



**Date: 13/06/2019**

The Minister of Finance held a meeting dedicated to solving the Lebanese University crisis. In addition to Minister Ali Hassan Khalil, were present: the Minister of Education, Akram Chehayeb, MP Bahia Hariri, the President of the Lebanese University, Fouad Ayoub, the Head of the League of Lebanese University Full-Time Professors, Youssef Daher, as well as representatives of the university professors.

After the meeting, Khalil made the following statement:

The issue today concerns all the Lebanese who were informed last week of the problem resulting from the strike of the LU professors and its impact on 80,000 students. The Minister of Education, concerned parties, the President of the University and the Head of the League deployed tremendous efforts in the past days to solve this matter. We were in direct and daily contact with the Minister of Education to reach an understanding on all the issues raised, and we finally agreed on resuming teaching at the university and ending the academic year with the least possible damage.

I think that today, with a quick overview the Minister of Education who will also speak about this matter, we will move forward and turn the page of the strike because during the meeting, all concerned parties stressed that the priority is preserving the Lebanese University, ensuring all what is needed for its continuity and strongly supporting it. Concerning the Budget, we were clear and frank, and stated that we support the demands but I think that we were not on the same wave. Today we are speaking the same language and as such are tackling many matters that were delaying the agreement. The outcome today is positive and we should be prepared to start a new phase as of next week. Students must return to their university and finish their exams, while we continue our work at the Finance and Budget Committee. I

would like to stress that, according to Article 90 of the Budget, professors who have not completed 25 years of teaching shall retain their right to retire.

Minister Akram Chehayeb stated:

Due to our shared responsibility, Finance Minister Khalil and I met today at his office with representatives from the Lebanese University, the league of LU professors and the Parliamentary Education Committee. This meeting was the fruit of several others that we started with the League, the Finance Minister and MP Bahia Hariri. We were also in contact daily with the President of the LU who was following closely this matter. We have also met with the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Speaker. We agreed to meet today with the Minister of Finance to thoroughly review the demands submitted by the League of LU professors and for which the strike was executed. Some of these demands are related to the Budget and can be corrected and others are legitimate and can be executed and some need ordinary laws following due process within the Parliament and not urgent (bis) ones. We have reached common understandings today on some points and promises on the remaining ones that should be pursued and tackled later, especially that we are currently discussing the Budget at the Parliament.

The Lebanese University is not just made of walls; it is made of an administration, professors and students. If these three pillars are integrated, we can but have a strong national university at the heart of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance with all these who are currently within the Parliamentary Education Committee. The Lebanese University is essential and it is a priority for our ministries. We are doing our best to strengthen its role in coordination and cooperation with the abovementioned parties.

The academic year is ending and students need to graduate. There is a number of students at the Faculty of Education who will be entering the public education system, and if they do not graduate, we will have a shortage of teachers in public schools next year. Therefore, we have to urgently solve this matter. It is their democratic right and they have clearly exercised it today. Through this meeting, we have reached understandings and DR. Youssef Daher will meet today with the professors, whom I have met earlier at the Minister of Education, and will inform them of the positive outcome and agreement among all

parties in order to end the strike, resume teaching and prepare the exams for our students who deserve to graduate this year.

I would like to thank the Finance Minister, the President of the LU and MP Bahia Hariri. The final decision is in the hands of the League of Lebanese University Full-Time Professors.

Answering a question, he declared:

We have made bold decision and the League will certainly make it too. No time was wasted. There was not any stalling. This matter was taken very seriously from the beginning, but there are popular stances and serious one. And we are from those who work seriously.