



Plenary sitting

B9-0327/2023

5.7.2023

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Lebanon
(2023/2742(RSP))

Pedro Marques, Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Isabel Santos
on behalf of the S&D Group

B9-0327/2023

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Lebanon
(2023/2742(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Lebanon, in particular its resolution of 16 September 2021 on the situation in Lebanon¹,
 - having regard to the press statement of the Delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries on an official visit to Lebanon from 19 to 23 June 2023,
 - having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement of 30 May 2006 establishing an Association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part²,
 - having regard to the EU Council decision of 26 July 2022 to extend until 31 July 2023, the framework for targeted restrictive measures to address the situation in Lebanon,
 - having regard to the statement of 30 July 2022 by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on behalf of the EU on the situation in the country,
 - having regard to the Lebanon-Israel maritime agreement brokered on 27 October 2022,
 - having regard to the World Bank’s Lebanon Economic Monitor, Spring 2023, entitled ‘The Normalization of Crisis is No Road for Stabilization’,
 - having regard to the International Monetary Fund Staff Concluding Statement of the 2023 Article IV Mission of March 2023,
 - having regard to the final report of the EU Election Observation Mission on the parliamentary elections held on 15 May 2022,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the current situation in Lebanon is deeply concerning due to the political, economic, social and financial crisis; whereas Lebanon is a close and important partner of the European Union; whereas this partnership is based on common interests, long-standing historical and cultural ties, regular political and social dialogue and wide-ranging people-to-people contacts;
- B. whereas Lebanon has a vibrant civil society, trade unions, academics, artists and youth

¹ OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 143.

² OJ L 143, 30.5.2006, p. 2.

groups mobilising and calling for urgent reforms;

- C. whereas on 4 August 2020, a devastating explosion of a large amount of ammonium nitrate at the Beirut port caused more than 200 deaths, wounded more than 6 500 people and damaged over 74 000 homes, directly affecting 300 000 people; whereas three year after the blast, the investigation into the causes that led to the explosion has not yet been concluded – largely because of corruption – and those responsible have not been identified or held to account;
- D. whereas corruption is one of the key challenges stifling Lebanon’s development and prosperity, which deepens alienation from and distrust of the political system; whereas corruption is widespread and permeates all levels of society;
- E. whereas since the term of President Michel Aoun ended on 31 October 2022, no successor has been elected;
- F. whereas Lebanon formed a caretaker government on 10 September 2021, but it has still to deliver on reforms to combat corruption and preserve its stability and economic progress;
- G. whereas, despite the crisis, the country managed to organise general elections that were held on 15 May 2022; whereas, according to the findings of the EU election observation mission’, ‘These elections were overshadowed by widespread practices of vote buying and clientelism, which distorted the level playing field and seriously affected the voters’ choice. The campaign was vibrant, but marred by various instances of intimidation – including on social media – and cases of campaign obstruction. The online space was slanted by prevalent information manipulation. The legal framework for campaign finance suffers from serious shortcomings concerning transparency and accountability. While the freedom of speech was generally respected, the media failed to provide equal visibility and balanced coverage’’;
- H. whereas, following an investigation into transactions allegedly involving the Governor of the Central Bank, Riad Salameh, and his brother, the Lebanese public prosecutor launched an investigation and at least six European countries, including France, Germany and Luxembourg, have also opened an investigation into money laundering allegations concerning Mr Salameh; whereas several arrest orders have been issued against him, the latest by France on 16 May 2023 and Germany on 23 May 2023, and Interpol has issued a red notice;
- I. whereas the Council Decision of 30 July 2021 established a framework for targeted sanctions against persons and entities responsible for undermining democracy or the rule of law in Lebanon; whereas these include an EU travel ban and assets freeze for persistently hampering the formation of a government or seriously undermining the holding of elections, for obstructing or undermining the implementation of plans approved by Lebanese authorities and supported by the EU to improve accountability and good governance, including in the banking and financial sectors, or for serious financial misconduct concerning public funds, for acts covered by the UN Convention Against Corruption or for the unauthorised export of capital;
- J. whereas Lebanon has taken in an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees, in addition to

some 15 800 refugees of Ethiopian, Iraqi, Sudanese and other origins registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and approximately 207 700 Palestine refugees;

