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RENTAL OF GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

LBP 200 BILLION ANNUALLY

Education in Lebanon
1 Million Students & 2,976 Schools

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Reflections on Independence

By Jawad N. Adra

Decades have passed, and nothing has changed in Lebanon. The hitherto unresolved dilemmas have engendered new crises, making reality harder to bear. The following text is the speech I delivered 18 years ago, on November 2003, 19 at the Antelias Cultural Movement Center on Independence Day. It was published in "The Monthly" magazine, Issue No. 3 of December 2003, and we are republishing it today will soon in celebration of Lebanon's 78th year of independence.

Bechara Khoury's British bornaita (hat), Riad Solh's Turkish "tarboush" (fez) and Majid Arslan's "ba'akour" (stick) were not encouraging symbols to the enthusiastic student eager to celebrate independence.

As days passed and the student read about those men commonly referred to, by the Civic Education book, as heroes of independence, his enthusiasm faded away. After the 'Allies' had settled their scores in Lebanon, the 'French' Emile Edde was branded a traitor, and those who had been imprisoned in the Rachaya Fortress for a few days became 'heroes'.

As more days passed, the enthusiastic student read about the only martyr of the independence, Said Fakhreddine, a soldier who was once left out of the history book. Upon learning more about other martyrs such as those that faced the Ottomans in World War I, he wondered why the names of the true heroes were substituted with those of politicians. Instead of being an occasion for unity, independence has become a source of divisions, and raising the flag to glorify an 'eternal' Lebanon has served as a disguise for Christian confessionalism, while Islamic confessionalism has been hiding behind the Palestinian and Arab causes.

The enthusiastic student discovered (of course not from the 'unified' history book or the one on civic education), the true meaning of independence. Independence is not in the departure of an army from our land, nor in the negative attitude towards 'the other', and it does not exist in the display of symbols, but in our scale of values - when we lose those values or tip the scale, we lose independence.

With time, we have failed to construct a society of knowledge and productivity and have instead been transformed into single entities competing for money and power. In the midst of that, we have lost that most precious treasure: freedom. To that student, Lebanon was a beacon of light in the midst of tyrannical Arab regimes. He also believed that where productivity and creativity exist, there is freedom (and vice versa). The closer we are to those values, the brighter the light.

Once the student came to realize this, he fell in love again with his country and suddenly felt differently toward Bechara Khoury's "bornaita", Riad Solh's "tarboush", and Majid Arslan's "ba'akour". He had wrongly condemned those people, for the problem is not in the individuals, it is in the scale of values, he discovered.

To quote the words of Gibran, written over 70 years ago:

"Pity the nation that is full of beliefs and empty of religion

Pity the nation that eats a bread it does not harvest

Pity the nation divided into fragments, each fragment deeming itself a nation"

More of Gibran's words dawned on the student, especially those echoed by Kennedy, that you should "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country". Let us produce at all levels: agriculturally, industrially, in arts and science, to become a society of knowledge, for only then will we be independent and Lebanon can be what we aspire for it to be.

Leader

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RENTAL OF GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS LBP 200 BILLION ANNUALLY

The premises occupied by the Lebanese ministries, government departments and public schools are either governed by the old rent law that was in effect prior to 1992 and imposed a periodic rental increase by half the percentage increase on the first tranche of wages, or by the new rent law that was materialized after 1992. The latter liberalized the rent market allowing for new contracts, with a landlord able to raise rent after three years. This signifies that under both laws, the rent has been rising perpetually.

Budget Allocation to Government Buildings

In order to reduce the rental expenses on private properties, the 2018 Budget Law No. 79 of April 18, 2018 established an allocation of LBP 750 billion to construct public buildings within a period of five years, thereby freeing the Lebanese state and its public administrations from the burdens of occupying rented buildings and premises. Yet, as no construction has been put up, the government has kept on renting private buildings and squandering public funds.

- 2018: LBP 10 billion
- 2019: LBP 200 billion
- 2020: LBP 200 billion
- 2021: LBP 165 billion
- 2022: LBP 175 billion

Rental of Buildings by Department and Institution

Thousands of government departments and institutions occupy rented buildings. As shown in the following table, their rental varies by region, space and building status.

A table showing the rented buildings by location, space, rental date and fee.

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
Ministry of Youth and Sports	Ashrafieh	A building of seven floors	-	LBP 262.9 million
Ministry of Tourism	Bhamdoun (a useless rental)	-	-	LBP 5.476 million
Ministry of Tourism	Rafic Hariri International Airport	-	-	LBP 24.7 million
Ministry of Tourism	Paris (the office has been placed in the custody of Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	-	-	€ 157,000 (a large but unnecessary cost)
Ministry of Tourism	Cairo	-	-	USD 12,000
Ministry of State for Administrative Development	Mina El Hosn- Beirut	2,305 m ²	A new contract	USD 572,000 + USD 61,000 for maintenance
The Central Fund for the Displaced	Moussaitbeh-Beirut	680 m ² + a warehouse of 700 m ²	1993	LBP 124 million + LBP 20 million for maintenance
The Central Fund for the Displaced	Moussaitbeh-Beirut	6 floors with an area of 1,803 m ²	1995	LBP 382 million It was approved to vacate the area in return for renting additional sections in the said building
Ministry of the Displaced	Mina El Hosn- Beirut	1,683 m ²	2001	LBP 96 million
Ministry of the Displaced	Mina El Hosn	Warehouses of 200 m ²	2000	LBP 50 million
Ministry of Education and Higher Education-Primary and Intermediate Schools	350 schools throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 20.2 billion

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
Ministry of Education and Higher Education- High Schools	88 high schools throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 10.8 billion
The Council for the South-Headquarters	Bir Hassan	7 floors with an area of 4,265 m ²	1985	LBP 962 million + LBP 50 million for maintenance
Office of the Council for the South	7 offices	1,210 m ²		LBP 44 million
The Economic and Social council	Downtown Beirut	2 floors with an area of 1,365 m ² + 20 car parking spaces	2001	USD 299,600 or its equivalent in Lebanese pounds at the official exchange rate + USD 28,000 for maintenance
The Central Inspection Board	Beirut	12 floors with an area of 5,214 m ²	1980	LBP 1.064 billion + LBP 70 million for maintenance
The Cooperative of Civil Servants	Head office	4 floors with an area of 2,530 m ²	1973	LBP 669 million
The Cooperative of Civil Servants	4 offices	1,143 m ²	-	LBP 77 million
The Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL)	Downtown Beirut	2 offices with an area of 1,374 m ²	2003	LBP 444 million (USD 265,000)
The Central Administration of Statistics	Hadath	2,200 m ²	2016	LBP 597 million + LBP 31 million for maintenance
The General Directorate of General Security	12 offices throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 663 million
The General Directorate of General Security	Ashrafieh	1,862 m ²	28-08-2016	LBP 444 million + LBP 9 million for maintenance
The General Directorate of General Security	Moussaitbeh	1,239 m ²	25-09-2019	LBP 666 million
The General Directorate of General Security	Ashrafieh, used as a garage for military vehicles	2,300 m ²	05-10-1999	LBP 621 million + LBP 2 million for maintenance
The General Directorate of Internal Security Forces	93 offices and one detachment throughout Lebanon	-	Most of them are old rentals	LBP 889 million + LBP 317 million for maintenance
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants-Center of Research and Documentation	Rmeil-Ashrafieh	1,980 m ²	1977	LBP 110.3 million
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants-Department of Foreigners	Rmeil-Ashrafieh	-	2004	USD 51,282
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants-Department of Economic Affairs	Rmeil	-	2005	USD 52,503
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants-Department of Economic Affairs	Rmeil	-	1999	USD 55,203

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants-Department of Economic Affairs	Rmeil	2,124 m ²	-	LBP 70 million
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants-Department of Economic Affairs	Rmeil	3 floors	-	LBP 273 million
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants-Department of Economic Affairs	Rmeil	1,555 m ²	-	LBP 50.6 million
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants-ESCWA Building	Downtown Beirut	-	1997	LBP 14.2 billion
Emigrants Directorate	Chiah	-	1996	LBP 482 million (a decision was made to evacuate it)
Ministry of Culture-The Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music	9 music conservatories in a number of Lebanese regions	-	-	LBP 422 million
Ministry of Culture	Ras Beirut	9 floors	-	LBP 187 million
Ministry of Culture	Beirut	-	-	USD 647,000
Ministry of Economy and Trade	Downtown Beirut	2,780 m ²	-	LBP 1.014 billion + 116 million for maintenance
Ministry of Economy and Trade-The Insurance Control Commission	Bank Street	1,100 m ²	-	USD 234,000 + USD 1,500 for maintenance
Ministry of Economy and Trade	Department of Economy and Trade for the Beqa'a Governorate (Zahle)	-	-	LBP 24.5 million
Ministry of Telecommunications-Telecommunications Regulatory Authority	Downtown Beirut	750 m ²	-	USD 200,000
Ministry of Environment	Downtown Beirut	2,060 m ²	-	USD 512,000
Ministry of Environment	Zahle, office of Regional Department	100 m ²	-	LBP 9 million + LBP 7 million for maintenance
Lebanese University	Mina El Hosn- Beirut	1,883 m ²	-	LBP 146 million
Lebanese University	Sin El Fil (Doctoral School of Literature, Humanities and Social Sciences)	337 m ²	-	LBP 37 million
Lebanese University	Raouche (Institute of Social Sciences)- 1 st branch	9 floors	1978	LBP 157.4 million
Lebanese University	Naccache (Institute of Social Sciences)- 2 nd branch	2,666 m ²	1978	LBP 401 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 4 th branch	150 m ²	1981	LBP 12.6 million
Lebanese University	Furn El Chebbak (Faculty of Fine Arts and Architecture)- 2 nd branch	8,050 m ²	1980	LBP 501 million
Lebanese University	Chiah (Institute of Social Sciences)- Deanship	160 m ²	2003	LBP 25.2 million

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
Lebanese University	Nabatieh (Faculty of Sciences)- 5 th branch	4,390 m ²	2001	LBP 325 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 4 th branch	880 m ²	2014	LBP 90 million
Lebanese University	Moussaitbeh (Mutual Fund for Lebanese University Professors)	975 m ²	1973	LBP 62 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Letter and Human Science)- 4 th branch	1,022 m ²	1980	LBP 67.5 million
Lebanese University	Nabatieh (Faculty of Sciences)- 5 th branch	1,100 m ²	2015	LBP 109 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Sciences)- 4 th branch	445 m ²	1980	LBP 21 million
Lebanese University	Mansourieh (Faculty of Sciences)- 2 nd branch	3,206 m ²	1977	LBP 200 million
Lebanese University	Haouch El Omara (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 4 th branch	1,839 m ²	1991	LBP 155.3 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Sciences)- 4 th branch	2,359 m ²	2001	LBP 164.7 million
Lebanese University	Saida (Institute of Social Sciences)-5 th branch	1,040 m ²	2014	LBP 115 million
Lebanese University	Beirut (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)-1 st branch	8 floors with an area of 2,160 m ²	1976	LBP 135 million
Lebanese University	Beit Meri (Inspection and Administrative Development Office)	149 m ²	1999	LBP 10.7 million
Lebanese University	Halba-Akkar (Faculty of Sciences)- 3 rd branch	1,460 m ²	2011	LBP 81.7 million
Lebanese University	Trablous (Faculty of Public Health)- 3 rd branch	600 m ²	2019	LBP 51.2 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Sciences)- 4 th branch	190 m ²	1981	LBP 13 million
Lebanese University	Dekwaneh (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Deanship)	600 m ²	2016	LBP 119 million
Lebanese University	Fanar-Ain Saadeh (Faculty of Letters)- 2 nd branch	5,400 m ²	1978	LBP 334.3 million
Lebanese University	Bauchrieh (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences- Le Centre de Langues et de Traduction)	3,360 m ²	2012	LBP 443 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Institute of Social Sciences)- 4 th branch	2,200 m ²	2005	LBP 112 million
Lebanese University	Mastita (Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management)	686 m ²	2018	LBP 65 million
Lebanese University	Aley (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration)- 4 th branch	4,065 m ²	2010	LBP 334 million
Lebanese University	Abey-Aley (Faculty of Technology)	3,175 m ²	2010	LBP 257 million
Lebanese University	Moussaitbeh-Beirut (Cafeteria of Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 1 st branch	140 m ²	1998	LBP 14 million

