

Resolution on the situation in Lebanon

2023/2742(RSP) - 12/07/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution on the situation in Lebanon.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR and The Left groups.

As a reminder, the current situation in Lebanon is extremely alarming and deeply concerning owing to the political, economic, social, financial and health crises, and the state of institutional breakdown. Inflation of electricity, gas and water prices peaked at nearly 600 % in June 2022. The majority of the Lebanese population live in poverty and the authorities are failing to ensure everyone's right to an adequate standard of living, including the right to food.

On 15 May 2022, parliamentary elections were held in Lebanon, after which Hezbollah and its allies lost their majority in the Parliament and Najib Mikati was designated once again by a majority to form a new government, but he failed to do so due to political blockade. The situation persisted until President Michel Aoun's mandate expired leaving Mikati's caretaker government in charge of the country.

In addition, three years after the Beirut port explosion, the domestic investigation into the causes that led to it has been actively obstructed, largely due to abuse of power exerted by political actors including Hezbollah, its allies, the Minister of Justice and the General Prosecutor.

Parliament considered Lebanon's present situation to be caused by politicians across the ruling class and by illegally armed parties obstructing the democratic and constitutional process and called for their **disarmament**. It called on Lebanon's political elite to take their **share of the responsibility** for the current situation in the country.

The Lebanese Parliament is called on to **elect a president** in the shortest possible timeframe in order to begin addressing the political, economic, social, financial and health crises, and the state of institutional breakdown. Parliament expressed regret over the second postponement of municipal elections, contributing to a deepening political stalemate and the dysfunction of state institutions. Parliament urged Lebanon's Interior and Municipalities Ministry to commit to holding the municipal elections within the next six months. It also called on Lebanese authorities to request the deployment of an election observation mission or an election expert mission well in advance of the elections. The Commission and the Member States are called on to provide **technical and financial assistance** to ensure the elections are conducted in a fair and transparent manner. The responsibility to allocate the necessary budget for the elections lies with the government.

The resolution called for the EU to offer Lebanon the deployment of a comprehensive **EU administrative advisory mission** in order to address the urgent need to counter the accelerating breakdown of public administration and basic services by providing an action plan and related necessary support.

Parliament called on the Lebanese government to swiftly implement crucial governance, economic, and financial reforms, which are crucial for political and economic recovery. Key areas of focus include the credible regulation of economic sectors, such as electricity, and the adoption of amendments to the Lebanese banking secrecy law to unlock international macro-financial assistance. Parliament emphasised the need for ongoing reforms in the judiciary to ensure independence, prevent political interference, and eradicate institutionalised impunity.

Recognising the urgency of tackling **food insecurity and energy crises**, Parliament emphasised the need for sustainable solutions. It called for direct humanitarian support aligned with the recommendations of the Food and Agriculture Organization. Additionally, Parliament highlighted the importance of supporting farmers, agricultural workers, and local food production, while also advocating for investments in renewable energy infrastructure in the country.

Regarding the situation of **refugees**, Parliament stressed that conditions are not yet suitable for the voluntary and dignified return of refugees from conflict-prone areas in Syria. The vulnerability of the refugee population in Lebanon is acknowledged, and Parliament called for adequate and predictable funding for agencies working with refugees.

The Council is called on to apply targeted **sanctions** against all of those who are infringing the democratic and electoral process in the Lebanese institutions, those involved in serious financial misconduct and those obstructing corruption investigations or the domestic investigation into the Beirut port explosion or an upcoming international fact-finding mission and seize their assets in the EU. Parliament also called on the EU to add Hezbollah in full and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to its list of banned terrorist organisations.