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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0328/2023**

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))

**Anna Fotyga, Angel Dzhambazki, Ryszard Czarnecki, Charlie Weimers, Bogdan Rzońca, Elżbieta Rafalska, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Eugen Jurzyca, Assita Kanko, Adam Bielan, Hermann Tertsch**  
on behalf of the ECR Group

**B9-0328/2023**

**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 Lebanon<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the Council conclusions of 14 November 2022, 26 July 2022, 30 July 2021 and of 7 December 2020 on Lebanon,
  - having regard to the statement of the International Support Group for Lebanon of 16 June 2023,
  - having regard to the statement of 8 April 2023 by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell on the escalation of violence,
  - having regard to the joint statement of 7 March 2023 by 38 UN member states calling for an international fact-finding mission to investigate the Beirut explosion,
  - having regard to the statement by the EU Delegation of the European Union together with the diplomatic missions of the EU Member States, Norway and Switzerland to Lebanon of 10 February 2023 on the current situation in Lebanon,
  - having regard to UN Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004), 1701 (2006), and 2650 (2022),
  - having regard to the Lebanese Constitution,
  - having regard to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an Association between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Lebanon, of the other part<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966,
  - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005 triggered the Cedar Revolution, which led to the waning of Syrian political dominance and Syria withdrawing its troops from Lebanon; whereas more recently, since 17 October 2019, popular protests have repeatedly broken out across the country, calling for enhanced socio-economic rights and an end to corruption among the members of the political class; whereas since March 2020, Lebanon has successively defaulted on its sovereign

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 143, 30.5.2006, p. 2.

debt and two successive governments have failed to enact meaningful reforms or present an economic plan to qualify for an International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout;

- B. whereas on 26 July 2021, Najib Mikati, a leading Lebanese businessman, was elected Prime Minister-designate, thereby ending 13 months of caretaker governance, in the hope that he would be able to form a viable government to tackle the crippling financial crisis; whereas Lebanon has for several months been unable to elect a new President amid differences between political rivals and detrimental Hezbollah interference;
- C. whereas Lebanon is facing an institutional breakdown and is undergoing a political, economic, social, financial and health crisis; whereas the current crisis is the biggest threat to Lebanon's stability since the 1975-1990 civil war and the World Bank has described Lebanon's financial crisis as one of the top three global worst in the last 150 years; whereas international efforts are seeking to support the financial and governance sectors and the fight against corruption in the country;
- D. whereas the worst financial crisis in Lebanese history has plunged over 80 % of the population into poverty; whereas severe fuel, medication and electricity shortages greatly affect the lives of ordinary Lebanese people and their ability to fulfil their most basic needs; whereas Lebanon's currency has lost more than 98 % of its pre-crisis value since February 2023 and its GDP has contracted by almost 40 % since 2018; whereas Lebanon's political and financial leaders have reportedly consistently undermined the IMF talks aimed at reaching full agreement on an IMF programme; whereas Lebanon still needs to implement at least 10 structural reforms or prior actions; whereas many Lebanese professionals, including doctors, have relocated and whereas the flight of human capital out of Lebanon has further exacerbated the country's economic collapse;
- E. whereas on 4 August 2020, an explosion at Beirut port killed at least 220 people and injured over 7 000 more; whereas the blast destroyed large parts of the city, with Christian neighbourhoods being the most affected; whereas the explosion left tens of thousands of people homeless and greatly affected formerly vibrant neighbourhoods; whereas according to the World Bank, the blast caused up to USD 4.6 billion in material damage and USD 3.2 billion in associated economic losses; whereas in the aftermath, former Prime Minister Hassan Diab resigned;
- F. whereas the explosion was in part caused by the stockpiling of 2 750 tonnes of a Russian ship's cargo of ammonium nitrate at the port; whereas long-standing corruption, mismanagement and negligence, and the port's management structure allowed for the highly explosive compound to be haphazardly stored at the port for nearly six years despite warnings by local officials; whereas the evidence implicates senior Lebanese officials and Hezbollah as being responsible for the tragedy, as they oversee Lebanese strategic infrastructure and port activities; whereas there has still not been an independent investigation into the blast and systematic problems have allowed those responsible to avoid being held to account;
- G. whereas on 30 July 2021, the Council adopted a framework for targeted restrictive measures to address the situation in Lebanon, providing for the possibility to impose sanctions against the individuals and entities who are responsible for undermining democracy or the rule of law in Lebanon; whereas the sanctions consist of a ban on

travel to the EU, asset freezes for individuals and entities, and a prohibition on making funds available to individuals and entities listed by the EU;

