



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN A WEEK

19 - 25 JUNE, 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**  
19 June 2023

**Lebanese parliament approves funding to cover public sector salaries**

The Lebanese Parliament adopted a bill that enabled the funding of LBP 38 billion to cover public sector fees. It includes four months of general administrations' salaries, three months of military personnel salaries and retirees, and a new daily transportation allowance of 450,000 LBP. A second bill was adopted, covering 265 billion pounds for transportation fees for Lebanese University teachers until the end of the current academic year. This parliamentary session was boycotted by 29 Christian and reformist MPs. They considered that the Constitution forbids the Parliament to adopt this legislation if the Presidency is vacant and that the condition of legislating essential matters related to the higher interests of the State was not met.

**The Cybercrime Bureau withdrew its summoning of Nisrine Chahine**

The head of the executive committee of contract teachers in public education, Nisrine Chahine, was previously accused of defamation of caretaker Education Minister Abbas Halabi, following a social media post in which she accused the Minister and Prime Minister Najib Mikati of corruption and clientelism. Earlier, at the end of 2022, the Minister dismissed Chahine, which was criticized by teachers as an attempt to silence criticism. On Thursday, June 15, teachers demonstrated in support of Nisrine Chahine. Later, the Cybercrime Bureau withdrew its summoning. Moreover, the Cybercrime Bureau has regularly convened and interrogated journalists and activists. In March 2023, Lara Bitar, editor-in-chief of the Public Source, was summoned by the Cybercrime Bureau to appear for interrogation. Political leaders have also tried to pressure journalists and activists who show public criticism, jeopardizing freedom of expression. Lara Bitar was summoned after the Lebanese Forces party filed a complaint regarding an article that the Public Source published on the party's responsibility in importing "ecological time bombs" in Lebanon during the civil war. In April 2023, the Coalition to Defend Freedom of Expression called on the Lebanese authorities to take measures to ensure compliance with international norms, such as decriminalizing defamation and prohibiting government institutions from bringing defamation suits.

Tuesday  
20 June 2023

### [UNICEF's new survey sheds light on worsening situation for children in Lebanon](#)

UNICEF published a report based on a survey conducted in June 2023 with families living in Lebanon, both Lebanese and non-Lebanese. First, UNICEF reports that 86% of households do not have enough money to buy essentials, compared to 76% in 2022. 1 family out of 10 now sends children to work, and the figure rises to 28% for Syrian refugee families. This results in difficulties in accessing education, noting that 15% of households stopped sending their children to school, compared to 10% in 2022. Women and girls are particularly affected. For instance, many females fall victim to period poverty, and only half of the respondents said that women and girls had enough "female hygiene items, such as sanitary pads". The worsening economic conditions also result in mental health issues: 2 thirds of respondents reported that their children seemed anxious, nervous, or worried, and that their well-being worsened over the past year. UNICEF welcomes the governmental National Social Protection Strategy, but pushes for increased efforts. It calls on the Lebanese government to "fund a package of social assistance programmes" to bring Lebanon in line with regional social protection standards.

Wednesday  
21 June 2023

### [Rami Adwan returns to Lebanon over accusations of rape and physical violence](#)

The Lebanese Ambassador to France has returned to Lebanon after his mission was ended by caretaker Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib. Since June 2022, two female members of the embassy staff filed complaints over "psychological and physical violence" and rape. After the disclosure of these allegations, Paris requested the suspension of Adwan's diplomatic impunity. In line with Lebanon's traditional policy of not handing their citizens to foreign judicial systems, the Lebanese Foreign Affairs Ministry refused, sent an investigation team, and returned the Ambassador to Lebanon, adding that all elements will be transferred to the Lebanese Justice Ministry. Lebanese politicians benefit from a wide impunity, and their crimes remain largely unpunished, mainly due to corruption and their interference in the judicial system.

### [Lebanese government cancels 'Brevet' for 2023](#)

Mikati's caretaker cabinet announced the cancellation of the "Brevet" official exams for Grade 9 students. The government justified its decision with logistical reasons within the security forces, responsible for ensuring safety during official exams. Amidst a global pandemic and worsening economic crisis, the latter were similarly canceled in 2020 and 2021, but were held in 2022. The crisis has drastically jeopardized the education system in Lebanon. In the last 2 years, students only received an average of 60 days of school, only a third of the international norm of 180 days. This results mainly from strikes that teachers engaged in to oppose the plunge of their salaries. The cabinet was boycotted by the Free Patriotic Movement, which considers it illegal for a caretaker government to meet and adopt decrees.

### [Another movie banned in Lebanon: the latest Spider-Man movie featuring a transgender flag](#)

The Directorate General of the General Security has banned the public projection of the new opus of Spiderman: Across the Spider-Verse in Lebanon. Released on June 2 in the United States, the movie briefly shows a transgender pride flag (five bands of pink, blue and white) in the background. Other movies showing or mentioning LGBTQI+ persons were similarly censored in Lebanon, such as Thor: Love and Thunder, released in July 2022 in the US, in which a character mentions he has two fathers. LGBTQI+ public events or representations are often forbidden by Lebanese authorities, under the ground of "immorality".

