



# Economic and Social Council

TOPIC B:

## **Lebanese Authority Power Division**

**Undersecretary:**

Alejandro Gallegos H.

# INTRODUCTION

Lebanon is home to different religions, but the most prominent of them are Christianity and Islam, which includes both Sunni and Shia Muslims. Since 1989, the government administration has been divided with the purpose of giving equitative authority to each of these religious groups, but despite its fairness, this split has caused multiple disturbances in the country. A recent result of the poor government oversight was the explosion in the capital city of the country: Beirut, which came as a consequence of poor handling of volatile materials from different sectors . Many prime ministers have resigned and given up on reforming the government, and as a product of this, the goal of organizing power has been postponed repeatedly.

## BACKGROUND RESEARCH

In 1989, after 15 years of civil war, the Tā'if Accords were signed by the three main religious groups in the country: Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shia Muslims. The terms of these agreements included the division of the secretariat in three equal parts, which would then be assigned to each of the parties included. Since then, by tradition, the president must be Christian, the prime minister should be a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the parliament is to be a Shia Muslim. Many militant leaders of the civil war joined other political parties as well. Although the tradition has gone on like this for about 30 years now, it has never been added to the constitution, but there has been no exception up to 2020 (Torbey, 2012). Even though there is an equal representation of these communities, many leaders have resigned their positions because of the tumultuous events that Lebanon is going through.

The new government also included the assignment of different ministries to multiple political parties, but these were handled in a corrupt way. Instead of boosting the economy, political leaders used their control over these sectors to their personal benefit, using the profits made to enrich themselves. An example of this is the garbage sector problem in 2015, which left the streets of Lebanon flooded with garbage piles, even though a report stated that \$420 million a year were invested in its management. The electricity sector was also a victim in that same year, as there were claims that \$1 billion were invested in it, but there were multiple massive blackouts in the country.

The same pattern was seen in the water sector, as there were multiple reports from households that claimed the water was not clean enough to drink (Ellis, 2020).

Another failure of the administration happened in the year 2020, and it resonated around the world: the Beirut explosion of August 4th. Lebanon is a country where not much is produced, but many foreign shipments pass through its ports. The combustion was caused by a very large storage of Ammonium Nitrate, and it could have been avoided with the care for the material. This shipment had been in the commercial port of the capital city for over 7 years, and no government sector wanted to become responsible for its handling (Ellis, 2020). As it was ignored all those years, it was forgotten, and the shipment was left there without any special treatment, until the moment it exploded.

Since the Syrian War, many investors stopped investing their money in Lebanese banks, which were a prominent part of the economy. The different parties could not sustain the industry anymore, so this became an economic problem in the country. Around 2016, protests started to intensify, which meant more pressure on the country's leaders. In 2017, Saad Hariri, the Lebanese Prime Minister, declared his resignation, but he later came back after 10 days to reclaim his position. The banks in Lebanon became even less sought-after, and as a way to compensate, a new tax on the banks' profits was introduced by the administration. Marches became bigger, now including people from many different religious groups, and The Prime Minister Saad Hariri finally resigned again in 2019.

Since the resignation of Hariri, Prime Minister Hassan Diab had been elected, promising to reform the government. His time in the position ended in August of 2020, after the massive explosion in Beirut left thousands of civilians without a home. Prime Minister Mustapha Adib was elected shortly after, On August 31, but he did not last long either. On September 26, 2020 Mustapha Adib made an announcement of resignation that was transmitted on television, failing to reform the government as well (Hubbard, 2020). There has not been another Prime Minister since then, and the administration is falling apart. The country needs another Prime Minister, or a reformed government in order to keep itself from being declared a failed state officially.

## UNITED NATIONS INTERVENTION

The Lebanese Administration was offered economic assistance by the International Monetary Fund, but the different sectors of the government could not agree on a solution to the problem. After the Beirut explosion in August of 2020, the UN launched an international appeal with the goal of providing Lebanon with \$565 million with the purpose of recovering from the economic damage that the explosion caused, and the recovery of its economy, predicted to be a long term plan. Four sectors

were targeted by this aid plan: education, security, health, and food supply. The families affected by the event will be provided with money to seek a new home for themselves. The educational help will consist of rebuilding the damaged schools around the area.

## POINTS TO CONSIDER

- **Lebanon lacks a Prime Minister at the moment, so the balance of religious groups in government positions is disrupted.**
- **Lebanese economy is at an all time low, and there is no actual plan provided by its government to recover.**
- **The last 3 Prime Ministers have promised the reform of the government before their resignation, and that is what the ongoing protests are for.**

## QUESTIONNAIRE

- A. What is my country's position?
- B. What are my country's policies?
- C. What can my country do to solve this issue?
- D. Which countries can my delegation work with?
- E. What are three possible solutions?
- F. What has been done to solve the problem?

## USEFUL LINKS

- <https://www.vox.com/2020/9/21/21445831/beirut-explosion-lebanon>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-18777367>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/10/world/middleeast/lebanon-government-resigns-beirut.html>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Torbey, C. (2012, July 12). Lebanon's sectarian division: What you need to know. Retrieved November 29, 2020, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-middle-east-18777367>

Ellis, S. (2020, September 21). How the Beirut explosion was a government failure. Retrieved November 29, 2020, from <https://www.vox.com/2020/9/21/21445831/beirut-explosion-lebanon>

Hubbard, B. (2020, August 10). Lebanon's Government Resigns Amid Widespread Anger Over Blast. Retrieved November 29, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/10/world/middleeast/lebanon-government-resigns-beirut.html>

Qiblawi, T. (2020, October 22). Protesters wanted change but Lebanon's elite picks veteran to lead crisis-hit nation. Retrieved November 30, 2020, from <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/22/middleeast/saad-hariri-prime-minister-lebanon-intl/index.html>

Lebanon's PM-designate Adib fails to form new government after blast. (2020, September 26). British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News. Retrieved November 30, 2020, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-54307896>

Lebanon: Government. (n.d.). Global Edge. Retrieved November 30, 2020, from <https://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/lebanon/government>

Ochsenwald, W. L. (2020, October 05). Lebanon. Retrieved November 30, 2020, from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Lebanon>

Sancha, N. (2016, December 19). Líbano estrena un Gobierno con 30 ministerios para cerrar 33 meses de vacío político. Retrieved November 30, 2020, from [https://elpais.com/internacional/2016/12/19/actualidad/1482141069\\_014489.html](https://elpais.com/internacional/2016/12/19/actualidad/1482141069_014489.html)

Chulov, M. (2020, September 26). Lebanon's leader Mustapha Adib steps down as hopes for reform collapse. Retrieved December 1, 2020, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/26/lebanons-leader-mustapha-adib-steps-down-as-hopes-for-reform-collapse>

UN and partners launch \$565 million appeal for Lebanon. (2020, August 14). United Nations (UN) News. Retrieved December 1, 2020, from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1070242#:~:text=The%20appeal%20launched%20on%20Friday,economy%20in%20the%20longer%20term.>