

UN chief welcomes new Government in Lebanon, after eight-month impasse

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed, on Friday, the announcement of a new Government in Lebanon; the result of eight months of negotiation, following general elections last May.

He congratulated Prime Minister Saad Hariri and Lebanon's political leadership, saying that he looks forward "to working closely with the new Government to continue to address urgent political, security, humanitarian and economic challenges, including in the follow-up to the international conferences of support to Lebanon, held last year".

Lebanon is governed by a complex power-sharing system aimed at representing all its religious and political communities. The new 30-member cabinet has four women, including the interior minister, which is a first for Lebanon.

According to news reports, Mr. Hariri's new government is a balanced composition of Lebanon's rival factions. The most pressing challenge for the cabinet is to revive the country's economy and cut the national debt, which stands at about 150 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Mr. Guterres reiterated the UN's commitment to "support Lebanon in strengthening its sovereignty, stability and political independence in accordance with the [Taif Accord](#) and the Baabda Declaration", and its effective implementation of Security Council resolutions [1701](#) (2006), [1559](#) (2004) and other relevant resolutions that remain essential "to the stability of Lebanon and the region".