



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

30 January - 05 February, 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.***

***The articles shared in this brief are the liability of their respective news outlets and do not reflect the views of CLDH.***



## LEBANON

**Tuesday**  
31 Jan 2023

### **Lebanon – Lebanon Electricity Shortage: Caretaker government aims to repair grid network**

Lebanon's caretaker government has proposed a plan it hopes could help ease the country's energy crisis. It aims to repair the damaged electricity grid and provide a stable power supply to households. The plan is part of a scaled-down proposal to secure a \$300-million Treasury advance that would use revenue from collected tariffs to repay the Central Bank. Walid Fayyad, Lebanon's caretaker minister of water and energy said, "We are working together to implement the electricity plan, through which we increase supply and provide electricity by increasing the tariff, cheaper at half the price than private generators. We need financing, in the first period, which is the period between bringing the fuel to provide electricity and the period of collecting money." This week, the government approved a treasury advance worth 116 million dollars to purchase fuel needed to operate the country's power plants. It would also pay for heavy maintenance on the two main plants.

### **Lebanon – CLDH releases a statement on the current conflict between judicial authorities**

On January 25, 2023, the Public Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation, Judge Ghassan Oueidat, issued a decision to release all detainees in the Beirut Blast case. This decision constitutes an important legal precedent in regards to the detainees' right to preserve their liberty and not bear the burden of the judiciary and political parties' obstruction of justice. However, it also raises several questions about the circumstances behind it, as it is not the first instance of political interference in the investigation. The political authorities' will to disrupt the case has been evident since the explosion took place and with its referral to the non-competent special tribunals instead of the judicial tribunals. CLDH condemns any political interference in the judiciary and any infringement of judges' powers that aim to achieve personal benefits. CLDH emphasizes the importance of not reinforcing the principle of detention for the complete duration of the trial, which constitutes an exception. It is essential to put the judicial independence law into effect, respect international conventions without any discrimination, abolish special tribunals, as well as restricting the discriminatory powers of the Public Prosecutor.

**Wednesday**  
01 Feb 2023

### **Lebanon – Lebanon's air transport union is joining the strike next week**

The Air Transport Union took part in a meeting of the General Labor Union Executive Board in Lebanon. In a statement, the Union pledged to join the nationwide strike scheduled for Wednesday, February 8th. They urged those concerned to act swiftly to strengthen the state and prevent a more dire situation. They emphasized that the strike must not affect air traffic and protested the poor living conditions in employment, education, and services. This strike will involve several sectors including the land transport sector, independent businesses' unions, governmental hospitals, and teachers' leagues who are calling on the government to assume their responsibilities. The strike is a show of solidarity for the transportation sector and is expected to escalate if their demands are not met. The nationwide strike is poised to have a major impact and bring attention to the grievances of the participating sectors.

### **Lebanon – [Lebanon devalues official exchange rate by 90 percent](#)**

Lebanon has devalued its official exchange rate for the first time in 25 years, weakening it by 90 percent but still leaving the local currency well below its market value. The central bank confirmed the new official rate of 15,000 pounds per United States dollar on Wednesday, scrapping the rate of just more than 1,500 pounds at which the currency was pegged for decades before the currency collapsed. The pound has crashed in the past few years, with many Lebanese pointing to mismanagement by the country's ruling elite and decades of corruption that led to a financial meltdown in 2019. Lebanese officials have described the adoption of the new official exchange rate as a step towards unifying an array of rates that have emerged during the crisis. But market participants said the pound was changing hands at about 60,000 per dollar on Wednesday on the parallel market, where most trades take place. Since the economic downturn, Lebanon's cash-strapped banks imposed informal limits on cash withdrawals in dollars, with most depositors losing access to their savings. The new rate will be applied to limited withdrawals in local currency from US dollar accounts. It is also due to be applied to customs duties in a country that depends heavily on imports.

### **Lebanon – [Lebanon calls for removal of barbed wire erected by the Israeli regime at the border](#)**

The Lebanese army called for the removal of barbed wire erected by the Israeli regime in a disputed area on Lebanon's southern border. The call was made during an extraordinary meeting of officers from the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Lebanese and Israeli armies at the UNIFIL headquarters in Ras Al-Naqoura, southern Lebanon. "The need to remove the barbed wire recently placed by the Israeli enemy in the area that Lebanon has maintained on the Blue Line in the town of Adaysah was stressed during the discussion," said the Lebanese army. Lebanon also wants the Israelis to remove the fence on Ras Al-Naqoura hill north of the Blue Line, as well as the concrete wall in the same area between Lebanon and occupied Palestine. During the meeting, the Lebanese representatives took the opportunity to repeat the need for the Israelis to withdraw from all the occupied Lebanese territory.