- H. whereas many Lebanese people and international experts recognise links between the excessive and detrimental influence of Hezbollah and the crises afflicting the country and its rapid decline; whereas the Lebanese judiciary is not independent and is heavily influenced by Hezbollah, which is unwilling to allow an independent international investigation into the Beirut port explosion and ensure that those responsible are held to account; whereas Hezbollah's hold on Lebanon is exacerbating the crises afflicting the country and its rapid decline, and has created a 'state within a state' with its rule in the predominately Shi'ite regions of the country;
- I. whereas Hezbollah has assisted and supported the Assad regime in the Syrian war, including by providing boots on the ground and accompanying Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps personnel in organising and training Syrian militias; whereas, as a result of the Syrian crisis, it is estimated that around 1.5 million Syrian refugees and almost 15 000 refugees of other nationalities are residing in Lebanon; whereas 90 % of Syrian refugees are estimated to be living in extreme poverty; whereas rising discrimination and hate speech against Syrian refugees in Lebanon is creating tensions between the communities and strengthening the narrative of returns to Syria;
- J. whereas ever since its inception in 1982 as an Iranian proxy, Hezbollah has engaged in terrorist activities funded by drugs and weapons and people smuggling across the globe; whereas Hezbollah's involvement in the transnational drugs trade, particularly in captagon, precedes the Syrian conflict, but the war has provided it with an opportunity to consolidate its control over captagon production and trade; whereas Hezbollah's political dominance, including its representation in state institutions, and Lebanon's flawed political system that enables corruption, have allowed the group to engage in illicit transactions with impunity;
- K. whereas Hezbollah was found to be responsible for the 2012 suicide bombing in Burgas, Bulgaria, which killed six Israeli tourists and wounded several others; whereas the attack led to the Council's unanimous agreement to list Hezbollah's so-called military wing as a terrorist organisation on 22 July 2013; whereas a distinction between Hezbollah's military and political wings has been vehemently denied by senior Hezbollah leadership who insist that both wings are one and the same organisation; whereas over the last few years, an increasing number of Member States have listed Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organisation, including Austria, Germany, Latvia, Slovenia and the Netherlands; whereas Canada, the United Kingdom, the US, Israel, the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council have also proscribed Hezbollah in its entirety as a terrorist organisation;
- L. whereas on 31 August 2022, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2650 (2022), which extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to 31 August 2023; whereas it recalled the need for the Lebanese armed forces to be deployed in southern Lebanon and for all parties to respect the cessation of hostilities, prevent Blue Line violations and ensure UNIFIL's freedom of movement and access to the Blue Line; whereas Hezbollah has persistently violated the Blue Line; whereas on 1 June 2023, a Lebanese military tribunal formally accused five members of Hezbollah

and the allied Amal Movement of killing Irish UN peacekeeper Private Sean Rooney and seriously injuring Trooper Shane Kearney, as well as lightly injuring two other Irish soldiers, on 15 December 2022, the first fatal attack on UN peacekeepers in Lebanon since 2015;

