

## Committee on the Application of Standards

Date: 13 May 2022

**Governments concerned are invited to submit written information on serious failure to report by 16 May 2022.**

### ▶ Information on cases of serious failure to respect reporting and other standards-related obligations supplied by governments

#### Lebanon

#### **Failure to submit reports for two years or more, failure to reply to all or most CEACR comments, and serious failure to submit instruments adopted by the Conference to the competent authorities**

The Government has provided the following written information.

Our country is among the cases identified by the Committee of Experts as cases of serious breaches of reporting obligations or other obligations related to the standards. Furthermore, thank you for giving us the opportunity to submit written information on the national situation regarding these shortcomings.

For the aim towards the preparation of this reply, we contacted the International Labour Office, and more specifically the Standards Department of the International Labour Organization and the Decent Work Technical Support Team that covers our country, to provide us the necessary technical assistance with some clarifications, thus it was useful.

In this regard, we would like to describe the national situation of Lebanon, regarding these shortcomings, during years: mid-year 2019–2020–2021:

“For nearly two years now, Lebanon has been assailed by compounded crises, specifically, an economic and financial crisis, followed by COVID-19 and, lastly, the explosion at the Port of Beirut on August 4, 2020. Of the three, the economic crisis has had by far the largest (and most persistent) negative impact.”<sup>1</sup> (Written in 2021).

“In August 2019, due to various financial hardships, especially the growing probability that the Lebanese Government will default on maturing debt obligations, the black market exchange rate started diverging from the official exchange rate.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lebanon/overview#1>

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanese\\_liquidity\\_crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanese_liquidity_crisis)

“The Lebanese Government’s decision to impose new taxes in October 2019 sparked nation-wide protests by a population exhausted by poor public services, worried about increasing national debt and frustrated by widespread corruption. Since then, the black market exchange rate started diverging from the official exchange rate and Lebanese politics have been marked by political deadlock that has prevented successive governments from implementing urgent reforms. The devastating explosion in the port of Beirut on 4 August 2020 only exacerbated the situation. Since 2021, the country had sunk deeply into a financial and economic crisis. Lebanon’s severe and prolonged economic depression is, according to the World Bank, likely to rank in the top 10, possibly top 3, most severe crisis episodes globally since the mid-nineteenth century. Poverty in Lebanon has spread dramatically over the past year and now affects about 74 per cent of the population. Lebanon is host to approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees, 90 per cent of whom live in extreme poverty. There are also over 210,000 other refugees. The Lebanese pound has lost 90 per cent of its value in the past two years, most people have only two hours of electricity per day, and the healthcare sector is at breaking point. The middle class has been decimated, with many leaving the country or planning to do so.”<sup>3</sup>

“Before the crisis, most civil servants earned salaries worth around \$1,000 and up; today, most are earning around a tenth of that after a currency crisis led the Lebanese pound to lose more than 90 per cent of its value.

Some public sector workers have since the beginning of November 2021, been staging an open-ended strike over better pay and living conditions. Others simply cannot make it into work: A full tank of gas can eat up more than half of their monthly wage and benefits.”<sup>4</sup>

The Head of the International Affairs Department at the Ministry of Labour, Lebanese Republic, responsible for international labour standards reporting, in addition to other functions, was affected, by all these crises mentioned above, directly and indirectly:

- The Department Head was injured by the Beirut blast, in 2020.
- After the Department Head’s sick leave, in 2021, the department started striking, to denounce Lebanon’s declining socio-economic conditions and demand increased salaries. The department officials were present in the offices for one day per week as they could not afford the transportation fees and have not received any salary raise as a civil servant since then.
- At the beginning of this year, 2022, the Government pledged, to give financial aid (1,500,000 Lebanese Pound (LBP)) as half salary added, which is approximately 50\$ as incentive to work 3 days per week). Since then, officials have been compensated just for two times.

Consequently, the Head of Department was working, as priority, on urgent files. It was challenging preparing “online or from home”, the international labour standards reports as a complicated file, because it demands a lot of administrative data research and archives, official correspondences as well as collaboration with other relevant ministries and institutions and colleagues. In addition, it becomes unfeasible with

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS\\_BRI\(2022\)729369](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2022)729369)

<sup>4</sup> <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1284233/refile-lebanons-public-sector-falls-further-into-chaos-and-corruption-.html>

electricity shortage and during the strike because it disrupts operations at government offices and could prompt public office closures.

However, despite all these poor and difficult working conditions, the Head of Department never gave up her role to promote the fundamental principles and rights at work, and to move forward to do some achievements, during this dark situation in our country.

Last but not least, every effort will be made to submit the rest of the reports due to deadline, September 2022.