Lebanon Pushes for Activation of Medical Cannabis Law

November 4, 2021

On 20 April 2020, the Lebanese Parliament passed a law permitting the cultivation, trade, research, and use of medical cannabis.

As a result of multiple factors, including the socioeconomic health of the nation, progress on the legalization of the cultivation of cannabis has been stagnant in Lebanon. The law establishes an authority named the Regulatory Authority for the Cultivation of Cannabis Plants for Medical and Industrial Use (the "Authority") which would oversee all cannabis-related operations in Lebanon; however, the Authority has been inactive to date and has yet to approve any applications for the license types provided for in the law.

On 28 October 2021, more than a year and a half after the enactment of the law, the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture confirmed that the cultivation of cannabis will be implemented in Lebanon very soon. Lebanese Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Abbas Al-Hajj Hassan, stipulated that:

"Today I would like to talk about Lebanon as a whole and the Baalbek-Hermel region and the Bekaa in particular, which is the subject of cannabis and is central and essential today for many reasons; we all know that the law exists and is approved, and therefore we await the executive decrees of the cabinet"

Minister Hassan added that "*Prime Minister Najib Mikati promised good things and has begun communicating with the ministries concerned, so that the law can be implemented.*"

Minister Hassan stated that the cultivation of cannabis in Lebanon will "*save the Lebanese economy and the deprived areas of Kekar and Baalbek-Hermel*", stressing that "*this will have internal and external positives, but the interior positive is the revitalization of the region*". Minister Hassan concluded his remarks by emphasizing that "*the cultivation of cannabis will take us* [Lebanon] *far and will be presented at the international stage as an auxiliary solution on the subject of global health security, and we* [Lebanon] *will be strongly present in the international stage as a country that helps the international community in this context*".

Over the past year, Lebanon has seen some drastic events that have deteriorated the health of the nation. With that being said, there is a strong belief within the nation that the legal cultivation of cannabis will be Lebanon's saving grace. The area currently planted with plants producing hashish – the illegal form of cannabis – in the area of Baabalk-Hermel is estimated at 5,000 dunams (1,200 acres), located within the Bekaa Valley; the production of cannabis in the area, which is equivalent to $10,000 per plant, is the most expensive quality cannabis in the world.

With the legalization and regulation of cultivated cannabis in Lebanon, the nation will seek to take advantage of the prosperous geological factors which make the production of cannabis in Lebanon the cheapest and highest quality cannabis currently available in the international markets.

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