



Sukleen and Sukomi - Press Conference Statement

Monroe Hotel, Ain El Mraisse, Beirut

07.04.2016

A lot has been said, written, assumed, implied and inferred about what we have done or haven't done for Lebanon, about what drives and motivates us, about our implied fictive political connections and the way we do business.

This is the first Press Conference ever organised by Sukleen and Sukomi and let me assure you that it will not be the last. We can no longer allow the culture of rumours and false accusations to tarnish our reputation that was built over 23 years. Most importantly, we will not let all this affect the dignity of our people – those people you see constantly cleaning the streets of Beirut 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. The time has come to end the misinformation and rumours accusing our companies of not treating the waste and of stealing the public funds.

For the interest of the people of Lebanon that we respect, appreciate, live together with and serve, and to preserve the dignity of our employees and workers, the actual stories of Sukleen and Sukomi should be told. What we have actually achieved for this country and its people has never been of interest to the public: we believe it's high time it were.

We have been executing all the requested work: sweeping, waste collection, sorting, composting, baling, wrapping and landfilling according to the contractual requirements and the available capacity made available to us by the Government. For the past 23 years, we have been constantly and daily verified by the consultants of the CDR, and quarterly by independent international auditors. All these audit reports are documented by the CDR and the Ministry of Environment.

Regarding the legal accusations brought against in next week's file, these will be appropriately challenged and disputed. We fully trust the Lebanese judiciary system and we shall keep cooperating with it as it has always been the case.

We have built, commissioned and operated one of the best, safest and most modern landfills in Middle East as attested by all the visiting local and international experts.

Please do not think, even for a second, that Naameh is a '*death trap*' or a '*health hazard*' – it certainly isn't and we officially invite any members of the public and media to go and see this for themselves. You will be as surprised at what you'll see since some of the international visitors were impressed by how aligned with international standards Naameh is.

Sukleen and Sukomi have constantly sought to increase the sorting and composting capacity of the waste collected over the years with the aim to reduce the quantity of waste landfilled in Naameh. We have presented the Lebanese Government with numerous pilot projects over the years to achieve 80% of waste treatment and landfilling less than 20 percent– these were all scientifically robust and technologically viable, tested and proved, and among those pilot projects were: air sorting, tunnel composting, RDF and gas to energy generation. The Lebanese government decided to accept the project related to the electricity generation from Naameh, a project that provides currently 0.5 MW and 24hrs electricity supply to three villages - Abey, Baawerta, Ain Drafil, namely to more than 500 houses, since the summer of 2014. By the end of 2016, Naameh's power capacity will increase to 7 MW.



We have been accused, many times, that we have not raised awareness of the importance of waste reduction, segregation and recycling. The reality is that we have a department dedicated to those activities, and Sukleen has reached more than 2,000 partners, spread across a variety of public and private institutions, providing its recyclable collection service free of charge. We have been distributing more than 11,000 thousand of recycling bins and boxes across our areas of operation in Lebanon. Thousands of leaflets and posters were distributed and displayed in different areas of Beirut and Mount Lebanon areas and we have run dozens of awareness raising events and related workshops.

We are not a political organisation, we do not interfere in politics, we do not dictate nor influence the strategic approach of the Lebanese Government and that of the political parties. We know only what we do best and what we are the best at: cleaning the streets, collecting, treating and safely disposing of the waste, fulfilling the contract requirements and ensuring that we keep Beirut and Mount Lebanon clean, as we have done it over the last 23 years.

Ever since Naameh closed down on the 17th of July last year and Sukleen and Sukomi contract expired, we had no permanent waste disposal option made available to us, other than the temporary storage areas provided by the Municipalities and the Government. While the Lebanese government could not secure a permanent location to which waste is transported, all what Sukleen and Sukomi could do was to put all their capacity at the disposal of the Lebanese government to ensure the continuity of the public service. We are fully aware of the residents' complaints, their dissatisfaction and lack of sufficient information provided by the relevant authorities in this regard – we did not choose the locations, we were not asked for our opinion regarding these nor did we have any influence on the areas chosen.

Under the current Waste Management Plan of the Government Decision no. 1 dated 12.03.2016, we have immediately mobilised our workforce and logistic equipment and collected more than 275,000 of the estimated 400,000 tonnes of waste accumulated. As such, since the inception of the Government's new Waste Plan, the waste is being removed from the streets of Beirut and Mount Lebanon and we have begun transporting it to Na'ameh landfill. We anticipate to finish this operation within the set time of the 2 months plan if there are no other changes occurring. Just as we observed every single provision of our past contracts, we are fully compliant with what it is being requested from us now.

Regarding the temporary storage sites or "Temporary Parkings" of Burj Hammoud and Costa Brava, these are temporary storage sites hosting the waste sorted in our sorting facilities in Amrousieh and Karantina that are operating at full capacity, 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week and have never ceased operating, contrary to the public misinformation.

Until the Lebanese government calls for tenders as stated by the Government Decision no. 1 dated 12.03.2016, the work our companies are doing at the two temporary storage sites of Burj Hammoud and Costa Brava is planned and strictly supervised by the consultants of the CDR.