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
Lebanese University	Raouche (Faculty of Fine Arts and Architecture)- 1 st branch	4,200 m ²	1978	LBP 721 million
Lebanese University	Saida (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 5 th branch	3 floors	2014	LBP 171.3 million
Lebanese University	Bauchrieh (Faculty of Pedagogy)- 2 nd branch	1,642 m ²	1979	LBP 248 million
Lebanese University	Chiah (Faculty of Fine Arts and Architecture)- 2 nd branch	3,280 m ²	2009	LBP 279 million
Lebanese University	Saida (Faculty of Public Health)- 5 th branch	6 floors with an area of 4,691 m ²	1992	LBP 521 million
Lebanese University	Moussaitbeh (Faculty of Law and Political and Administrative Sciences-French Section)	2,889 m ²	2000	LBP 366 million
Lebanese University	Ashrafieh (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration)-2 nd branch	300 m ²		LBP 18 million (used as parking lots)
Lebanese University	Nabatieh (Faculty of Sciences)- 5 th branch	1,250 m ²	2008	LBP 70 million
Lebanese University	Mejdlaya-Zgharta (Institute of Social Sciences)- 3 rd branch	4,577 m ²	2008	LBP 160 million
Lebanese University	Saida (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 5 th branch	2,950 m ²	2002	LBP 251 million
Lebanese University	Ashrafieh (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration)- 2 nd branch	2,419 m ²	1979	LBP 288 million
Lebanese University	Rawda (Faculty of Pedagogy)- 2 nd branch	870 m ²	1997	LBP 88 million
Lebanese University	Sin El Fil (Doctoral School of Law, Political, Administrative and Economic Sciences)	5,610 m ²	1986	LBP 681 million
Lebanese University	Saida (Faculty of Law and Political and Administrative Sciences)- 5 th branch	3,128 m ²	1981	LBP 172 million
Lebanese University	Tayouneh (the building of the Deanship of Faculties of Engineering, Information and Social Sciences)	1,762 m ²	1998	LBP 366 million
Lebanese University	Trablous (Research and Studies Center)	1,836 m ²	2009	LBP 215 million
Lebanese University	Roumieh (Faculty of Engineering)- 2 nd branch	760 m ²	2020	LBP 86 million
Lebanese University	UNESCO (Faculty of Information and Documentation)- 1 st branch	6 floors	1966	LBP 453 million
Lebanese University	Mazra'a (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 1 st branch	7 floors	1963	LBP 322 million
Lebanese University	Corniche El Mazra'a (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 1 st branch	7 floors and a warehouse	1961	LBP 338 million

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
Lebanese University	Corniche El Mazra'a (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 1 st branch	9 floors	1965	LBP 254 million
Lebanese University	Mazra'a (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 1 st branch	7 floors	1960	LBP 162 million
Lebanese University	Haouch El Omara-Zahle (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 4 th branch	585 m ²	2010	LBP 55 million
Lebanese University	Haouch El Omara-Zahle (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 4 th branch	1,863 m ²	1978	LBP 141 million
Lebanese University	UNESCO (Faculty of Pedagogy)- 1 st branch	1,000 m ²	1967	LBP 360 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Sciences)- 4 th branch	1,716 m ²	2013	LBP 219 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Sciences)- 4 th branch	190 m ²	1983	LBP 8 million
Lebanese University	Saida (Institute of Social Sciences)- 5 th branch	3,313 m ²	1978	LBP 209 million
Lebanese University	Ain W Zein-Chouf (Faculty of Public Health)- 6 th branch	1,170 m ²	2010	LBP 63 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Sciences)- 4 th branch	222 m ²	1987	LBP 3 million
Lebanese University	Central Administration- Office of Social Security- Lebanese University	160 m ²	1973	LBP 8 million
Lebanese University	Mar Roukoz (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences- Le Centre de Langues et de Traduction)	2,296 m ²	2001	LBP 149 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Law and Political and Administrative Sciences)- 4 th branch	517 m ²	2007	LBP 19.3 million
Lebanese University	Dekwaneh (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences-Deanship)	1,665 m ²	1986	LBP 118 million
Lebanese University	Dekwaneh (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences-Deanship)	627 m ²	1986	LBP 445 million
Lebanese University	Aamchit (Faculty of Sciences)- 2 nd branch	986 m ²	1986	LBP 80.5 million
Lebanese University	Haouch El Omara-Zahle (Faculty of Law and Political and Administrative Sciences)- 4 th branch	2,087 m ²	2012	LBP 104 million
Lebanese University	Saida (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences)- 5 th branch	3,229 m ²	2002	LBP 244 million
Lebanese University	Ras Maska-North Lebanon (Faculty of Fine Arts and Architecture)- 3 rd branch	8,860 m ²	2014	LBP 366 million
Lebanese University	Roumieh (Faculty of Engineering)- 2 nd branch	1,075 m ²	1983	LBP 79 million

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Sciences)- 4 th branch	222 m ²	1985	LBP 8.7 million
Lebanese University	Roumieh (Faculty of Engineering)- 2 nd branch	1,821 m ²	1984	LBP 178 million
Lebanese University	Zahle-Maalaka (Faculty of Public Health)- 4 th branch	265 m ²	2017	LBP 35 million
Lebanese University	Roumieh (Faculty of Engineering)- 2 nd branch	6,051 m ²	2007	LBP 305.7 million
Lebanese University	Dekwaneh (Faculty of Agronomy)	5,570 m ²	1986	LBP 772 million
Lebanese University	Trablous (Faculty of Public Health)- 3 rd branch	215 m ²	2004	LBP 20.4 million
Lebanese University	Saida (Faculty of Public Health)- 5 th branch	877 m ²	2017	LBP 88 million
Lebanese University	Furn El Chebbak (Faculty of Pedagogy-Deanship)	4,600 m ²	2010	LBP 520 million
Lebanese University	Zahle (Faculty of Public Health)- 4 th branch	1,242 m ²	2017	LBP 148 million
Lebanese University	Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management	4,200 m ²	2015	LBP 549 million
Lebanese University	Saida (Faculty of Law and Political and Administrative Sciences)	816 m ²	1984	LBP 26.7 million
Lebanese University	Beit Meri (Central Administration-Inspection and Administrative Development Office)	700 m ²	1979	LBP 34 million
Lebanese University	Bauchrieh (Faculty of Information and Documentation)- 2 nd branch	2,087 m ²	2015	LBP 366 million
Lebanese University	Raouche (Institute of Social Sciences)- 1 st branch	2,476 m ²	1978	LBP 212 million
Lebanese University	Moussaitbeh (Central Administration- Warehouse of Central Administration)	920 m ²	1973	LBP 12.6 million
Lebanese University	Rachaya El Wadi (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration)- 6 th branch	1,395 m ²	2013	LBP 75 million
Lebanese University	Roumieh (Faculty of Engineering)- 2 nd branch	1,382 m ²	1985	LBP 160 million
Lebanese University	Dekwaneh (Faculty of Agronomy)	268 m ² (a cafeteria)	1998	LBP 30 million
Lebanese University	Jal El Dib (Faculty of Law and Political and Administrative Sciences)- 2 nd branch	8,381 m ²	1978	LBP 661 million
Lebanese University	Nabatieh (Faculty of Sciences)- 5 th branch	1,150 m ²	2016	LBP 113 million
Lebanese University	Trablous (Faculty of Public Health)- 3 rd branch	2,321 m ²	1997	LBP 221 million
Lebanese University	Trablous (Faculty of Fine Arts and Architecture)	-	-	LBP 268 million

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
Lebanese University	Nabatieh (Faculty of Economics and Business Administration)- 5 th branch	4,339 m ²	2017	LBP 377 million
Lebanese University	Trablous (Faculty of Engineering)	-	-	LBP 276 million
Lebanese University	Roumieh (Faculty of Engineering)- 2 nd branch	3,000 m ²	1980	LBP 357 million
The National Employment Office- Ministry of Labor	Ashrafieh	483 m ²	1978	LBP 250 million
The Educational Center for Research and Development	14 centers (previously the teacher-training colleges)	-	-	LBP 551 million
The Educational Center for Research and Development	Dekwaneh	6 floors	-	LBP 40 million
The Educational Center for Research and Development	Zahle	3 floors	-	LBP 144 million
The Audit Bureau	Zokak El Blat- Beirut	8 floors with an area of 6,310 m ²	1963	LBP 1.018 billion
The Civil Service Board	Verdun-Beirut	830 m ²	1960	LBP 272 million
Office of a Minister of State	Bachoura-Beirut	121 m ²	2008	LBP 40.1 million
Office of the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs	Mina El Hosn	-	-	USD 70.7 million
The Hajj and Umrah Affairs Authority	Moussaitbeh-Beirut	320 m ²	2008	LBP 66.7 million
The National Archives Center	3 premises in Beirut	1,820 m ²	-	LBP 764 million + LBP 93 million for maintenance
The Higher Relief Council	Starco- Downtown Beirut	13 offices with an area of 682 m ²	-	LBP 285 million + LBP 23 million for services
Elissar Institution	Moussaitbeh	482 m ² + a warehouse and parking lots	2011	LBP 182 million
The Tripoli Special Economic Zone	Trablous	540 m ²	2017	LBP 285 million + LBP 23 million for services
The Higher Disciplinary Committee	Ashrafieh	2 floors with an area of 1,374 m ²	1973	LBP 444 million
The Central Inspection Board	Ras Beirut	5,214 m ²	Rented in several stages between 1981 and 2001	LBP 597 million + LBP 31 million for maintenance
The Cooperative of Civil Servants	Medawar-Beirut	2,000 m ² + 2 warehouses with an area of 530 m ²	2016	LBP 699 million + LBP 15 million for maintenance
The Cooperative of Civil Servants	4 offices throughout Lebanon	1,143 m ²		LBP 78 million

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
The Sunni Sharia'a Courts	19 premises in Beirut and other Lebanese regions	-	-	LBP 547 million + LBP 18 million for maintenance
The Druze Religious Courts	8 premises in Beirut and other Lebanese regions	-	-	LBP 354 million + LBP 10.7 million for maintenance
The Druze Council	Ras Beirut-Verdun	3 floors with an area of 1,056 m ²	2007	LBP 183 million + LBP 32 million for maintenance
The Islamic Alawite Council	Trablous	245 m ²	2019	LBP 36 million + LBP 3.6 million for maintenance
The Supreme Islamic Shia'a Council-Hazmieh	Hazmieh (the premises is owned by the Supreme Islamic Shia'a Council)	1,722 m ²	1973	LBP 54 million + LBP 7 million for maintenance
The Supreme Islamic Shia'a Council-Khalde	Khalde (the premises is owned by the Supreme Islamic Shia'a Council)	629 m ²	1979	LBP 48.6 million + LBP 3 million for maintenance
Dar al-Ifta' al-Jaafari	3 offices in: Bint Jbeil, Jbeil and Baalbeck	-	-	LBP 35.5 million + LBP 3 million for maintenance
Dar El-Fatwa	Moussaitbeh-Beirut (the premises is owned by the General Directorate of Islamic Endowments)	4 floors with an area of 3,577 m ²	1969	LBP 37.3 million
Dar El- Fatwa	4 Fatwa houses in: Mennieh-Baalbeck-Sour-Hasbaya	-	-	LBP 118.5 million
The Council for Development and Reconstruction	Zokak El Blat-Downtown Beirut (owned by Solidere)	3 floors with an area of 2,713 m ² + warehouses of 2,524 m ²	2012	USD 897,000 including services and maintenance, payable in Lebanese pounds at the official exchange rate
The Council for Development and Reconstruction (the Expropriation Committees of Mount Lebanon and South Lebanon)	Mazra'a	361 m ²	-	LBP 52.4 million
The Economic and Social Development Fund	Port of Beirut-Downtown Beirut (owned by Solidere)	1,284 m ²	2019	USD 330,000, subject to gradual increase
The General Directorate of Lebanese Customs	Port of Beirut-Downtown Beirut	1,534 m ²	1979	LBP 480 million
The Higher Customs Council	Zokak El Blat-Downtown Beirut	935 m ²	1963	LBP 295 million
The General Directorate of Lebanese Customs-IT Service	Mar Elias	-	1986	LBP 81 million
The General Directorate of Lebanese Customs	9 offices in: Marjeyoun-Bourj Hammoud-Saida-Chtoura- Manara in Western Beqa'a-Arsal-Baalbeck-Rachaya El Wadi-Andaket	-	-	LBP 152 million
The Lebanese National Lottery Directorate	Bechara El Khoury-Beirut	2,464 m ²	-	LBP 84 million
The Lebanese Authority for Tobacco and Tombac	9 offices in: Baalbeck-Sour (2)- Bint Jbeil-Tebnine-Halba (2)-Tayouneh-Beirut	-	-	LBP 71.6 million
Ministry of National Defense	20 offices throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 537 million

