



**Date: 29/06/2018**

Finance Minister Ali Hassan met in his office at the Ministry with Kataeb leader, MP Sami Gemayel, heading a delegation encompassing MPs Nadim Gemayel and Elias Hankash, as well as a number of Kataeb advisors. The meeting focused on the ongoing housing loans crisis.

After the meeting, Gemayel stated:

We have met with the Finance Minister for an hour and had a comprehensive discussion, particularly that the country is facing a critical crisis related to its youth: the housing loans problem. This problem extends to all citizens, regardless of their confession or political affiliations.

Lebanese young men and women are suffering from the housing crisis. It has been months since the Lebanese State has stopped funding housing loans, preventing young men and women from buying apartments. This crisis has led also to another one related to real estate companies, some of which went bankrupt, which in turn led to a new crisis since many young men and women had taken loans and paid their money but these companies could not hand them their apartments. Therefore, they paid, did not receive their apartments and could not get a refund.

It is the State's responsibility to secure constant support when loan funding

stops and should bear it towards the people, especially those with limited income who cannot afford to buy an apartment without loans subsidized at 3%. Therefore, social stability cannot be safeguarded in Lebanon anymore. The State pays unnecessary expenses during the year instead of paying 60 million USD only in subsidies to the Housing Corporation. It is shameful that the State is incapable of securing such an amount. We will follow up on this matter until the end.

The Minister has provided us with all necessary information and figures related to the Housing issue. There State carries a heavy responsibility and I cannot separate between the Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance, the Lebanese government and all the officials. Everyone shares this responsibility.

**Q:**

If the law is adopted in an extraordinary session summoned by the President and the PM, are there enough funds, according to the Finance Minister, to offset the Housing deficit?

**A:**

The Finance Minister confirmed the possibility of securing this small amount compared to the size of the problem, but Lebanese banks are refusing to grant loans because they fear that this subsidy is not sustainable and they are concerned the Minister will not be able to secure this amount next year. Banks also have a duty towards the people given all the support they are getting from the State and the annual profits they make. They should at least facilitate the loans and the State should give the needed warranties and support to solve the Housing problem. The endorsement of a law binding the State to support housing loans would be a positive step forward. We will work on achieving this during the coming phase. It is

shameful to hold such meetings to discuss the Housing problem while the State is turning a blind eye to this matter.

**Q:**

Do you think that this Housing crisis is mainly beneficial to banks since there is no other option but to turn to private banks with an interest rate of 15% for some?

**A:**

When we mention subsidized loans, we mean the intervention of the Lebanese State. The State should provide this support or force banks to grant these loans. If the State does not do that, we cannot rely on the private sector to respond to the needs of the Lebanese people

The BDL's governor bears direct responsibility for this, along with the Lebanese government.

Gemayel mentioned also the Nationality decree, indicating he will be meeting with the President of the Republic to tackle this matter.