



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

13 - 19 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
13 March 2023

[Private School Teachers Union Announces Strike in Lebanon](#)

The Private School Teachers Union in Lebanon has announced a strike in all private schools in the country on Tuesday, March 14, 2023. The union issued a statement stating that they have been left with no other choice but to go on strike due to the government's failure to respond to their demands. The union has been asking the government to allocate a grant of ten billion Lebanese pounds to the pension fund for private school teachers, but their requests have been ignored. The retired teachers are currently suffering from a humiliating and degrading situation, as they are unable to provide for their families' basic needs and medical care.

[Thousands of Lebanese households unsubscribe from EDL](#)

According to a source at EDL, more than 2,000 households throughout the country are seeking to unsubscribe from the public network each day. Following a sharp increase in the rates for electricity provided by state supplier Electricité du Liban (EDL), many subscribers are rushing to the provider's offices to cancel their contracts, a source within EDL's administration told L'Orient-Le Jour. The tariff, that will be priced according to the Sayrafa exchange rate, is divided into three parts: a fixed subscription of up to \$7.45, a \$0.10 charge per kWh for consumption below 100 kWh and a \$0.27 charge per kWh for consumption exceeding 100 kWh. This increase was made due to the continuously fluctuating fuel prices, yet it does not ensure a 24-hour electricity service as EDL's generators only work for 4 hours a day.

Tuesday
14 March 2023

[Lebanese pound hits historic low of 100,000 to dollar: dealers](#)

The Lebanese pound sank to a historic low against the dollar on the parallel market Tuesday, foreign exchange dealers said, as banks in the crisis-hit country resumed an open-ended strike. The Lebanese pound, officially pegged at 15,000 to the dollar, was trading at 100,000 against the greenback, dealers said – a dizzying plunge from 1,507 before the economic crisis hit in 2019. The currency's market value was at around 60,000 to the dollar in late January. Tuesday's low marked another somber milestone in an economic meltdown that has pushed most of the population into poverty. Despite the gravity of the crisis, the country has no president and only a caretaker government amid persistent deadlock between rival alliances in parliament.

[World Bank sets conditions for Lebanon to access electricity funding](#)

Lebanon has to audit its state electricity company among other reforms the World Bank has required before it will consider funding Lebanon's worn-down electricity sector, the bank's regional vice president Ferid Belhaj said on Tuesday. Public provision of electricity in Lebanon has been poor since the country's 1975-90 civil war but has deteriorated further over the last three years as the financial crisis has debilitated the government's ability to secure fuel. Lebanon has been hoping to access World Bank funding but Belhaj told the country's caretaker premier Najib Mikati that Lebanon still needs to audit Electricity du Liban (EDL), activate its newly announced regulatory authority and recover provision costs through collection, according to a statement by Mikati's office, which did not have comment from the prime minister.

Wednesday
15 March 2023

Lebanese students cannot afford school closures: UNICEF

In a statement welcoming schools reopening after two months of school closures, UNICEF has stated that over 450,000 children are now back at school and learning. Along with the international community, the organization supported Lebanon's Ministry of Education and Higher Education to ensure the return for in-person learning and teaching for children, teachers, and schools. The previous week, UNICEF disbursed \$13.7 million to 1074 public schools, including 342 afternoon shifts, to contribute to School Funds and Parent Council Funds and initiated a first payment of the productivity allowance for 13,160 special contracted teachers and administrative staff. The statement added that the organization also issued the salaries of special contracted teachers, mentioning that investment targeting vulnerable children to access education, which "is essential given it has been stalled for the last four years." The organization said that getting more students in school, around 700,000 out-of-school children, requires a multi-year investment from Lebanon's Government.

In Lebanon, UN deputy chief explores first-hand, challenges facing children and persons with special needs

During a visit to a center for street children in Beirut, Lebanon, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed said: "Children should be allowed to be children. They should enjoy their rights to education, to health, to safe environment and to not feeling the pressures of an adult at a child's age." She added: "We want to make sure that street children are an issue of the past. That's what we will be working for day-in and day-out." Recognizing the unprecedented economic hardship that people in Lebanon are facing and renewing the UN's commitment to supporting Lebanon to respond to increasing needs, are two main issues addressed by Ms. Mohammed while on a two-day official visit to Lebanon for the opening of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, organized by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA). On the margins of the forum, Ms. Mohammed made two visits, one to a center for street children and the other to a community kitchen run by women with disabilities, to explore, first-hand, challenges faced by two of the most vulnerable groups in Lebanon as a result of multi-layered crises that have left an estimated 80 per cent of the population residing in the country struggling with multidimensional poverty, which considers dimensions other than income, such as access to health, education and public utilities.