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
Ministry of National Defense	Furn El Chebbak-Offices for the Directorate of Geographic Affairs	6,158 m ² + a warehouse of 1,500 m ²	1978	LBP 156.6 million
Ministry of Labor	Headquarters of the Ministry of Labor-Msharafieh	-	1974	LBP 244 million
Ministry of Labor	Offices for the Ministry of Labor throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 133 million
Ministry of Labor	ILO office in Lebanon-Starco Building-Hamra	-	1998	LBP 418.5 million
The National Social Security Fund	Headquarters-Moussaitbeh	11 floors with an area of 5,500 m ²	Prior to 1992	LBP 328.2 million
The National Social Security Fund	Moussaitbeh-NSSF Administration	9 floors with an area of 4,857 m ²	Prior to 1992	LBP 179 million
The National Social Security Fund	Moussaitbeh-NSSF Administration	4 floors with an area of 654 m ²	Prior to 1992	LBP 41 million
The National Social Security Fund	14 offices throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 601 million
The National Social Security Fund	Bourj El Barajneh	7 floors with an area of 2,000 m ²	-	LBP 301.6 million
The National Social Security Fund	Bourj Hammoud	One floor with an area of 1,126 m ²	Prior to 1992	LBP 226 million
Ministry of Interior and Municipalities- Cooperative Fund for Mukhtars in Lebanon	Ashrafieh	523 m ²	-	LBP 173.4 million for the first three years and LBP 195.7 million for the next three years
Ministry of Interior and Municipalities- Traffic Management Center	7 offices throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 270 million
Ministry of Interior and Municipalities- General Directorate for Political Affairs and Refugees	Hamra- Near BDL-Headquarters of the General Directorate	850 m ²	2016	LBP 150 million
Ministry of Interior and Municipalities- General Directorate for Political Affairs and Refugees	3 offices in Bachoura-Beirut	-	-	LBP 54 million
Ministry of Interior and Municipalities-Directorate General of Civil Status	Registry Office of Beirut	1,470 m ²	2015	LBP 346.7 million
Ministry of Interior and Municipalities-Directorate General of Civil Status	10 Registry Offices throughout Lebanon	-	Most of them are old rentals	LBP 75 million
The General Directorate of State Security	Headquarters-Beirut	1,052 m ²	1986	LBP 341 million
The General Directorate of State Security	Ashrafieh	698 m ²	1998	USD 140,000 + LBP 2 million for maintenance
The General Directorate of State Security	5 offices throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 53 million + LBP 13 million for maintenance

Government department / institution	Location	Space	Rental date	Annual rental fee
Ministry of Justice	Ashrafieh- Institute of Judicial Studies	8 floors with an area of 628 m ² + parking lots	1974	LBP 210 million
Ministry of Justice	Ashrafieh-Directorate of Prisons-Department of Minors-Forensic Medicine	8 floors with an area of 1,115 m ²	1974	LBP 102.6 million
Ministry of Justice	13 Court premises throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 290 million
Ministry of Agriculture-The Green Plan	Moussaitbeh-Beirut- Headquarters	-	1965	LBP 89 million
Ministry of Agriculture-The Green Plan	6 offices throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 59 million
Ministry of Agriculture	Bir Hassan-Chiah-Headquarters of the General Directorate of Cooperatives	1,990 m ² + a garage of 1,530 m ²	1973 and 2018	LBP 187 million + LBP 60 million for maintenance
Ministry of Agriculture	Baabda-Headquarters of the General Directorate of Cooperatives	2 floors with an area of 912 m ²	2015	LBP 197.7 million
Ministry of Agriculture	The building of regional organizations-Baabda	1,440 m ²	2018	LBP 600 million
Ministry of Agriculture	11 offices for Mount Lebanon Agriculture Department	-	-	LBP 83.3 million
Ministry of Agriculture	4 offices for Beqa'a Agriculture Department	-	-	LBP 79.7 million
Ministry of Agriculture	6 offices for North Agriculture Department	-	-	LBP 23.6 million
Ministry of Agriculture	4 offices for Nabatieh's Agriculture Department	-	-	LBP 32.4 million
Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Moussaitbeh-Beirut-Offices of the Directorate of Buildings	7 floors with an area of 3,500 m ²	2018	LBP 325 million
Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Wata El Msaytbeh-Beirut-Directorate General of Urban Planning's building	8 floors with an area of 3,000 m ² + parking lot + shelter	1966	LBP 366.6 million
Ministry of Social Affairs	Offices for the projects emanating from the Ministry	7 floors	1961	LBP 142.5 million
Ministry of Social Affairs	Regional Departments	-	-	LBP 150.3 million
Ministry of Social Affairs	83 Centers for Development Services throughout Lebanon	-	-	LBP 1.290 billion
Ministry of Social Affairs	Disability Rights Insurance Program	-	-	LBP 72 million
Ministry of Information	Office of the National News Agency in Hasbaya	-	-	LBP 6 million
Ministry of Information	Ras Beirut-Télé Liban	-	-	LBP 45.7 million

Source: A report issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers in 2021.



LEBANON'S SUPREME COUNCIL FOR THE TRIAL OF PRESIDENTS AND MINISTERS IS "INACTIVE"

Presidents, ministers and MPs enjoy broad powers enabling them to carry out their functions and duties, and to manage the country's resources. They may however err or break the law while exercising such powers, which begs the question on the body responsible for prosecuting them; is it the judiciary or the Supreme Council?

The Supreme Council

Pursuant to Articles 60 and 71 of the Lebanese Constitution, the impeached President of the Republic, Prime Minister and Ministers shall be tried before the Supreme Council for Trying Presidents and Ministers.

Article 80 of the Constitution stipulates that “the Supreme Council, whose function is to try Presidents and Ministers, shall consist of seven MPs elected by the Parliament and of eight of the highest Lebanese judges, according to their rank in the judicial hierarchy, or, in case of equal ranks, in the order of seniority. They shall meet under the presidency of the judge of the highest rank. The decisions of condemnation by the Supreme Council shall be rendered by a majority of ten votes. A special law shall be issued to determine the procedure to be followed by this Council”.

Trial Law

Although Article 80 of the Lebanese Constitution has been adopted since 1926, the law on trial before the Council was not issued until 1990 under Law No. 13 of August 18, 1990. This means that the Supreme Council was unable to carry out its duties throughout the years 1926 – 1990.

The Law reads as follows:

- The members forming the Supreme Council (7 MPs) shall be elected at the start of each mandate, during the Parliament’s first session.
- The Court of Cassation shall nominate eight justices for its chambers. It shall also appoint a judge to act as the Attorney General of the Supreme Council.
- The Speaker of Parliament shall place at the disposal of the Chairman of the Supreme Council, and upon his request, the personnel necessary to carry out the Council and the Investigation Committee’s activities. The Parliament’s budget shall include a special chapter on the funds allocated for the expenditures of both the Supreme Council and the Investigation Committee (but since this was not itemized in the budget, the Supreme Council was not ready to act).
- The Parliament is the only body authorized to accuse the President of the Republic of violating the Constitution or committing high treason or ordinary crimes. It has also the right to indict the Premiers and Ministers for committing high treason or breaching their duties.
- The Parliament shall call for a special session to be held 10 days after providing the person(s) to be accused with a copy of the indictment. It shall, after hearing the prosecution and defense cases, decide by an absolute majority to immediately refer the indictment to a special parliamentary committee called “the Investigation Committee” prior to the voting process or to return it.
- A special parliamentary committee called “the Investigation Committee” shall be established after the referral. It shall consist of a chairperson, two original members and three reserve MPs elected by secret ballot and absolute majority of the Parliament, in the session stipulated in Article 22 of this Law. The “Investigation Committee” shall immediately refer its report to the Parliament and communicate it to both the prosecution and defense representatives.
- The Parliament shall, upon the request of its Speaker, hold a special session within a period not exceeding ten days from the date of submission of reports by the “Investigation Committee” to hear the reports and the prosecution and defense cases. The indictment decision shall be issued by a two-thirds majority of the total MPs and voting shall be made by secret ballot.
- The Supreme Council shall begin the trial as soon as it receives the case. It shall decide it within a period of one month from the referral date, subject to renewal only once.
- The Supreme Council shall convene, when necessary, at the Palace of Justice in Beirut or at any other place of its choice. Its sessions shall only be deemed legal in the presence of the 15 members (including the Chairman) stipulated in Article 80 of the Lebanese Constitution.
- The Supreme Council shall make a reasoned final decision in the deliberation room and sign it along with the members and the clerk. It shall include the names of “members who participated in the decision” and be read out by the Chairman in a public hearing.

- The decisions of the Supreme Council shall neither be appealed nor reviewed. They can be reconsidered in accordance with the provisions of Criminal Procedure Code.

Idle Supreme Council

Several parliamentary investigation committees were formed during the past decades, the most popular of which is the one investigating former President Amine Gemayel's role in the Puma aircraft deal in 1994 (this case dates back to President Gemayel's term in 1982-1992, and to the purchase of Romanian planes that were supposedly French-made, leading to the theft of a great amount of public funds).

No case has been referred to or tried before the Supreme Council, causing it to lose its credibility, and to pose as a saving grace for the accused Presidents and Ministers. Consequently, any accusation towards a President or Minister that is appealed to the Supreme Council is terminated by a not guilty verdict.

In its decision of October 27, 2000, the General Authority of the Court of Cassation states that the Supreme Council is the exclusive prosecutor of accused Presidents and Ministers, and whenever it fails to perform its intended role, the case is referred to the ordinary courts. It also accurately defines the job-related offenses that fall under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Council, and anything not within these criteria falls under the responsibility of the ordinary courts.



PARLIAMENT'S QUORUM COUNTED FROM THE SERVING OR OVERALL MPs?

The legislative session conducted by the Lebanese Parliament on Thursday October 28, 2021 witnessed a sharp debate and disagreement over the number of MPs it would take to form the majority that can vote on electoral law amendments after being approved by the President. Shall it be based on the number of living MPs as the Speaker Nabih Berri and many MPs (including Lebanese Forces MPs) argued, i.e. the absolute majority is 59 out of 117 MPs after the resignation of eight and the death of another three, or shall it be based on the entire number of MPs, i.e. the majority of the 128 MPs is 65, as the Free Patriotic Movement MPs, among others, argued? The debate was finally settled by adopting the number of living MPs.

Notably, this issue dates back decades when 32 seats of the 1972 Parliament became vacant and no parliamentary by-elections were held due to war, leading to the extension of that Parliament's term.

Old Article 57

Article 57 of the Lebanese Constitution's preliminary version, promulgated in 1926 before being amended, stipulates the following:

"The President of the Republic shall be entitled to request a reconsideration of the law, once during the time limit for its promulgation. His request shall not be refused. When the President exercises this right, he shall not be required to promulgate the law until it has been discussed and approved by an absolute majority of members legally composing the two councils (i.e. the Parliament and the Senate before its abolition)". This provision is understood to mean that the quorum is based on the number of living MPs, and refers to this by "serving MPs".

