

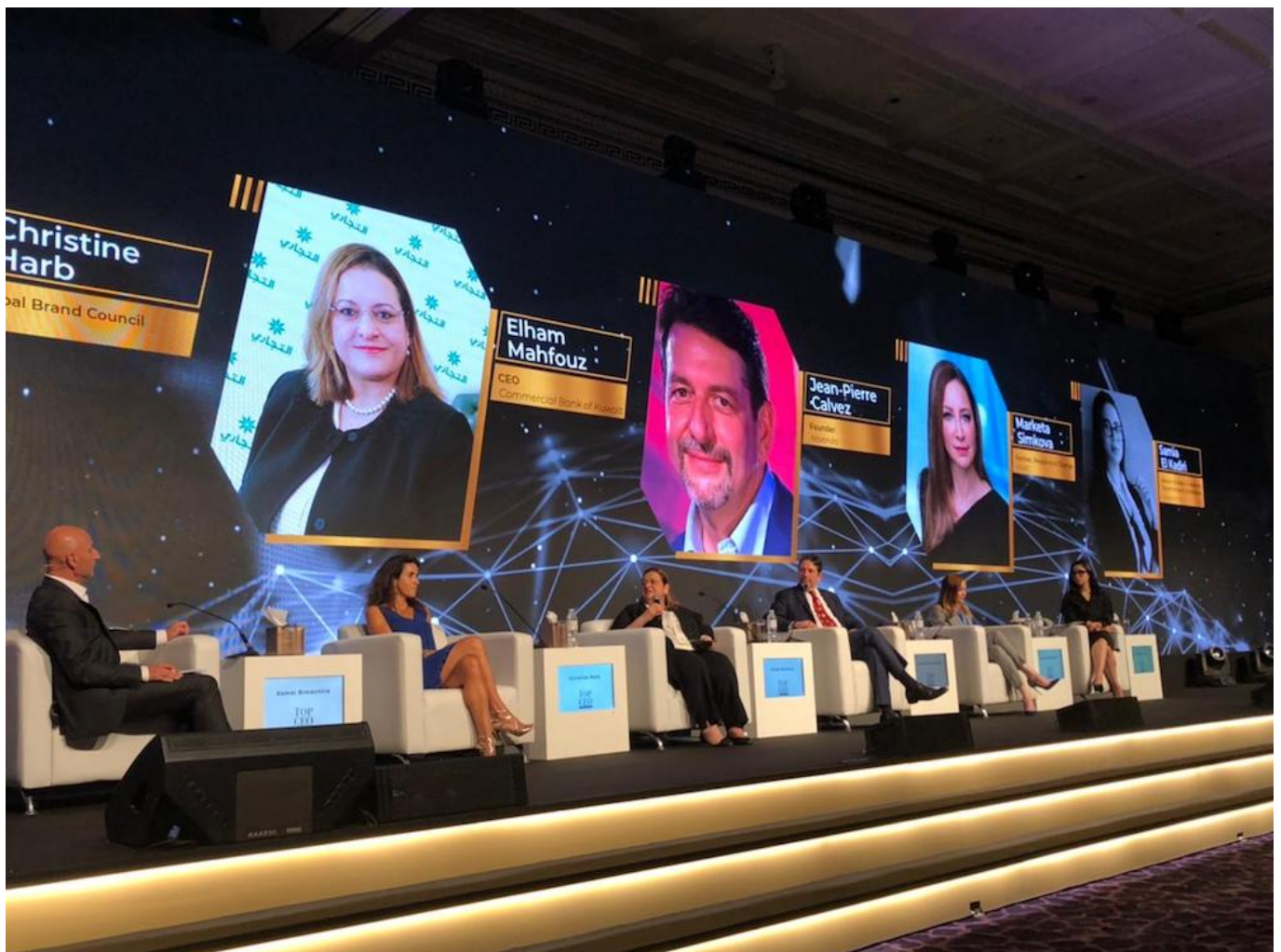
Why positive change in Middle East starts with bringing women into the work force

Tue, 2022-05-17 22:16

DUBAI: Advancing the role of women in society and the economy is a key driver for change in any country or region, particularly the Middle East.