- M. whereas the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement is based on respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which constitutes an essential element of the agreement;
- N. whereas in 2023, the EU provided EUR 60 million in humanitarian aid to help vulnerable populations in Lebanon; whereas since 2011, the EU has provided EUR 2.7 billion in funding, including almost EUR 860 million in humanitarian aid to respond to the urgent needs of the population; whereas in 2023, the EU launched two new initiatives worth EUR 25 million to support vulnerable people in Lebanon and to fight food insecurity; whereas the funds will seek to provide immediate assistance for 7 245 impoverished Lebanese families; whereas these initiatives were a response to the negative impact of Russia's war against Ukraine; whereas the EU and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development launched a new advisory programme in December 2022 to support Lebanon's private sector by helping SMEs to innovate, grow and become more competitive;
1. Regrets that Lebanon has yet to elect a president after 12 inconclusive rounds of presidential elections, further widening divisions in the nation and demonstrating Hezbollah's harmful grip over the country's future;
  2. Stresses the need for a viable, credible and accountable government; urges the political leadership and Members of Parliament to assume their responsibilities and prioritise the national interest by electing a new president without further delay and by urgently resuming talks with the IMF;
  3. Is deeply concerned that the current political stalemate exacerbates the erosion of Lebanese state institutions and undermines Lebanon's ability to address the pressing socio-economic, financial, security and humanitarian challenges facing the country; stresses the need to respect the separation of powers, in accordance with Article 20 of the Lebanese Constitution; reiterates its support to Lebanon and its people in moving towards Lebanon's much needed recovery and stability and calls, therefore, on the Lebanese Government to urgently expedite the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive and inclusive reform agenda;
  4. Expresses its solidarity with all those affected by the Beirut port explosion; supports the international and local efforts that continue to provide relief to those affected; reminds the Lebanese Government of the need to provide compensation and to rebuild the area without delay;
  5. Calls on the Council and the Member States to consider targeted sanctions under the Council framework adopted on 30 July 2021 against the Lebanese leaders responsible for the country's corruption and degradation, including officials implicated in the ongoing violations of human rights related to the Beirut port explosion and the efforts to undermine accountability; calls on the European External Action Service, in cooperation with the Member States, to propose a reliable and accurate list of the

accountable authorities in Lebanon;

6. Expresses grave concern at the obstruction of justice and rampant political interference in the Beirut port blast investigation, including by blocking a criminal investigation into the explosion; recalls that an urgent, transparent and independent investigation into the Beirut port explosion must be ensured, as well as the urgent need for a UN-led fact-finding mission to Lebanon; calls on Lebanese stakeholders to allow a fair and transparent investigation into the explosion and to refrain from all acts of interference; recalls that those found directly or indirectly responsible must be held accountable for the lives lost and damage done to the Lebanese people; calls for close cooperation with Interpol and for the arrest of those behind the blast, including the Russian ship's owner and captain;
7. Calls on the Lebanese Government to take the necessary steps to prevent another disaster and ensure the protection of the human rights of those affected, particularly vulnerable groups, in the aftermath of the explosion; insists that any aid provided to Lebanon is channelled through transparent and accountable mechanisms;
8. Expresses grave concern about Hezbollah's destabilising and unconstructive role in Lebanese politics, economy and society; stresses the need for all stakeholders to respect the independence of Lebanon's judiciary; condemns Iran's meddling in Lebanese affairs through its substantive support to Hezbollah; calls on Iran to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and independence;
9. Strongly condemns Hezbollah's links to terrorism and drug trafficking in the EU and around the world; calls for the EU and the Member States to designate the organisation in its entirety as a terrorist organisation; welcomes the fact that some Member States have already done so;
10. Strongly condemns the firing of rockets by Hezbollah from southern Lebanon towards civilian areas in Israel; expresses deep concern at Hezbollah's recent violation of the Blue Line between Lebanon and Israel and the continued lack of progress made towards the establishment of a permanent ceasefire and other key provisions of UN Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) in view of the continued tensions along Lebanon's southern border; welcomes recent US efforts to dismantle Hezbollah's outpost on Israeli territory along the Lebanon-Israel border;
11. Expresses support for UNIFIL's work along the Lebanese-Israeli border and strongly condemns all attacks on UN peacekeepers; calls as a matter of urgency for those responsible to be held to account, including to ensure the credibility of the Lebanese Government; stresses the need for the Lebanese armed forces to be deployed in southern Lebanon in order to prevent Blue Line violations and ensure UNIFIL's freedom of movement and access to the Blue Line;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, 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, and the Government and Parliament of Lebanon.