

Al Jadeed Interview

“After publication of new employee lists from Hamiyeh Family in CMA-CGM... Digital expert Roland Abi Najm reveals the disappearance of all the posted names”

On social media sites in the last couple of days, a series of photos and information were circulating concerning the employment of a number of young people, or employees, in CMA-CGM. They are all from the family of Minister of Public Works and Transport Ali Hamiyeh. Shortly, we will see the pictures or names of these employees, who were listed on this website.

For more information on this issue, on whether or not it is true, we are joined by our guest Roland Abi Najm, an expert in Information Security and Digital Transformation. Good morning

- Good morning to you Reef and to all viewers
- First, let us sum up the situation for viewers. Two days ago, a series of posts appeared on social media sites saying over 50 employees with the same family name, i.e. that of the Minister of Public Works and Transport Ali Hamiyeh were employed by CMA-CGM in the last few months. Obviously, they are still fresh, junior employees, and according to their employment and their positions, they seem to be newly recruited in these jobs. You showed the following day that if we open LinkedIn, we can see these employees' data. However all this data was deleted less than 24 hours later. The names are nowhere to be found. We tried contacting the Minister of Public Works and Transport Dr. Ali Hamiyeh in the morning to solicit his opinion and find out how true this issue is, and we will pursue the matter during the day. But we are speaking to you from a technical angle. Are these names real or fake? Were they really published then deleted? What information do you have to sum this matter up for us? How can we ascertain that these were newly employed individuals, meaning from around 4 months ago, namely that this is a company that plays a big part in the Port of Beirut, the Port of Tripoli and was supposed to play a big part in the postal service company and many public entities. The company has indeed entered the Lebanese scene with force since 2019.

- First of all Reef, let's clarify this to viewers scientifically. The first thing we saw was this screenshot from LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a site similar to a CV for each of us. When a person joins they write 'I work for CMA CGM', or 'Microsoft' or any other firm. When you check the company's page, you will see all its employees names and you can simply specify that you want to see the names of employees from the Hamiyeh family. It turns out there is a list of names on LinkedIn for members of the Hamiyeh family. For me, as soon as I saw the screenshot I did a fact check. I tried to seek confirmation about the story, and found out that the names were no longer there as company employees. I tried to search for each one in their personal capacity, I checked every person by name to see whether or not these names are even listed on LinkedIn. All their accounts had been deleted. I did that for a simple reason. A person can be an employee of the company but as you mentioned I wanted to check the start date of their employment. Was it one or two months ago, or 4 to 5 years ago, that is to say before all these contracts with the Lebanese State? It turned out that all accounts for employees from the Hamiyeh family were deleted. If these were simply people with no political links, nor were given jobs for political reasons, or because of agreements between the company and the government, why would their accounts be deleted? There was already a screenshot of their accounts, so the screenshot is still there. So if you delete the account, the contrary happens, it could dispel the allegation if you've been with the company for 4 or 5 years, or if you have specific skills and such. This is why this issue raised very big questions.
- Concerning these young employees, can we know by their positions that appeared at first whether they were still freshly employed, if these were new positions, or do their positions go back years, or 3 to 4 months, how can we know?
- I reiterate that theoretically if their accounts were still present on LinkedIn, you could see their date of employment in the company and the nature of their work. In the screenshot you can only see the title. One guy per example was an IT technician. So an IT technician fixes a problem you may have with your computer or such things. It is then a fresh entry position. Once again,

questions were raised for many reasons, first because there were questions around Minister Hamiyeh in particular concerning the airport issue, which he went back on. He had awarded one company a \$122 million contract without a tender. Also with CMA-CGM and the postal service, Mr Jean Al-Alliyeh Head of the Tenders Department intervened, rejecting their offer because it was a tender tailored to the company while there was no other bidders. They were winning the bid through some kind of arrangement with the government. This is why it raised questions about the Minister and the company. That's why people were wondering if this employment was done in exchange for the company's contracts in the Port of Tripoli, the postal service, and many things it was acquiring from the government, whether without tender or through consensual agreements. In exchange for this, some people were hired in the company, especially that it is a private firm and can employ whomever it wishes. But if this happened in exchange for political contracts, it could reap very high returns, and this will create big problems.

- The one thing certain today is that these names were really present on LinkedIn, they were not fake people. They were listed as employees of the company but were deleted within mere hours. So this requires some explanation. How were this many people from one family hired in the last few months, right?
- Absolutely. While there are all these people from the Hamiyeh family, why isn't one person listed as a company employee? This raises very big questions, especially as some consider that they deleted their accounts after being smeared. But on the contrary, if their accounts remained, it would protect them. As in, we were not hired recently because of the tenders, and were already serving employees. Plus, why would all the employees from a single family take a collective decision to delete their accounts? Unless someone requested they do so. These are the big, truly controversial questions.
- Yes. we certainly do not mean to offend anyone but as you said, this issue caused an uproar on social media and raised a lot of questions. Naturally, as a media institution we should highlight this issue to clarify it. Like you have noted, the names were listed and all deleted simultaneously, both as accounts

on LinkedIn, and from the company's page. Therefore an explanation is needed. Of course this doesn't mean these individuals do not deserve the jobs. But it's an issue that raised controversy and needs more explaining. We will follow-up on the details of the matter with the Minister of Public Works and Transport, to get an explanation for hiring this many people in the company. Thank you once again.

Interview link

<https://www.aljadeed.tv/news/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA/444628/%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AD-%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B8%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%AC%D8%AF%D8%AF-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A2%D9%84-%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-cma-c>