The article was amended in 1927, following the Senate's abolition, to read as follows:

"The President of the Republic shall be entitled to request a reconsideration of the law, once during the time limit for its promulgation. His request shall not be refused. When the President exercises this right, he shall not be required to promulgate the law until it has been discussed and approved by an absolute majority of members legally composing the Parliament".

The last amendment to Article 57 was in 1990, after the adoption of Taëf Agreement, at which time the relevant provision was changed to read thus:

"The President of the Republic shall, after informing the Council of Ministers, request a reconsideration of the law, once during the time limit for its promulgation. His request shall not be refused. When the President uses this right, he shall not be required to promulgate the law until it has been discussed and approved by an absolute majority of members legally composing the Parliament".

If the time limit expires without the law being issued or returned, the law shall be considered automatically operative and must be promulgated.

These differences in interpretation are rooted in the use of "the members legally composing the Parliament" phrase. Yet, by returning to the original text, it can be understood to mean the serving (living) MPs and not their total number.

Precedents

Since no parliamentary by-elections were held during the Lebanese Civil War, the number of vacant seats reached 32 in 1991. In the session held by the Parliament on August 23, 1982 to elect the President of the Republic Bachir Gemayel, the quorum (two-thirds the Parliament) of 62 MPs was based on the number of serving MPs (93) and not on the 99 members that make up the Parliament (this is what had raised the quorum to 66 MPs).

This recurred in the presidential elections of November 5, 1989, when President René Moawad was elected based on the number of serving MPs (71 MPs), and in the election of President Elias Hrawi that took place on November 24, 1989, following the assassination of President Moawad.

Quorum Law

In view of the rising number of deceased MPs and the difficulty of holding parliamentary elections or by-elections to fill the vacant seats, the Parliament passed on August 08, 1990 Law No. 11, stipulating in its first article the following: "Exceptionally and until a parliamentary election or by-election is held under the electoral law, the quorum established in the Constitution shall be based on the total number of serving MPs".

This Law had determined the quorum based on the number of serving MPs, resolving the controversy over the matter. Nonetheless, with the holding of general parliamentary elections in 1992, this law rendered void and could not be invoked.

Subsequently, the current Parliament should have passed a clear law determining the quorum based on the number of serving MPs, especially after no parliamentary by-elections have taken place to fill in the 11 vacant seats.

A table listing the 32 MPs that were elected in 1972 and passed away without being succeeded.

MP	Sect	Electoral district	Date of death
Sabri Hamadeh	Shia'a	Baalbeck-Hermel	21-01-1976
Morshed Samad	Sunni	Mennieh-Dennieh	14-06-1976
Kamal Jumblatt	Druze	Chouf	16-03-1977 (assassination)
Joseph Chader	Armenian Catholic	Beirut I	28-03-1977
Tony Frangieh	Maronite	Zgharta	13-06-1978 (assassination)
Bahij Takeddine	Druze	Chouf	09-02-1980
Amine Gemayel	Maronite	Matn	23-09-1982 (he was elected President of the Republic)
Mir Majid Erslan	Druze	Aley	18-09-1983
Pierre Gemayel	Maronite	Beirut I	29-08-1984
Fouad Ghosn	Greek Orthodox	Koura	13-10-1984
Abdel Latif Baydoun	Shia'a	Bint Jbeil	18-10-1984
Maurice Zwein	Maronite	Kessrouan	17-02-1985
Mounir Abou Fadel	Greek Orthodox	Aley	29-01-1987
Nadim Naim	Maronite	Baabda	22-04-1987
Rashid Karami	Sunni	Trablous	01-06-1987 (assassination)
Salim Daoud	Druze	Western Beqa'a-Rashaya	03-06-1987
Camille Chamoun	Maronite	Chouf	07-08-1987
Suleiman Ali	Sunni	Akkar	27-09-1987
Hassan Zahmoul El Mays	Sunni	Zahle	25-01-1988
Estephan El-Douaihy	Maronite	Zgharta	06-03-1988
Salim Maalouf	Greek Orthodox	Zahle	27-04-1988
Louis Abou Charaf	Maronite	Kessrouan	15-04-1989 (he was killed by a shell)
Bachir El-Awar	Druze	Baabda	15-07-1989
Nazem El-Kadiri	Sunni	Western Beqa'a-Rashaya	21-09-1989 (assassination)
René Moawad	Maronite	Zgharta	05-11-1989 (he was elected President of the Republic)
Elias Hrawi	Maronite	Zahle	23-11-1989 (he was elected President of the Republic)
Kazem El-Khalil	Shia'a	Sour	23-04-1990
Bakhos Hakim	Greek Orthodox	Koura	27-08-1990
Fouad Theini	Maronite	Chouf	04-12-1990
Joseph Skaff	Greek Catholic	Zahle	05-11-1991
Mounir Honein	Maronite	Baabda	31-05-1992

Source: *Information International* based on the death date of said MPs.

POST-TAËF LEBANESE GOVERNMENTS

Since the adoption of Taëf Agreement in 1989, Lebanon has witnessed 20 governments, with the last one being formed on September 10, 2021. They are as follows:



- Five governments were presided by Rafic Hariri, three by his son, Saad Hariri, and three by Najib Mikati. Fouad Siniora and Omar Karami headed two governments each, and one government was administered by each of Rachid El Solh, Tammam Salam and Hassan Diab.
- 12 of these governments included 30 ministers, whereas 4 of them comprised 24 ministers, and two others consisted of 14 ministers., Additionally, one government had 16 ministers while another encompassed 20 ministers.
- The votes of confidence ranged from 121 votes for Saad Hariri's government in 2009, to 59 votes in Omar Karami's term in 2004.
- Najib Mikati's first government (formed in 2005) gained 109 seats in the Parliament, only to decrease to 68 in his second government (formed in 2011), then upsurge to 85 in his current term.
- Some government formations took up to two days (the 2003 government headed by Rafic Hariri, and the 1998 government governed by Salim El Hoss), whereas Tammam Salam's government took 315 days to compose. As for Hassan Diab's government, it had been in caretaker mode for 366 days



A table listing the 20 post-Taëf Lebanese governments by duration of formation and vote of confidence.

Government	Prime Minister	Government's formation decree no. & date	Government's resignation decree no. & date	No. of ministers	Votes of confidence	Votes of non-confidence	Abstention	Duration of government's formation	Period for devising ministerial statement
1 st	Salim El Hoss	2 25-11-1989	859 24-12-1990	14	Unanimous consent of MPs			13 days	1 day
2 nd	Omar Karami	860 24-12-1990	2417 16-05-1992	30	38	3	-	5 days	17 days
3 rd	Rachid El Solh	2419 16-05-1992	2898 31-10-1992	24	76	5	3	4 days	14 days
4 th	Rafic Hairi	2900 31-10-1992	6810 25-05-1995	30	104	12	3	8 days	12 days

Government	Prime Minister	Government's formation decree no. & date	Government's resignation decree no. & date	No. of ministers	Votes of confidence	Votes of non-confidence	Abstention	Duration of government's formation	Period for devising ministerial statement
5 th	Rafic Hariri	6812 25-05-1995	9499 07-11-1996	30	76	18	5	4 days	12 days
6 th	Rafic Hariri	9501 07-11-1996	2 04-12-1998	30	102	19	-	14 days	13 days
7 th	Salim El Hoss	4 04-12-1998	4334 26-10-2000	16	85	-	31	2 days	11 days
8 th	Rafic Hariri	4336 26-10-2000	10055 17-04-2003	30	95	6	17	4 days	8 days
9 th	Rafic Hariri	10057 17-04-2003	13619 26-10-2004	30	85	13	13	2 days	8 days
10 th	Omar Karami	13621 26-10-2004	14321 19-04-2005	30	59	21	35	8 days	10 days
11 th	Najib Mikati	14323 19-04-2005	14951 19-07-2005	14	109	1	2	5 days	8 days
12 th	Fouad Siniora	14953 19-07-2005	16 11-07-2008	24	92	14	2	20 days	10 days
13 th	Fouad Siniora	18 11-07-2008	2837 09-11-2009	30	100	5	2	45 days	29 days
14 th	Saad Hariri	2839 09-11-2009	5816 13-06-2011	30	121	1	1	135 days	30 days
15 th	Najib Mikati	5818 13-06-2011	11215 15-02-2014	30	68	-	1	140 days	23 days
16 th	Tammam Salam	11217 15-02-2014	1 18-12-2016	24	96	-	1	315 days	33 days
17 th	Saad Hariri	3 18-12-2016	4338 31-01-2019	30	87	4	1	46 days	10 days
18 th	Saad Hariri	4340 31-01-2019	6155 21-01-2020	30	111	6	-	253 days	13 days
19 th	Hassan Diab	6157 21-01-2020	8374 10-09-2020	20	63	1	20	34 days	22 days
20 th	Najib Mikati	8376 10-09-2021	-	24	85	15	-	47 days	10 days

Source: *Information International* based on the formation decrees of the said governments and the Parliament's minutes of meetings.

“DISCRETIONARY” PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORAL LAWS

For several decades, the parliamentary electoral law did not adopt unified standards in the partition of electoral district boundaries or in the distribution of parliamentary seats. This has been justified by the fact that these laws respect the Lebanese sectarian-political structure, and that it is the path adopted since Lebanon’s establishment. However, a review of the pre-independence laws reveals that there were specific and clear criteria for determining the number of MPs, drawing the electoral district boundaries and distributing parliamentary seats.

Number of MPs

By virtue of the Legislative Decree No. 49 of 1943 (attached), the number of Lebanon's members of parliament (MPs) is determined by dividing the number of residents by 23,000, which is the number defining the electoral rate. As for the minority sects, whose communities are less than half the electoral rate plus one, they shall be aggregated and entitled to a number of parliamentary seats that equals the number received when dividing the total members of these sects by the electoral rate, or half this rate, plus one.

If by virtue of the previous paragraph, the minority sects are entitled to one parliamentary seat, then this seat shall be allocated to Beirut Mohafaza. If they are entitled to two seats, then the first shall be allocated to Beirut Mohafaza and the second to Mount Lebanon Mohafaza for having the largest number of minorities after Beirut. Based on this mechanism, the number of MPs reached 45.

MPs by Mohafaza and Sect

Legislative Decree No. 50/1943 distributes the parliamentary seats (chairs) over the five Mohafazat (adopted as electoral districts) and sects of Lebanon. The following table shows that 32 seats were allocated to Christians against 20 seats for Muslims. This is because the number of Christians, at that time, was greater than that of Muslims and thus, represented 60% of the total voters.

A table showing the distribution of parliamentary seats ("chairs" in the decree) by Mohafaza and sect.

Mohafaza	No. of seats	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze	Total of Muslims	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Armenian Orthodox	Minorities	Total of Christians
Beirut	8	3	-	-	3	1	1	-	2	1	5
Mount Lebanon	19	1	1	3	5	10	1	1	1	1	14
North Lebanon	11	4	-	-	4	5	2	-	-	-	7
South Lebanon	10	1	6	-	7	1	1	1	-	-	3
Beqa'a	6	1	2	-	3	1	1	1	-	-	3
Total	54	10	9	3	22	18	6	3	3	2	32

Source: *Information International* based on Legislative Decree No. 50/1943.

LEBANESE VOTERS 2009-2021

AN ANNUAL INCREASE OF 80,000

Each year, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) prepares the electoral rolls even when there aren't any municipal, ikhtiyariya or parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in any given year. By virtue of the electoral law, the electoral lists shall mandatorily include the voter's full name, mother's name, the registration number identical to that in the personal status records, gender, date of birth and confession. Each roll shall include an empty space reserved to note down, when appropriate, the amendments made to the entries while referencing to the supporting legal record. People aged a hundred and above shall be crossed out from the electoral rolls, and can only be relisted upon the request of the related party.

The law sets a deadline for the preparation of the electoral rolls:

- The Registry Offices of Civil Status shall establish lists containing the names of civilians eligible for registration, and submit them to the Directorate General of Civil Status (DGCS) between November 20 and December 20.
- Between November 20 and December 20, the Police Department Records Office shall supply the Directorate General of Civil Status with a list comprising the names of people convicted of crimes that inhibit them from exercising their voting rights.
- The Justice Courts shall provide the Directorate General of Civil Status with the list of their final rulings issued on crimes that prohibit voters from exercising their voting rights.