According to a 2020 study by management consulting firm McKinsey and Co., “increased female participation in professional and technical jobs can turbocharge economic growth in a region that will be significantly impacted by the Fourth Industrial Revolution – making their participation all the more critical.”

McKinsey emphasized four indicators that correlated with women’s participation in professional and technical jobs: Education, financial inclusion, digital inclusion, and legal protection.



A panel of experts at the Arab Women Forum, held in Dubai on Tuesday, examined what the workplace of tomorrow may look like for women. (AN Photo/Zubiya Shaikh)

For the Middle East, high inequalities in these metrics persisted, most notably in legal protection and financial inclusion – with a significant number of women remaining unbanked.

The goal, the consulting firm said, was to introduce new legal frameworks as an important enabler for ending the gender-based inequalities endemic to the Middle East.

On a more positive note, McKinsey predicted that the share of women in professional and technical jobs was set to more than double by 2030. Crucial, then, was the need to capture this opportunity to bring the Middle East's women into parity with their peers around the world.

WORLD'S LOWEST FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

Female and male LFPR as a share of total female working age population (15+)



*Based on 2019 data from Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE
Source: ILO modeled estimates, 2019 / McKinsey

ARAB NEWS

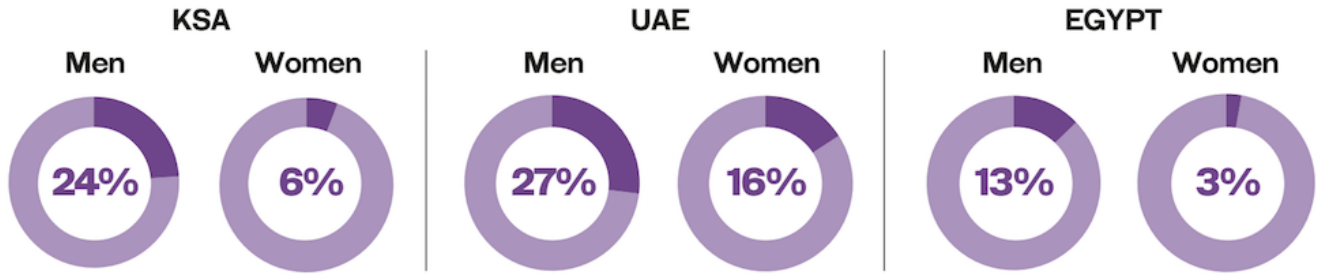
A panel of experts at the Arab Women Forum, held in Dubai on Tuesday, examined what the workplace of tomorrow may look like for women, and asked how companies could attract and retain female talent.

Speakers included Christine Harb, vice president of marketing at Visa Inc.; Dr. Celeste Cecilia Moles Lo Turco, director for PwC Middle East in the environmental, social, and corporate governance, and sustainability fields; Khaled Al-Maeena, chairman of Al-Bilad Media and Publishing and managing partner of Quartz Communications; Dr. Maliha Hashmi, World Economic Forum Global Future Council expert and V20 delegate of the G20; and Anand Vengurlekar, a strategic innovation adviser.

Harb said there were two main challenges facing women in the workplace today. "One is female representation in C-level positions. If we look at the Middle East and North Africa region, we still have a low representation of women in board rooms and C-level positions and, even if companies today are promoting diversity and inclusion, the representation in the region is still very low across industries and the region in general," she told Arab News ahead of the event.

TECHNICAL LIMITATIONS

Fewer women take college courses equipping them for the digital future



Source: UNESCO, 2016 / McKinsey

ARAB NEWS

More women occupy C-level roles now than at any time in the past 10 years – but to address their persistent underrepresentation at all levels, the workplace of the future must provide flexibility and versatility for women, and they must be seen in the top-level roles, Harb added.