- K. whereas Palestine refugees in Lebanon continue to face substantial challenges and restrictions, with the majority living in poverty and relying on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) assistance as their main source of livelihood;
- L. whereas the latest UN Security Council resolution on Lebanon, Resolution 2650 (2022), adopted on 31 August 2022, extends the mandate of UNIFIL until 31 August 2023 and recalls the need for a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon in line with the principles and elements set out in Resolution 1701 (2006);
- M. whereas Lebanon has not yet ratified four out of ten fundamental International Labour Conventions (ILO), namely Convention 87 on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, Convention 155 on Occupational Safety and Health, Convention 187 on the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health and Protocol 29 of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention;
- N. whereas a sovereign, united and democratic Lebanon is of crucial importance for the stability, security and peaceful development of the whole of the Middle East; whereas external interference is detrimental to Lebanon's development and stability;
 - 1. Strongly urges the Lebanese Government to respond to the needs and aspirations of the Lebanese population, in particular the implementation of reforms, which are absolutely necessary to overcome the current and unprecedented social, economic and humanitarian crises; expresses grave concern about the obstacles to the implementation of the necessary reforms and calls on the Lebanese leaders to prioritise national interests;
 - 2. Calls on the Government, Parliament, and the Central Bank to act together, rapidly and decisively, to tackle long-standing institutional and structural weaknesses in order to stabilise the economy and pave the way for a strong and sustainable recovery;
 - 3. Recalls that a transparent, independent, neutral and effective investigation into the Beirut port explosion is a priority and must be ensured; urges the Lebanese authorities to respect the judicial procedures and the independence of the judiciary and assist every effort that would allow those responsible for the decisions that led to the blast in the port of Beirut to be properly investigated and held to account; calls for an independent international fact-finding mission to Lebanon to investigate the Beirut explosion within the framework of the UN; insists that those found directly or indirectly responsible must be held accountable for the lives lost and the damage done to the Lebanese people; calls on the EU Member States on the UN Council of Human Rights to take the initiative that can lead to the establishment of a fact-finding mission to investigate the blast in the port of Beirut;
 - 4. Urges the Lebanese Government to undertake all necessary measures to dismantle corrupt practices, including transfers of public capital and tax evasion, to ensure the full independence of the future members of the National Anti-Corruption Institution and to

request the technical support of the international community through UN mechanisms and the UN Convention Against Corruption in order to guarantee both transparency and full accountability to the Lebanese people; recalls that the EU, the World Bank and the UN have demanded the establishment of an independent and transparent judiciary, the adoption of a modern public procurement law and the enactment of an anticorruption strategy, and denounces the lack of action by successive Lebanese governments over the past years;