The Directorate General of Civil Status shall then verify the information received and update the electoral rolls accordingly. It shall send copies of the preliminary electoral rolls to the municipalities and mukhtars before the first of February of each year to correct and publish them.

The interested parties may submit to the competent registration committee, a request for the correction of any inaccuracy in their registration data, including omissions or wrong name spelling. The request for correction shall be submitted to the registration committee before the 1st of March of the same year. As for the electoral rolls, they shall be frozen on March 30 of each year, remain effective until March 30 of the following year and be used in any elections taking place during the period from March 30 to March 30 of the following year.

It is possible to shorten the deadlines and complete the rolls before March 30. Yet, if no amendment is made and the elections are held on March 27, 2022 based on the frozen rolls, about 80,000 of Lebanese youths will not participate in the elections. Based on the electoral rolls, the number of voters increases annually by around 54,000, but if we add the 26,000 dead voters, the total real increase will be about 80,000.

The following table shows an increase in the number of voters between 2009 and 2021, where the average annual increase has reached 54,436 voters during 2009-2021 and 56,510 voters during 2017-2021.

A table showing the number of voters (2009-2021).

Year	No. of voters	Amount of increase	Rate of increase (%)
2009	3,258,573	-	-
2010	3,310,959	52,386	1.6
2011	3,334,676	23,717	0.7
2012	3,378,966	44,290	1.3
2013	3,458,884	79,918	2.3
2014	3,514,588	55,704	1.6
2015	3,567,503	52,915	1.5
2016	3,624,886	57,383	1.6
2017	3,682,158	57,272	1.5
2018	3,746,746	64,588	1.7
2019	3,803,558	56,812	1.5
2020	3,860,939	57,381	1.5
2021	3,908,200	47,261	1.2

Source: *Information International* based on the number of voters published by the DGCS.

LEBANESE VOTERS 2018-2021

UP BY 4.3% WITH THE MAJORITY REPORTED IN

NORTH LEBANON I, SOUTH LEBANON III & BEQA'A III DISTRICTS

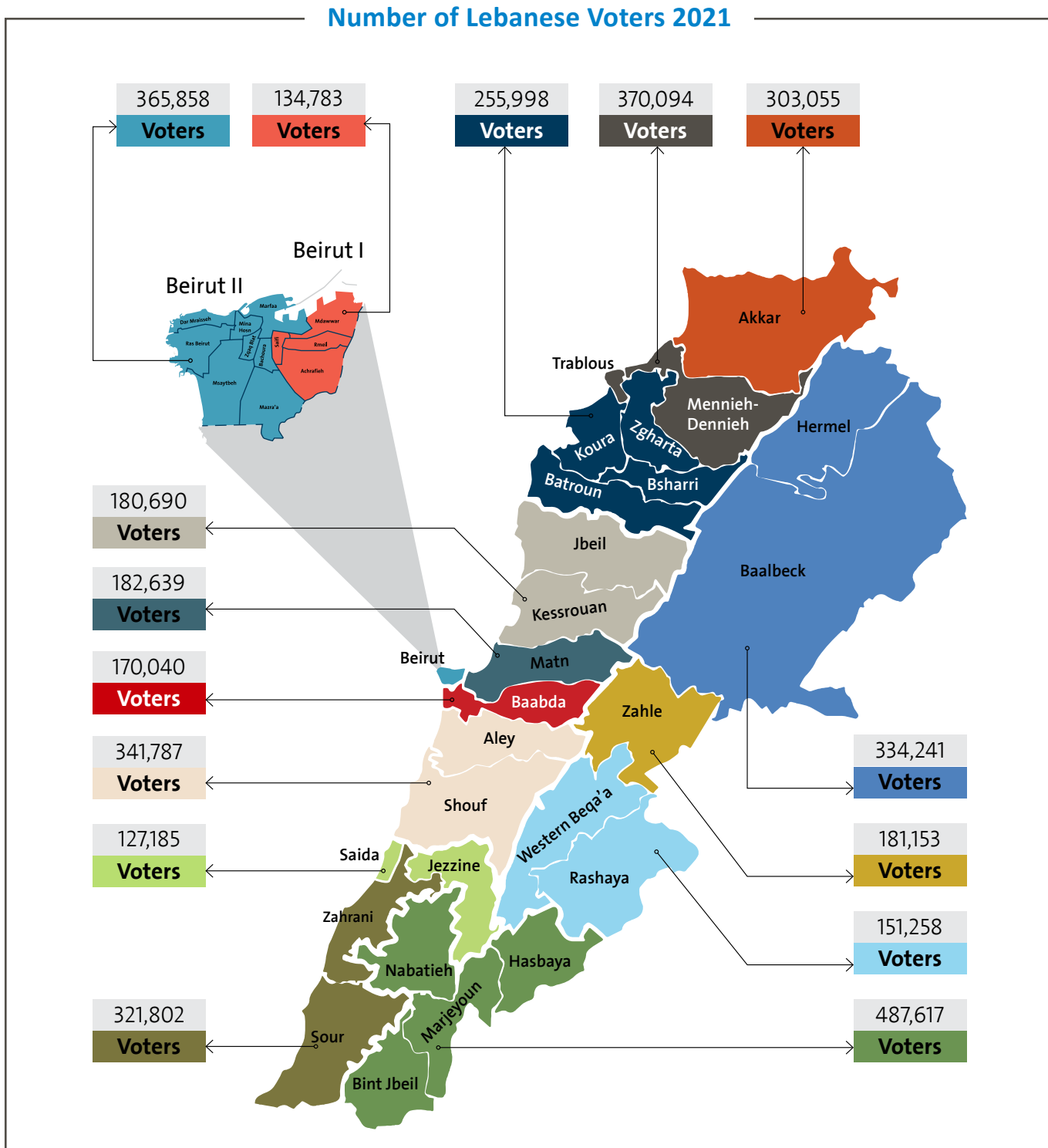
The number of Lebanese voters has risen from 3,746,746 in 2018 to 3,908,200 in 2021, i.e. an increase of 4.3% or 161,454 voters.



This rate of increase has varied from one district to another according to the voters' sect.

- It has increased in the Islamic majority districts by about 5%-6.79%
- It has decreased in the Christian majority districts by about 0.03%-2.5%
- Beirut I District recorded the lowest increase at 0.03%.
- Akkar District recorded the highest increase at 679%

The average annual increase between 2018 and 2021 amounted to 53,818 voters, in addition to about 27,000 dead voters, i.e. a total average annual increase of 80,000 voters.



The following table compares the number of Lebanese voters by electoral district in 2018 and 2021.

A table showing the number of Lebanese voters (2018-2021).

Electoral District	Number of voters in 2021	Amount of increase compared to 2018	Rate of increase compared to 2018 (%)
North I (Akkar)	303,055	19,265	6.79
Trablous	250,073	12,743	5.3
Mennieh	47,013	2,588	5.8
Dennieh	73,008	4,619	6.7
North II	370,094	19,950	5.69
Zgharta	81,128	2,945	5.69
Koura	62,260	1,279	3.7
Batroun	61,933	1,286	2.1
Bsharri	50,677	1,072	2.1
North III	255,998	6,582	2.6
Beirut I	134,783	47	0.03
Beirut II	365,858	12,444	3.5
Jbeil	84,750	2,250	2.7
Kessrouan	95,940	1,730	1.8
Mount Lebanon I	180,690	3,980	2.2
Mount Lebanon II (Matn)	182,639	2,720	1.5
Mount Lebanon III (Baabda)	170,040	3,905	2.3
Chouf	209,647	7,158	3.5
Aley	132,140	4,759	3.7
Mount Lebanon IV	341,787	11,917	3.6
Saida	66,005	3,256	5.1
Jezzine	61,180	1,405	2.3
South Lebanon I	127,185	4,661	3.8
Zahrani	120,503	7,014	6.1
Sour	201,299	10,596	5.6
South Lebanon II	321,802	17,610	5.78

Electoral District	Number of voters in 2021	Amount of increase compared to 2018	Rate of increase compared to 2018 (%)
Nabatieh	156,339	8,439	5.7
Bint Jbeil	158,829	9,182	6.1
Marjeyoun	121,772	6,910	6
Hasbaya	50,677	2,521	5.2
South Lebanon III	487,617	27,048	5.87
Beqa'a I (Zahle)	181,153	5,285	3
Western Beqa'a	99,871	4,886	5.1
Rashaya	51,387	2,560	5.2
Beqa'a II	151,258	7,446	5.17
Baalbeck	278,589	15,534	5.9
Hermel	55,652	3,064	5.8
Beqa'a III	334,241	18,597	5.8
Total	3,908,200	3,746,746	4.3%
		161,454	

Source: *Information International* based on the number of voters in 2018 and 2021.



EDUCATION IN LEBANON

1 MILLION STUDENTS & 2,976 SCHOOLS

After two years of online education due to COVID-19, Lebanese students are gearing up to return to school amid many challenges, including the continuing expansion of the pandemic and the economic-financial crisis that eroded the value of salaries while increasing the cost of education and transportation. With the anticipated return to schools, what is the reality of pre-university education in Lebanon?



Number of Students

The number of students in public education has declined from 1,053,956 in 2020-2021 to 1,069,826 in 2019- 2020. Table No. 1 below classifies the students by type of education, in which the majority (48.8%) are enrolled in private non-free schools.

Table No.1: Number of students by type of education 2020-2021.

Type of education	No. of students	Percentage
Public	384,741	36.5%
Private non-free	514,988	48.8%
Private-free	116,691	11%
UNRWA	37,536	3.5%
Total	1,053,956	100%

Source: *Information International* based on the statistical bulletin of the Center for Educational Research and Development (CRDP).

