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## **USD 24 BILLION** IN TRANSACTIONS ON THE SAYRAFA PLATFORM IN 2021-2023

**TOP FINANCIERS ARE THE TOP BENEFICIARIES**

### **The 2023 Budget**

Four times what it was in 2022 with  
significant increases in fines and taxes

**60% of Lebanon's General Budget  
Reserves Unaccounted for**

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The release of this edition was postponed until the conclusion of July 2023, in order to furnish a more comprehensive depiction of significant content

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# The Emirate of Lebanon

## Or the Not-United Non-Lebanese Emirates

By Jawad N. Adra

***In Lebanon, secession movements are growing, as are efforts to divide the country into separate entities or “emirates” under the guise of federalism. This article was published in the September 2009 issue of The Monthly. We have decided to include it in this issue as well since we believe it still applies to our current reality.***

A friend of mine, who was once a member of the Phalange Party then he moved to the Lebanese Forces and back again, called me in reproach: Why did you mention the story of the Sunni woman whose mother was killed on the doorsteps of her home, whose disabled father was burned in his bed by supporters of Phalange Party (Lebanese Front) and who elected or supported Antoine Zahra because she was afraid of Hassan Nasrallah? Why didn't you mention other stories?

Why didn't you mention that Orthodox woman from Al-Mina-Tripoli who voted for Bilal the son of Said Shaaban, who had once declared Tripoli a citadel for Muslims, sowing fear in the hearts of the city's Christians and accelerating their departure or displacement?

Why didn't you mention that a mother in West Beqa' who supports the Syrian Social Nationalist Party and whose son was killed by Hizbullah gunmen and yet voted for March 8?

The conversation ended after the friend stirred up even more memories... what about the so-called “War of the Mountain” and the massacres committed mutually by Druze supporters of Kamal and Walid Jumblat and by Maronite followers of Bashir Gemayel and Samir Geagea? The massacres were committed against each other and against civilians who did not belong to either side: Weren't Walid Jumblat and George Adwan elected by those same people and those same victims?

Didn't the “Arab Deterrent Forces” of 1976 serve as a cover for the displacement by Al-Marada and the Lebanese Front of Koura residents, who became divided between March 8 and March 14? Didn't the Sunnis vote for Nadim Bashir Gemayel, who would have been killed by Al-Murabitoun had he passed through one of their checkpoints (had he been born then)? Or perhaps not since he is Bashir's son, otherwise he would have definitely been forgotten along with the thousands who disappeared at the checkpoints of our leaders who insist on passing over the reins of leadership to their relatives and sons.

There are some who say “La Tanka'a Al-Jirah” translated as “don't pour salt on the wounds” but did the Maronites

and the Sunnis vote hand in hand as a sign of love and forgiveness? Or did they do so out of hatred and fear of the Shi'a and loyalty to the leader?

Did the Christians and the Shi'a vote together as a sign of love and forgiveness or out of hatred and fear of the Sunni and loyalty to the leader? Did the Druze and Maronites forgive the crimes of their wars or is this a temporary demonstration of solidarity?

A society that was polarized in the civil war because of the Muslim left and the Christian right is now further fragmented by the greater vertical rupture that was demonstrated in the parliamentary election between Shi'a, Sunni, Druze and Maronites.

We did not wish to explore the causes and cons of the civil war and now we do not want to discuss the electoral law and the election expenditures. The important thing is that our leaders are well and what they have done and what they are capable of doing, no elected member of Parliament anywhere in the world has the nerve to do and now we hear talks about amending the constitution.

The interest of the Druze requires so, the interest of the Maronites requires so, the interest of the Sunnis requires so and the interest of the Shi'as requires so and everybody understands “the so” of the other. Why don't we then amend the constitution so that each confession can elect its deputies. In fact let us abolish the elections altogether and declare Lebanon an emirate and let them canonize themselves as official princes and princes of money, weapons, confessions and tribes. Let us drop the charade of a republic and statehood.

Lebanon, the playing field and the laboratory, is not a necessity for its people but a detriment. Lebanon the emirate or the emirates is the reality of the matter and the need now is to amend the constitution in that direction and set things clear once for all.

Each and all are for this Lebanon which is not-united non-Lebanese emirates.

# Leader

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# **USD 24 BILLION IN TRANSACTIONS ON THE SAYRAFA PLATFORM IN 2021-2023**

## **TOP FINANCIERS ARE THE TOP BENEFICIARIES**

The Sayrafa Platform debuted in 2021 with the a rate of LBP 12,000 to the dollar, and a black market rate of LBP 13,000 to the dollar. Today, the exchange rate on the platform is LBP 85,000 to the dollar whilst the black market rate is LBP 92,000 to the dollar as of July 2023 (with an all time high of LBP 145,000 to the Dollar in March of 2023).

On May 21, 2021, the Lebanese Central Bank (Banque du Liban) launched the Sayrafa platform by virtue of article 75 of the Code of Money and Credit which states that BDL “may use the means that it deems fit to stabilize the currency. For that purpose, it may interfere in the market with the agreement of the Minister of Finance by buying and selling foreign currencies. It must limit these transactions in a special account called the Currency Board.” This article also allows the banks to exchange currencies using the rate set by BDL. The stated goal is to combat the quick devaluation of the Lebanese Pound against the US dollar and other foreign currencies.

## Two Years After Launching the Platform

Two years after an economic collapse and two years after launching the Sayrafa platform in May of 2021, *Information International* ran the numbers. We present to you an analysis of the daily transactions on the Sayrafa platform, as well as the change in the exchange rate in the black market and the change in BDL’s USD reserves, without deducting the Eurobonds, from May 2021 to July 2023.

Has Sayrafa been able to prevent the devaluation and alleviate the crisis? What about BDL’s USD / foreign currency reserves?

## Daily Transactions

Daily transactions on the platform include:

- The amount of USD bought and sold by BDL.
- The amount of USD bought and sold by other banks and exchanging institutions, which must be recorded on the platform.

## The Volume of Trade

By reading the tables which show the volume of trade on the Sayrafa platform and the official rate since May 2021 until July 18, 2023, in addition to BDL’s foreign currency reserves, and the rate of the US dollar in the black market, we have gathered that:

- The total of transactions since launching the platform in May 2021 and until July 18, 2023 is worth USD 24.3 Billion and includes sales to banks, companies, and individuals.
- In that same period, BDL’s foreign currency reserves fell from USD 21,112 million to USD 14,395 million, a USD 6,717 million drop. This reveals that BDL has bought no less than USD 17 billion from the black market. This excludes the payments made by BDL to subsidize medicine, flour, and other commodities. This has led to further devaluation of the LBP against the USD, which goes against the original principle of the platform: decreasing the exchange rate.
- The Sayrafa dollar rate has gradually increased from 12,000 Lebanese pounds to LBP 85,500 today (July 18, 2023), which means it has increased by LBP 73,500, a 612% increase.
- Since launching Sayrafa, the exchange rate has risen from LBP 12,750/1USD to LBP 143,000/1USD in March, then dropped to around LBP 93,000/USD 1. The rate has since stabilized around this threshold. This means that Sayrafa failed to reach its alleged objective of lowering the USD-LBP exchange rate. We must reconsider this platform and its role in the market.
- The circulars issued by Riad Salameh, the (former\*) governor of the Central Bank, have let every account holder to deposit Lebanese pounds in their account and get US dollars in return within the specified limits and sometimes without limits. This arrangement has allowed small depositors make monthly profits of USD 100-500. Banks, traders, and financiers with large deposits were able to make huge profits. They were allowed to put tens of billions of Lebanese pounds and get dollars in return, where at times the black market rate was LBP 20,000 higher than the Sayrafa rate. The World Bank estimates that USD 2.5 billion were made in profits from Sayrafa.

\* Salameh left office in July 2023.

- Currency exchanges between LBP and USD has risen. At launch, the amounts being exchanged, never exceed USD 1 Million daily. Trade started rising gradually, reaching USD 310 Million on January 3, 2023, at the Sayrafa rate of LBP 38,000 per USD. Meanwhile on the black market, the dollar was selling for LBP 52,000. As such, we can estimate the huge profits made by big depositors.
- The volume of trade has increased on a yearly basis:
  - In 2021, trade was limited, reaching USD 426 million.
  - In 2022, trade increased significantly, reaching USD 11.812 billion.
  - In 2023 (July 18), trade reached USD 12,061.6 billion. This means that, if the Sayrafa platform is still active by the end of the year, the volume of trade would reach twice what it was in 2022.

**Table 1. Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)**

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
18-7-2023	85,500	120 Million
17-7-2023	85,500	105 Million
14-7-2023	85,500	155 Million
13-7-2023	85,500	190 Million
12-7-2023	85,500	179 Million
11-7-2023	85,500	150 Million
10-7-2023	85,500	141 Million
7-7-2023	85,500	120 Million
6-7-2023	85,500	165 Million
5-7-2023	85,500	161 Million
4-7-2023	85,500	154 Million
3-7-2023	85,500	150 Million
27-6-2023	86,200	150 Million
26-6-2023	86,200	160 Million
23-6-2023	86,200	130 Million
22-6-2023	86,200	125 Million
21-6-2023	86,200	133 Million
20-6-2023	86,200	148 Million
19-6-2023	86,200	185 Million
16-6-2023	86,200	181 Million
15-6-2023	86,200	175 Million
14-6-2023	86,200	144 Million
13-6-2023	86,200	141 Million
12-6-2023	86,200	183 Million
9-6-2023	86,200	185 Million
8-6-2023	86,200	201 Million
7-6-2023	86,200	218 Million

Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)		
Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
6-6-2023	86,200	145 Million
5-6-2023	86,200	175 Million
2-6-2023	86,300	131 Million
1-6-2023	86,300	205 Million
31-5-2023	86,300	167 Million
30-5-2023	86,300	119 Million
29-5-2023	86,300	112.5 Million
26-5-2023	86,300	115 Million
24-5-20223	86,300	105 Million
23-5-2023	86,300	113 Million
22-5-2023	86,300	130.5 Million
19-5-2023	86,300	108.5 Million
18-5-2023	86,300	109.5 Million
17-5-2023	86,300	125 Million
16-5-2023	86,300	140 Million
15-5-2023	86,300	133 Million
12-5-2023	86,300	120 Million
11-5-2023	86,300	140 Million
10-5-2023	86,300	153 Million
9-5-2023	86,300	147 Million
8-5-2023	86,300	140 Million
5-5-2023	86,300	70 Million
4-5-2023	86,300	147 Million
3-5-2023	86,300	138 Million
2-5-2023	86,500	145 Million
28-4- 2023	86,500	100.7 Million
27-4-2023	86,500	103 Million
26-4-2023	86,500	90 Million
25-4-2023	86,500	86 Million
20-4-2023	86,700	83.5 Million
19-4-2023	86,700	80 Million
18-4-2023	86,700	99.3 Million
13-4-2023	86,700	86 Million
12-4-2023	86,700	85 Million
11-4-2023	86,700	83 Million
6-4-2023	86,700	72 Million

## Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
5-4-2023	88,000	71 Million
4-4-2023	88,000	97 Million
3-4-2023	88,000	85 Million
31-3-2023	90,000	96 Million
30-3-2023	90,000	90 Million
29-3-2023	90,000	80 Million
28-3-2023	90,000	72 Million
27-3-2023	90,000	45 Million
24-3-2023	90,000	36 Million
23-3-2023	90,000	43 Million
22-3-2023	90,000	62 Million
21-3-2023	90,000	12 Million
20-3-2023	83,500	20 Million
17-3-2023	80,200	25 Million
16-3-2023	79,500	20 Million
15-3-2023	79,000	22 Million
14-3-2023	78,000	30 Million
13-3-2023	75,800	80 Million
10-3-2023	73,100	63 Million
9-3-2023	72,200	100 Million
8-3-2023	70,000	60 Million
7-3-2023	70,000	35 Million
6-3-2023	70,000	25 Million
3-3-2023	70,000	20 Million
2-3-2023	70,000	18 Million
1-3-2023	45,400	45 Million
28-2-2023	45,400	40 Million
27-2-2023	45,400	43 Million
24-2-2023	45,200	25 Million
23-2-2023	45,000	25 Million
22-2-2023	44,500	20 Million
21-1-2023	44,300	15 Million
20-2-2023	44,100	25 Million
17-2-2023	44,100	10 Million
16-2-2023	44,100	15 Million
15-2-2023	43,600	32 Million

Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)		
Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
13-2-2023	43,600	10 Million
10-2-2023	43,600	12 Million
8-2-2023	43,600	8 Million
7-2-2023	42,000	10 Million
6-2-2023	42,000	22 Million
3-2-2023	42,000	57 Million
2-2-2023	42,000	70 Million
1-2-2023	42,000	25 Million
31-1-2023	38,000	47 Million
30-1-2023	38,000	50 Million
27-1-2023	38,000	25 Million
26-1-2023	38,000	40 Million
25-1-2023	38,000	40 Million
24-1-2023	38,000	35 Million
23-1-2023	38,000	65 Million
20-1-2023	38,000	50 Million
19-1-2023	38,000	46 Million
18-1-2023	38,000	62 Million
17-1-2023	38,000	40 Million
16-1-2023	38,000	57 Million
13-1-2023	38,000	42 Million
12-1-2023	38,000	50 Million
11-1-2023	38,000	70 Million
10-1-2023	38,000	60 Million
9-1-2023	38,000	100 Million
5-1-2023	38,000	305 Million
4-1-2023	38,000	290 Million
3-1-2023	38,000	310 Million
29-12-2022	38,000	152 Million
28-12-2022	38,000	110 Million
27-12-2022	38,000	36 Million
23-12-2022	31,200	90 Million
22-12-2022	31,200	41 Million
21-12-2022	31,200	35 Million
20-12-2022	31,200	60 Million
19-12-2022	30,800	36 Million

## Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
16-12-2022	30,800	50 Million
15-12-2022	30,800	41 Million
14-12-2022	30,600	30 Million
13-12-2022	30,600	33 Million
12-12-2022	30,600	35 Million
9-12-2022	30,500	31 Million
8-12-2022	30,300	40 Million
6-12-2022	30,300	35 Million
5-12-2022	30,300	40 Million
2-12-2022	30,300	50 Million
1-12-2022	30,300	46 Million
29-11-2022	30,300	48 Million
28-11-2022	30,300	45 Million
25-11-2022	30,300	36 Million
24-11-2022	30,300	40 Million
23-11-2022	30,300	30 Million
21-11-2022	30,300	25 Million
18-11-2022	30,300	32 Million
17-11-2022	30,300	35 Million
16-11-2022	30,300	40 Million
15-11-2022	30,300	35 Million
14-11-2022	30,300	28 Million
11-11-2022	30,300	35 Million
10-11-2022	30,300	35 Million
9-11-2022	30,300	35 Million
8-11-2022	30,300	53 Million
7-11-2022	30,100	25 Million
4-11-2022	30,100	22 Million
3-11-2022	30,100	26 Million
2-11-2022	30,100	27 Million
1-11-2022	30,100	40 Million
31-10-2022	30,100	22 Million
28-10-2022	30,100	26 Million
27-10-2022	30,100	30 Million
26-10-2022	30,100	30 Million
25-10-2022	30,100	44 Million

Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
24-10-2022	30,100	87 Million
21-10-2022	30,100	25 Million
20-10-2022	30,100	75 Million
19-10-2022	30,100	47 Million
18-10-2022	30,100	60 Million
17-10-2022	30,100	60 Million
14-10-2022	29,800	48 Million
13-10-2022	29,800	57 Million
12-10-2022	29,800	65 Million
11-10-2022	29,800	73 Million
7-10-2022	29,800	30 Million
6-10-2022	29,800	55 Million
5-10-2022	29,800	70.2 Million
4-10-2022	29,800	62.5 Million
3-10-2022	29,800	82.2 Million
30-9-2022	29,800	77 Million
29-9-2022	29,800	63.5 Million
28-9-2022	29,800	48 Million
27-9-2022	29,800	64 Million
26-9-2022	29,800	86 Million
23-9-2022	29,800	36 Million
22-9-2022	29,800	52 Million
21-9-2022	29,800	20 Million
20-9-2022	29,800	41 Million
19-9-2022	29,800	48 Million
16-9-2022	29,600	57 Million
15-9-2022	29,300	22 Million
14-9-2022	28,800	28 Million
13-9-2022	28,600	29 Million
12-9-2022	28,400	28 Million
9-9-2022	28,200	42 Million
8-9-2022	28,200	33 Million
7-9-2022	28,000	28 Million
6-9-2022	28,000	41 Million
5-9-2022	28,000	52 Million
2-9-2022	27,600	95 Million

## Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
1-9-2022	27,400	45 Million
31-8-2022	27,200	35 Million
30-8-2022	27,200	31 Million
29-8-2022	27,200	16 Million
26-8-2023	27,200	20 Million
25-8-2023	27,200	26 Million
24-8-2023	27,200	26 Million
23-8-2023	27,200	40 Million
22-8-2023	27,100	25 Million
19-8-2023	26,900	26 Million
18-8-2023	26,700	37 Million
17-8-2023	26,500	29 Million
16-8-2022	26,300	38 Million
12-8-2022	26,200	46 Million
11-8-2022	26,200	45 Million
10-8-2022	26,100	32 Million
8-8-2022	26,100	23 Million
5-8-2023	25,800	56 Million
3-8-2023	25,800	37 Million
2-8-2023	25,700	73 Million
1-8-2023	25,700	81 Million
29-7-2022	25,700	38 Million
28-7-2022	25,600	33 Million
27-7-2022	25,600	51 Million
26-7-2022	25,600	43 Million
25-7-2022	25,600	25 Million
18-7-2022	25,600	42 Million
15-7-2022	25,600	30 Million
14-7-2022	25,400	48.5 Million
13-7-2022	25,400	57 Million
8-7-2022	25,400	52 Million
7-7-2022	25,400	40 Million
6-7-2022	25,400	42 Million
5-7-2022	25,300	92.3 Million
4-7-2022	25,300	73.8 Million
1-7-2022	25,300	55 Million

Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
30-6-2022	52,200	44.5 Million
29-6-2022	52,200	46.5 Million
27-6-2022	25,300	49 Million
24-6-2022	25,200	36 Million
23-6-2022	24,900	20 Million
22-6-2022	24,900	30 Million
21-6-2022	24,900	35 Million
20-6-2022	24,900	41 Million
17-6-2022	24,900	54 Million
16-6-2022	24,900	20.6 Million
15-6-2022	24,900	26 Million
14-6-2022	24,900	47 Million
13-6-2022	24,700	55 Million
10-6-2022	24,700	100 Million
9-6-2022	24,400	110 Million
8-6-2022	24,400	92.5 Million
7-6-2022	24,400	85 Million
6-6-2022	24,400	113 Million
3-6-2022	24,400	90 Million
2-6-2022	24,400	122 Million
1-6-2022	24,500	124.5 Million
31-5-2022	24,500	105 Million
30-5-2022	24,500	196 Million
27-5-2022	24,600	42 Million
26-5-2022	24,600	64 Million
24-5-2022	24,600	60 Million
23-5-2022	24,300	48 Million
20-5-2022	23,900	41 Million
19-5-2022	23,600	60 Million
18-5-2022	23,700	47 Million
17-5-2022	23,500	34 Million
16-5-2022	23,200	50 Million
13-5-2022	22,700	38.5 Million
12-5-2022	22,700	30.5 Million
11-5-2022	22,700	27 Million
10-5-2022	22,600	57 Million

## Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
9-5-2022	22,600	46 Million
6-5-2022	22,500	68.5 Million
5-5-2022	22,500	53 Million
29-4-2022	22,600	66 Million
28-4-2022	22,600	86 Million
27-4-2022	22,600	71.5 Million
26-4-2022	22,900	67.5 Million
21-4-2022	23,000	76 Million
20-4-2022	22,900	44 Million
19-4-2022	22,850	52.5 Million
14-4-2022	22,200	33.5 Million
13-4-2022	22,200	50 Million
12-4-2022	22,300	55 Million
11-4-2022	22,250	64.5 Million
8-4-2022	22,100	77.5 Million
7-4-2022	22,200	38 Million
6-4-2022	22,100	41 Million
5-4-2022	22,200	61 Million
4-4-2022	22,200	76.3 Million
1-4-2022	22,100	85 Million
31-3-2022	22,100	70.5 Million
30-3-2022	22,050	83 Million
29-3-2022	22,050	94.5 Million
28-3-2022	22,100	60 Million
24-3-2022	22,150	61 Million
23-3-2022	21,850	67 Million
22-3-2022	21,900	26 Million
21-3-2022	21,500	36 Million
18-3-2022	20,800	78 Million
17-3-2022	20,800	90 Million
16-3-2022	20,700	92 Million
15-3-2022	20,600	90 Million
14-3-2022	20,900	74 Million
11-3-2022	20,750	92 Million
10-3-2022	20,900	85 Million
9-3-2022	20,550	60 Million

Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
8-3-2022	20,200	70 Million
7-3-2022	20,200	80 Million
4-3-2022	20,200	84 Million
3-3-2022	20,200	82 Million
2-3-2022	20,200	87 Million
1-3-2022	20,200	93 Million
28-2-2022	20,200	73 Million
25-2-2022	20,200	75 Million
24-2-2022	20,200	70 Million
23-2-2022	20,200	59 Million
22-2-2022	20,300	55 Million
21-2-2022	20,300	50 Million
18-2-2022	20,300	60 Million
17-2-2022	20,300	60 Million
16-2-2022	20,400	55 Million
15-2-2022	20,400	50 Million
11-2-2022	20,500	46 Million
10-2-2022	20,600	50 Million
8-2-2022	20,700	46 Million
7-2-2022	20,800	39 Million
4-2-2022	20,900	35 Million
3-2-2022	21,100	16 Million
2-2-2022	21,100	30 Million
1-2-2022	21,200	32 Million
31-1-2022	21,500	43 Million
28-1-2022	22,100	40 Million
27-1-2022	22,300	50 Million
26-1-2022	22,400	53 Million
25-1-2022	22,500	36 Million
24-1-2022	22,600	15 Million
21-1-2022	22,700	20 Million
20-1-2022	22,900	36 Million
19-1-2022	23,100	38 Million
18-1-2022	23,300	34 Million
17-1-2022	23,900	43 Million
14-1-2022	24,400	41.5 Million

## Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
12-1-2022	24,700	14.5 Million
11-1-2022	25,000	17.5 Million
10-1-2022	24,600	19 Million
7-1-2022	24,300	24.9 Million
5-1-2022	24,500	155 Million
4-1-2022	24,000	18 Million
3-1-2022	23,500	14 Million
29-12-2021	22,700	18.5 Million
28-12-2021	22,600	14.3 Million
23-12-2021	24,000	19.8 Million
22-12-2021	22,200	16 Million
21-12-2021	22,200	13 Million
20-12-2021	22,100	6 Million
17-12-2021	22,400	20 Million
15-12-2021	22,300	17.6 Million
14-12-2021	23,000	5.3 Million
13-12-2021	21,300	12 Million
10-12-2021	20,600	7.1 Million
9-12-2021	20,500	5 Million
8-12-2021	19,800	4.2 Million
7-12-2021	19,500	4.2 Million
6-12-2021	19,400	8.250 Million
3-12-2021	19,300	11 Million
2-12-2021	19,500	8 Million
1-12-2021	20,600	5.750 Million
30-11-2021	20,600	3.7 Million
29-11-2021	20,400	5.250 Million
26-11-2021	21,000	3.5 Million
24-11-2021	19,700	4.3 Million
23-11-2021	19,500	7.1 Million
19-11-2021	19,300	5.3 Million
17-11-2021	19,300	4.9 Million
16-11-2021	18,900	3.850 Million
15-11-2021	19,000	4.3 Million
12-11-2021	19,000	2.8 Million
11-11-2021	18,500	3 Million

Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
10-11-2021	18,000	3 Million
9-11-2021	17,900	9.5 Million
5-11-2021	17,600	4.1 Million
4-11-2021	17,500	6.5 Million
3-11-2021	17,100	2.8 Million
2-11-2021	17,300	3.7 Million
1-11-2021	17,400	5 Million
29-10-2021	17,500	6.9 Million
17-10-2021	17,500	3.5 Million
26-10-2021	17,400	5.8 Million
25-10-2021	17,800	5.6 Million
22-10-2021	17,300	7 Million
21-10-2021	17,000	3.3 Million
20-10-2021	17,500	3 Million
19-10-2021	16,900	5 Million
14-10-2021	Bank shutdown	#VALUE!
13-10-2021	17,000	2 Million
12-10-2021	17,000	2.3 Million
11-10-2021	16,000	1.6 Million
8-10-2021	16,000	2 Million
7-10-2021	15,300	2.3 Million
6-10-2021	15,100	2.4 Million
5-10-2021	15,500	2.150 Million
4-10-2021	14,600	1.150 Million
1-10-2021	14,750	850 Thousand
30-9-2021	15,000	700 Thousand
29-9-2021	14,700	850 Thousand
28-9-2021	14,500	850 Thousand
27-9-2021	14,200	900 Thousand
24-9-2021	14,300	900 Thousand
23-9-2021	14,200	750 Thousand
22-9-2021	14,000	1.150 Million
21-9-2021	14,000	750 Thousand
20-9-2021	13,200	1.050 Million
17-9-2021	13,200	2.2 Million
15-9-2021	14,000	800 Thousand

## Volume of daily trade on Sayrafa and the dollar rate, from recent to old (July 18, 2023 – July 2021)

Date	Dollar rate (LBP)	Volume of trade (USD)
14-9-2021	14,300	1.5 Million
13-9-2021	14,500	600 Thousand
10-9-2021	15,500	500 Thousand
9-9-2021	16,000	1 Million
8-9-2021	16,000	700 Thousand
6-9-2021	15,500	2.1 Million
3-9-2021	16,000	1.5 Million
2-9-2021	15,700	900 Thousand
1-9-2021	16,000	850 Thousand
31-8-2021	16,600	900 Thousand
30-8-2021	16,700	1.050 Million
27-8-2021	16,500	700 Thousand
26-8-2021	16,500	750 Thousand
25-8-2021	16,800	900 Thousand
24-8-2021	16,000	1.150 Million
23-8-2021	16,500	1 Million
20-8-2021	16,500	1.1 Million
18-8-2021	16,500	750 Thousand
17-8-2021	16,000	1.1 Million
13-8-2021	17,500	1.1 Million
12-8-2021	17,900	1 Million
11-8-2021	17,400	2 Million
10-8-2021	16,500	1.5 Million
6-8-2021	15,650	1.2 Million
5-8-2021	18,000	2 Million
3-8-2021	16,500	3 Million
2-8-2021	15,250	2.5 Million
30-7-2021	14,500	2 Million
29-7-2021	15,000	2 Million
28-7-2021	15,000	1.5 Million
26-7-2021	16,500	3 Million
26-7-2021	14,400	2 Million
23-7-2021	17,500	3 Million (2 working days)
16-7-2021	16,800	8 Million (within a week)
9-7-2021	15,200	5 Million (within a week)
2-7-2021	12,200	20 Million (within a week)

Source: *Information International*, based on data issued by Banque du Liban

## The Black Market and the Central Bank's Reserves

The black market dollar rate has risen, and BDL's foreign currency reserves have decreased.

These reserves include a sum of USD 5.03 Billion in Eurobonds held by BDL. In order to calculate BDL's available reserves, this sum must be deducted.

**Table 2. Change in black market dollar rate, monthly high, and BDL's USD reserves without deducting Eurobonds, May 2021 – July 18, 2023**

Date	Monthly high (LBP)	Dollar exchange rate at the beginning of the month vs at the end of the month (LBP)	BDL reserves (USD million)
<b>2023</b>			
18-Jul	91,000 - 93,000	93,000	14,396 (15th of July)
June	91,000 - 93,000	93,000	14,305
May	94,000	94,000	14,459
April	105,000 - 94,000	105,000	14,456
March	88,000 - 107,500	143,000	14,420
February	58,300 - 88,000	88,000	14,746
January	42,400 - 58,300	58,300	14,995
<b>2022</b>			
December	41,150 - 42,400	53,000	15,194
November	37,400 - 41,150	41,150	15,198
October	38,500 - 36,800	40,000	15,288
September	33,400 - 38,500	39,000	14,910
August	30,400 - 33,300	30,500	14,757
July	28,150 - 30,000	30,500	15,181
June	31,300 - 28,150	31,300	15,348
May	26,500 - 28,200	31,000	16,028
April	23,750 - 26,650	28,000	16,263
March	20,600 - 23,750	25,000	16,942
February	20,400 - 20,600	21,000	16,945
January	27,650 - 20,400	33,000	17,329
<b>2021</b>			
December	24,000 - 27,650	27,650	17,838
November	23,000 - 27,650	28,000	18,241
October	17,400 - 21,000	21,000	18,681
September	18,650 - 14,500* - 17,000	18,650	18,804
August	19,100 - 19,000	21,000	19,582
July	16,500 - 19,000	19,000	20,070
June	13,000 - 16,500	16,500	20,566
May	12,400 - 12,750	13,000	21,112

Source: *Information International*, based on data issued by Banque du Liban.

\* In the middle of the month after forming Prime Minister Najib Mikati's government.

Table 3. Volume of monthly trade on Sayrafa, May 2021 - July 18, 2023.

Date	Volume of Trade (USD million)
18th of July 2023	1,790
Jun-23	3,115
May-23	2,678
Apr-23	1,221.6
Mar-23	1,009
Feb-23	464
Jan-23	1,784
<b>Total Sum 2023 (including July 18)</b>	<b>12,061.6</b>
Dec-22	991
Nov-22	692
Oct-22	1,048.9
Sep-22	1,035.5
Aug-22	742
Jul-22	722.6
Jun-22	1,341.6
May-22	1,067.5
Apr-22	1,042.3
Mar-22	1,655
Feb-22	901
Jan-22	572.9
<b>Total Sum 2022</b>	<b>11,812.3</b>
Dec-21	196
Nov-21	82.6
Oct-21	56.850
Sep-21	20.550
Aug-21	23.700
Jul-21	46.5
<b>Total Sum 2021</b>	<b>426.20</b>
<b>Total Sum</b>	<b>24,300.1</b>

الجمهورية



وزارة المالية

# THE 2023 BUDGET FOUR TIMES WHAT IT WAS IN 2022 WITH SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN FINES AND TAXES

The Acting Minister of Finance announced that he submitted the 2023 Draft Budget to the council of ministers. Acting Prime Minister Najib Mikati announced that the caretaker council of ministers will soon review the draft. It appears the new budget is full of taxes and fines, some of which increased three to fifty-fold.

The draft mentions increases in hundreds of fines and states that any unmentioned fine will be increased thirty times from what it was on August 1, 2019.

The 2023 Budget draft law contains 82 articles distributed over four chapters.

The following table shows the estimated expenses and revenues stated in the draft:

<b>Estimated expenses</b>	<p><b>LBP 181,923 trillion</b> 141 trillion more than the 2022 budget, an increase of 445%</p> <p><b>USD 1,999,153,846</b> based on the rate of 91,000 LBP/USD.</p>
<b>Estimated revenues</b>	<p><b>181,923 trillion LBP, broken down into:</b> - LBP 147,739 trillion from regular revenues - LBP 34,183 trillion from special revenues <b>Total: USD 1,99 billion based on the rate of 91,000 LBP/USD</b></p> <p>The Ministry of Finance has not declared the 2022 revenues. Instead, it published numbers from the 2021 budget. The Ministry considers that the budget deficit is 18.79% only.</p>
<b>Estimated expenses for the 2022 Budget</b>	<b>LBP 40,873 trillion</b>

## 1- General Expenses

- Generally, estimated expenses increased by 4.45 times compared to the 2022 budget. However, further analysis shows that the expenses of the Ministry of Finance increased by 19 times, those of the president increased by 15 times, and those of the Ministry of Public Works increased by 9.9 times. On the other hand, the expenses of the Ministry of Health increased by 2.5 times, and those of the Ministry of Labor increased by 1.3 times.
- Expenses are divided into regular expenses, reaching LBP 170 trillion, and equipment and investment expenses, reaching LBP 11.9 trillion only.

**Table. Main government expenses mentioned in the budget draft:**

Main expenses	Amount (LBP)
Foreign treasury bonds interests	5,475,113,000,000
Domestic loan interests	7,307,833,000,000
Salaries, wages, and related expenses	30,486,518,549,000
Contributions for salaries and wages in public institutions	2,299,468,203,000
Social contributions for public sector workers	51,804,162,879,000

## 2- Tax Brackets

### A- Commercial, non-commercial, and industrial professions tax:

Article 32 of legislative decree 144 issued on June 2, 1959, has been modified as follows:

Tax rate	Threshold (LBP million)	Previous threshold (LBP million)
4%	0-100	0-27
7%	100-260	27-72
12%	260-590	72-162
16%	590-1130	162-312
21%	1130-2440	312-675
25%	More than 2440	More than 675

Financial companies (Joint-stock companies, LLCs, and private companies limited by shares) pay a tax set at 17%.

### B- Tax brackets for salaries, wages, and retirement incomes have been modified as follows:

Tax rate	Threshold (LBP million)	Previous Threshold (LBP million)
2%	0-70	0-18
4%	70-170	18-45
7%	170-330	45-90
11%	330-650	90-180
15%	650-1300	180-360
20%	1300-2440	360-675
25%	More than 2440	More than 675

The new law also allows the Minister of Finance to modify tax brackets and deductions by virtue of a decision duly issued. The same goes for all ministers, each according to what their ministry specializes in.

