

13 July 2023

Alejandra Reynoso  
Chair, ICANN Country Code Name Supporting Organization

### **Establishment of a caretaker designation for top-level domains in the root zone database**

Dear Alejandra,

In performing our responsibilities for managing the root zone, we've become aware of an operational situation in a country-code top-level domain that requires us to act and we wanted to inform you about.

In the case of the .LB domain, the ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 designation for Lebanon, the current ccTLD manager is the American University of Beirut (AUB). AUB has made representations to IANA that AUB has no ongoing role or responsibility for the domain, and we are satisfied through our investigations that this is the case. Further, AUB has requested to be removed from IANA's records so that AUB is no longer listed in the IANA database as the manager for .LB. This presents a challenge as IANA does not have a successor organization to appoint in its place. IANA's current operational procedures and the existing policies on ccTLD transfers assume a qualified successor organization will be available for appointment.

The situation for the .LB domain is complicated by the fact that IANA understands that day-to-day operations of the .LB domain were being performed by Nabil Bukhalid, a former AUB employee. He had been working to establish a successor arrangement but passed away earlier this year. Associates of Bukhalid have continued to manage the domain on an informal basis since that time.

In order to honor the request of AUB and to better reflect the operational reality of .LB, IANA is establishing a "caretaker" designation in the root zone database for this domain. This designation will signal that there is an extraordinary and temporary operational situation. IANA will identify .LB as in caretaker status and remove the designation of AUB as the domain's manager, as well as removing the designation of Bukhalid as the administrative contact. IANA will continue to work with Bukhalid's known associates to ensure the ongoing

operation of the domain, until such time as a qualified successor is identified through a normal ccTLD transfer request process, at which time the caretaker designation will be removed. We note that a temporary caretaker designation was also made for the .LY domain in the early 2000s for a short period of time.

We are establishing this designation out of an operational necessity. There appear to be no specific policies that govern a situation where the existing designated ccTLD manager no longer performs its role but there is no obvious successor. The ccNSO Council may wish to consider these types of scenarios to identify if any further guidance or policymaking by ICANN and the ccNSO is necessary.

ICANN has approved creating the caretaker designation in the context of the IANA Naming Functions contract.

Thank you for the discussion on this matter during ICANN77 and we remain available to answer any questions you may have.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kim Davies', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kim Davies  
Vice President, IANA Services, ICANN  
President, Public Technical Identifiers