5. Calls on the Lebanese authorities to enhance governance, anticorruption, and anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) frameworks to regain social trust in government policies and to promote inclusive growth; believes that the ongoing governance diagnostic will provide the roadmap to reform, as well as to enhance the independence and integrity of the judiciary system, and to improve accountability across the public sector; notes, moreover, that the approved procurement law, which is in line with the best international standards, should be implemented promptly, starting with the full functionality of the Procurement Authority and the e-procurement platform;
6. Calls on the Commission and the EU Member States to engage constructively with the Lebanese Government in delivering the structural and sectoral reforms required to unlock significant EU macro-financial assistance and in strengthening our trade relations, on the condition that tangible progress is made on the implementation of necessary reforms;
7. Calls on the Lebanese authorities to resume talks with the IMF as soon as possible in order for reforms to be tangible for people struggling in Lebanon; calls on the Lebanese authorities to provide support for the most vulnerable communities in Lebanon, including through social safety nets;
8. Calls for amending the Banking Secrecy Law in order to address outstanding critical weaknesses; calls, in particular, for relevant agencies to have access to data on individuals' transactions and deposits at client level; calls, in addition, for the legal and institutional framework of the central bank and other banking authorities to be modernised in order to strengthen governance and accountability so that trust in institutions can be rebuilt; calls for the special audit of the central bank to be published in order to increase transparency;
9. Stresses that Lebanon is hosting the world's highest proportion of Syrian refugees; points to the particular responsibility of the Syrian regime in the continuation of this dramatic humanitarian situation; calls for the EU to continue supporting Syrian refugees in Lebanon and hosting communities with increased financial means; recalls the vulnerability of the Palestine refugees in Lebanon, including those displaced in the country from neighbouring Syria; calls, in this regard, for continued and additional funding to UNRWA in order to ensure the continued provision of essential services to the Palestine refugee communities in the country;
10. Notes that the Council Framework is due to expire on 30 July 2023; calls on the Council and the Commission to take immediate action to extend it and work toward its renewal;
11. Calls on the European External Action Service to propose a list of accountable

authorities in Lebanon in cooperation with the Member States; calls for the use of targeted sanctions under the framework adopted by the Council on 30 July 2021 on all persons or entities that fulfil the criteria of that framework and, in particular, the Central Bank's Governor Salameh and members of the Lebanese Parliament undermining the presidential elections and thereby the formation of government, and those hindering the approval of reform laws agreed with the IMF, as well as politicians obstructing justice, particularly the investigation into the port blast;

12. Recalls its strong support for all human rights defenders in Lebanon and their work; is extremely concerned by the increasing emigration of the Lebanese population and consequent brain drain affecting the human resources essential to the reconstruction and recovery of Lebanon and its democratic life; recalls its strong support for those who, although they work in a dysfunctional public administration, do their best in their attempt to ensure basic services to the population;
13. Calls on Lebanon to ratify the remaining four fundamental ILO Conventions still not ratified, namely Convention 87 on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, Convention 155 on Occupational Safety and Health, Convention 187 on the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health and Protocol 29 of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention; calls on Lebanon to ensure the necessary protections against forced labour, as enshrined in national labour law and international human rights standards, including fundamental principles and rights at work, and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention (No 189 of 2011) in order to address the exploitative nature of the kafala system;
14. Calls on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to designate a special envoy to Lebanon who will oversee progress under the agreements undersigned by Lebanon with the EU;
15. Calls on Lebanon's authorities to follow up on the 23 recommendations of the EU Elections Observation Mission for improving the way elections are organised, managed and conducted in Lebanon and to organise the delayed municipal elections;
16. Calls on the Lebanese Parliament to vote on the necessary laws to effectively ensure the independence of the judiciary;
17. Stresses the importance of ensuring the proper application of modified Article 47 of the code of criminal procedure that authorises the presence of a lawyer in all steps of the investigation;
18. Calls on the Lebanese Ministry of Interior to ensure proper protection for the LGBTIQI+ non-governmental organisations and for communities to have the right to freedom of speech and demonstration;
19. Welcomes the signing of an agreement on the delineation of the maritime boundary between Lebanon and Israel; encourages the parties to continue their constructive engagement;
20. Expresses concerns about the continued lack of progress towards a permanent ceasefire and other key provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006); reaffirms its

strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon, in line with recent UN Security Council Resolution 2591 (2021);

21. Reaffirms its strong partnership with Lebanon and its people, anchored in the common values of democracy, pluralism, rule of law and respect for human rights; reaffirms its solidarity with and support for Lebanese civil society; recalls the urgent need to elect a president and to nominate a full functioning government in order to ensure political stability; calls on the Council and the Commission to continue their efforts to support the reconstruction and economic recovery of Lebanon and to establish closer cooperation with and better funding for civil society organisations in the country;
22. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the President of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly, and the Government and Parliament of Lebanon.