## 3- Family Deductions

Family deductions were modified by virtue of article 31 of legislative decree 133 issued on June 2, 1959, in the income tax code. The amounts are now as follows:

- LBP 108 million, LBP 30 million for each spouse, and LBP 6 million for each child. Previously, the amount was LBP 37 million and LBP 500 thousand for each spouse, as well as LBP 2.5 million for each child.

## 4- Inheritance Tax and Built Property Tax

### Inheritance Tax:

While tax rates were kept as is, tax brackets were multiplied by 3.6. This decreases the tax in line with inflation.

For example, amounts less than 90 million were taxed at 3% for married couples. Now, this value has increased to 330 million. The 5% tax on life insurance funds has also been kept as is while adding a clause to keep the funds in the currency specified in the insurance policy. (Legislative decree 146/1959, article 32 of the budget draft).

### Built Property Tax:

Tax brackets have been modified as follows:

Tax rate	Threshold (LBP million)	Previous Threshold (LBP million)
4%	0-440	0-120
6%	440-870	120-240
8%	870-1,300	240-360
11%	1,300-2,170	360-600
14%	More than 2,170	More than 600

### Furthermore,

- A LBP 100 million property deduction has been approved (the amount was previously LBP 40 million)
- The fine for violating the Built Properties Code has been raised from 5% to 25%.

## 5- Decreases in the Tax Rate on Profits Made by Contractors of Public Works

Article 27 stipulates tax reductions by 75% on profits made by contractors of public works for projects completed before December 31, 2021. This reduction is applied on profits in Lebanese pounds made by contractors as long as the amount was not modified to make up for the differences that resulted from the devaluation of the Lebanese pound.

## 6- Tax on Services Provided Online at the Benefit of Persons in Lebanon

Article 29 states that a 2% tax must be paid by every person or entity living in Lebanon and providing online services through any platform or electronic medium, even if the center of activity were abroad. Details about the application of this law will be revealed in a decision issued by the Minister of Finance.

## 7- Banks Required to Apply Taxes on the Deceased's Inheritance Before Transferring it to the Beneficiaries

Article 31 requires banks to deduct 3% of the deceased's inheritance before transferring it to the beneficiaries. This is in order to avoid tax evasion by not declaring the amount of the inheritance.

## 8- Alcoholic Beverages

### A- Taxes on the consumption of alcoholic beverages, whether produced locally or imported:

Article 36 modifies legislative decree 133/1933 which sets taxes on the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

If the beverage is imported, the consumption tax is set based on the specified customs fees. If it is produced locally, the tax is set as follows:

Product	Previous consumption tax for every liter (LBP)	New consumption tax for ever liter (LBP)
Beer	60	5,000
Arak	250	7,500
Wine	200	6,000
Champagne	400	12,000
Cognac	750	22,500
Whiskey (aged less than 12 years)	400	12,000
Whiskey (aged more than 12 years)	750	22,500
Other spirit drinks	400	12,000
Pure industrial alcohol	200	6,000
Impure industrial alcohol	150	5,000

### B- Yearly licenses for selling alcoholic beverages have been modified as follows:

Type	Yearly license fees (LBP)	Proposed fees (LBP)
Importers of alcoholic beverages for every imported brand	900,000	27,000,000
Local producers of alcoholic beverages for every brand of alcohol registered under their company's trademark in the Ministry of Economy and Trade	500,000	15,000,000
Wholesale traders	500,000	15,000,000
Retail traders	400,000	12,000,000

### C- Yearly licenses for institutions that sell alcoholic drinks per glass, consumed on site:

Article 38 proposes a modification of the yearly license fees for institutions that sell alcoholic drinks per glass to be consumed on site. Previously, the fees were determined by a detailed table depending on each hotel's rating and divided into different types within every rating. Now, they are as follows:

Type	Fixed fee (LBP)	Proportional fee (per square meter) (LBP)
International and 5-star hotels	45,000,000	27,000

**Hotels, restaurants, bars, and other establishments that serve food and drinks:**

4 stars	22,500,000	18,000
3 stars	13,500,000	14,000
2 stars	9,000,000	9,000
Cafés and other places	4,500,000	3,000

**9- Smoking Licenses for Touristic Institutions that Meet the Legal Health Requirements**

Smoking fee	Previous fixed fee	Proposed fixed fee	Previous proportional fee (per square meter)	Proposed proportional fee (per square meter)
International and 5-star hotels	5,000,000	90,000,000	3,000	54,000

**Hotels, restaurants, bars, and other establishments that serve food and drinks:**

4 stars	2,500,000	45,000,000	2,000	36,000
3 stars	1,500,000	27,000,000	1,500	27,000
2 stars	1,000,000	18,000,000	1,000	18,000
Cafés and other places	500,000	9,000,000	300	6,000

**10- Cement Production Fee:**

Article 40 stipulates an increase in fees for cement production as follows:

	Previous fee per ton (LBP)	Current fee per ton (LBP)
Cement	6,000	180,000

The article includes a clause requiring the payment to be made within 15 days of the end of every month.

**11- Stamps**

Two articles in the draft state that stamps can now be paid using marking machines if the amount does not exceed LBP 3 billion. Previously the threshold was set at LBP 500 million. The articles also allow institutions with which the government works and institutions in charge of official procedures to rent marking machines for a fee.

**12- Various Fees Increased by 30 Times**

Article 43 stipulates that all fees, no matter their type, be increased by 30 times compared to what they were on August 1, 2019, with the exception of customs fees and fees which were modified to be collected in foreign currencies.

## 13- Hunting Fees

Transport and possession fee of category V weapons (hunting weapons) and their ammunition	Proposed (LBP)	Previous (LBP)
Single-shots	1,500,000	50,000
Double-barreled shotguns	3,000,000	100,000
Semi-automatic rifles (3 shots maximum)	6,000,000	200,000
Rifles with multiple barrels (with at least one dedicated for shots)	6,000,000	200,000

## 14- Candidature Fees for Mayors Elections and Municipal Elections

Clause 2 in article 25 of law 665/1997 sets candidature fees at LBP 500 thousand. These fees have been increased to LBP 15 million.

## 15- Fine for Delay in Issuing Death Certificate

The fine for delaying applications for death certificates has been increased from LBP 100 thousand to 3 million. The previous amount had been set by virtue of article 39 of law 665/1997.

## 16- Stamp Tariffs

One-hundred and eleven tariffs have been increased by rates varying from 3 to 50 times. Below are a few examples.

Type of license	Previous fee	Proposed fee
Franchising fee	1,000,000	50,000,000
Drilling and mining fee	1,800,000	90,000,000
Joint-stock company establishment license	1,000,000	30,000,000

## 17- Electricity Generation Fee for Local Generators

Previously, the fee for selling one kVA of energy was LBP 15 thousand. The fee has been increased to LBP 100 thousand.

## 18- Judicial Fees

Judicial fees were set at amounts varying between LBP 100 and LBP 50 thousand. They have been increased 10-fold. The fees cover the following:

- A- Registration fees
- B- Lawsuit fee
- C- Notification fees
- D- Picture fees

Other fees mentioned in the law on judicial fees.

Judicial insurances have been doubled.

## 19- Foreign Trucks Entry Fee

The draft proposes imposing fees on the entry of foreign trucks to be determined by virtue of a decision issued by the Minister of Public Works in accordance with article 73 of the draft.

## 20- Entrance Fees to Casino du Liban

Article 60 of the draft stipulates that the state will collect fees in US dollars from some projects. Entrance fees to the Casino du Liban have increased as follows:

	Previous fee	Proposed fee
One-day entrance	10,000	500,000
One-week entrance	50,000	2,500,000
One-month entrance	150,000	7,500,000
Seasonal entrance	350,000	17,500,000
Yearly entrance	1,000,000	50,000,000

## 21- Consumption Fees for Beverages

Soft drinks, energy drinks, and drinks containing sugar now have a consumption fee of LBP 5,000 per liter.

## 22- Fees for Special License Plate Numbers

Previously, fees for ownership of special license plate numbers varied between LBP 300 and 750 thousand per year. The new draft raises these fees to vary between LBP 3 and 11 million per year.

Bidding fees for special license plate numbers have also increased.

## 23- License Plate Fees and Driver License Fees

License plate fees and driving license fees have increased by 10 times.

## 24- Quarry Fees to be Collected in US Dollars

Article 54 of the draft states that the mentioned amounts are to be allocated for environmental projects. Article 53 requires all projects that need environmental tests or examinations, environmental consequences evaluations, or environmental management plans to pay USD 300 per project.

## 25- State's Share of Fines

Article 64 decreases the state's shares of fines. Previously, fines were split into 70% for the treasury and 30% for the employee. The shares are now equal with 50% for the state's treasury and 50% for the employee.

## 26- Fees for Exporting Raw Materials and Biproducts

Article 76 imposes a 10% tax on exporting excess biproducts of raw materials. This includes metals of all kinds, paper, carton, leather, nylon, aluminum, burned oils, recyclable materials. This is to be approved by a joint decision of the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Industry.

## 27- Tobacco Fees

Article 77 imposes a yearly tax on selling tobacco products and alternatives.

- LBP 5,000,000 for every shop that sells tobacco products and alternatives.
- LBP 50,000,000 for main sellers of tobacco products and alternatives.
- LBP 7,500 per pack of cigarettes
- LBP 75,000 per kilogram of hookah tobacco
- 10% sales tax for individual cigars

## 28- "Cost of Living" Bonuses not Included in Basic Salaries

Article 80, which goes against previous legal texts concerning the rights of workers in public institutions and public authorities, states that no bonuses granted after 2020 shall be included as part of an employee's basic salary, even if this goes against the rules of procedure in a certain institution. This applies to cost of living bonuses, social aid, special compensation, or compensation by virtue of article 111 of the 2022 General Budget.

Article 81 states that cost of living bonuses shall be determined as fixed amounts. No proportional bonuses shall be given even if the rules of procedure of the concerned institutions and public authorities state otherwise.



## 29- Other Articles

Article	Details	Remarks
5	Article 5 allows the government to borrow money by issuing government bonds in LBP.	
8	By virtue of article 85 of the constitution and through a decision of the council of ministers, the Lebanese president can issue a decree to open up or transfer new credits in the budget so long as the amount does not surpass 300 billion LBP. Such measures must be approved by the council of deputies.	The limit, set at LBP 300 billion, has not been raised this year, it was raised in 2022 from the previous limit of was LBP 100 billion.
12	LBP 75 billion are taken from the revenues collected for municipalities for street lighting, garbage collection, and other projects in small villages where there is no municipality.	This amount was previously LBP 15 billion.
13	Credits can be transferred to pay EDL's electricity bills. However, this clause does not allow credits to be transferred to pay for other bills.	
15	<p>Modification of programs acts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program for building administrative buildings to decrease the government's spending on rent.</li> <li>• Program for establishing the Maritime Sciences and Technology Institute (MARSATI) in Batroun and building an office for the general directorate of land and naval transportation.</li> <li>• Program for land pooling and subdivision.</li> <li>• Housing and urban planning.</li> <li>• Loans and compensation for land appropriation.</li> <li>• Contribution of the Council of Development and Redevelopment to build office space for the customs administration in the Beirut port.</li> <li>• Upscaling South-West Beirut.</li> <li>• Program act in the Ministry of Finance.</li> <li>• Land measurement and mapping all Lebanese land.</li> </ul>	Some programs acts such as programs to build roads and buildings were transferred to the 2024 Budget. All new public works and projects were canceled.