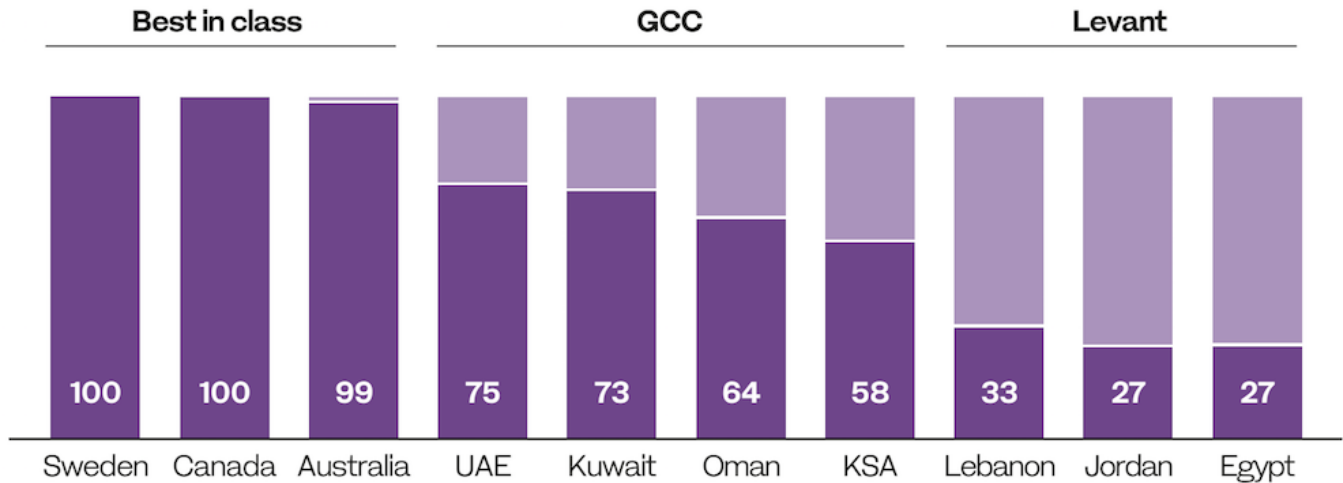
“How can women make sure they are sponsored and supported? Companies in the region also need to promote them to (C-suite) roles,” she said.

The second challenge, Harb noted, was the alignment of what organizations say and how they act toward their female employees.

BANKING ON SUCCESS

GCC leads on female access to bank accounts, while Levant falls behind

■ % of women with access to bank accounts



Source: Global Findex, 2017 / McKinsey

ARAB NEWS

“Many companies today are saying the right things, but there is no psychological safety, as such, for women to feel they can benefit from the flexible working hours or from the conditions that are being put in place that will allow them to find their balance as women,” she added.

She pointed out that some of the challenges stemmed from cultural limitations. “Historically, in the Middle East, most of these roles have been occupied by men.”

And to undo this, a concerted effort had to be made within organizations

before a role opened up.

“When we look at the evolution, in the succession planning of these organizations, women were not really prepped to take on (high-level) roles. It’s not just the promotion, but it is about making sure the woman is equipped to be able to take over,” Harb said.



ARAB WOMEN FORUM

SPECIAL ADDRESS: BEYOND THE BUSINESS RESET

Speaker: Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Saudi ambassador to the US



May 17, 2022
Palazzo Versace Dubai, UAE

STORYTELLERS FROM THE WAR FRONT

Speakers: Christiane Baisary, news anchor, Al-Hadath
Arizh Mukhammed, reporter, Sky News
Noor Nugali, assistant editor-in-chief, Arab News



WHEN WOMEN FIGHT BACK

Speakers: Cecilie Fjellhøy, founder, Action Reaction Foundation
Permilla Sjöholm, Swedish public figure



A NEW BEGINNING: WORK 2.0

Speakers: Christine Harb, Global Brand Council, Visa
Elham Mahfouz, CEO, Commercial Bank of Kuwait
Samia El-Kadiri, adviser and head of research, governance and compliance, Hawkamah
Marketa Simkova, partner, director, People and Change Practice, KPMG
Jean-Pierre Calvez, founder, Novonda



ARAB WOMEN'S IMAGE

Speakers: Huda Lawati, founder and CEO, Aliph Capital
May Nasrallah, founder and executive chair, deNovo Corporate Advisers
Suzy Kanoo, CEO and president, Khalil bin Ebrahim Kanoo Company & International Motor Trading Agency
Khalid Abdulla Janahi, chairman, Vision 3
Matthew Miller, senior managing director, Teneo