3500 doctors left Lebanon after the economic crisis

The head of the Lebanese Order of Physicians Youssef Bakhsh confirmed that 3,500 doctors, i.e. approximately 25-30% of the Lebanese medical body, left Lebanon due to the economic, financial and political crisis. In an interview with LBCI today, Bakhsh noted that a child died at birth, because there was no specialist for his condition, although 93% of doctors in Lebanon are specialized. As for the cost of doctor's visits, Bakhsh indicated that the pricing is not subject to a clear mechanism. The syndicate recommends that the price to see a specialist be set at \$25, and a generalist at \$20, provided that the amount is paid in Lebanese pounds.

5 out of 37 water samples are fit for use in Akkar

On Wednesday, the crisis cell of the federation of municipalities of Jerd al-Qaitaa in Akkar, met with representatives of local associations to develop a roadmap to address the mismanagement and pollution of water in the region, after it found 32 out of 37 water samples contaminated. Akkar municipalities are having difficulty securing water in homes. The municipality of Meshmesh spent two-thirds of its annual budget to secure 4 hours of water in just one month, before even examining whether the water was clean or contaminated. This forces the residents to choose between resorting to contaminated sources or dispensing with water altogether. Contaminated water has recently accelerated the transmission of diseases across regions, especially cholera, which spread throughout Lebanon in just two weeks, because of domestic use water mixing with sewage water.

Thursday
16 March 2023

[Lebanon central bank head questioned in corruption hearing](#)

Lebanon's central bank governor Riad Salameh was questioned in Beirut on Thursday in a hearing attended by European officials visiting the country as part of their probe into whether he embezzled vast sums of public funds, three sources said. The 72-year-old governor, whose 30-year tenure at the bank is to end this summer, was interrogated for nearly six hours by a Lebanese judge relaying questions submitted by French and German officials, a judicial official said. The official said Salameh had "calmly" answered questions about Forry Associates, a firm owned by his brother which received commissions from the central bank. European prosecutors, who have yet to file formal charges, suspect the central bank collected those commissions as a fee from bond buyers and then transferred the funds to Forry. The judicial official and another source familiar with proceedings said Salameh came without a lawyer on Thursday and that a second hearing was scheduled for Friday morning. Salameh is being investigated alongside his brother Raja in Lebanon and in at least five European countries over accusations of stealing hundreds of millions of dollars over more than a decade and laundering some of the proceeds abroad. They both deny wrongdoing. The governor says the accusations are part of an attempt to scapegoat him for Lebanon's financial meltdown.

Friday
17 March 2023

[Education crisis in Lebanon spells 'disaster'- Video report](#)

The United Nations says a third of Lebanon's children are not attending school. The country's economic crisis is rippling through the education system, which is threatening to collapse. The hardest hit in the disruptions are Syrian refugees.

Saturday and Sunday
18 and 19 March 2023

[Fatmata A woman migrant worker killed by neglect and abandonment: 9 months of suffering and agony in Lebanon](#)

Fatmata, a domestic worker, arrived on April 22nd, 2022, from Sierra Leone to Lebanon. Shortly after she arrived, she fell ill. Her sponsor (Kafeel) took her back to the agency, which subsequently ignored her need to be examined. They also disregarded Fatmata's right to health coverage stipulated in the employment contract, and asked her family to buy medicines for her. Fatmata was placed in an unsafe house and starved by the agent, where she was given a piece of bread and some water a day. As her health deteriorated, the agent left her in front of her country's consulate in Jnah before being taken to her friends' house. After several attempts, the International Organization for Migration responded to her call for help and transferred her to Al-Sahel hospital where she was diagnosed with a chronic disease. She was transferred back to her friends' house without any help. Several Lebanese hospitals refused to welcome her because her disease was contagious. She passed away on January 28, 2023. The cost of transporting her body back to Sierra Leone, was estimated to be 8000 USD. The agent asked the family to pay 3600 USD to transport her, but they were unable to obtain such an amount. They felt pressured and had no other choice but to agree on burying her in Lebanon.