

## **Raising Taxes Is Pushing People into the Abyss, a Repeated Electoral Exploitation, and a Confirmation of the Failure of the Ruling Authorities!**

(Translated)

At a time when the people in Lebanon are groaning under suffocating economic burdens, the Council of Ministers comes out with a decision to increase the tax on gasoline by 300,000 liras per can, and to increase the value-added tax known as VAT by 1%, bringing it in total to 12%, under the title of funding an increase in public sector salaries by 800 million dollars!

It is needless to say that this decision is an additional burden placed upon the people as a result of the state's failed financial policies, and that a serious orientation toward real reform is through combating corruption and the money sharks, restoring the looted public funds and properties, holding accountable those who misused authority in employing the public sector for clear political and electoral interests, then strengthening the state's industrial and agricultural orientation, benefiting from Lebanon's landscape and geography in enhancing exports of basic materials and reducing reliance on imports, and freeing itself from the grip of America, which obstructs the country's gas wealth in favor of its control over these sources against Europe. Through this, the state can transform into a state of care, not a state of taxation!

Although the economic system in Lebanon stems from a crooked and false secular basis, and then was compounded by the poor care of the people such as these tax increases and others, it is possible to mitigate the effects of this abnormal situation upon the people through a real restructuring of the public sector in a way that ensures efficiency and justice away from political clientelism, stopping waste in state institutions and controlling non-productive spending, and recovering the public funds that were squandered and looted during previous eras — the greater part of which is borne by senior politicians, especially the sharks, through turning the country into a farm that yields them money, even fortunes! What is required and the solution today is not imposing new taxes on those whose purchasing power has been drained, but launching a clear path at the level of authority and state — if there is still any remnant of a state!

Loading the cost of salary increases through raising the tax on gasoline and increasing the VAT means practically raising the cost of transport and all goods and services, which reflects negatively and worsens the economic crisis that affects everyone, including the public sector employees themselves, whom the authority claims it is seeking to solve their problem! We are not against improving people's conditions; rather, we consider that a duty upon the state and its politicians who have installed themselves as rulers. But we reject that this be funded from the pockets of the general public, which aggravates the crisis and does not treat its roots nor even its symptoms!

Then why is the timing of this matter with the approaching parliamentary electoral entitlement and the beginning of talk about it?! Unless it is to buy people's loyalties as happened previously in the salary scale series that the authority issued in 2017 which brought the people to collapse, or to its edge! More striking is that this matter was not approved in the budget project in the Parliament, but was added as a subsequent clause in a session of the Council of Ministers! Why?! It is the tossing of this file among the ruling authority; some of them do not want to stain their name or their political group with this nonsense! Another side prepares to bear it with its burdens and flimsiness!

We are fully aware of the extent of the failure of the authority in all its components, and aware that it is an authority that does not undertake any action except in which there is an interest in consolidating itself upon the seat of rule. Thus it uses these increases to fund those counted upon it to secure its electoral interests. We are aware of the authority's subservience in proceeding along paths of handing over the country to America, its companies, and its investments, and its henchmen in authority, and aware that unless the people take their decision not to allow the state to proceed in its politically and economically failed projects,

nothing will change! Yet despite this awareness, it is necessary to raise the voice loudly in the face of this systematic injustice with a clear message:

**O people**, the claimants of politics in this country have harnessed the issues of the public sector for their benefit, to the extent that they refused to reduce its large size (25% of the labor market) during the crisis! They kept matters as they are, turned every movement of the people into a detestable sectarian division, then pushed the revolting youth to emigrate out of despair of improvement of conditions, then benefited from their financial remittances to their families inside Lebanon (amounting to billions of dollars), and took for themselves a share from them unlawfully! Then they brought a formal presidency of government that, to this day, has accomplished nothing but raising fees and taxes! And is preoccupied with elections that have never benefited except those who lived off them from deputies and politicians!

**O people**, this authority of taxation — rather, authority of highway robbers — does not care about your voices, nor your lives, nor your daily sustenance. Rather, what concerns it is consolidating its henchmen and their living off the state's money, so that loyalty is to them and to the colonial West behind them, headed by America, the ruler of Lebanon from the top of its head to the soles of its feet!

**O people**, Hizb ut Tahrir in Wilayah of Lebanon is for you a clear warner: the true care that any state must establish for the people is that which comes from the Creator of the people, Glorified is He, which was fully manifested exclusively in the rulings of Islam: ﴿أَلَا يَعْلَمُ﴾ **“Does He who created not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?”** [Al-Mulk:14].

Had those in authority been righteous rulers, we would have overcome that crisis — indeed we would not have reached that crisis in the first place. We see no radical solution except in a state that cares for the affairs of the people, secures for them the essential needs, and strives to secure the complementary and luxury needs of the people; that does not steal public funds nor impose taxes on the poor and the weak, but takes from the wealth of the rich — if it needs to — according to its needs to return it to the poor and fulfill their interests; a state that holds the thieves of authority accountable and restores the looted public funds, sets developmental economic plans, invests the wealth that Allah Almighty has granted us, and redistributes it rather than monopolizing it in addition to looting it: ﴿كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ﴾ **“So that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among you.”** [Al-Hashr:7].

And prevents the intervention of embassies, let alone Western politicians, in our internal affairs. It is clear that this will not be with an authority, a state, and a fragile entity born deformed at the hands of colonial France in the Sykes–Picot Agreement, then inherited by America to increase it in ruin and plunder! Rather, it will be by the hand of a state that implements the Law of Allah Almighty — an Islamic state; a Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) on the method of the Prophethood — to which Lebanon and its people will join as they once were, and it will care for their affairs as it cared and excelled before, fulfilling the statement of the Messenger of Allah (saw): «كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَمَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ؛ فَالْإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ» **“Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock; the Imam is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock.”** (Reported by Al-Bukhari)

And perhaps it will be soon: ﴿وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا \* وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ﴾ **“And whoever fears Allah – He will make for him a way out \* And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah – then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent.”** [At-Talaq:2–3].

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Hizb ut Tahrir

Wilayah Lebanon