



**Date: 16/04/2019**

Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil met with former Minister Hussein Hajj Hassan with a delegation of Baalbek-Hermel MPs including MPs Ghazi Zeaiter, Ibrahim Moussawi and Al Walid Sukkarieh. The meeting focused on matters of interest to their region.

After the meeting, Hajj Hassan made the following statement:

We are honored today to visit the Minister of Finance with whom we deeply discussed the situation in the country after the adoption of the electricity plan. Tomorrow a law to strengthen this plan will be discussed in the Parliament and the General Assembly, in order to activate the work on electricity and reduce the deficit in the budget of the EDL.

Work is currently underway for the preparation of 2019 State Budget. Minister Khalil explained to us many of the procedures that can result from this budget. We encourage the rapid endorsement of 2019 Budget by the government and its submission to the Parliament for examination and approval. When approved by all bodies, the Budget shall certainly positively reflect on the financial situation in the country and its economic conditions.

Other issues were also discussed, such as the amounts due to municipalities, since the latter are suffering from the financial situation and the lack of transfer of funds from the independent municipal fund. Indeed, municipalities are struggling with the salaries of their workers, employees and staff, in addition to their inability to pay the amounts due in exchange for provided services. This situation is of course related to the overall situation and we hope that solutions will be reached soon.

There are many development issues that we have also discussed with Minister Khalil related to Baalbek-Hermel region, including the compensations to fish farmers that have sustained heavy damages. Minister Khalil promised the disbursement of these amounts, which, despite not being big are pending between the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers or the High Relief Commission and the Ministry of Finance.

We also discussed Law 246, which is the Development Law issued in 1994 and currently being extended at the Council of Ministers before being submitted to the Parliament for approval. This shall also affect a number of existing projects, including Resolution 99 issued by the Government of PM Tammam Salam and several other projects specific for the Baalbek-Hermel region.

Q: What is Hezbollah's position on the reduction of salaries?

A: We, as a party, are examining all existing propositions and shall determine our stance once we complete this thorough examination. The objective is to achieve 2019 Budget. Now, we do not have any stance to announce on any issue except that we are studying all the submitted suggestions and we shall determine our position as to these propositions and their impact on the State Budget accordingly.