IT'S FAKE NEWS

Speakers: Faisal J. Abbas, editor-in-chief, Arab News
Khalid Abdulla Janahi, chairman, Vision 3
Hussein Frejeh, general manager of Snap Inc. for MENA
Thomas Hughes, executive director, Meta Oversight Board



THE MANAGEMENT BOTTLENECKS

Speakers: Dr. Celeste Cecilia Moles Lo Turco, director of government and public sector, PwC Middle East
Iyad Malas, CEO, Al-Ghurair Group
Rabih I. Khoury, managing partner, Middle East Venture Partners
Mike Frayne, CEO, Aviv Clinics Dubai
Cyba Audi, founder and CEO, Saba Consultants
Dr. Yasar Jarrar Author, member of the board of trustees, Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government



THE LEAKING PIPELINE

Speakers: Selim Chidiac, CEO, L'Azurde Company for Jewelry
Jean-Pierre Calvez, founder, Novonda
Amr M. Khashoggi, chairman, Amkest Group
Gretchen Moxcey, head of people, performance and culture, KPMG
Hassan M. Fattah, director of communications, Crescent Petroleum



THE WORKPLACE OF TOMORROW

Speakers: Christine Harb, Global Brand Council, Visa
Dr. Celeste Cecilia Moles Lo Turco, director of government and public sector, PwC Middle East
Khaled Almaeena, chairman, Al-Bilad Media and Publishing, managing partner, Quartz Communications
Dr. Maliha Hashmi, public speaker and author, WEF Global Future Council expert, V2O delegate of G20
Anand Vengurlekar, strategic innovation adviser



WOMEN IN TECH

Speakers: Dr Nour E. Raouafi, project scientist, NASA Parker Solar Probe mission
Philippe Blanchard, founder, Futurous
Ambareen Musa, founder and CEO, Souqalmal.com
Dr. Selda Konukcu, senior director of global strategic accounts, Honeywell Connected Business



SAUDI WOMEN PIONEERS: CHANGE FROM WITHIN

Speakers: Sarah Al-Tamimi, vice chair, National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, deputy president, Human Rights Commission
Noor Nugali, assistant editor-in-chief, Arab News
Nora Aldabal, executive director for arts and creative industries, Royal Commission for AlUla
Lama Al-Shethry, editor-in-chief, Sayidaty Magazine and Al-Jamila



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[Editor's Choice](#)

Digital transformation, women participation are the need of the hour, says VP Visa CEMEA Women should not relinquish their rights in business, says Suzy Kanoo

[Reformists surge in Lebanon polls](#)

Tue, 2022-05-17 21:27

BEIRUT: Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group and its allies lost their parliamentary majority while independents achieved surprise breakthroughs, final elections results showed Tuesday.

The results indicate a fragmented and polarized parliament divided between pro- and anti-Hezbollah lawmakers who will likely find it difficult to work together.

The outcome signaled a shift in a country devastated by an ongoing financial crisis and soaring poverty.

New reformist faces who entered the legislative race on the values of a 2019 anti-establishment uprising made a stronger showing than many had predicted.

Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon Waleed Al-Bukhari tweeted that the result "proves the inevitability that the logic of the state will win against the absurd excesses of the statelet disrupting political life and stability in Lebanon."

In the words of a political observer, "neither Hezbollah nor the Free Patriotic Movement is controlling parliament."

On May 22, the term of the new parliament begins and Prime Minister Najib Mikati's Cabinet will become a caretaker government.

The new house is expected to elect a new speaker amid the absence of parliamentary consensus to reelect standing speaker Nabih Berri, who has held the position since 1992.

Beirut witnessed on Tuesday morning the burning of a "Revolution Fist" that was set up in the Martyrs' Square as a symbol of popular protest against the ruling class.

Moreover, the exchange rate of the US dollar against the Lebanese pound on the black market surpassed 30,000 Lebanese pounds for the first time after the elections.

The presidential palace announced that President Michel Aoun was transferred to Hotel-Dieu de France hospital in Beirut "to undergo some medical tests and X-rays." They reassured the public that Aoun "will leave the hospital in the next few hours when the tests are done."