Students by Type of Education 2020-2021

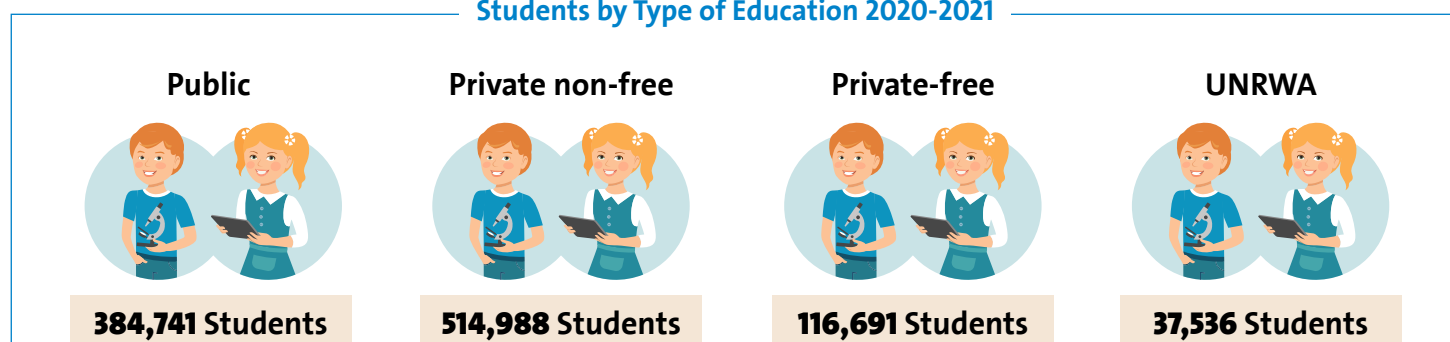


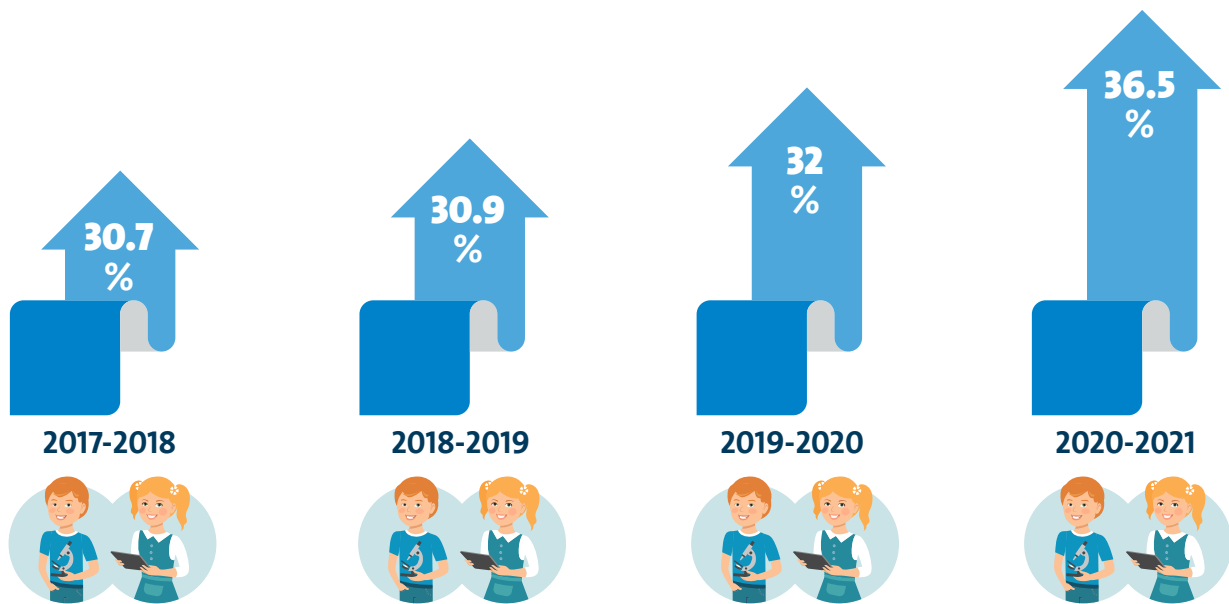
Table No. 2 shows a remarkable increase in the number of students enrolled in public educational institutions by 56,071; which is an approximate increase of 36.5%. This is due to students' transfer from private-free schools (their percentage decreased from 12.5% to 11%) and private non-free schools (their percentage decreased from 52.7% to 48.8%) to public schools.

Table No. 2: Evolution of the number of students in public education (2017-2021).

Academic year	No. of students in public	Percentage
2017-2018	328,040	30.7%
2018-2019	332,126	30.9%
2019-2020	342,303	32%
2020-2021	384,741	36.5%

Source: *Information International* based on the statistical bulletin of the Center for Educational Research and Development (CRDP).

Evolution of Students in Public Education



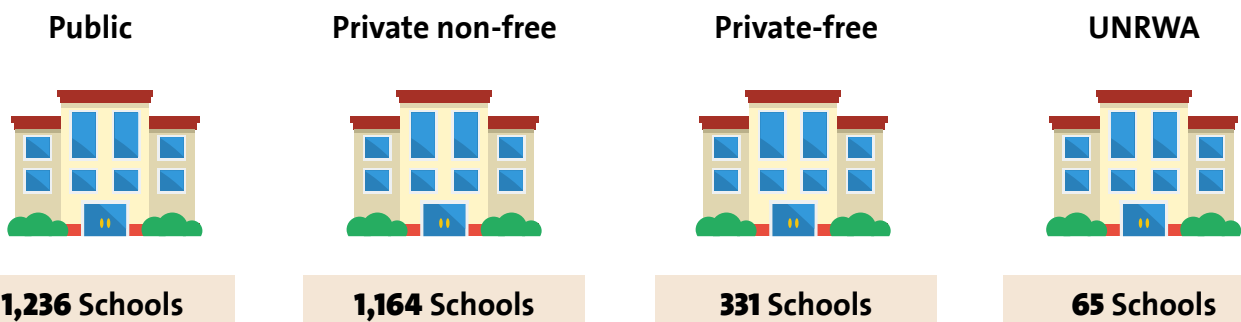
Number of Schools

The number of schools in Lebanon totaled 2,796 in 2020-2021, down from 2,861 in the previous year. 66 schools have closed down, of which 45 are private non-free and 21 are private free, while only one public school has been opened.

Schools are distributed by type of education as follows:

- Public: 1,236
- Private: 1,164
- Private-free: 331
- UNRWA: 65

Number of schools 2020-2021



Number of Teachers and Administrators

The number of teachers and administrators reached 92,908 in 2020-2021 and is distributed by education type and job position in Table No. 3. Notably, full-time staff represent 56% of the total staff, which is a low percentage reflecting job instability.

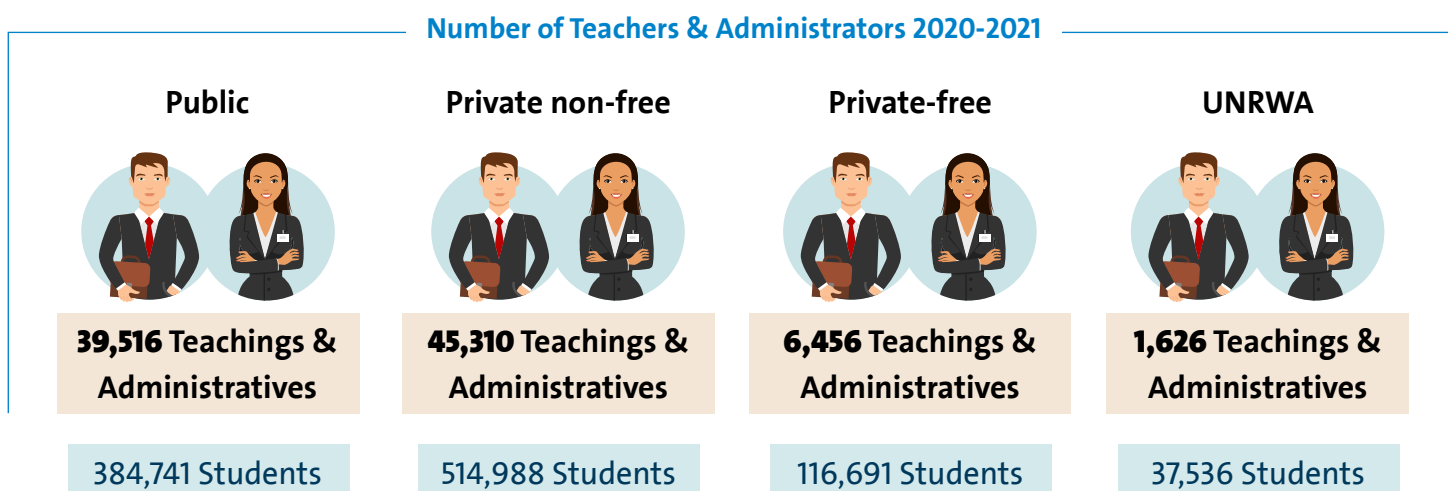


Table No. 3: Number of administrative and teaching staff by education type and job position (2020-2021).

Education type	Full-timers	Part-timers	Volunteers	Others	Total
Public	18,465	17,575	905	2,571	39,516
Private	27,308	16,126	416	1,460	45,310
Private-free	4,952	1,273	101	130	6,456
UNRWA	1,278	287	11	50	1,626
Total	52,003	35,261	1,433	4,211	92,908

Source: *Information International* based on the statistical bulletin of the Center for Educational Research and Development (CRDP).

MEHE Budget

According to 2021 budget bill, the budget of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) amounts to LBP 1,879 billion, i.e. 10.3% of the total estimated budget expenditures.

Such expenditures are distributed among the following main items:

- General Directorate of Education - salaries and wages: LBP 46.5 billion.
- School rent - primary education: LBP 20.2 billion.
- Salaries and wages - primary education: LBP 614 billion.
- School rent - secondary education: LBP 10.8 billion.
- Salaries and wages - secondary education: LBP 336.5 billion.
- Contribution to private-free schools: LBP 90 billion.

CLOSURE OF 66 PRIVATE SCHOOLS & DISMISSAL OF 8,000 STAFF

The COVID-19 pandemic along with the economic-financial crisis in Lebanon have led to the closure of thousands of institutions, leaving tens of thousands of employees out of work. The educational sector was not spared the crisis as dozens of private schools were closed and thousands of administrative and teaching staff were dismissed.



Closure of Schools

In 2019-2020, Lebanon had a total of 2,861 schools, including 1,561 private schools. In 2020-2021, 66 private schools closed their doors, 21 of which are private-free, and 45 are private non-free. They are distributed by Governorate, as illustrated in the following table, where the highest number of closures took place in Mount Lebanon (32 schools).

A table showing the number of closed private schools by Mohafaza.

Mohafaza	No. of closed private-free schools	No. of closed private schools
Beirut	2	6
Mount Lebanon	7	25
North Lebanon	3	5
Beqa'a	2	1
South Lebanon	1	3
Nabatieh	3	3
Akkar	2	2
Baalbeck-Hermel	1	-
Total	21	45

Source: *Information International* based on the statistical bulletin of the Center for Educational Research and Development (CRDP).

Dismissal of Administrative and Teaching Staff

The closure of schools has led to the dismissal, resignation and retirement of thousands of teachers and staff. This resulted in a decrease in the number of employees from 101,137 in 2019-2020 to 92,908 in 2020-2021. Furthermore, the number of full-time staff has decreased by 4,027 (from 56,030 to 52,003), and the number of part-timers has dropped by 3,722 (from 38,983 to 35,261).



PUBLIC SECTOR PAY RISE

With the loss of purchasing power caused by the depreciation in the Lebanese currency, raising the salaries and wages of private and public sector employees has become necessary. However, each sector has its own circumstances allowing or denying it from proceeding with the increase.

Number of Public Servants

The number of public servants in Lebanon (including military and security forces, as well as teachers) is estimated to be around 320,000, in addition to about 120,000 who benefit from pensions. This means that the public sector is the source of income for nearly 440,000 people.

Cost of Public Servants

The cost of public servants and retirees amounted to LBP 9,833 billion in 2020, decreasing from LBP 10,146 billion in 2019. This decline is due to the cost of end-of-service indemnities, which dropped from LBP 972 billion in 2019 to LBP 426 billion in 2020 as a result of freezing early retirement and not paying the end-of-service indemnities. The following table shows the cost of salaries and wages between 2019 and 2020.

A table showing the cost of salaries, wages and pensions (2019-2020).

Salaries	2019 (LBP billion)	2020 (LBP billion)	Amount of increase or decrease (LBP billion)	Rate of increase or decrease (%)
Salaries, wages and social benefits	6,032	6,138	+106	+1.75
Pensions	2,690	2,852	+162	+6
End-of-service indemnities	972	426	-546	-56
Salary transfers to public institutions	452	467	+12	+3.3
Total	LBP 10,146 billion	LBP 9,883 billion	LBP -263 billion	-2.5

Source: *Information International* based on the Public Finance Monitor-Ministry of Finance.

Cost of Pay Rise

If the government decides to increase the salaries and wages by their rate of decline (92%), the total annual cost would reach LBP 18,975 billion; which the government cannot afford. Moreover, if it decides to adopt an increase of 25%, the total cost would be LBP 12,353 billion, however, this number constitutes 91% of the state's 2021 projected revenues (the revenues are estimated at LBP 13,573 billion). This implies that without imposing higher taxes and fees, it is virtually impossible for the government to increase its revenue and finance its other expenditures.



LEBANON'S OIL IMPORTS

1/4 THE IMPORT BILL

After the civil war, Lebanon lowered its dependence on hydroelectric power and increased its reliance on fuel and diesel to operate the power plants. No public transportation plan had also been adopted, turning private cars into the main means of transportation. All of this has led to an increase in the cost of oil imports, which constituted 25% of the import bill. During the years 2012-2020, the value of imported goods and commodities amounted to USD 173.3 billion, of which USD 42.5 billion were the value of oil products.

Evolution of Imports

The following table shows an increase in the annual volume of imports, resulting from the high consumption of oil products in generating power and operating cars and machines.

- A steep rise in diesel consumption from an annual average of about 3 million tons in the years 2012-2015 to an annual average of 4.3 million tons in the years 2016-2020 (an increase in 43.3% or 1.3 million tons). This is a relevant indicator of two subjects: the decline in the production of electricity, thus the increase in the reliance on generators, and the increase in smuggling operations.
- An increase in gasoline consumption from about 1.6 million tons in 2012 to 2.1 million tons in 2019, i.e. a rise of 31.2% or 500,000 tons.