# 60% OF LEBANESE GENERAL BUDGET RESERVES UNACCOUNTED FOR

The 2023 General Budget is yet to be issued, and the Lebanese caretaker government has been spending following the 12-month rule. High expenditures and draining budget credits have led the government to issue a series of decisions that would transfer credits from the budget's reserves, originally earmarked for emergency expenditures.

What remains of the General Budget's credits?



The General Budget includes main credits and reserve credits, which can be transferred by virtue of decrees.

After spending the main credits, the Lebanese caretaker government has started transferring reserve credits since the end of February 2023. The total amount of credits transferred by 5 June 2023 has reached LBP 1,670,034,672,000, or 60.4% of the reserve credits in the budget which total LBP 2,764,541,909,000. Only 1,094,507,237,000 reserve credits remain, which will not cover public sector salaries. This doesn't account for the credits transferred by the Minister of Finance which include medical aid, bereavement support, monetary provisions\*, and financial settlements.

As such, the depletion of the reserves and the main budget credits has led the parliament to issue a law which opens up new credits for the 2023 budget. This is in order to fill the gap and pay public sector salaries until the end of 2023. Even though the budget has yet to be approved (it technically does not exist), law number 331/2023 issued on June 21, 2023, has opened up new credits in the 2023 General Budget. The credits will be recorded in it when it is issued.

## What is the Budget Reserve Section? What is it for?

In every general budget there is a section called the budget reserves. This section is dedicated to:

- Reserve credits for joint expenditures between a number of ministries, for such purposes as medical aid, bereavement support, monetary provisions, financial settlements, etc...
- The Minister of Finance allows reserve credits to be allocated for budget items that ran out of credits, or to open up new credits.

Credits in this section are not spent directly. They are transferred in case of need to other budget items where they are spent within the designated sections.

## How are Credits Transferred?

Reserve credits are transferred by virtue of decrees issued by the Council of Ministers. The decrees themselves are issued based on the suggestion of the minister in question and the Minister of Finance.

Reserve credits can be transferred by the Minister of Finance's decision for joint expenditures between a number of ministries, such as medical aid, bereavement support, monetary provisions, financial settlements, and others.

Even before approving the budget, the government may transfer reserve credits to carry out certain budget items based on the twelve-month rule. This must be done by virtue of decrees taken by the council of ministers based on the General Accounting Law clause 3, article 60.

## Before Even Being Issued, the Budget Was Depleted Within 2 Months

The 2023 General Budget has not been issued yet. As such, the caretaker government is basing its expenditures on the 2023 General Budget, with credits totaled LBP 40,873,086,750,000 (40 trillion).

The 2022 budget set 6.8% of the credits as reserve credits, or LBP 2,764,541,909,000 (2.7 trillion), equivalent to USD 29.5 million (at the rate of LBP 93,500 per dollar).

Object	Amount in LBP	Amount in USD (based on the 93,500 rate)
Total credits in the 2022 General Budget	40,873,086,750,000	437,145,312.83
Reserve credits	2,764,541,909,000	29,567,293.14
Total credits transferred from the reserves through decrees	1,670,034,672,000	17,861,333.39
Remaining reserve credits	1,094,507,237,000	11,705,959.75

Source: *Information International* based on the 2022 General Budget Law and the decrees transferring credits.

**Table. Value of credits transferred and the debtor arranged by date of issue of decree, from newest to oldest.**

Decree number	Date	Administration receiving the transfer from the general budget reserve credits	Amount transferred
11051	27/02/2023	President of the Republic	10,800,000,000
11050	27/02/2023	President of the Republic	2,400,000,000
11049	27/02/2023	President of the Republic	1,000,000,000
11109	03/04/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – Internal Security and Prison Forces	842,500,000
11110	06/04/2023	Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Lebanese University – General Directorate of Higher Education	60,000,000,000
11244	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Central Inspection	165,000,000
11242	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Supreme Islamic Shia Council	16,000,000
11241	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Higher Disciplinary Board	460,000,000
11240	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – High Relief Committee	1,322,130,000
11243	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Sunni Sharia Court	7,288,500,000
11237	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Administrations for the deliverance of fatwas	375,549,000
11236	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Central Statistics Administration	3,710,000,000
11235	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Druze Judiciary	4,132,450,000
11234	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – National Administration Institute – Civil Service Council	280,000,000
11233	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Higher Defence Council Secretariat	480,000,000
11245	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Office of the Mufti	1,673,280,000
11246	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Central Inspection	248,410,000
11247	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Jafari Sharia Court	2,600,000,000
11250	18/04/2023	Ministry of Telecommunications – OGERO – General Directorate of Exploitation and Maintenance of Telecommunications	129,000,000,000

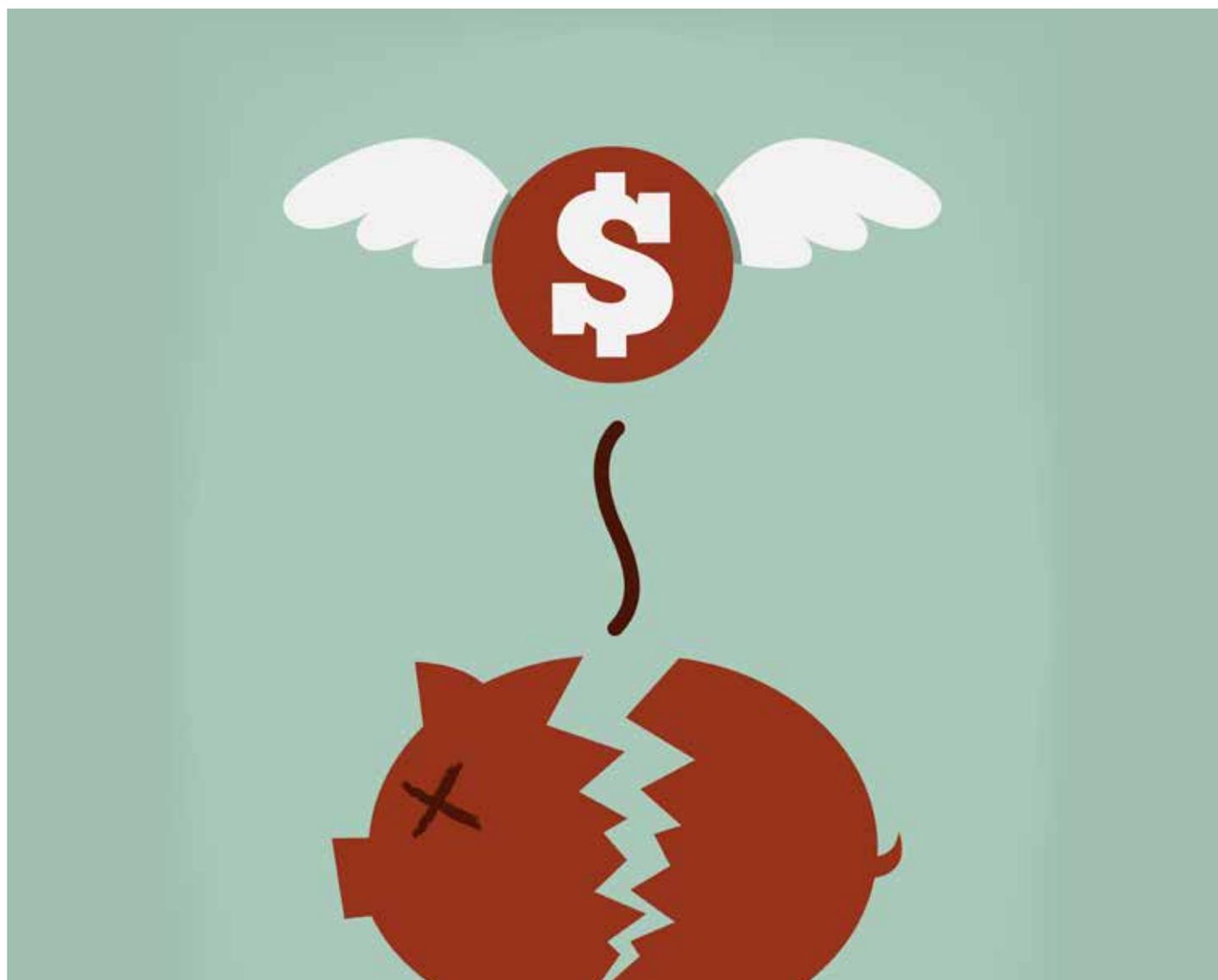
Decree number	Date	Administration receiving the transfer from the general budget reserve credits	Amount transferred
11252	18/04/2023	Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Lebanese University – General Directorate of Higher Education	180,000,000,000
11256	18/04/2023	Ministry of Finance – General Directorate of Finance	16,875,000,000
11289	18/04/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – Internal Security and Prison Forces	841,200,000
11254	18/04/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	500,000,000,000
11295	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – High Relief Committee	3,500,000,000
11255	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – National Archives Institute	435,355,000
11253	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Council for Development and Reconstruction	616,639,000
11251	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Minister of State for Administration Reform expenses	650,000,000
11249	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Public Procurement Authority	9,000,000,000
11248	18/04/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Sheikh of the mind of the Druze Almohads	400,250,000
11488	29/05/2023	Ministry of Youth and Sports – General Directorate of Youth and Sports	325,068,000
11321	29/05/2023	Ministry of Justice – Central Administration	400,000,000,000
11320	29/05/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	100,000,000
11372	29/05/2023	Constitutional Council	360,000,000
11370	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Office of the Jafari Mufti	295,102,000
11369	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Higher Disciplinary Board	31,702,000
11367	29/05/2023	Constitutional Council	96,000,000
11365	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Druze Judiciary	1,200,000,000
11364	29/05/2023	President of the Republic	8,400,000,000
11363	29/05/2023	President of the Republic	7,320,000,000
11361	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Office of the Jafari Mufti	2,882,500,000
11360	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Council for Development and Reconstruction	26,576,468,000
11358	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Central Inspection	12,900,000,000
11357	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Supreme Islamic Shia Council	1,665,000,000
11356	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Lebanese State Security	96,550,000,000
11355	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Council for Development and Reconstruction	11,162,570,000
11322	29/05/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – North Governorate	253,039,000

