

Resolution 2150 (2017)¹

The situation in Lebanon and challenges for regional stability and European security

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls its [Resolution 1520 \(2006\)](#) on recent developments in Lebanon in the context of the situation in the Middle East, in which it stated that a lasting political solution in the region can only be achieved through political dialogue among all parties concerned and that it considered itself to be particularly well placed to pursue such a dialogue at the parliamentary level.
2. The Assembly recognises the many specificities that make Lebanon a unique country. It is the most religiously diverse country in the Middle East and the Arab country with the largest Christian population. Lebanon is the oldest democracy in the Middle East. Political power is shared by Christians, Sunni and Shia according to an agreement between the respective communities. Surrounded by conflicts, Lebanon is a good example of peaceful co-existence and should be supported to allow this to continue.
3. The Assembly welcomes the election of Michel Aoun as President of Lebanon on 31 October 2016, which showed that consensus was possible between the different political parties. The inability to elect a president for more than two-and-a-half years had paralysed the country and deprived it of the ability to react to the challenges in the region.
4. The election of Mr Aoun, after the longest presidential void in Lebanon's history, put an end to a constitutional crisis which posed a serious threat to the fragile balances on which the functioning of Lebanese society is based. If such balances were to be disrupted, regional stability would be further undermined and, for obvious reasons, security would be challenged in the whole of Europe.
5. The Assembly welcomes the formation of a national unity government on 18 December 2016, headed by Prime Minister Saad Hariri. The Assembly sees this development, together with the election of President Aoun, as a vital step for the stability of Lebanon. However, it does not guarantee that the country's other problems will be solved. The Assembly wishes to see further political reconciliation, especially in line with the upcoming general elections scheduled to take place before 22 June 2017.
6. Since the beginning of the Syrian conflict, the Assembly has been drawing attention to the plight of refugees. Already in 2012, it adopted [Resolution 1902 \(2012\)](#) on the European response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria; in April 2013, it held a current affairs debate on "Syrian refugees in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq: how to organise and support international assistance?"; in June 2013, it adopted [Resolution 1940 \(2013\)](#) on the situation in the Middle East; in October 2013, [Recommendation 2026 \(2013\)](#) on the situation in Syria; in January 2014, [Resolution 1971 \(2014\)](#) "Syrian refugees: how to organise and support international assistance?"; and in April 2016, [Resolution 2107 \(2016\)](#) on a stronger European response to the Syrian refugee crisis. These texts list the measures that the Assembly deems necessary to cope with the refugee crisis.
7. During the last five years, the refugee situation has worsened and today Lebanon hosts an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees. This number adds to the many other refugees who were already there, making Lebanon the country with the highest number of refugees per capita in the world.

1. *Assembly debate* on 26 January 2017 (8th Sitting) (see [Doc. 14226](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Tobias Zech). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 26 January 2017 (8th Sitting).



8. The refugee crisis is becoming unsustainable for Lebanon in many respects: municipalities, on which the responsibility falls, are unable to provide adequate food, sanitation, health care or schooling and it is civil society, together with international organisations, which is trying to cope with the situation. Greater international solidarity is clearly needed. The economic situation in general is dire and the youth unemployment rate is extremely high.

9. The Assembly thanks Lebanon for its generosity and calls on the international community, in addition to the measures already indicated in previous texts, to step up, as a matter of urgency, its contribution to support and assist the refugees presently in Lebanon. States should, on the one hand, increase their financial support for the humanitarian response on the ground and, on the other hand, increase resettlement possibilities for those refugees wishing to relocate. The Assembly welcomes, however, the fact that the situation in the camps housing Palestinian refugees has improved, including the living conditions and the legal rights of Palestinians.

10. The Assembly calls on the Lebanese Parliament to consider asking the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) for its assistance in revising the electoral law.

11. Finally, the Assembly has decided to develop relations with the Lebanese Parliament, first by inviting Lebanese parliamentarians to follow its work and then by encouraging the Lebanese Parliament to consider applying for partnership for democracy status with the Assembly.