



HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

23 - 29 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
23 Jan 2023

Lebanon – [Lebanon's restaurants charge in scarce dollars as pound sinks to new low](#)

Lebanese people are being charged different prices for the same food items as the Lebanese pound continues to lose its value. Within three hours, the price of a customer's coffee at Goro restaurant jumped by 9,000 Lebanese pounds, the equivalent of \$0.18 on the parallel market, where the national currency topped the symbolic 50,000 mark last week. "Ordered my first coffee at 10:30 AM, the second one at 1 PM. The Lebanese Lira lost value during that time, resulting in two different charges," he wrote in a tweet that was widely shared on social media. The sudden increase is due to the restaurant pricing its menu in dollars. Customers can pay the bill in dollars or in the local currency, but at the parallel market rate, which remains highly volatile and can undergo sudden changes in mere hours. More and more restaurants have switched to the dollar instead of the Lebanese pound, which is gradually disappearing from menus. Restaurants say they have no choice. "Because of the volatility of the Lebanese pound, our suppliers are only accepting dollars," said Kamal Darwich, a manager at Onno in Beirut. He said the price increases also covered rocketing expenses such as gas and electricity, as restaurants have to rely on expensive private generator suppliers in the near absence of state electricity. Salaries, however, are not entirely in dollars but are paid as a mix of both currencies.

Tuesday
24 Jan 2023

Lebanon – [Lebanon inflation rate at highest since 1987 at 171%](#)

Inflation in Lebanon surged to 171.2 percent in 2022, the highest in nearly four decades, as the country continues to grapple with its worst economic crisis, according to official data. Hyperinflation continued for the 30th consecutive month, rising annually to about 122 percent in December from the same month a year earlier, led by triple-digit increases in communication, food, water, and energy costs, the Central Administration of Statistics' Consumer Price Index showed. The CPI increased about 6.73 percent from November 2022. Inflation in the country remains far from a peak of 741 percent that was hit towards the end of 1987, during Lebanon's last civil war from 1975 to 1990. The country was expected to post the second-highest inflation rate in the world last year, behind Sudan, which was forecast to see its CPI hit about 180 percent, according to Fitch Solutions. Lebanon's crisis has been described by the World Bank as one of the worst in modern history, leading to a surge in unemployment, more than half the population sliding below the national poverty line, and waves of citizens leaving the country.

Wednesday
25 Jan 2023

Lebanon – [Lebanese pound loses 13% of its value in less than a week](#)

The Lebanese pound experienced a sudden decline, reaching 57,000 against the dollar on Wednesday morning, marking a loss in value of 13 percent in a week. Once pegged at around 1,507 to the US currency, the Lebanese pound has now lost 97 percent of its value since the start of an unprecedented financial crisis caused by a drastic shortage of dollars, which plunged 80 percent of the population into poverty. The sudden drop in the exchange rate caused sporadic protests throughout the country. In Beirut, the Depositors' Outcry Association, an advocacy group for depositors, called for a sit-in outside the Central Bank headquarters in Beirut, which was joined by a small group of protesters on Wednesday. Lebanon's National News Agency reported that demonstrators blocked several roads across the country on Tuesday and Wednesday to protest the worsening living conditions and soaring inflation. The inflation surged to 171 percent in 2022, one of the highest levels in nearly four decades, according to the Central Administration of Statistics inflation figures released in January.

Lebanon – [Victims' Families Despair as Blast Suspects Freed](#)

Lebanon's general prosecutor on January 25, 2023, ordered the release of all suspects detained in connection with the catastrophic explosion in Beirut's port on August 4, 2020, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International said today. The unprecedented move amid rampant political interference bypasses the ongoing criminal investigation into the explosion. To help secure a path toward truth and justice for the victims, the United Nations Human Rights Council should urgently pass a resolution to create an impartial fact-finding mission into the Beirut port explosion. Nearly two-and-a-half years on, the domestic investigation has stagnated with no progress in sight due to multiple legal challenges from the politicians charged in the case aiming to replace the lead investigator, Judge Tarek Bitar.

Thursday
26 Jan 2023

Lebanon – [Clashes in Beirut as crowds rally outside Justice Ministry over blast probe](#)

Angry protesters sought to break into Lebanon's Justice Palace on Thursday as they demonstrated against yet another judicial blockage in the investigation into the deadly Beirut port blast. The explosion in 2020 killed more than 220 people in Lebanon's capital, injured thousands, and destroyed many parts of the city. The protest came a day after Lebanon's chief prosecutor ordered the release of all those detained in connection with the blast and filed charges against Tarek Bitar, the judge leading the investigation. The demonstrators, including family members of the victims, had gathered to show support for Bitar and to register their protest as the country's leading judges later canceled a meeting to discuss the fate of the blast probe. "We want to send a message to the world that the law has died in Lebanon," Mireille Khoury, whose son Elias was one of the victims of the blast, told The National.

Lebanon – [KSRelief continues aid efforts in Lebanon, Yemen, Ethiopia](#)

The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) distributed winter clothes to Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The relief items benefited 2,052 families in need from the refugee and host communities, state agency SPA reported. The assistant supervisor general for operations and programs of KSRelief Ahmed bin Ali Al-Beez met with the Director of the UNESCO Regional Bureau in Beirut Costanza Farina on Wednesday. The pair spoke about ways to enhance cooperation between the two entities and develop educational projects in order to better serve affected communities worldwide.

Saturday and Sunday
28 and 29 Jan 2023

Lebanon – [Lebanon Lawmaker Sit-in Enters the Second Week](#)

Two Lebanese lawmakers entered the second week of a sit-in inside the crisis-hit country's parliamentary chamber, vowing to remain inside until fellow MPs elect a new president. Parliamentarians Najat Saliba and Melhem Khalaf, both independents, began their protest on January 19, after colleagues met and failed for an 11th time to agree on a new president. Lebanon has been without a head of state since Michel Aoun's mandate expired last year, with a caretaker cabinet overseeing the responsibilities of government amid a financial collapse that is stretching into its third year and this week saw the local currency reach a record low against the US dollar. "We are staying here, we won't be leaving" before a president is elected, Saliba told AFP Friday from the parliament. "The state has completely collapsed... there is no government, no financial system, and the judiciary is at war with itself," she said, adding that the pair hoped their sit-in would empower the parliament.