Decree number	Date	Administration receiving the transfer from the general budget reserve credits	Amount transferred
11323	29/05/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – Internal Security and Prison Forces	87,146,000
11324	29/05/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – Internal Security and Prison Forces	8,696,000
11341	29/05/2023	Ministry of Youth and Sports	600,000,000
11481	29/05/2023	Ministry of Culture – General Directorate of Culture	502,400,000
11487	29/05/2023	Ministry of Tourism – General Directorate of Tourism	87,000,000
11374	29/05/2023	Ministry of Defense – Central Administration and Military Chamber	450,000,000
11373	29/05/2023	Ministry of Defense – Central Administration and Military Chamber	322,500,000
11371	29/05/2023	Ministry of Defense – Central Administration and Military Chamber	600,000,000
11507	29/05/2023	Ministry of Public Works and Transport – General Directorate of Roads, Buildings, and Local Directorates	3,640,335,000
11485	29/05/2023	Ministry of Public Works and Transport Budget – General Directorate of Civil Aviation	19,435,135,000
11476	29/05/2023	Ministry of Public Works and Transport Budget – Department of Railways and Public Transportation – General Directorate of Land and Sea Transportation	5,728,221,000
11483	29/05/2023	Independent National Commissions Budget – National Anti-Corruption Commission	2,000,000,000
11368	29/05/2023	Ministry of Finance – Basil Fuleihan Institute of Finance	1,600,000,000
11366	29/05/2023	Ministry of Finance – General Directorate of Finance	27,000,000,000
11334	29/05/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – Internal Security and Prison Forces	250,000,000
11328	29/05/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – Internal Security and Prison Forces	45,630,000
11327	29/05/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – Internal Security and Prison Forces	30,889,000
11326	29/05/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – Internal Security and Prison Forces	23,407,000
11325	29/05/2023	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities – Internal Security and Prison Forces	3,110,000
11354	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Hajj and Umrah Affairs Welfare	1,000,000,000
11353	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers	5,600,000,000
11335	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers	11,715,000,000
11338	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Office of the Mufti	3,222,891,000
11344	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Druze Council	4,798,100,000
11346	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Sunni Sharia Court	21,500,000,000
11347	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Druze Court	360,000,000
11348	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Druze Court	60,000,000

Decree number	Date	Administration receiving the transfer from the general budget reserve credits	Amount transferred
11477	29/05/2023	Ministry of Public Works and Transport Budget – Department of Railways and Public Transportation – General Directorate of Land and Sea Transportation	8,514,000,000
11352	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers	8,000,000,000
11350	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Jafari Sharia Court	31,400,000,000
11349	29/05/2023	Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Civil Service Council	2,160,000,000
11515	05/06/2023	Ministry of Justice – Court of Justice	32,000,000
11514	05/06/2023	Ministry of Justice – Central Administration	28,500,000
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1,670,034,672,000</b>

Source: *Information International*, based on the decrees of transferring credits published in the national gazette.

**\* Monetary provisions determine the decisions that require the Lebanese government to pay a sum of money to third parties.**



# **CHRONIC VACANCY IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN LEBANON**

## **DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE COUNTRY'S RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES**

The absence of a president in Lebanon has been accompanied by several vacancies in key central government and leadership positions. Vacancy at such high-level positions affect the proper administrative, judicial, and military functioning of central State organs.



A survey conducted by *Information International* shows that 97 of Lebanon’s 202 leadership positions are vacant. Ninety-three positions are assigned to Christians and ninety-nine to Muslims. Nine of the seats are not limited to any sect because they were not assigned One position, the “Head of the Lebanese Petroleum Administration”, is rotational for a one year term”. It is usually held by a member of the Board of Directors based on the alphabetical order of the members’ last names mentioned in the appointment decrees.

**Table 1. Distribution of posts by sect, number of vacant posts and vacancy rate.**

Sect	Number of posts	Number of vacant posts	Vacancy rate (%)
Maronite	52	19	36.5
Greek Catholic	19	9	47.4
Greek Orthodox	15	8	53.3
Armenian Orthodox	5	2	40.0
Christian Minorities	2	1	50.0
<b>Total of Christian posts</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41.9%</b>
Shi’a	41	23	56.1
Sunni	43	19	44.2
Druze	13	6	46.2
Alawite	2	0	0.0
<b>Total of Muslim posts</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48%</b>
Rotational	1	1	100
Not restricted to any sect	9	9	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>48.3%</b>

Source: *Information International* based on the relevant appointment decrees and resolutions.

Regarding the sectarian division of jobs and positions in Lebanon, it is clear that the vacancy rate for Christian positions is 41.9% while that of Muslim positions is 48%.

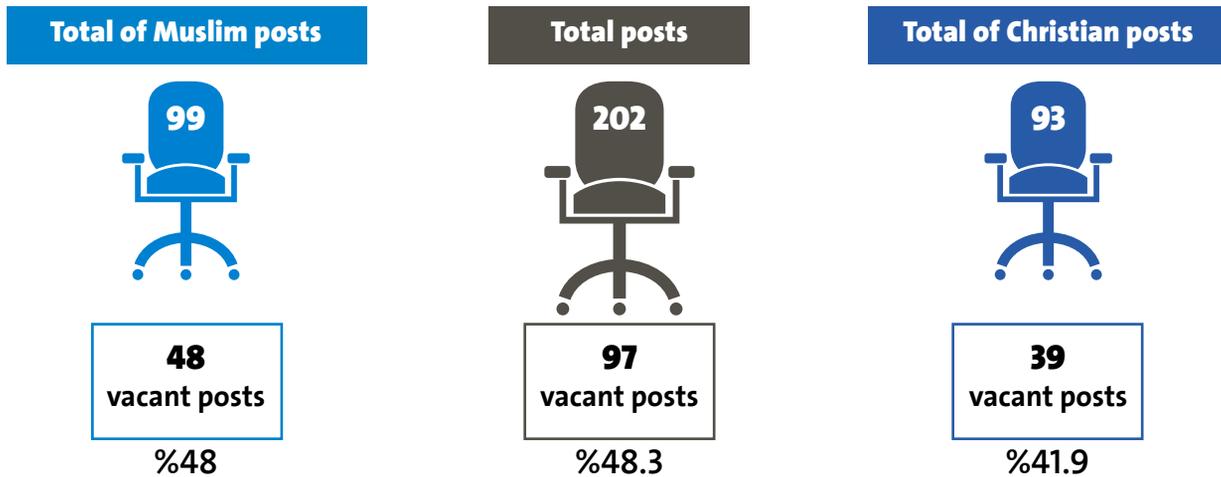


Table 2. Job titles of vacant posts by sect.

	Job title	Date of vacancy	Observations
<b>Shi'a</b>			
1	Head of the National Drug Office	1999	Still vacant
2	Second Vice-President of the Council for Reconstruction and Development	2003	Yasser Berri continued to serve in this post past his term
3	Head of Tyre Port Investment	2005	Abdel Motalleb El Hussein served in this post for three years starting 2002
4	Secretary-General of Parliament	2005	Adnan Daher continues to serve in this post past his term
5	Director General of Legal Affairs Division at the General Directorate of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers	2007	Still vacant
6	Head of the National Audiovisual Council of Lebanon	2008	Abdel Hadi Mahfouz continued to serve in this post despite the end of his term
7	Member of the National Audiovisual Council of Lebanon	2008	They continued to serve in this post past his term
8	Head of Zahrani Oil Installations	2016	Jihad El Zein is the current holder of the office
9	Director at the Régie Libanaise des Tabacs et Tombacs	2017	Still vacant
10	Director General of Vocational and Technical Education	2017	Hanadi Berri is the Acting Director General
11	Director General of Emigrants	2017	The post is still vacant since the retirement of former Director General Haitham Jomaa
12	Chairman of the Board of Directors of Finance Bank S.A.L.	Apr-18	Still vacant
13	Head of the Council for the South	2020	Still vacant since the resignation of Kabalan Kabalan
14	Nabatieh Governor	01-07-2020	Still vacant
15	Director General of Investment	2022	Still vacant
16	Secretary-General of the National Council for Scientific Research of Lebanon (CNRS-L)	Jun-22	The post is still vacant since the retirement of Mouin Hamze. Tamara El Zein was assigned to this position without an appointment decree
17	Director General of Social Affairs	20-10-2022	Still vacant
18	Director General of Youth & Sports	25-12-2022	Still vacant
19	LAF Director General of Administration-Ministry of Defense	3/2/2023	Brigadier General Mounir Chehadeh was appointed Director General of Administration of the Ministry of National Defense, replacing Major General Malek Chamas who went into retirement
20	Director General of General Security	20-03-2023	Still vacant
21	Director General of the Council for the South	24-03-2023	Still vacant since the retirement of Hachem Haidar
22	Government Commissioner at the National Institute for the Guarantee of Deposits (NIGD)	-	Mohammad Ismail Cheaito held this post in 1988
23	Chairman of Intra Investment Company	-	-

	Job title	Date of vacancy	Observations
<b>Maronite</b>			
1	President of the Executive Committee of Lebanon's Green Plan	2000	Gloria Abou Zeid served as the President of the Committee since 2000, then as the Acting President after being appointed Director General of Cooperatives
2	Director General/ Head of the Budget, Financial, Economic, Social and Educational Affairs Division at the General Directorate of the President of the Republic	2006	-
3	Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Social Security Fund	2008	The duties of Tobia Zakhia, who is outside the country, are carried out by Vice-Chairman Ghazi Yehya. The mandate of the Board of Directors was extended for two months pursuant to Decree No. 518, dated July 05, 2007 until the appointment of new members. Yet, in 2008, another decree (Decree No. 768 of January 03, 2008) was issued to extend the term of the Board of Directors, which is still in effect.
4	First Vice-President of the Council for Development & Reconstruction (CDR)	Jan. 2011	Still vacant
5	Director General of Ministerial Affairs Division at the General Directorate of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers	2015	Still vacant
6	Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Administration (École Nationale d'Administration (ENA))	2017	Gerges Tannous Labaki continued to serve in this post despite the end of his term
7	Chairman of the Board of Directors of ELYSSAR	2017	Elie Chedid continued to serve in this post despite the end of his term
8	Chairman/Director General of Électricité du Liban	22-05-2017	The term of office of Kamal Fouad Hayek was renewed for three additional years on May 22, 2014 and he continues to serve in this post despite the end of his term
9	Director General of the National Employment Office (NEO)	May-19	This post was held by Jean Abi Fadel
10	Director General of Oil Installations in Tripoli and Zahrani	2019	The post was held by Sarkis Hleiss
11	Director General of the National Archives	21-04-2020	Still vacant
12	Head of Lebanese Customs	10-08-2020	Badri Daher was placed at the disposal of the Council of Ministers
13	Director of Public Finance	29-08-2020	After the resignation of Alain Bejjani, the position was assumed by the Director General of Land Registry and Cadastre, Georges Maarawi, who was appointed by Decree No. 6957/2020
14	Member of the Banking Control Commission	23-03-2021 pursuant to Decree No. 7590/2021	Marwan Youssef Mikhael resigned from his position
15	Director General of Hydraulic and Electricity Resources	25-06-2021	The post was held by Fadi Comair
16	Head of the NSSF Technical Committee	17-10-2021	The post was held by Samir Aoun
17	Director General of the Public Corporation for Housing	29-06-2022	Rony Tanios Lahoud was appointed Director General on May 23, 2014, his term was renewed in 2018 by virtue of Decree No. 3324/2018 and he continues to serve in the office despite the end of his term