A table showing the evolution of oil imports (2012-2020).

Year	2012		2013		2014	
	Volume (tons)	Value (thousand dollars)	Volume (tons)	Value (thousand dollars)	Volume (tons)	Value (thousand dollars)
98-octane gasoline	246,027	272,394	245,043	257,054	259,064	255,875
95-octane gasoline	1,412,282	1,520,899	1,376,982	1,412,394	1,465,940	1,408,420
Diesel	3,028,684	2,965,217	2,879,790	2,764,389	2,821,305	2,532,023
Fuel	1,905,350	1,400,216	1,356,248	903,390	1,637,856	1,051,367
Gas	211,239	222,959	232,236	225,006	247,735	224,622
Kerosene	24,338	25,991	26,473	26,740	24,122	23,121
Total	6,827,920	6,407,616	6,116,772	5,588,973	6,456,022	5,495,428
Overall total of imports	16,637,031	22,036,924	17,057,171	22,020,118	16,918,154	21,437,324
Percentage of oil imports to total imports	41%	29%	35.8%	25.4%	38.2%	25.6%

Year	2015		2016		2017	
	Volume (tons)	Value (thousand dollars)	Volume (tons)	Value (thousand dollars)	Volume (tons)	Value (thousand dollars)
98-octane gasoline	273,123	170,983	297,582	153,834	296,700	177,222
95-octane gasoline	1,631,144	969,861	1,743,719	856,601	1,767,626	1,010,339
Diesel	3,089,958	1,854,337	4,605,012	2,354,346	4,251,626	2,044,855
Fuel	1,653,279	547,862	1,688,777	450,707	1,826,009	633,975
Gas	229,348	130,792	238,534	116,964	235,704	142,083
Kerosene	26,222	14,709	33,065	15,301	34,427	18,571
Total	6,903,074	3,688,544	8,606,689	3,947,753	8,412,092	4,027,045
Overall total of imports	17,244,649	18,594,657	18,927,793	19,118,990	18,974,943	19,582,209
Percentage of oil imports to total imports	40%	19.8%	45.5%	20.6%	44.3%	20.6%

Year	2018		2019		2020	
	Volume (tons)	Value (thousand dollars)	Volume (tons)	Value (thousand dollars)	Volume (tons)	Value (thousand dollars)
98-octane gasoline	280,420	205,676	263,185	172,898	157,152	75,500
95-octane gasoline	1,730,472	1,216,074	1,837,073	1,158,668	1,680,496	761,400
Diesel	3,140,740	2,083,071	5,128,983	3,197,454	4,118,926	1,668,630
Fuel	457,842	189,126	3,859,417	1,722,399	1,429,495	493,214
Gas	232,852	150,068	231,597	123,464	227,400	113,568
Kerosene	36,826	26,562	31,953	21,059	17,344	8,295
Total	5,879,152	3,870,577	11,352,208	6,395,942	7,630,813	3,120,607
Overall total of imports	15,855,024	19,979,509	19,351,042	19,239,394	13,474,659	11,309,733
Percentage of oil imports to total imports	37%	19.4%	58.7%	33.2%	56.6%	27.6%

Source: *Information International* based on the General Directorate of Lebanese Customs.

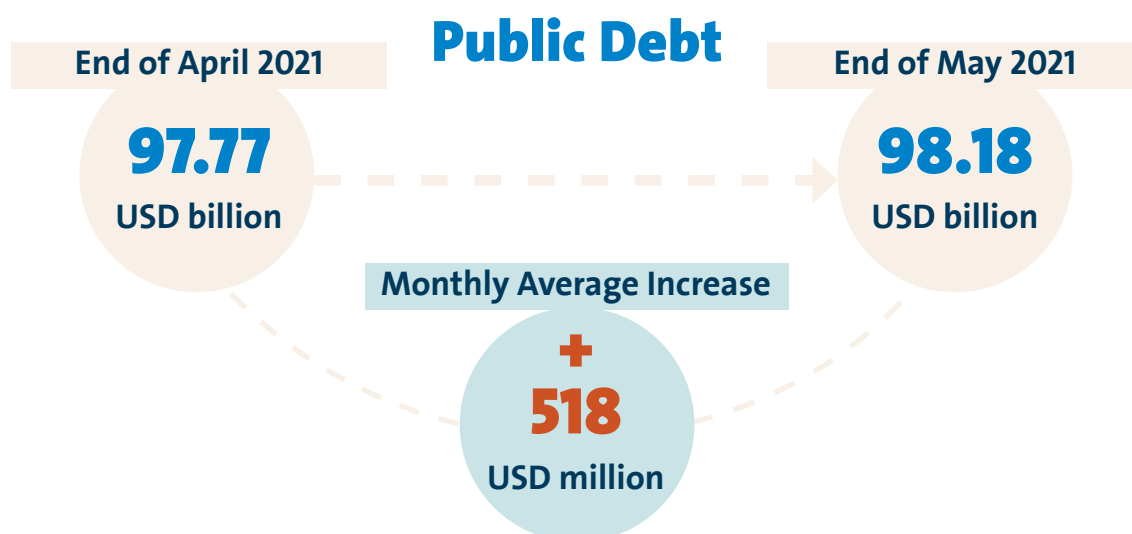
LEBANON'S PUBLIC DEBT

**USD 100 BILLION
OR LBP 796 TRILLION**

Years ago, several financial and economic experts warned on the risks of the borrowing policy and the growth of public debt to reach USD 100 billion, both of which bring about adverse psychological effects.

These predictions came true today as the public debt reached USD 100 billion, with financial and economic crises outweighing the effects of the public debt.

According to a study by the Association of Banks in Lebanon (ABL), the public debt totaled USD 97.77 billion on April 30, 2021, and grew to reach USD 98.18 billion at the end of May 2021 (an increase in USD 2.59 billion since the beginning of the year, and an average increase in USD 518 million per month).



Public Debt in LBP and USD

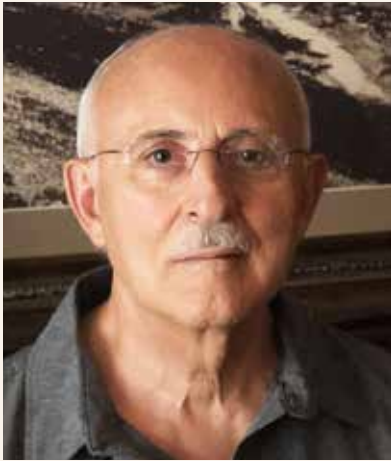
62% of Lebanon's public debt is in Lebanese pounds, and 38% is in foreign currencies. If calculated at the rate of LBP 20,500 per USD 1 (the market rate of October 10, 2021), the debt denominated in dollars would decline from USD 100 billion to USD 43 billion, while the debt denominated in Lebanese pounds would increase from LBP 150 trillion to LBP 872 trillion. However, Lebanon does not have the capabilities to pay back such a huge amount as its annual earnings do not exceed LBP 14 trillion.

Creditors

The public debt (in LBP and USD) is distributed over creditors as follows:

- The Banque du Liban (BDL): 43%
- Lebanese banks: 27%
- Foreign banks: 18%
- Public institutions and non-banking sector: 12%

Noteworthy, Lebanon's public debt was less than USD 3.5 billion in 1992. Nevertheless, Lebanon's budget deficit and its continued borrowing despite the high (and unjustified) interests have caused its debts to reach dangerous levels.



NUNTIUS (THE MESSENGER)

[Reprinted from the Journal of the Oklahoma State Medical Association, July/August-2021]

By Dr. Hanna Saadah

It was during a Dusha (*Soul* in Russian) camp in Homosapia that my wife and I met Mr. Toutourien (*All-or-none* in French). It was our first day and there were people from all over the world who had come to listen to the teachings of the new religion that had descended upon the spiritual leader, Mahatma Nuntius (*Great-Soul Messenger* in Sanskrit-Latin). Before the lecture began, Mr. Toutourien asked me if the lecture was going to be in French. "*La conférence sera-t-elle donnée en français?*"

With attendees from all over the world, I replied, "In English, certainly." "*En anglais, certainement.*"

My emphatic answer summoned perturbations to Mr. Toutourien's face. Apparently, he spoke very little English and had received his invitation in French. "*Mais j'ai reçu mon invitation en français,*" he countered.

"Mine was in English," "*Le mien est venu en anglais,*" I countered back.

All around us, attendees must have been having similar conversations. I heard exclamations in Urdu, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Armenian, Greek, and many other languages. More and more attendees donned worried expressions as their conversations grew louder and louder. But, suddenly, the noise died down when Mahatma Nuntius appeared on the stage with a smile as wide as a horizon over a calm sea. He was simply but elegantly dressed, and a blush of all-knowing kindness shone from his face. No one applauded. Silence was the group's intuitive welcome.

"My fellow *Homo sapiens,*" he began. "I know that you hail from diverse countries with diverse religions. My new religion, which loves all of your countries and all of your religions, is called Elpida (*Hope* in Greek). It descended upon me when I had grown dispirited with humanity's suffering, and it granted me new hope, which I aspire to impart to you."

Hearing that, Mr. Toutourien looked at me with smiling eyes, which said that his ears were hearing French. "*Il parle français.*"

Since my ears were hearing English, I looked around and discovered that all the attendees in the room were also harking with intrigued faces. I heard one say, "*Er spricht deutsch,*" another say, "*El esta hablando español,*" and another say, "*El esta hablando italiano.*"

"Could it be that his voice carries the languages of the ears that hear it?" I wondered. "Is this his first miracle?" I was afraid to believe what I was thinking but, as the lecture went on, all faces seemed mesmerized; all nodded at the same moments, smiled at the same times, and exchanged dazzled expressions in rhythmic synchrony. Joyful peace slowly smoothed the group's wrinkled features.

His religion was simple, forthright, and devoid of euphemisms. He called his thirteen messages, enlightenments, and emphasized that they were not commandments. To follow is a recording of his thirteen enlightenments.

* * *

First Enlightenment—“Remember that our minds deceive us, and it is not wise to trust whoever deceives us. Therefore, do not trust your minds’ opinions. Minds render impromptu opinions without scrutinizing the evidence. Challenge your minds’ opinions by spending more time on the disproof than on the proof. Time and history disprove most spontaneous, un-researched, deeply held opinions.

Second Enlightenment—“Believe wisely and carefully because you become what you believe. Passions and popularity do not make beliefs right. Take plenty of time to reflect on what you are about to believe. Beliefs are very serious matters because once they infiltrate your minds, they enslave them—as addictions, delusions, and obsessions do—and you will have a very hard time freeing yourself from their bondage”.

Third Enlightenment—“Your brains hum continuously with myriad thoughts. Brain thoughts are not your thoughts because they sneak, uninvited, into your consciousness. Beware of thoughts that you did not elaborate. Be they positive or negative, these thoughts are not your thoughts and should not be trusted. They are but the erratic echoes of everything that your brain has ever recorded. They can masquerade as gut feelings, first impressions, fantasies, reveries, or déjà vu. Shoo them away as you would an uninvited guest and dwell mainly on the conscious thoughts that you, yourself, elaborate”.

Fourth Enlightenment—“Don’t think with your feelings and don’t feel with your thoughts. Filter your feelings through your thinking mind. Feelings are fickle and capricious, they come and go as they please, and can burn like an out-of-control fire. Be wary of strong feelings; they can delude you, betray you, and drive you astray. Do not mistake the intensity of feelings as a measure of their veracity”.

Fifth Enlightenment—“Beware of blind loyalties. Feel free to change your minds when evidence, facts, and realities change. If you do not struggle to think freely and correctly, you stand to become enslaved by the thoughts of others”.

Sixth Enlightenment—“Temper your desires with grace. Desires that end in satiation or anticlimax are to be placed on leash lest they drag you down tenebrous alleys. Desires that are noble and insatiable are those that elevate your soul with love, art, science, and humane ideals. Even those desires should be tempered with grace lest they lead to irremediable regret and inconsolable grief”.

