

Comments on Lebanon's ongoing economic crisis in FT, 28 Nov 2019

Dr. Nasser Saidi's comments on Lebanon's potential debt crisis appeared in the article titled "Lebanon urged to restructure debt as crisis deepens" published in the FT on 28th Nov 2019.

The full article can be accessed at: <https://www.ft.com/content/e0c02d14-104e-11ea-a225-db2f231cfeae>

Comments are posted below:

Nasser Saidi, a former central bank vice governor, said he expected the central bank would be able to provide the foreign currency needed to cover Thursday's repayment, pointing out that not all the funds would automatically flow overseas. He estimated that over two-thirds of the \$1.5bn owed would remain in the country as the debt is already held by local lenders and the central bank. "The balance to foreign investors can be covered from existing [foreign exchange] reserves," he said.

Comments on Lebanon's worsening default risk in FT, 16 Nov 2019

Dr. Nasser Saidi's comments on Lebanon's escalating economic-financial-fiscal crisis appeared in the article titled "Lebanon's creditors adopt crash position as default risk worsens" published in the FT on 16th Nov 2019.

The full article can be accessed

at: <https://www.ft.com/content/11d008d6-07b5-11ea-a984-fbbacad9e7dd>

Comments are posted below:

Nasser Saidi, a former BdL vice-governor and former economy and trade minister, said different approaches were needed to ease the debt servicing burden of Lebanon's foreign currency and local currency debts.

Mr Saidi said that maturities on local debt could be extended and interest rates lowered, if BdL, local banks and pension funds were to agree with the measures. He added that multilateral development banks and foreign donors could offer guarantees on Lebanon's foreign currency debt, lessening the pain for investors taking forced losses.

But he said that politicians need to act fast and appoint a government with technical skills to see through this difficult process. "The longer you take to . . . undertake a painful adjustment, the worse the problem becomes," Mr Saidi said.

Comments on Lebanon's escalating economic crisis in New York Times, 15 Nov 2019

Dr. Nasser Saidi's comments on Lebanon's escalating economic-financial-fiscal crisis appeared in the article titled "Economic Crisis Looms as Protests Rage in Lebanon" published in the New York Times on 15th Nov 2019.

The full article can be accessed at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/15/world/middleeast/lebanon-protests-economy.html>

Comments are posted below:

"The problem is that the current policies are unsustainable," said Nasser Saidi, a former Lebanese economy minister. Putting

the country on the right track would require simultaneously dealing with a large budget deficit and bringing down public debt – a gargantuan task.

“You really don’t have much choice,” he said. “You are at the edge of the precipice and you are looking down, so unless you do that, where is this going to end?”