	Job title	Date of vacancy	Observations
18	Director General of Petroleum	18-12-2022	The post is till vacant since the retirement of Aurore Youssef Feghali
19	Director General of Education	27-02-2023	He requested a suspension of his duties for one renewable year in February 2022 and resumed his duties in February 2023 by virtue of Decree No. 11096/2023. This post is considered vacant after one year of absence
<b>Sunni</b>			
1	Chairman of Saida Port Investment Authority	2005	Walid Baassiri held this post for 3 years starting 2002
2	Director General of Urban Planning	2005	Although the post is still vacant, Elias Al Tawil assumes the duties. The first holder of the office was a Sunni and the second was from a minority
3	Director General/Head of the Protocol and Public Relations Division at the General Directorate of the President of the Republic	2006	Still vacant
4	Member of the National Audiovisual Council of Lebanon	2008	Position still held
5	Member of the National Audiovisual Council of Lebanon	2008	Position still held
6	President of the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR)	2009	The current president Nabil Jisr is still in office
7	Director General of Civil Aviation	Dec-10	Still vacant
8	Chairman of the Committee of Qadisha Electricity Administration	2016	Abdul Rahman Al Mawas holds the position of Director
9			
10	Head of Tripoli Oil Installations	2016	The post was held by Hadi El Houssami
11	Director General of the National Institute of Administration (École Nationale d'Administration (ENA))	2017	The post is held by Jamal Adli Al Zaim Al Mounjid
12	Director General of Local Administrations and Councils	2017	Still vacant
13	Director General of Higher Education	01-10-2019	Still vacant
	Director General of Tourism	2019	Still vacant
14	Director General/Head of Technical Affairs Division at the General Directorate of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers	2019	The post was held by Sanaa Mohamad Mounib Sirwan
15	Director-General/Head of the Constitutional and Legal Affairs Division at the General Directorate of the President of the Republic	2019	Still vacant
16	Head of the Tripoli Special Economic Zone (TSEZ)	21-04-2020	Rayya Mohammad Ali Haffar held this position for five years pursuant to Decree No. 1886 of April 21, 2015
17	Director General of Land and Maritime Transport	Feb-21	Still vacant
18	Head of the Judicial Inspection Authority	2022	The post was held by Borkan Abdel Kader Saad, who retired in 2022
19	Public Institution for Sports and Youth Facilities	01-01-2023	Still vacant

	Job title	Date of vacancy	Observations
<b>Positions not restricted to any sect</b>			
1	Government Commissioner at the General Directorate of Civil Aviation (DGCA)	-	-
2	"Authority for the Establishment and Management of Industrial Centers"	-	A public corporation called "The Authority for the Establishment and Management of Industrial Centers" was created by Decree No. 1660 dated January 17, 1979
3	Ombudsman of the Republic	-	This post was created by Law No. 664 of February 04, 2005
4	Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Drug Office	-	The Office was created by Law No. 253 of January 05, 2022
5	Director General of the National Drug Office	-	The Office was created by Law No. 253 of January 05, 2022
6	Head of the National Competition Authority-Head of the Competition Council	-	The Authority was formed by Law No. 281 of March 15, 2022
7	Secretary of the National Competition Authority-Head of the Administrative Body	-	"The National Competition Authority" was established by Law No. 281 of March 15, 2022
8	Rapporteur-General of the Investigative Body at the National Competition Authority	-	"The National Competition Authority" was established under Law No. 281 of March 15, 2022
9	Head of the Electricity Sector Regulatory Authority	-	"The Electricity Sector Regulatory Authority" was created under Law No. 462 of September 02, 2002, with the mission of regulating and controlling electricity
10	Head of the Lebanese Petroleum Administration	2018	Rotational for one year term, based on the alphabetical order of Board members' last names
<b>Greek Catholic</b>			
1	Chairman of the Committee of Beirut Stock Exchange (BSE)	2009	-
2	Director General of Roads & Buildings	2010	-
3	Director-General/Head of Technical Affairs Division at the General Directorate of the President of the Republic	2011	The post was restricted to Catholics, but was shortly assumed by a Shi'a
4	Head of Insurance Control Commission (ICC)	2012	The Minister of Economy and Trade appointed Elie Maalouf as Acting Head of ICC, but he resigned in 2022
5	Chairman of the Board of Directors of Télé Liban	01-05-2017	
6	Director General of the Administration and Investment of Beirut Port Silos	2017	Assaad Haddad has been appointed to this post
7	Head of the Branch of the General Secretariat of the President of the Republic	2019	The post was held by Adnan Khalil Nassar, who retired in 2019
8	Head of Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC)	11-12-2020	Charles Arbid remained in office past his term. The mandate of General Assembly members was 3 years starting from the date of publishing the appointment decree, amended in 2022 setting the term of office at 4 years, with the possibility of renewal for one time only. Mandates commence upon publishing the appointment decree and the new General Assembly is elected two months prior to the end of mandate. The outgoing Council continues to perform its functions until the issuance of a decree appointing the new members
9	Chairman of the Board of Directors/Director General of the Bekaa Water Establishment	01-02-2022	Jean Gibran was appointed as Acting Chairman following the resignation of Rizk Gerges Rizk

	Job title	Date of vacancy	Observations
<b>Greek Orthodox</b>			
1	Chairman of Investment Authority of Port of Tripoli	2005	Bechara Joseph Karam (born in 1948) held the post in 2002
2	Head of the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD)	2014	Nada Oueijan is the Acting Head
3	Head of the Central Fund for the Displaced	Since 2017, pursuant to Decree 11590/2014	The post was held by Nicolas Mikhael El Haber
4	Director General of the Ministry of Labor	2021	Marleine Atallah is the Acting Director General
5	Chairman/Director General of the Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music	29-10-2022	Dr. Hiba Al Kawas appointed as Chairman/ Director General of the Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music throughout the vacancy period
6	Government Commissioner at the Central Bank (BDL)	2022	Following the resignation of Christelle Wakim and until the Council of Ministers appoints a new Government Commissioner, the Minister of Finance in the caretaker government, Youssef Khalil, assigned Moni Khoury as Acting Government Commissioner at the Central Bank
7	Director General for Cereals and Sugar Beets	23-04-2023	The post was held by Gerges Tanios, who was appointed as Director General of the Office of Cereals and Sugar Beets at the Ministry of Economy and Trade pursuant to Decree No. 6477 dated June 11, 2020, and retired in April 2023
8	Secretary General of the Council for Development & Reconstruction (CDR)	-	-
<b>Druze</b>			
1	Director General of the Displaced	2002	A Sunni staff member has taken up the post of Acting Director General of the Displaced
2	Member of the National Audiovisual Council of Lebanon	2008	The Member remains in his/her post despite the end of his/her term in 2008
3	Director General of Sessions and Committees in the Lebanese Parliament	2013	The post is still vacant
4	Director General of Health	27-05-2020	The post is still vacant
5	Government Commissioner at the Center for Development & Reconstruction (CDR)	30-01-2022	The post is still vacant
6	LAF Chief of Staff	24-12-2022	The post is held by Major General Amin El Erem, who will retire on December 24, 2023
<b>Armenian Orthodox</b>			
1	Director General of Central Administration of Statistics	18-06-2022	Maral Totalian (born in June 18, 1958), appointed in December 31, 1999 and retired in 2022
2	CEO & Director General of the General Council of Museums	21-10-2022	The post was held for five years by Anne-Marie Afeiche, whose term expired
<b>Christian Minorities</b>			
1	Head of Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA)	2010	The position was held by TRA Acting Head Amine Moukheiber
<b>98</b>	<b>Total Sum</b>		

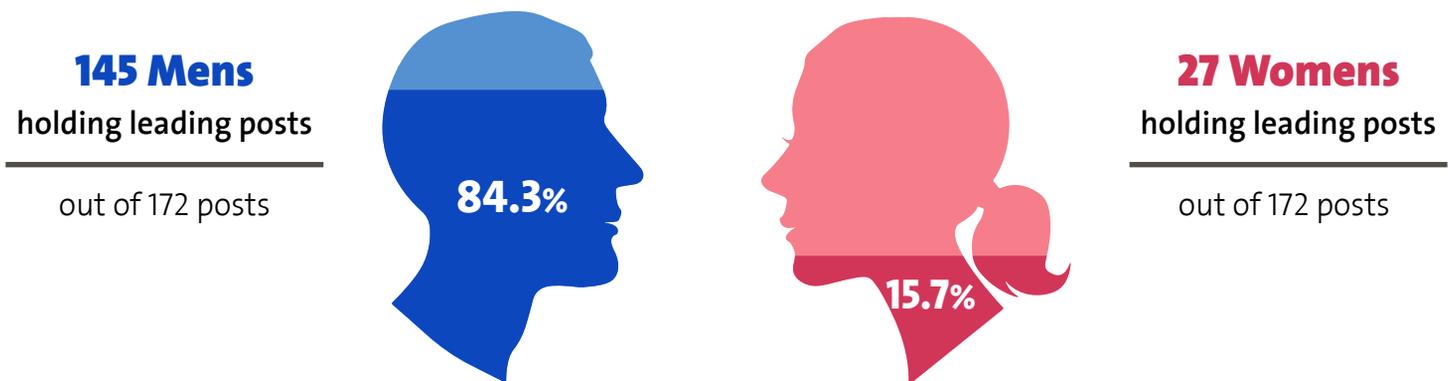
Source: *Information International* based on the relevant appointment decrees and resolutions.

## Filled Vacancies

Several vacant posts are still occupied by the same holder due to the continued operation of public facility or by mandate from the relevant minister, noting that according to Article 6 of Decree No. 4517/1972 (General Regulations of Public Institutions) “the existing Board of Directors shall continue its work until the new Board of Directors is elected”.

## Women and Men

Statistics show that the number of women holding leading or high-level posts, whether appointed originally to the post or later on to fill in for someone else, is 27 out of 172, or 15.7% of total posts, while men assume 145 posts or 84.3% of the total occupied posts.



## Sectarian Distribution

Christian women hold 18 out of 84 leading or high-level posts restricted to Christians, whether appointed originally to the post or later on to fill in for someone else. By contrast, 9 out 88 posts restricted to Muslims are held by women.

## Expected Vacancy in 2023-2025

In addition to the vacancy indicated above, 18 leadership positions will be vacant from July 2023 till the end of 2025. This includes many key positions such as the BDL governor, commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, the general director of the Internal Security Forces, and the Court of Cassation Public Prosecutor.

Table 3. Administrative positions that will be vacant starting July 2023 until 2025.

Post	Sect	Position holder	Date of Vacancy
<b>2023</b>			
President of the Higher Customs Council	Shi'a	Asaad 'Ali al-Tufaili	31-7-2023
Governor of Lebanon's Central Bank	Maronite	Riad Toufic Salameh	1-8-2023
Regional Gendarmerie Commander (Brigadier General)	Maronite	Marwan Slailati	4-9-2023
<b>2024</b>			
Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces (General)	Maronite	Joseph khalil Aoun	1-1-2024
Public Prosecutor	Sunni	Ghassan Oueidat	20-2-2024
Administrative Inspector General of the Central Inspection	Maronite	Mikhael Jirjis Fayad	1-3-2024
Director-General of Civil Status	Maronite	Elias Jean Al-Khoury	4-4-2024
Director-General of the Internal Security Forces (ISF)	Sunni	Imad Mahmud Othman	15-5-2024
General Director of the ministry of Industry	Greek Catholic	Dany Nicolas Gedeon	18-8-2024
Chairman Director of Ogero Telecom	Sunni	Imad Kirdiyeh	11-10-2024
Inspector General of the Central Inspection	Maronite	Antoine Mikhael Nohra	3-12-2024
Director General of the Civil Defense (Major General)	Maronite	Raymond Sami Khattar	3-12-2024
Director General of Cooperative Government Employees	Druze	Yahia Shakib Khamis	16-12-2024
<b>2025</b>			
Member of the Supreme Disciplinary Authority	Sunni	Mirvat Ahmad 'Itani	2-1-2025
Head ofL Director General of the Road Traffic Department	Greek Orthodox	Hoda Ryad Salloum	5-1-2025
Head of the lawsuit department at the Justice Ministry (Judge)	Greek Catholic	Helena Nicolas Iskandar	15-1-2025
Vice President of the Council of the South	Maronite	Jean Antoine Mikhael	10-4-2025
Financial General Prosecutor (Judge)	Shi'a	Ali Musbah Ibrahim	14-4-2025
Director General of the Public Employees in the Council of Civil Service	Greek Orthodox	Jacqueline Ya'cub Boutros	14-9-2025

Source: *Information International* based on the relevant appointment decrees and resolutions.



