

Speech of EU Ambassador to Lebanon Ms. Christina Lassen in the launching ceremony of the “Lebanese Army Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement” Monroe Hotel, 29/1/2019

Commander in Chief, General Aoun
General Eid,
Mr. Deputy,
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is very nice to be here today and it's of course a very special occasion as we just heard from the two previous speakers. We are also very happy from the European Union side because of course only a month ago, last December, we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the universal declaration for Human Rights. This was an important milestone for the European Union, as one of our core beliefs is the need to further the protection of Human Rights around the world, because as High Representative Mogherini frequently reminds us, societies are strong, stable and peaceful, only when civil rights, social rights and individual freedoms are guaranteed. Here in Lebanon, we engage into a continuous dialogue with the government on Human Rights issues. We always make a point to advocate for human rights protection, whether it's for the freedom of expression, ensuring democratic election processes or women rights.

Human rights are also the demands of many of our cooperation programs here, including in the security area, and we have been particularly pleased with this program involving the LAF. This program is so important, because all of you here are serving your country and your people. Your fundamental duty is to protect your country and ensure peace and stability. While doing so, you act as representatives of the state and in accordance with democratic values and human rights. The launch today of the Human rights code of conduct for the LAF shows us that Lebanon is making a progress in mainstreaming Human Rights into Lebanese Law enforcement forces and institutions. We have seen similar development in other law enforcement institutions, for example, General security just launched a code of conduct recently and just last month, we launched a training curriculum for the ISF, which was developed in close cooperation with the European Union. The LAF Code of Conduct details the standards that should be applied in law

enforcement during security operations. The code of conduct is based on international standards on human rights and law enforcement as we just heard from the OHCHR.

Looking at the code of conduct, you notice that core principles reflect that they are fully aligned with international standards of accountability, integrity and fairness. They reinforce the existent procedures to ensure compliance with international human rights applications and norms, and these principles of course are to be used in day to day operations by the LAF, crucial to ensure its professionalism and effectiveness. Because the code of conduct focuses on the main duties and responsibilities of army personnel in the use of force, accountability and the rest of the aspects, it can provide clarity and support to practical problems and challenges related to the protection of human rights, which you could all be confronted with in your daily work. It also highlights, as we saw in the small movie before, the human rights principles to be followed, specifically with women, children, elderly, refugees and victims of human trafficking among others. But with the code of conduct now completed, we need to move to the next and even more important phase. While this project is financed by the European Union, the most important work actually starts now and that is why I'm looking to all of you because we need to make sure that these 20 thousand copies of the code of conduct are not forgotten or put in drawer. Its content must be fully embraced by each and every member of the LAF, from the servicemen on the ground to the highest ranking officers. So, I hope that all of you present here today will take it upon yourselves to be human rights ambassadors in the communities where you serve. As members of the LAF, you have to be the key role in the responsibility in protecting and promoting human rights and rule of law for all people living in Lebanon, and by doing so, you will of course continue the proud tradition of Charles Malek, who on behalf of the government of Lebanon was one of the first signatories to the Universal declaration of Human Rights, 70 years ago.

So I conclude by saying "Mabrouk", congratulations to all of you for the great achievement you're celebrating here today, and of course a special thank you for the office of human rights in the army and to General Eid, General Joseph Aoun for all the great work that you do, and also for the OHCHR for the training and all the support you provide in the process. We really look forward to seeing the results and wish you all the best of success. Thank you very much.