Thursday  
22 June 2023

### [French envoy meets political leaders to pave the way for presidential elections](#)

President Macron's newly nominated special envoy for Lebanon and former Defense and Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian have started to meet with Lebanese political leaders in an attempt to find a presidential candidate that is agreed upon by all political parties, eight months after the end of the previous presidential mandate. Le Drian will also host a meeting with the ambassadors of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, and the US, which are the countries that attended a summit in Paris in February to find a solution to Lebanon's political situation. If Macron once supported Sleiman Franjeh, it remains unclear if Le Drian will try to push for this alternative or if he abandoned it. It is likely that Le Drian's visit will be followed by others in the next months.

### [Son of Muammar Gaddafi in hospital after a 2-week-long hunger strike](#)

Hannibal Gaddafi, son of the former Libyan dictator, was hospitalized after his health deteriorated while in prison. He started a hunger strike 2 weeks ago to protest against his detention, which has lasted for 8 years even though he has never been brought before a trial. Following the beginning of the Libyan uprising in 2011, Hannibal Gaddafi fled to Syria, where he was arrested and brought to Lebanon in 2015. He is accused of hiding evidence on the disappearance of Musa al-Sadr in Libya in 1978, founder of the Shia Amal Movement. Amnesty International recently published a report on conditions of detention in Lebanon, highlighting structural gaps in ensuring basic needs and the provision of medical aid to detainees, resulting in worsening medical conditions and deaths. 79.1% of all detainees are held pretrial, resulting in a growing overcrowding of 323%.

### [Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc publishes homophobic statement](#)

Amid LGBTQI+ Pride month, the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc published a statement condemning the influence of "Western erotic perversity" on Lebanese society. It denounced the "abnormal and shocking concepts and manifestations [of sexuality] being marketed to the Lebanese regardless of their affiliations and regions", considering them "contrary to the culture and customs of our people, its national interests and its moral values". Homophobic and transphobic statements are common in Lebanese politics. The Penal Code is sometimes used to prohibit homosexuality under the prohibition of "sexual intercourse contrary to nature" through Article 534. However, courts have taken steps towards decriminalizing homosexuality in recent years. Caretaker Interior Minister Bassam Mawlawi recently urged the General Security and the Internal Security forces to forbid LGBTQI+ gatherings, leading to the cancellation of some Pride events.

Friday  
23 June 2023

### [The United Nations and United States begin cash transfer to Lebanese army staff](#)

The United States and the United Nations began cash distributions to members of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), under the "Livelihood Support Program". Valued at \$55.5 million, the program provides \$100 per month to 70,000 LAF personnels for a period of six months. A similar program started in April, targeting Internal Security Forces (ISF) members. The wages of security forces members have considerably decreased due to the economic crisis and the depreciation of the Lebanese Lira. Similar support to the LAF was previously provided by Qatar. Such support raises concerns about accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations, as the LAF has repeatedly conducted human rights violations, such as extra-judicial deportations to Syria.

### World Bank increases support to Lebanon by US \$300 million

The World Bank approved a \$300 million additional financing to the "Emergency Crisis and COVID-10 Response Social Safety Net Project" (ESSN), which is dedicated to provide cash transfers to Lebanese households and to support the development of a social safety net delivery system. The ESSN was first established in January 2021 with \$246 million to face the Lebanese economic crisis. The Lebanese social protection system is historically regressive, based on universal contribution and limited social protection. The ESSN aims at building a different system that is more protective to poor and vulnerable Lebanese. It will provide over 2 years cash transfers to 160,000 households, amounting to a monthly \$25 flat amount, in addition to \$20 per household member. Additionally, 92,000 teenagers will receive education-dedicated transfers.

### 'The first major wildfire of the season' continues to spread in Akkar

On Saturday, a huge wildfire broke out in a wooded area near Sinn, Akkar, before spreading to neighboring forests. Civil Defense volunteers, environmental activists, and local residents were trying to contain the fire but described it as "out of control". The Lebanese army also supported via the mobilization of helicopters. The cause of the fire remained unclear, and the caretaker Minister of Environment Nasser Yassin called for a judicial inquiry. On Sunday afternoon, the wind continued to spread the fire, and the affected area expanded to more than 40 hectares. Although wildfires were already observed in 2023, especially in March in the North, this fire is the first major one of the year. Worldwide, the risk of wildfires, both in number and in gravity, rises due to global warming, which results in increased temperatures and droughts. In Lebanon specifically, George Mitri, director of the Land and natural Resources Program at the University of Balamand said in early April that his "research is clearly showing a relationship between climate change and fires".

### FEMALE feminist collective celebrated 10th anniversary despite threats

The FEMALE collective organized a festival on June 23-24 at the Beirut Hippodrome to celebrate its 10th anniversary, under the slogan "Loud, Proud, Feminist". Roundtable discussions were held on women in business, politics, sport, medicine and technology, and concerts were also organized. The event was attended by between 1,000 to 2,000 persons. Many threats were addressed to the event, including calls to the security agencies and the Interior Minister to forbid the festival. The FEMALE collective analyzed these messages as "backlash" against the feminist movement, organized by those whose privileges are affected by feminism.



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