



Date: 08/01/2018

Statements made after the meeting at the MoF between Minister Hassan Khalil, Minister Cesar Abi Khalil, the President of the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers, Bechara Asmar, and the Syndicate of EDL's worker.

Minister Khalil declared:

“We have thankfully achieved a positive outcome. I would like first to stress, in the presence of H.E. Minister Cesar Abi Khalil, who has held a meeting yesterday with the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers and EDL Syndicate in order to reach some kind of agreement on general issues, that what was mentioned in the media for the last two days about political reasons being behind the current situation is inaccurate. All the discussions between the syndicate, concerned ministries and the Presidency were purely administrative and financial and focused on the work of EDL and its relationship with the Ministry of Energy and Water and the Ministry of Finance, in addition to tackling the issue of the implementing mechanisms of Law 46 and the implementation of the Cabinet's decision that was circulated in a memorandum issued by the PM. The discussion was technical and I do not think that EDL's Syndicate or any of the concerned ministries would like to drag this matter in any political problem. We already have enough political problems and do not want to add this issue to them or put its burden on the shoulders of either the citizens, the EDL or its employees.

Confusion is prevailing in the country; there are two problems related to electricity: one concerns the strike of EDL employees and the other concerns the company in charge of providing services in southern Lebanon and the governorates of the South and Nabatiyeh.

These are two completely different problems, and today, we have reached an agreement on the salary and wages issue and decided to prepare the implementing decree of law 46 concerning EDL. Agreement was reached on all the points related to this decree that will be prepared and pursued in accordance with the legal and constitutional requirements of concerned

parties.

This agreement between EDL and the Ministries of Energy and Finance ,in consultation with the PM, puts things into perspective and reconciles between the requirements of the law and its regulations and the demands of the Syndicate and employees.

It reflects the common interest of all parties and is consistent with the spirit of the law which was passed by the Parliament.

On the other hand, I would like to point out that we have reached the last phase of the agreement related to solving the problem of the provision of services between the Ministry and EDL and the service provider in Southern Mount Lebanon and the South. Consultations are underway and thorough talks are taking place between Minister Abi Khalil, PM Saad Hariri, MPs of the concerned areas and Speaker Nabih Berri to reach, as soon as possible, an agreement that would restore electricity services to the South. We hope to announce tomorrow an executive order in this sense if essential issues are solved.

Q&A

Q: What is the percentage of the salary scale?

A: This is a detailed matter and we have agreed on its bases with the Syndicate, in accordance with the law and EDL specificities that have been taken into account in conformity with the spirit of the law. We will continue working on this matter in accordance with the law.

Q: What about the strike?

A: The strike is supposed to end now.

Q: Is today's agreement a preamble to an agreement on the Seniority decree?

A: These are two completely different issues There are constitutional points of view that we had to unfortunately share today in the media, while they should have been exchanged elsewhere. There is no relation between these two issues and we stand our ground.

Minister Abi Khalil

This was a fruitful meeting during which we reached an agreement taking into account Law 46 and EDL specificities and operating procedures. We are waiting for the Syndicate to resume its administrative work and other activities that were hindered, in order to provide citizens again with the service they need, especially after everything they have been through during the last two weeks in terms of poor electrical service in all Lebanese regions.

Concerning service providers, we are currently seriously considering some ideas along with concerned parties and have shared them with Minister Khalil. We hope to have a solution tomorrow.

President of the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers, Bechara Asmar

I would like to thank the Ministers of Finance and Energy for the efforts they deployed in the past days and for contacting the PM. I would like also to thank Speaker Nabih Berri whom we have kept informed about the situation on the ground.

The agreement is honorable, putting an end to the strike and restoring electricity to its normal state. Since yesterday, work has started in terms of repairs and things are back on track. We count on the word of the two Ministers concerning service providers and hope they will find a solution soon for the crisis of the per diem workers who have been suffering for a while since they have not been paid for the last three months and do not have any economic prospects.