### **Lebanon – [CLDH releases a statement on the recent attack on the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International \(LBCI\)](#)**

On the evening of the 22nd of January 2023, the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI) was attacked by unknown parties who threw a grenade at its studios. The attack took place following the first episode of the program "تعاقلو بيزعل", which was prepared and presented by Hussein Kaouk and Mohammed Dayekh. CLDH condemns the apparent violation of freedom of expression and fears that these attacks, which may be dismissed by the judiciary, will turn into repeated attacks on the media sector and its employees without any accountability. As such, CLDH calls on the Ministry of Information to take the necessary steps to protect the Lebanese media sector as well as the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution. It also calls on the judiciary to take the necessary steps to achieve justice for this media institution and the program's creators who have been subjected to flagrant violations.

### **Lebanon – [Lebanon's money changers close doors for fear of being shut down](#)**

The money changers on Beirut busy Damascus Street, which are usually full of customers swapping sought-after dollars for the national pound, were empty on Thursday as the doors to most of the money dealers were shut. Money changers and their cash counters have become a central plank of Lebanon's daily life, as one of the only ways to obtain US dollars in the economically devastated country or to swap the hard-won greenback for pounds; they form the so-called black market – or parallel market. Unlike official rates fixed by the central bank, the price at the exchanges – hovering around 63,000 Lebanese pounds against the US dollar on Thursday – is the most representative of the actual value of the currency. As the currency fell to unprecedented lows against the dollar in recent weeks, changers are being targeted on the grounds that they are again speculating and driving up inflation. On Wednesday, the police arrested two people in Baalbek after a raid on an unlicensed operation for "practising illegal money-exchange operations", the state-run National News Agency reported. Fear of a new wave of government reprisals led most of Damascus Street's operators to shut up shop, said one of the few traders still open on Thursday morning. "Most money changers are closed today because they are scared of police raids and being thrown in jail," he explained.

**Lebanon – [Snow spell adds to pain of Syrian refugees in Lebanon](#)**

A snow spell is worsening the already harsh living conditions for thousands of Syrian refugees in northern Lebanon, Anadolu reports. There are around 80,000 Syrians living in refugee camps in the northern town of Aarsal, along with 40,000 others on the outskirts of the town. Their living conditions in the camps have worsened in recent days after a severe cold wave hit the country amid heavy snow and rainfalls. A 45-year-old Syrian refugee, who gave his name as Abu Mohamed, termed the conditions of refugees in Lebanon as "tragic". "We live in very tragic conditions amid the freezing cold in Aarsal," he told Anadolu. "Our tents have been buried in the snow," he said. "All refugees suffer from severe cold amid lack of all means of heating. We find nothing to warm ourselves but to burn down our clothes."

**Lebanon – [Cancer patients in Lebanon fear death due to lack of vital medicine](#)**

Dozens of cancer patients in Lebanon staged a demonstration on Saturday in Riad Al-Solh Square near the headquarters of the prime minister to highlight the unavailability of drugs in pharmacies and hospitals. Protesters held banners saying, "We will tell God everything" and "Medicine will be available when you stop your corruption." The patients' protest on Saturday coincided with World Cancer Day. Joe Salloum, president of the Lebanese Order of Pharmacists, condemned, along with the Barbara Nassar Association for Cancer Patient Support, "the genocide committed against the patients by depriving them of cancer medication." Salloum is one of the organizers of the protest taking place in Beirut. Karim Gebara, head of the Lebanese Pharmaceutical Importers, believes there is a drug shortage because the funds available for their purchase are not enough to cover the needs of all Lebanese patients. Gebara said that importers no longer play a key role when it comes to the amount of imported drugs. Instead, it is the Health Ministry that decides the quantity and type of drugs and who will receive them, Gebara added. Patients and activists supporting them wore black during their protest on Saturday, mourning cancer victims who died last year because they could not receive their treatment on time.