

Human Rights in an Inhumane State

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As we recently celebrated Human Rights Day, one cannot but reflect upon the steady deterioration of Human Rights conditions in Lebanon, following the full-scale deterioration of the country's economic, political and social standards, quality of life, health conditions, etc. Or, as the French *Le Monde* magazine has so bluntly put it, that Lebanon has “stopped being a state and turned into a beast that cannot be governed¹”, not only because now, obviously, it is militias and corrupt politicians that are ruling the country, but clearly because of the state's clear and “intentional²” failure to adhere to the required reforms, set out by the World Bank as a condition for their support program, drawing itself more and more away from the International community recommendations and into becoming an isolated state.

At such escalating speed, Human Rights are compromised, and deterioration is becoming a domino effect, destroying life conditions in the country one piece at a time, and naturally, the most vulnerable are paying the higher costs!

Not only women's rights have witnessed a horrifying decline by the rise of domestic violence cases, many that amounted to cold-blooded murders as declared by UNICEF, from 21% in 2018 to 26% in 2019 to 35% in 2020³; but the numbers of young females and minors published missing on almost a daily basis is devastating, if we are to take into consideration the small population of Lebanon!

These and other crime rates have not been properly tackled, considering the strikes going on and off that have paralyzed almost every department of the Lebanese public sector for more than two years; notwithstanding, the latest strike announced by the judiciary throughout the whole of Lebanon exceeds more than 400 judges & counting, who refrained from looking into any cases, actions, complaints, even in the General Prosecutor's department and courts of emergency pleas. This is not only a gross compromise of the rule of law under any measure, but it certainly is the live implementation of the principle “Justice delayed is justice denied”! The impact of this announcement on the lives of detainees awaiting trials in custody conditions, for months or years, is life threatening considering the conditions in Lebanese prisons, and even victims seeking police intervention are being cast away by police departments from reporting any complaint simply because General Prosecutors are refusing to answer their calls.

Nevertheless, the ruling class oblivious to all these atrocities, in a hopeless attempt to escape responsibility from generating any solutions to these escalating conditions that are getting worse by the hour, is now targeting and politicizing the cause of Syrian refugees to throw back in the international community's lap to take the blame and -wishfully- trying to pressure it for more aid, loose negotiable conditions, and/or exemption of sanctions that have been targeting the most corrupt throughout recent years.

The Lebanese public is being constantly programmed into thinking that the refugees are responsible for the lack of resources in the country, such as the latest absence of bread from

¹ *Le Monde* "Liban: L'état, monstre ingouvernable" editorial published Nov. 30 2020

² Human Rights Watch, World Report 2022: Lebanon

³ UNICEF Report on Lebanon, Dec. 17, 2021

shops and bakeries, which led in certain areas to selling bread by ID to prove you're Lebanese! This unreasonably exaggerated crisis is because wheat is being smuggled into Syria due to the open borders used for trafficking at large, with little or no control whatsoever. Therefore, most of our supplements/resources sold at a depreciation of 80% of the local currency, are being regularly smuggled to the Syrian markets & sold at higher prices to take advantage of the margin of difference, which was also the cause of lack of basic resources such as the previous fuel crisis.

Now bread is back, as talks are being held to raise its price, while Syrian refugee numbers have not changed, nor the quantity of their consumption. On the other side, Lebanon is also coming up with excuses to try to pull a deal out of their presence.

No one can deny that Lebanon has failed, it has failed on a humanitarian scale and in front of its public that are now migrating in flocks out of the country in the hope of becoming legal refugees in countries that might accept to help them, even before failing those who seek our help!