
Minister of Labour signs decree implementing Labour Law amendments for Palestine refugees

[وزير العمل بطرس حرب يوقع قرارا لتنظيم عمل اللاجئين الفلسطينيين المقيمين في لبنان](#)

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Beirut

The Lebanese Minister of Labour in the caretaking government Boutros Harb signed on Tuesday (22 February) a decree implementing amendments to the Labour Law that were adopted last August, thus facilitating access of Palestinian refugees to work permits and de-linking those permits from a work contract.

The decree has now been referred to the Council of State (Shoura) for finalisation as per the provisions of the Lebanese law.

A meeting took place between UNRWA's Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi and Minister Boutros Harb on 19 February in the presence of the Director of UNRWA Affairs in Lebanon Salvatore Lombardo and the ILO Regional Director for Arab States, during which the Minister confirmed plans to sign the decree.

Thanking Minister Harb for this "very positive move", Filippo Grandi said: "This is a very important step for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, as it will provide them with better social and economic opportunities, which are currently very limited. This decree will thus contribute to improving their living conditions while of course preserving their inalienable rights as refugees and without prejudice to all related UN resolutions."

ILO Regional Director Nada Al-Nashif further confirmed the breakthrough this decree represented in granting an automatic right of work to Palestinian refugees and said: "We will work in close partnership with UNRWA, the Lebanese and Palestinian communities to ensure these positive implications are well understood and applied."

The PLO representative in Lebanon Dr Abdallah Abdallah welcomed this move and said: "We consider this move as complementary to the Labour Law amendments of August 2010. This is a very positive step towards facilitating the work of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. We thank the Minister for his personal efforts in this respect and we hope that this step be followed by other steps to open the membership of liberal professions too for qualified Palestinian professionals. This is an additional proof of Lebanon's support to the Palestinian refugees, who are temporary residents on the Lebanese soil, and it definitely facilitates their daily life until they return to their homeland Palestine."

The department in charge of Syrian workers affairs at the Ministry has been entrusted with handling all Palestine refugee labour affairs and was given specific prerogatives including ,but not limited to, receiving work permit requests, documentation, follow-up and making the relevant formalities efficient and speedy. All work permit requests will have to be addressed with the relevant documentation needed to the Ministry of Labour through Libanpost or any other company that will be identified by the Ministry.

Work permits issued for Palestinian refugees residing in Lebanon will be valid for three years. Wage-earners and self-employed artisans do not need to submit a work contract to obtain a work permit. The only documents required are a request signed by the person concerned, clarifying therein the profession he wishes to engage in, a copy of the refugee's identification card issued by the Department of Political and Refugee Affairs in the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, and two passport photographs.

Not an official document

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