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Written statement submitted by Arab NGO Network for Development, a non-governmental organization on the roster*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[1 June 2026]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



The Economic and Social Rights Situation in Lebanon

The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) welcomes the examination of the human rights situation in Lebanon within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This submission builds on continuous civil society monitoring efforts aimed at ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights in Lebanon and strengthening accountability for state obligations. ANND would like to take this opportunity to raise further concerns on the situation of economic and social rights in Lebanon, particularly considering that the last review cycle took place amid the war in Lebanon, which had devastating impacts in the country and that has faced one of the most severe economic, financial, and social crises in its history and deepening instability.

Triggered by the collapse of an unsustainable economic model in 2019, the crisis resulted in sovereign default, banking sector collapse, currency devaluation, soaring inflation, rising unemployment, and widespread poverty. The Lebanese Lira lost more than 90% of its value, inflation peaked at 171% in 2022 and remained high through 2024, while nearly three-quarters of the population fell under some form of poverty and deprivation. Access to food, housing, healthcare, education, water, and other essential services deteriorated significantly, with around 30% of the population facing acute food insecurity by 2025. The 2020 Beirut Port explosion further aggravated these conditions, while the 2023/2024 Israeli war on Lebanon caused large-scale destruction of infrastructure, agriculture, healthcare, education, water, and electricity networks, with more than 19,500 buildings damaged or destroyed and approximately 1.5 million people displaced. The beginning of the war in Lebanon on 2 March 2026 further exacerbated these conditions, particularly affecting the already weakened health and education systems.

According to Lebanon's Economy and Trade Ministry, daily economic losses in the first two weeks of the March 2026 Israeli war on Lebanon totalled \$60 to \$80 million, excluding damage to residential property, commercial establishments, industrial units, farmland, and infrastructure. The Economic, Social, and Environmental Council estimated daily economic losses at a more conservative \$30 to \$50 million. Commercial activity fell 50% from pre-war levels within two weeks, driven by a 60-80% collapse in sales of nonessential goods. The industrial sector contracted by 50% due to production shutdowns in conflict-affected areas and the suspension of export operations to Gulf states. Agriculture fell by 40% as production in strike-affected regions halted and export channels closed. A concurrent 45% surge in oil prices since the start of the war has increased transportation and shipping costs, stoked renewed inflationary pressure. Furthermore rising unemployment, which stood at 36% before the war, rose afterward to between 43% and 45% wage losses, and accelerating inflation threatened to erode what remained of household purchasing power.

Against this backdrop of overlapping economic, social, and humanitarian crises, questions of social protection and the adequacy of state response have become increasingly central to discussions on Lebanon's human rights obligations and recovery efforts. During the review session, references were made to the implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy(NSPS), the "Aman" programme and to the measures taken by the government including allocation of national resources, development of a unified social registry. Several recommendations welcomed these steps and called Lebanon to continue these efforts. At the same time, these discussions underscored the importance of ensuring that such measures move beyond emergency and donor-driven responses toward a comprehensive, rights-based, shock-responsive, and financially sustainable social protection system capable of addressing the scale and multidimensional nature of the ongoing crisis. Moreover, it is important that Lebanon reviews and updates the financing mechanisms of the NSPS to reflect the current economic context, including rising poverty, currency devaluation, and subsidy removal, ensuring its long-term financial sustainability.

The right to education remained at the center of several recommendations directed to Lebanon, calling for Lebanon to ensure inclusive access to quality education for all children, including refugees and vulnerable groups, strengthening the public education system by closing enrolment gaps. Indeed, the healthcare and education sectors have been severely affected by successive economic, social, and conflict-related crises in Lebanon. Education has been disrupted by reduced teaching days, curriculum cuts, strikes, and wage erosion

affecting teachers, alongside war-related destruction of schools and repeated closures that left hundreds of thousands of students out of school and deepened inequalities. The healthcare system, largely privatized and without universal coverage, has been weakened by the economic collapse, leading to rising costs, medicine shortages, high out-of-pocket spending, and staff emigration. Israeli attacks further damaged hospitals and primary healthcare centers, particularly in the South, with at least 137 recorded attacks causing deaths, displacement of health workers, and reduced service capacity. Overall, both sectors remain undermined by structural weaknesses, underfunding, and compounded crises, resulting in a continued deterioration of the rights to health and education.

The deterioration of economic and social rights is closely linked to structural weaknesses in governance, a rentier and unequal economic model, regressive taxation, and the absence of rights-based public policies. Informal and precarious work remains widespread, particularly among refugees and migrant workers who face legal barriers and exclusion from social benefits, while persons with disabilities, domestic workers, and Palestinian workers continue to face discrimination and limited legal protection. Despite recent reforms, including a 2023 social protection strategy, implementation remains weak and labour institutions ineffective.

Given this context, and in pursuance of to the full enjoyment of economic and social rights by all citizens in Lebanon, we urge the Council to recommend the following

Strengthening international monitoring of economic, social and cultural rights in Lebanon through enhanced reporting, data collection, and follow-up mechanisms.

Aligning international financial assistance and donor engagement with rights-based conditionalities that address structural inequalities and promote social justice.

Supporting the adoption of progressive fiscal frameworks, including fair taxation systems aimed at reducing inequality and expanding fiscal space for social policies.

Set national social protection priorities based on population needs, and encourage donor alignment with these priorities, particularly in livelihoods, social services, and social development sectors and ensure the full implementation of the NSPS through adequate budgeting, legal frameworks, and effective institutional coordination, while adopting the necessary legislation to operationalize Lebanon's NSPS without further delay.

Promoting sustainable strategies to reduce poverty and inequality, ensuring equitable access to essential services including health, education, housing, and water.

Ensuring mechanisms for transparent public budgeting and enabling meaningful participation of civil society in budget formulation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Supporting the integration of fragmented social assistance and cash transfer schemes into a unified, life-cycle-based social protection framework.

Promoting universal access to healthcare through strengthened public health systems, reduced reliance on out-of-pocket expenditure, and expanded primary healthcare services.

Supporting the rehabilitation and protection of education and health infrastructure affected by economic collapse and conflict, particularly in vulnerable regions.

Encouraging alignment of national legislation with international human rights and labour standards, including protection of freedom of association, non-discrimination, and equal rights for all workers.

Recalling the sincere desire expressed to cooperate with the Human Rights Council, we invite Lebanon to accept all the recommendations received during the Working Group session, including those related to economic and social rights, and to act promptly to translate them into comprehensive, concrete, and effective measures. We call the international community including international financial institutions and other development partners, to continue providing support to Lebanon in line with national development priorities set to ensure progressive realization of economic and social rights. To ensure full implementation of these recommendations, we encourage Lebanon, in cooperation with the Human Rights Council, to establish comprehensive monitoring and follow-up mechanisms that ensure transparency and provide meaningful space for participation by civil society.