Seventh Enlightenment—“Worship your God with all your heart. Worship is reflective, soul-searching, and pacifying. Do not worship because you have to, for God’s sake. God does not need your worship. It is you who need it”.

Eighth Enlightenment—“Because we are our brains, and because our brains are programmed by nature, nurture, and experience—none of which are under our control—we should not take full credit for all our achievements or full blame for all our misbehaviors. Achievements and behaviors are brain fruits, and brains are life fruits, and life is God’s gift, equally given to all. Therefore, since our brains are but life’s gifts, shun hubris and replace it with humility and gratitude”.

Ninth Enlightenment—“Blame is brain weakness. It judges without fully understanding the programs of the faulted persons or groups. Mal-programmed brains should be reformed, not judged. They should be reformed with sympathy and joy—sympathy, because mal-programmed brains engender self-suffering, and joy, because we are the fortunate ones who have not been saddled with miscreant brains”.

Tenth Enlightenment—“Humanity is a chain of programmed brains. Once we understand that, we will surmise that human conflicts are naught but clashes among brains that do not accept nor understand how the opposing brains are programmed. Once we accept that we are naught but a historic chain of programmed brains, fighting will abate, and understanding will grow”.

Eleventh Enlightenment—“We can all reform our programmed brains, but that requires enlightenment.

Enlightenment demands the dedicated empowerment of our sense of ethics to find and correct our misconceptions. It is a painful reformation because it changes who we thought we were. It is a labor-intensive, self-effacing, sooth-seeking endeavor that our individual and collective programmings viciously resist“.

Twelfth Enlightenment—“Don’t let your time-space zones separate you into irrational, feuding groups. You are all part of the historic, programmed, human chain—a chain that, because it can never be severed, need not be subjected to futile tugs of war.”

Thirteenth Enlightenment—“Your brains, your bodies, and your lives are on loan, to be returned when recalled. Rejoice that your no-interest loan was approved and return it with gratitude when it is recalled.

Embrace death as a noble friend; it protects you from disease, decay, and suffering; it renders life meaningful and precious; and it makes room for those in line, awaiting their no-interest loan approvals.

There is nothing tragic about late-life death. There is everything tragic about late-life decay.

Imagine the suffering of being immortal—the suffering of eternal crowding, aging, and decay—and you will realize why death is an empowering savior, a gift, a salvation, and an honorable discharge.”

* * *

When Mahatma Nuntius ended his thirteenth enlightenment, he smiled and said, “There will be no questions because I do not answer questions. You are the ones who should cogitate on the questions posed by your minds and elaborate your own answers. And there will be no applause because applause is a crowd’s reaction, which cripples careful thinking.”

Then, before our gaping eyes, Mahatma Nuntius slowly dematerialized out of sight like a vanishing apparition. The group froze in a startled trance and, like an ice block, melted apart in dripping silence.

* * *

“Wake up, wake up,” shouted my wife, shaking me vigorously. “You’re mumbling some sort of nonsense and your brother is on the phone, wanting to talk to you.”

“My brother?”

“Yes, your only brother, dear. Wake up and talk to him. He’s calling from Lebanon and says it’s urgent.”

* * *

“Mother just died,” cried my brother. “She had a stroke. Ah... She did not suffer. Ah... She died babbling something unintelligible.”

“What did she say?”

“What she said made no sense.”

“But, what did she say that made no sense,” I insisted.

“She repeated and counted, repeated and counted the same thing, over and over, until she stopped breathing.”

“Repeated and counted the same thing? What did she repeat and count?”

“She said *nuntius-one* then took a few breaths, *nuntius-two* and took a few more breaths, *nuntius-three* and took deeper breaths, and on and on, breathing deeper and more intensely with each count, until she got to *nuntius-thirteen*.”

Here, my brother choked on his held-back tears. After giving him a few moments of respite, I pleaded, “Go on, brother, please. I have to know.”

“When she said *nuntius-thirteen*, she took several, very deep, labored sighs, closed her eyes, smiled, and surrendered her soul.”

* * *

“I am accustomed to sleep and in my dreams to imagine the same things that lunatics imagine when awake.”

René Descartes (1596-1650)



TEIL IN AKKAR

Tleil, the name of a village in Akkar, has been widely circulated in the media since Sunday August 15, 2021 after a gas tanker exploded in the area, leaving 31 casualties and more than 80 injuries, about 5 of them with serious burns.

Location

Tleil is located in Dreib El-Awsat in the Akkar Mohafaza at an altitude of 320 m above sea level. It is 125 km from Beirut, 35 km from Trablous and 11 km from the Lebanese-Syrian borders and stretches across an area of 430 hectares. The village may be reached through the following route: Beirut-Trablous-Halba-Kouaikhat-Tleil.

Demographic Structure-By Sect

The registered population of Tleil is estimated at 1,650 people, distributed by sect as follows:

- Maronite: 42%
- Greek Orthodox: 40%
- Greek Catholic: 11%
- Other sects: 7%

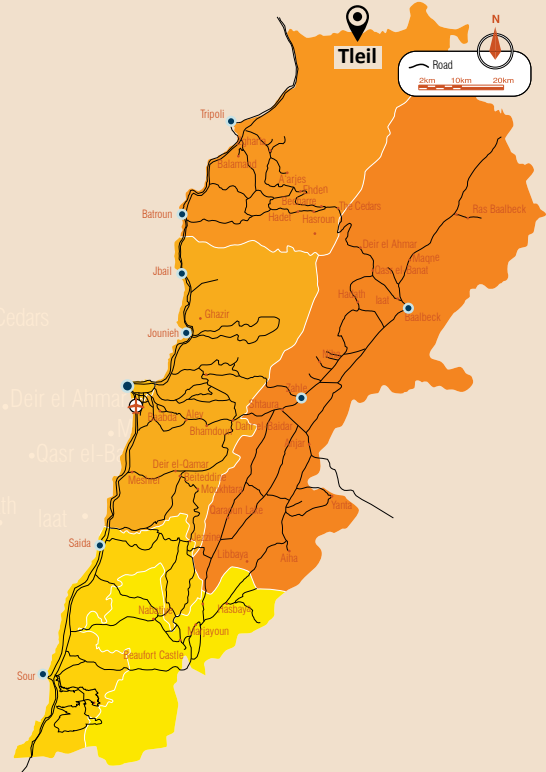
Political Structure

In the last parliamentary elections that took place in 2018, the registered voters numbered 1,188, of whom 472 cast their ballots. The votes were distributed as follows:

- Akkar Al-Qawiyya “The Strong Akkar” list (the Free Patriotic Movement, the Islamic Group, and MP Mostafa Hussein): 171 votes or 36%. The candidate Assaad Dergham received 129 votes.
- Al-Mustaqbal Li Akkar “The Future for Akkar” list (an alliance between the Future Movement, Walid Baaribi and the Lebanese Forces): 135 votes or 28.6%. MP Hadi Hobeich won 83 votes.
- Lobnan Al-Siyada “Lebanon the Sovereign” list (supported by Major General Ashraf Rifi): 118 votes or 25%. The candidate Elie Assaad Saad received 113 votes.
- Al-Qarar Li Akkar “The Decision for Akkar” list (an alliance between the former MPs Wajih Baarini, Michel Daher and Karim Rassi, Marada Movement and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party): 37 votes. The candidate Emile Abboud won 27 votes.

Familial Structure

Tleil village has many families belonging to several sects, including:



Greek Orthodox

- Al-Fayyad
- Ibrahim
- Assaad
- Al-Hader
- Al-Mashriqi
- Elias
- Gerges
- Jalloul
- Hanna
- Deeb
- Zakhour
- Saad
- Greige
- Fares
- Mansour
- Wehbe
- Salmen

- Sayegh
- Tohme
- Abdallah

Maronite

- Saab
- Ishaq
- Abboud
- Awwad
- Ghawar
- Tannous
- El-Khoury
- El-Sheikh
- Boutros
- Habib
- Salloum
- Elias

Greek Catholic

- Abdo
- Mansour

Alawite and Shia'a

- Assaad
- Kafa

———— **ABOU DOLEH FAMILIES** ————

in Kfar Habou

“Doleh” (rib) is one of the arched bones in the thoracic cage. It is also the name of a Greek Orthodox family that consists of 85 members and resides in Kfar Habou (a village located in the Qada’a of Mennieh-Dennieh, at 90 km from Beirut and 15 km from Trablous).

———— **KANBOUR FAMILIES** ————

“Sunni” and “Catholic” in Western Beqa’a

“Kanbour” (lark) is a species of songbird that is small in size, has rectangular wings, feeds on insects and wild seeds and lives in hot and temperate climates. It is also the name of Lebanese families whose members total about 120 and are distributed by sect and place of residence as follows:

- Sunni: 65 members, residing in Khiara (Western Beqa’a).
- Greek Catholic: 55 members, residing in Joub Jannine (Western Beqa’a).

———— **SHEBER FAMILIES** ————

in Nabatieh and Beirut

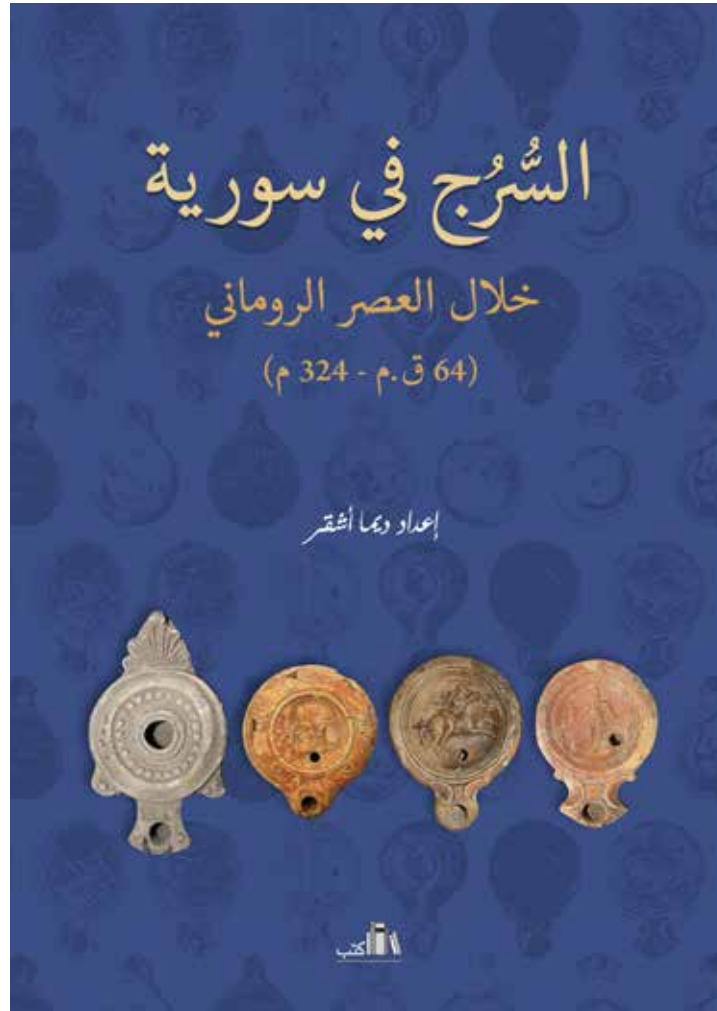
“Sheber” (span) is the distance measured by a human hand, from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger (i.e. about 20 cm). It is also the name of Lebanese families whose members number about 50 and are distributed by sect and place of residence as follows:

- Shia’a: 30 members, residing in Kfar Tebnit, near Nabatieh (South Lebanon).
- Greek Orthodox: 20 members, residing in Tahwitat El-Nahr (Baabda) and Achrafieh (Beirut).

THE ROMAN-ERA SYRIAN LAMPS

(64 B.C.-324 B.C.)

KUTUB Ltd. has recently published a book entitled "Al-Souroj Fi Souriya Khilal Al-Asr Al-Roumani" (The Roman-era Syrian Lamps (64 B.C.-324 B.C.)) by Dima Achkar. The publication documents a series of Roman-era Syrian lamps that are housed in Damascus National Museum and other Syrian museums with the aims of portraying the customs and traditions of lamp users.



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