



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

23 - 29 OCTOBER, 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

**Monday**  
23 October 2023

### **International news agencies withdraw from Southern Lebanon**

The last international news agencies withdrew their correspondents from Southern Lebanon. The media gradually withdrew following the killing of Reuters photographer Issam Abdullah and the wounding of six of his colleagues from Agence France-Presse and Al-Jazeera. This withdrawal resulted in most agencies broadcasting images from the Israeli side of the border. Only correspondents of Arab and local channels remained on the Lebanese field, but their movement was restricted to the maximum extent. These measures raise doubts about the media isolation of the Lebanese side in the clashes and the level of responsibility of the Israeli intimidation of journalists in this isolation.

**Tuesday**  
24 October 2023

### **Situation of displaced in South Lebanon 'unsustainable'**

Officials in Sour warned that the situation of the emergency shelters housing thousands of internally displaced people following fighting between Hezbollah and Israel over the border is “unsustainable”. Over a thousand individuals have taken shelter in three schools, while 5,000 others live in private apartments around the city - more are expected to be displaced unregistered. The displacement has resulted in poor access to sanitation and medication. In shelters, up to 15 individuals have to share a single room, and hundreds of families share just eight toilets with no shower available. This caused a scabies outbreak in shelters. A further break of skin diseases is likely. The UN said on Monday that around 19,000 individuals have been internally displaced in Lebanon since the beginning of rocket exchanges over the Southern border. The lack of sufficient supplies, strengthened by a four-year-long economic crisis, forced some displaced people to return to their villages to retrieve essentials, despite the risk of coming under Israeli shelling.

**Wednesday**  
25 October 2023

### **Two die in fire during mutiny in Ehden police station**

A fire during a mutiny at a police station in Ehden left two detainees (of Lebanese and Syrian nationality) dead. Two others, of Ethiopian and Kenyan nationality, were injured and hospitalized to be treated for smoke inhalation. The Civil Defense, policemen, and local residents mobilized to extinguish the fire. The circumstances of the incident remain unclear. Lebanese prisons are grappling with extreme overcrowding, with an occupancy rate reaching over 320% according to the Interior Ministry. In September, detainees at the Sour prison self-mutilated to protest against their detention conditions, demanding better food, improved hygiene, and more rest time.

Thursday  
26 October 2023

### Medicine importers warn the Lebanese: Storage “will create a severe shortage”

The Syndicate of Drug Importers and Warehouse Owners called for not storing medicines at home, stressing that their stock is sufficient for months, according to a “comprehensive survey of the drug stock at the present time” conducted by the union. Despite the increased tensions in the South, drug shipments continue to be imported. The union is also working on ensuring alternative importation paths if Lebanese ports are blocked, especially by sea from Cyprus or by air from the Emirates. It calls Lebanese residents “not to worry and rush to stockpile medicines”, warning that “this will create a severe shortage of medicine and will prevent a number of patients from obtaining their medicines, which may plunge Lebanon into the same crisis that it went through in late 2020 when a large number of citizens stocked medicines”.

### Bou Habib meets his counterpart in Damascus

Caretaker Foreign minister, Abdullah Bou Habib, visited his Syrian counterpart Faisal Al-Miqdad in Damascus. The visit was scheduled before the beginning of the Gaza war to discuss the presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and cross-border movements. Bou Habib proposed that Syrian convicts serving their sentences in Lebanon could complete their sentences in Syria due to overcrowding in Lebanese prisons. He also called for strengthened border control to fight cross-border movements to Lebanon. The Syrian minister repeated that Syria was open to returnees and claimed that people are in Lebanon only due to the financial support they receive.

### Continued attempts to extinguish a fire caused by Israeli shellings

A major fire broke out near Alma Al-Shaab in South Lebanon, reportedly after Israeli white phosphorus shells were bombed. A spokesperson of the Civil Defense reported that Israel was preventing firefighters from reaching and extinguishing the fire. “With our well-visible firefighter trucks, we are bombed each time we come close to the periphery of the fire,” he said. Strong winds, a heat wave, and the presence of landmines increased the risk of propagation, according to Andrea Tenenti, spokesperson of the UNIFIL, which said it supported the Lebanese authorities in extinguishing the fire. The fire reached the proximity of border villages and olive groves. The use of white phosphorus in Lebanon was confirmed by Human Rights Watch, despite Israeli denials. The human rights organization has added that such use “exposes civilians to heavy risks” and is illegal if used against civilians.

### In Ain el-Hilweh, a limited security setback leaves one dead and several wounded

A limited security incident violated the calm of Ain el-Hilweh camp, with gunfire resulting in one dead person and several wounded. The shooting caused a state of panic among the residents of the camp, especially those residing in Al-Fawqani Street and its surroundings. Families fled outside the camp for fear that the situation would further aggravate, as occurred at the end of July and in September. The Palestinian Joint Action Committee reportedly intensified its actions, reaching a ceasefire, a decrease in tension, and the restoration of calm in the camp. The reasons for the shooting remained unclear, with conflicting information reported. Some claimed that an assassination attempt targeted the brother of an Islamist activist and sparked the launch of gunfire and missiles by Islamist militants towards the Fatah movement center on Al-Fawqani Street. However, the Fatah denied any connection to the incident and called for “restraint and the return of calm”.

**Friday**  
27 October 2023

### **Too poor to run: Lebanese families stuck in the middle of border clashes**

Lebanon's dire financial crisis has left some families unable to flee the cross-border clash between Israeli forces and Hezbollah, exposing them to danger as shelling continues. Most families have little to no savings to secure new accommodations and belongings, and some report having too little money to move to another city by car. Others prefer to stay, fearing their livestock would die if they leave. The clashes have also cut off the border towns from the surrounding area. For example, delivery trucks do not make the trip to Dahayrah anymore. Residents are subsisting on the crops they grow, but risk lacking essential goods. The few people who remain also face repeated shelling, including of white phosphorus.

**Saturday and Sunday**  
28 and 29 October  
2023

### **Nearly 29,000 displaced in Lebanon due to clashes on Israeli border**

The UN's International Organization for Migration reported that 29,000 people were internally displaced in Lebanon, mainly from the South, following clashes between Hezbollah and Israel. This figure has risen by 37% since October 23. The death toll in Lebanon increased to at least 58 individuals, most of them Hezbollah fighters, but also at least 3 civilians and Reuters journalist Issam Abdallah.

### **RSF video investigation into the death of Reuters reporter Issam Abdallah in Lebanon: the journalists' vehicle was explicitly targeted**

On Friday 13 October, two strikes hit the exact spot where seven journalists were standing on the border between Israel and Lebanon. The first strike killed Reuters photojournalist Issam Abdallah and seriously injured Agence France-Press correspondent Christina Assi, while the second (which hit the ground approximately 30 seconds later) destroyed an Al Jazeera vehicle, injuring several journalists. Based on videos and ballistic analysis, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) reports that the strikes came from the Israeli border. The organization considers it "unlikely" that the journalists were understood to be combatants, considering their location, clothes, and vehicle's PRESS marks. Also, an Israeli Apache helicopter flew over the scene a few seconds before the strike. Five days earlier, on 9 October, other journalists reported suffering a similar attack in southern Lebanon when an Israeli helicopter flew over them before a missile fell next to their car, which also bore the word "press".



**UNDEF**  
The United Nations  
Democracy Fund



**FNUD**  
Fonds des  
Nations Unies  
pour la démocratie

FUNDED BY THE UNITED NATIONS DEMOCRACY FUND