The elected parliament does not resemble any of the six previously elected parliaments since the Taif Agreement in 1989. According to political observers, "it reflects the political turmoil the country is going through."

The loss of several veteran political figures was remarkable in the election. Minister of Information Ziad Makkari said that those forces and figures "should reconsider the work they've done for their people."

He added: "We hope that the forces of change that have reached the parliament seriously contribute to the rise of the country because it can't endure any longer."

Remarkably, Hezbollah and its allies won a total of 59 seats out of 128. The group's allies include the Amal Movement, the Free Patriotic Movement, the Tachnag party and Al-Ahbash Association, along with Jihad Al-Samad, Farid Al-Khazen and Hassan Mourad.

The Amal Movement, headed by Nabih Berri, won 15 Shiite seats, most of which are occupied by current deputies, including two who were charged in the Beirut port explosion case.

Hezbollah won 13 Shiite seats, including current deputies and two new ones.

One Shiite and two Sunni deputies allied with Hezbollah also won.

The Lebanese Forces won 20 seats, including one Sunni deputy who was running on a list supported by the party.

The Free Patriotic Movement won 18 seats.

The Progressive Socialist Party, headed by Walid Jumblatt, won nine seats.

The Lebanese Phalangist Party won five seats, including an Armenian deputy.

The Independence Movement won two seats.

The Marada Movement won two seats, while Al-Ahbash won two seats – one in Beirut and one in Tripoli.

The Islamic Group won one seat.

Camille Dory Chamoun from the National Liberal Party won one seat. The party announced on Tuesday that "they will be part of the bloc that includes the Lebanese Forces and their allies."

The elections also witnessed the victories – mostly in the north – of six former members of the Future Movement who left the party following former Prime Minister Saad Hariri’s decision to suspend his political activity.

Eleven independent candidates won, including some fiercely opposed to Hezbollah, such as Achraf Rifi in Tripoli and Fouad Makhzoumi in Beirut.

Fifteen deputies from civil society and the 2019 revolution won, including doctors, engineers, scientists, lawyers, businessmen and academicians. Their victory breaks the monopoly of the conventional political parties and reflects voters’ revolt against their traditional leaders.

The winners include Rami Fanj, candidate for the Sunni seat in Tripoli. He ousted deputy Faisal Karami, who comes from a veteran political family.

Eight out of 155 women candidates were able to break the parliament’s overwhelming male dominance.

Three of these female winners were already deputies, including Inaya Ezzedine from the Amal Movement, Paula Yaacoubian, who resigned amid the 17 October revolution, and Sethrida Geagea of the Lebanese Forces.

The remaining women deputies are Nada Boustani, former minister of energy affiliated with the Free Patriotic Movement, Ghada Ayoub from the Lebanese Forces and Cynthia Zarazir, Najat Saliba and Halima Kaakour from the civil society movement.



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[Lebanon election 2022](#)

Blow to Hezbollah in Lebanese election
Lebanon parliamentary elections: Voting marred by disputes, low turnout

[Turkey foils Daesh suicide bomber in province bordering Syria](#)

Mon, 2022-05-16 22:02

ANKARA: As part of its countrywide counterterrorism operations, Turkey has arrested a suicide bomber allegedly linked to Daesh who was planning an attack in the southeastern province of Urfa, bordering Syria.

Bashar Al-Mizhen, codenamed Abi Enes Al-Kathani, has confessed to the authorities.

Mizhen, who joined Daesh in 2015 and received special arms training from the terror group, was allegedly preparing the attack in coordination with the Damascus branch of Daesh.

He is the 10th terrorist caught this year on Turkish soil. The authorities seized several digital materials and are currently examining various organizational documents belonging to the terror group.

FASTFACT

Bashar Al-Mizhen, codenamed Abi Enes Al-Kathani, has confessed to authorities.

Daesh members have carried out a number of attacks against Turkey, including at least 10 suicide bombings, seven bombings, and four armed attacks, which killed 315 people and injured hundreds of others.

Last year, Turkey also arrested a Daesh terrorist identified as the right-hand man of the late terrorist leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi.

