

## H.E. Minister Kazzi: “The Ministry of Labor Needs a True Revival at Both the Thinking & the Administration Levels.”

Interview done by: Roula Rached

H.E. the Minister of Labor Sejaan Kazzi considers that: “The worst statesman is the one who wants to make accomplishments during his office years; a true statesman is the one who plans and works for generations to come and not for a short period of time.” He continues by stating that: “There are many issues I am working on as a minister and since I cannot probably completely resolve them during my term, I hope they get granted the continuity to last for future generations.”

H.E. also told Human and Health magazine that: “The Ministry of Labor needs a true revival at both the thinking and the administration levels, and by administration I mean re-structuring and re-organizing job descriptions, assigning the right man to the right position, staff rehabilitation and training, putting the ministry at the service of the citizens and helping them solve their problems more quickly and efficiently instead of making their lives more complicated. As for the revival at the thinking level, continued his Excellency, we should work on a new approach in defining the role of the ministry and the concept of work in Lebanon”. He also said that: “All files are priorities in the ministry; first we worked on developing the social security by redefining its role, the services it provides and enlarging its spectrum of coverage. Second, we limited the number of foreign labor in Lebanon and you will be surprised by the huge number of demands for hiring foreigners in all sectors in our country.” He also went on by saying: “I don’t pretend that I stopped foreign labor, for this is impossible, what I did was limiting and controlling it: instead of having thousands of work permits delivered for foreigners, we are talking now about hundreds. One more thing, work permits for foreigners used to be issued in almost all sectors so I tried to restrict it to some specific sectors such as agriculture, construction and exceptionally to other sectors where foreign exchange is enriching such as education.”

H.E. refused to narrow down the role of the Ministry of Labor to the simple mission of creating new job



opportunities because, according to him, the role of the Ministry is to protect jobs and Labor, and there is a big difference. “Investors should create new job opportunities and look for them, he added, I am sorry to say that some company owners in Lebanon don’t work hard enough in finding local labor, they only post announcements once in the newspaper and then move to the easiest option which is going to offices who gather foreign labor for recruitment. Same story happens with big educational institutions that find it easier for them to get teachers from abroad.”

H.E. expected the new law on labor to be out soon and he said: “the new law has been studied well and comparisons have been made with existing labor laws across the world. Many factors were taken into consideration while preparing the law, such as the human factor, the right to rest, to work and equality. All is based on conditions and standards set by the International Labor Organization, ILO. The law has been finalized on August 4 and will soon be transferred to the Council of Ministers before going to the Parliament for discussion and adoption as a project law, and then to be implemented.

H.E. also reassured Human and Health magazine that a project-law on social security post retirement will come to life soon, but the political conflicts going on now concerning new projects of social laws and the fact that every political team tries to push his own project first, complicate the situation.

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