at the Beirut Justice Palace and burned tyres outside the building during last week's protests, as they decried what they say is police interference in the blast probe. Protesters on Monday condemned the country's ruling elite. They say the elite's lock on power has kept its members immune from accountability. William Noun, who lost his brother Joe, a firefighter, in the blast, has been an outspoken activist. Summoned Monday, he later claimed the authorities were trying to exhaust and intimidate the families. Security forces raided his home and detained him overnight on Saturday after he spoke in a TV interview and criticized the judiciary.

Wednesday

18 Jan 2023

Lebanon – Lebanon to take \$116m in loans to solve electricity crisis

Lebanon's caretaker government approved opening credit lines totaling \$116 million to fix the country's electricity grid, Anadolu News Agency reports. "An advance of \$62 million in favor of the electricity sector has been approved," Prime Minister, Najib Mikati, told a press conference in the capital, Beirut. He added that a sum of \$54 million has also been allocated for maintenance works. Lebanon's two main power plants have occasionally broken down and require heavy maintenance. Moreover, Lebanese Energy Minister, Walid Fayad, announced an initiative to solve the country's chronic power outages at a cost of \$600 million over five months to increase electricity supplies to 10 hours per day.

Lebanon – Saved from death at sea, Syrian refugees face deportation

On New Year's Eve, a small boat carrying more than 230 would-be migrants, most of them Syrians, broke down and began to sink after setting sail from the northern coast of Lebanon. Rescue crews from Lebanon's navy and U.N. peacekeepers deployed along the border with Occupied Palestine were able to save all but two of the passengers, a Syrian woman and a child who drowned. For many of the survivors, however, the relief was fleeting. After bringing them back to shore, to the port of Tripoli, where they recovered overnight, the Lebanese army loaded nearly 200 rescued Syrians into trucks and dropped them on the Syrian side of an unofficial border crossing in Wadi Khaled, a remote area of northeastern Lebanon, some of the survivors and human rights monitors said. Once on the other side of the border, the boat survivors were intercepted by men wearing Syrian army uniforms who herded them into large plastic greenhouses. They were held captive there until family members paid to have them released and brought back to Lebanon by smugglers. Human rights monitors say the case of the boat survivors is a troubling new twist in Lebanon's ongoing push for Syrian refugees to go home.

Thursday
19 Jan 2023

Lebanon – [Around 2 million facing food insecurity across Lebanon](#)

Lebanon's first ever Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Insecurity Analysis predicts that the situation will deteriorate between January and April this year, with 2.26 million people - 1.46 million Lebanese residents and around 800,000 refugees - expected to be in the "crisis" phase or worse, needing urgent assistance. The results of the analysis were officially launched by Agriculture Minister Abbas Hajj Hassan, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Representative in Lebanon, Nora Ourabah Haddad, and World Food Programme (WFP) Country Director in Lebanon, Abdallah Al Wardat. "More people than ever before in Lebanon are now dependent on assistance," said WFP's Abdallah Al Alwardat. "These findings are deeply troubling and reflect the dire situation that many people in Lebanon are currently facing." According to FAO's Nora Ourabah Haddad, "The IPC results give us a bleak picture of the food security in the country. They reconfirm the urgent need to transform the country's agrifood systems to make them more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient, and more sustainable."

Lebanon – [Palestinian refugees call on UNRWA to have emergency relief plan](#)

Palestinian refugees in Ein Al-Hilwa refugee camp in Lebanon have organized a protest in front of a clinic run by the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), urging it to have an emergency relief plan in place, Quds Press has reported. The protest was organised by the Palestinian Unified Independent Movement, and dozens of refugees took part. "The protest is part of ongoing action by Palestinian refugees in Lebanon seeking to announce a state of emergency and the need to have an emergency relief, social, health and educational plan in place," explained Ibrahim Mi'ari, a member of the Unified Independent Movement. He added that the cuts in UNRWA's services had a negative impact on the living conditions and healthcare of all Palestinian refugees. "The difficult economic situation in Lebanon has magnified the tragic and difficult conditions of the refugees with an astronomical increase in poverty, unemployment and despair rates." Mi'ari called for everyone with an interest in UNRWA and working for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to declare them to be a disaster-stricken population due to the harsh living and health conditions they endure in the refugee camps.

Friday
20 Jan 2023

Lebanon – [Lebanon to pay UN \\$1.8m arrears after losing voting rights](#)

Lebanon vowed to pay the \$1.8m it owes to the UN's operating budget on Friday after losing its voting rights in the 193-member UN General Assembly. Lebanon is among six countries to lose its right to vote after not meeting minimum contributions, along with Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Venezuela, South Sudan, and Gabon, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said. In response to the suspension, Lebanon's Foreign Ministry said on Friday that the payment process would take place immediately. "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants would like to clarify that all the payment stages of the required amount have been completed," the ministry said. "After the necessary contacts with each of the Lebanese Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, it has been confirmed that the final payment process will take place immediately in a manner that preserves Lebanon's rights in the United Nations." Lebanon previously lost voting rights temporarily in 2020 for failing to pay its share with the UN.

Lebanon – [Teachers of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon protest UNICEF over low wages](#)

Dozens of Lebanese teachers demonstrated in front of the headquarters of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Beirut on Friday to demand better wages, Anadolu News Agency reports. The teachers of Syrian refugee children working in the afternoon classes have been paid by UNICEF, in addition to their salary from the Lebanese government. One of the protesters, teacher Shahira Zaiter, who comes from Baalbek province in eastern Lebanon, said the Ministry has been paying their wages for about eight years without any problems, but that the wages have become very low due to the depreciation of the Lebanese lira. On 10 January, the Ministry of Education decided to suspend afternoon classes attended by Syrian refugee students in public schools, after teachers had ended morning sessions allocated to Lebanese students. On Thursday, UNICEF called on Lebanon, urging the immediate re-opening of public schools to end education disruption due to a strike by teachers in protest of their low salaries.

Lebanon – [More MPs join sit-in inside Lebanon's parliament amid political crisis](#)

More MPs have joined independent lawmakers staging a sit-in inside Lebanon's 128-seat parliament to protest at the ongoing vacuum of power. Protesters held their own sit-in outside parliament in solidarity with MPs angry at the failure to elect a new president. Reformist MPs Najat Saliba and Melhem Khalaf launched their protest in the plenary hall of parliament last Thursday to put pressure on factions to elect a president, nearly three months on from the post falling vacant. Reformist MPs Halima Kaakour and Firas Hamdan joined the protesters on Friday night, in addition to George Okais and Razi Al-Hajj from Lebanese Forces. Khalaf told Arab News, "We are not protesting; we are applying the law. We don't have the right to complain, as the Lebanese people have been living for months without electricity and services." Independent deputy Abdel Rahman Al-Bizri said, "There should be a democratic political breakthrough inside parliament. It is the only solution for the crisis." Al-Bizri believes that the action initiated by Khalaf and Saliba may have helped bring matters to a head after 11 failed electoral sessions. He emphasized that the main purpose of the move was to protect the Lebanese presidential and parliamentary system.