In the first quarter of this year, dozens of Daesh members, including the sons of its top officials in Iraq, were caught in several Turkey cities, including Urfa, the northern province of Samsun and the western province of Izmir.

Last month, Turkey's intelligence agents also caught two Daesh terrorists who were planning attacks against the country's troops on home soil and in Syria.

Nihat Ali Ozcan, a retired major now serving as a security analyst at the Ankara-based think tank TEPAV, said such operations are held consecutively because one operation feeds another with the intelligence data that is gathered.

"Within its territories, Turkey hosts about 3.7 million unregistered Syrian refugees right now. Adding the unregistered refugees and those who are settled in the safe zones in northern Syria, this number has reached 7.5 million," he told Arab News.

"We cannot assume that all of them are innocent people," he said.

"There are several Daesh sympathizers among them. All immigrant-receiving countries are at the same time importing the domestic problems of their countries of origin," said the retired major.

"In Turkey, one can identify several kinds of economic, cultural and security-related challenges that Syria has exported along with several ideological(ly-driven actors who are in competition with one another)," Ozcan added.

There are about 430,000 registered Syrian refugees in Sanliurfa, making the city the fourth-largest host of displaced people after Istanbul, Gaziantep and Hatay.

Ozcan also underlined the impact of faith-based actors in Sanliurfa, including tribes and clans that have linguistic, religious, and kinship ties with Syrians, which also feed this security eco-system and boost the sympathizer base of Daesh in this city.

Experts have emphasized that any attack plan of Daesh, including its timing and scope, is related to its own organizational dynamics, and should be considered a reminder of how dangerous the current situation in neighboring Syria and Iraq is, as the terrorists move across borders to fulfill their wider objectives.

"Daesh acts according to its own rationale. It uses terror to influence great masses, (send) message(s) to the political actors and show(s) ... the world that it steps up efforts to bolster its presence in other regions as well," Ozcan said.

Daesh still retains a significant presence in northern Iraq and Syria, as shown by one of the biggest assaults in years, which was the prison attack in the Kurdish-controlled northeast Syrian city of Hasakah in January that left hundreds dead and allowed several prisoners to escape.

In April, two Iraqi soldiers were killed and two others wounded in an attack by Daesh in the western Anbar province, while seven Peshmerga and three civilians were killed in another Daesh attack in northern Iraq in December 2021 – an assault that was condemned by Turkey.

“Several years ago, Daesh seized huge (swathes) of Iraq and Syria. Today, despite its significant loss of a territorial base, the terror group still struggles to maintain its existence through new tactics,” Ozcan said.

The global coalition against Daesh, which was formed in 2014 and now includes 84 states and international organizations, gathered last Wednesday in Morocco to coordinate efforts against any resurgence of the extremists in the Middle East and North Africa.

“Over the last several years, Daesh has been considerably weakened in Iraq and Syria, but it remains a threat, seeking any opportunity to reconstitute itself,” senior US diplomat Victoria Nuland said during the meeting.

Daesh recently urged its sympathizers to take advantage of the ongoing war in Ukraine to stage new attacks against European nations.



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Biden invites private investment in Syrian areas not under Daesh, Assad control
Turkey has offered sea evacuation for wounded Ukrainian fighters –
Erdogan adviser

Palestinian Authority appeals to EU for resumption of financial support

Author:

Mon, 2022-05-16 22:26

RAMALLAH: The Palestinian Authority has reiterated its appeal to the EU to provide its pledged aid without conditions.

The authority is concerned about the continuing uncertainty over the EU's annual financial support for its budget despite holding several meetings with senior EU officials in recent months.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyieh, who met EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell Fontelles in Brussels last week, urged the bloc to expedite the transfer of its financial support, which has been suspended for two years.

Shtayyieh pointed to a growing financial crisis caused by the drop in external support and the continuation of Israel's deductions from the tax it collects on behalf of the PA.

"We have called on the European Union to provide its pledged aid without conditions. We hope to accomplish this very soon," Shtayyieh said at the start of the Palestinian Authority's weekly Cabinet session on Monday in Ramallah.

