

Lebanese people form nationwide human chain in solidarity with protests



Beirut, October 28 (RHC)-- Tens of thousands of people in Lebanon have formed a 170-kilometer-long human chain stretching the length of the Arab country in a show of unity and solidarity with anti-government protests.

According to organizers, the human chain on Sunday was successfully formed as protesters held hands from Tripoli in the north to Tyre in the south, running through capital Beirut, the main protest hub against the Mediterranean country's economic crisis.

In capital, men, women and children held hands, some waving Lebanese flags and many singing the national anthem. "I can confirm that the human chain was a success. The idea behind this human chain is to show an image of a Lebanon which, from north to south, rejects any sectarian affiliation," said Julie Tegho Bou Nassif, a history professor and one of the organizers.

She also said that there was no political demand behind the human chain and that its main purpose was to "send a message by simply holding hands under the Lebanese flag."

Since October 17, the Lebanese in Beirut and other cities have been taking to the streets to express their strong discontent with the government's failure to find solutions to the country's economic crisis.

The unprecedented cross-sectarian mobilization seems to be triggered initially by the planned taxes on gasoline, tobacco and online phone calls such as through WhatsApp.

The leaderless protest rallies have been noteworthy for their territorial reach and the absence of political or sectarian banners.

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri announces the approval of the 2020 state budget envisaging a deficit of 0.6% of gross domestic product. Last Monday, embattled Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced a package of economic reforms which aims to revive an almost collapsed economy, but the move has failed to stop the protests.

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