The EU postponed the transfer of \$223 million in annual aid to the PA after EU members supported Hungary's condition to change the curriculum in West Bank schools because it "contains incitement against Israel and anti-Semitic content."

The EU contributed about \$156 million annually to the PA budget of which \$93 million went to pay the salaries of its civilian employees. Those workers have received between 70 and 80 percent of their salaries for five consecutive months.

The PA suffered a sharp decline in international aid to its budget from \$1.3 billion in 2013 to \$129 million in 2021.

Samir Hulileh, a Palestinian economist, told Arab News that the policy of European countries has recently been to provide direct support to the Palestinian private sector, marginalizing the PA.

"European countries continue to expand their support for the Palestinian private sector economy, but the official support provided to the Palestinian government is completely halted," he said.

"This leads to the weak performance of the Palestinian Authority in its functional role and tasks – especially with the halt to US and Arab support for it."

The value of the budget deficit had reached \$1.3 billion, Hulileh said.

At the beginning of this month, the Palestinian Authority presented a broad reform program to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee to encourage donor countries – especially EU states – to resume their financial support for the PA, a Palestinian source told Arab News.

A senior European source told Arab News: “The EU continued to support UNRWA. What remains pending is the funding to the PA, which is still stuck in Brussels.”

Nevertheless, news reports said that the EU reduced its aid to the UNRWA by 40 percent for the 2022-24 period, from \$135 million to \$82 million.

The EU said that aid could return to normal levels by changing school curricula and removing what it termed incitement materials against Israel while it continues to delay the \$156 million annual financial support to the PA.

The reduction in the EU budget comes amid intense pressure and incitement campaigns against UNRWA last year by Israeli institutions. That led the EU to condemn UNRWA’s use of educational materials, which it claimed incited hatred and violence against Israel and Jews in schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This was the first time the EU had condemned the UN relief agency for its curricula.

The EU demanded the UNRWA “immediately” remove the so-called inflammatory material, stating that its funding “should be conditioned” on the adaptation of educational materials to match the values of the UN that promote peace and tolerance.



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[European Union](#)

[UNRWA](#)

Family: Palestinian Authority covering up critic's death
Activist fears Palestinian Authority's bid to 'silence' dissent

[Iran bus drivers stage strike to protest low salaries](#)

Author:

AFP

ID:

1652718202315580400

Mon, 2022-05-16 16:02

TEHRAN: Dozens of bus drivers went on strike in the Iranian capital Monday to protest over their living conditions following demonstrations in other cities

in past days, local media reported.

The drivers and workers of the Tehran Bus Company decried the failure to implement a decision by the Supreme Labour Council to introduce a 10 percent salary increase, reformist Shargh newspaper wrote on Twitter.

The strike comes days after Iranian media reported that a demonstrator had been killed in the southwestern Iranian city of Dezful during protests over rising food prices.

Demonstrators on Monday chanted slogans describing Tehran's mayor as "incompetent" and calling on him to resign, as seen in a video of the protest tweeted by Shargh.

Tehran mayor Alireza Zakani attended a meeting with the striking workers and spoke with their representative, Mehr news agency reported.

The authorities announced last week a series of measures to tackle mounting economic challenges, such as changing a subsidy system and raising the prices of staple goods, including cooking oil and dairy products.

Hundreds took to the streets in a number of Iranian cities to protest the government's decision, including in Tehran province, state news agency IRNA reported.

MP Ahmed Avai confirmed Saturday that one person had been killed during the demonstrations, according to the Iran Labour News Agency (ILNA).

IRNA had reported Friday that more than 20 people were arrested during the demonstrations in the cities of Dezful and Yasuj, but made no mention of any casualties.

Iran has been reeling under the effect of sanctions reimposed by the US in 2018 – exacerbated by rising prices worldwide since the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February.

The Islamic republic has witnessed several waves of protests over living conditions in recent years, most notably in 2019 after a fuel price hike. In recent months, teachers have held successive demonstrations demanding the speeding up of reforms that would see their salaries better reflect their experience and performance.



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[Alireza Zakani](#)

Price protests turn political in Iran as rallies spreadIran protests 'won't end until regime falls'