## **YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT** **GUT MICROBIOTA AND HEALTH**

Dr. Mirna Sabra

The human gut microbiota has received considerable interest in the recent years and our knowledge of the inhabitant species is increased particularly after the development of metagenomic studies. Gut microbiota is highly diverse and refer to the microorganisms living in symbiosis with the host. The most abundant microbiota is that of the intestine (the intestinal flora), but there is also a vaginal and intrauterine microbiota, essentially made up of lactobacilli. The number of bacteria present in a human body would be close to that of its own cells, and it has been found to be an essential component for digestion and metabolism as well as immune responses. There are trillions of microorganisms involved: mostly bacteria and viruses and fungi (1). Any alteration of gut microbiota seems to influence development and diseases of the enteric, central nervous system, endometriosis, diabetes, inflammatory diseases, lung diseases, liver diseases, osteoporosis, cancer treatment, food allergy and ageing (2). Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the functioning of gut microbiota may be a new therapeutic target for treating diseases such as prebiotics, probiotics, drugs, and faecal transplantation leading to improved health.

### **Origin of the gut microbiota?**

Gut microbiota has evolved along with their hosts and is an integral part of the human body. Microbes colonize the neonatal gut immediately following

birth, while the modification of their composition depends mainly on various genetic, nutritional, and environmental factors. The shaping and multiplication of gut microbiome starts at birth in parallel as the host develops and maintains its temporal stability and diversity through adulthood until death (3). The establishment and interactive development of this early gut microbiota are believed to be (at least partially) driven and modulated by specific compounds present in human milk (4). The accumulated evidence suggests that though a part of the microbiota is conserved, the dynamic members vary along the gastrointestinal tract, from infants to elderly, primitive tribes to modern societies and in different health conditions. Gut microbiota also exerts significant influence on both physical and mental health of an individual (3).

### **Physiological role of gut microbiota in human body?**

The gut microbiota actively participates in the digestion and absorption of food, also it makes vitamins (those of group B) and without it, some food residues could not be digested. Here we will describe a study led by researchers at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health that was published February 8 in *Cell*. This study offers new insights that link the condition's unexplained fatigue symptoms with changes in gut microbe

composition. Millions of people are affected by CFS (chronic fatigue syndrome), a disease characterized by debilitating exhaustion and brain fog, the underlying cause of the disease remains unknown. Researchers found that levels of gut bacteria *F. prausnitzii* and *Eubacterium rectale* were reduced in subjects with CFS. These “good bacteria” are responsible for producing butyrate, a fatty acid that breaks down fiber. Reduced levels of butyrate are associated with a range of diseases, such as colon cancer, insulin resistance, and inflammatory bowel disease, and may even factor into COVID-19 severity or duration. Lower levels of the bacteria *F. prausnitzii* also correlated with the severity of fatigue symptoms in CFS. The relationship between *F. prausnitzii* and CFS presents potentially actionable targets for future therapeutic trials (5).

Also, the gut microbiota seems to play a role in the development and progression of obesity. Most studies of overweight and obese people show a dysbiosis characterized by a lower diversity. Gut microbiota dysbiosis probably promotes diet induced obesity and metabolic complications by a variety of mechanisms including immune dysregulation, altered energy regulation, altered gut hormone regulation, and proinflammatory mechanisms (6).

According to the studies carried out, it seems that there are differences in the pathological evolution of certain infections, the detoxification of drugs or toxic products or even the triggering of certain serious pathologies according to the characteristics of the intestinal microbiota (7).

### **Microbiota in diseases ?**

Interest in the human gut microbiome accelerated when culture-independent methods revealed that the microbiome was different in patients with a range of disorders compared with healthy individuals (8).

#### 1- In cancer:

There is a growing interest in how the microbiome has an impact on the progression of cancer, as well as its ability to make patients more receptive to certain immunotherapies. Research has shown that microbiota can alter cancer susceptibility and progression by modulating inflammation, causing DNA damage, and producing metabolites involved in the formation of cancer cells or tumor suppression. There has also been evidence that gut microbiota can affect the efficiency of chemotherapeutic drugs. Research published in the British Medical Journal shows that altered gut microbiota are associated with resistance to both chemotherapy and immune checkpoint inhibitors, while supplementation with distinct bacterial species can restore responses to anticancer drugs. As a result, there is now a growing body of biotechs looking at the potential to develop treatments utilizing gut microbiota, or to create drugs that target the microbiome to augment the activity of anticancer agents (9).

#### 2- In endometriosis:

Endometriosis is caused by endometrial-like tissue containing endometrial glands and extensive fibrotic tissue growing outside the endometrial cavity, most often in the pelvic peritoneum or ovaries, resulting in chronic pelvic pain and infertility. It is a common gynecological disease affecting 10 to 15% of women of reproductive age (10). Affected women are at higher risk than the general female population of developing ovarian cancer, and they also may be at increased risk of breast and other cancers as well as autoimmune and atopic disorders (11). Several hypotheses have been proposed to explain the cause of endometriosis. New study, published by kondo and al. supports a mechanism for the pathogenesis of endometriosis via *Fusobacterium* infection in the formation of ovarian endometriosis. Although a large proportion

of the bacteria in the vagina are Lactobacilli, studies have documented the presence of other types of bacteria as well, such as *Fusobacterium nucleatum*, which may be associated with vaginal dysbiosis in certain situations. Species of the *Fusobacterium* genus are known to be common members of the oral and gastrointestinal tract microbiota and have a symbiotic relationship with its hosts. This study suggests that targeting *Fusobacterium* in the endometrium by antibiotic treatment could be an approach to treat patients with endometriosis (10).

### How to preserve our Microbiota?

If you suffer from digestive disorders, it is because your intestinal flora is in bulk. Do not panic, you can restore the balance by adopting the “microbiota diet”:

- get into the habit of eating fiber-rich foods. These contain prebiotics which constitute the exclusive food of the bacteria of your microbiota. They are found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes...
- eat fermented foods such as cheese, plain yogurt, sauerkraut, kefir, or miso. “These foods are rich in probiotics which promote good bacteria in the gut,” says the naturopath. For yogurts, choose those that are highly concentrated in lactobacillus bacteria.
- take a course of prebiotics or probiotics in the form of capsules or powder, if those contained in the diet are not enough to restore the balance in your intestinal flora.
- avoid eating too much refined sugar, red meat, and light products. Excess sugar modifies the composition of the microbiota by destroying certain good bacteria and making the wall of the intestine permeable to bacterial species harmful to health. Red meat feeds bacteria in the microbiota that produce a toxic compound. As for light products, they often contain artificial sweeteners that promote the multiplication of bad bacteria in the microbiota (12).

Many studies, mainly in animals, leads us to believe that the microbiota, especially the intestinal microbiota, could play an important role in the evolution of various pathologies, but also in the effectiveness or resistance to certain treatments. However, there is still a lot to learn about bacterial populations, useful microbiological tests, how to correct dysbiosis and finally to confirm by extensive clinical trials the hopes coming from these experiments (7).

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# BATROUN'S TOWN OF NIHA

In Lebanon there are three towns that hold the name Niha. One is in Chouf; the other is in Zahle, and the third, which we will talk about in this article, is in Batroun.

## Etymology

According to Anis Freiha in his book “Names of Cities and Villages in Lebanon”, Niha is a Syriac word that means calm, relaxing, and dream. In Lebanese Arabic, nih and tnih means to rest or to relax. As such, Niha is the place where someone can rest and relax.

## Location

Niha lies in the Batroun district in the North governorate of Lebanon. It covers an area of 447 hectares and is 90 kilometers away from the capital Beirut. It lies at an altitude of 1,350 meters above sea level.

It can be accessed by the Byblos – Tannourine – Kfour Al-Arabi – Niha Road.

## Population and Houses

There are 108 dwellings in the town and 1,500 registered residents who are Maronites. However, the majority of the town's population lives elsewhere.

## Registered Voters

The number of registered voters in 2000 was 947, of which 165 voted. That number reached 1,015 in 2009, of which 364 voted. As for the last elections in 2022, the number was 1,123, of which 388 voted.

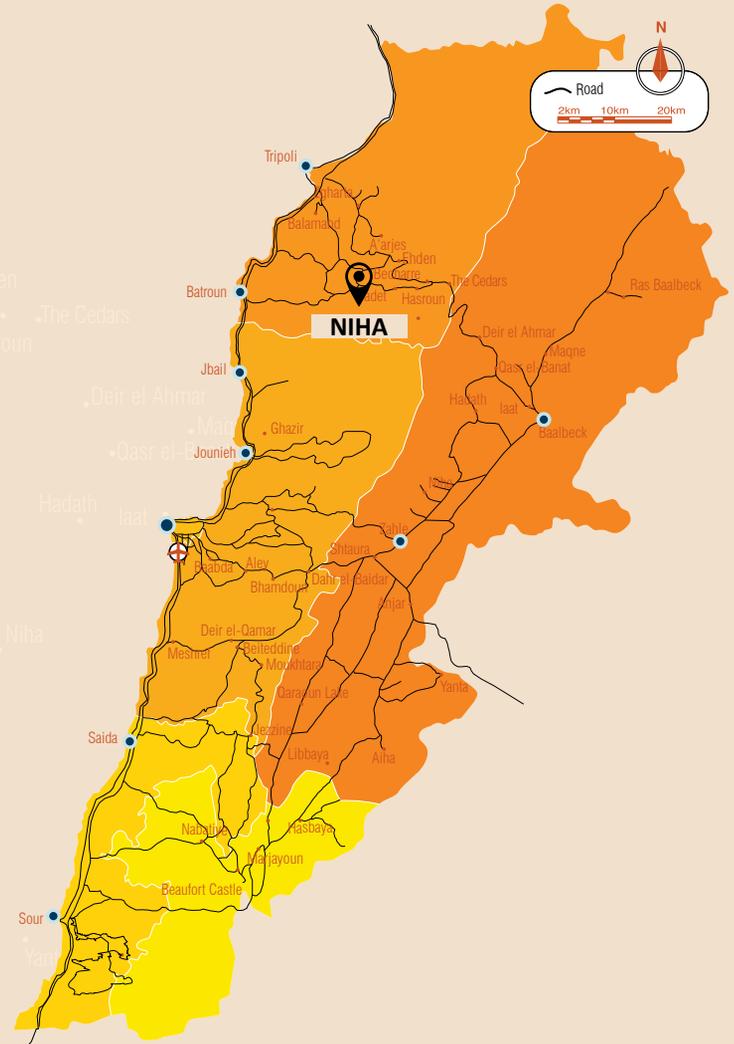
The voters are distributed among the following families:

- Khoury: 212 voters
- Tarabey: 115 voters
- Gerges: 110 voters
- Tannous 75 voters
- Fahed: 53 voters
- Sa'ud: 46 voters
- Nakhleh: 44 voters
- Nqoula: 41 voters
- Nahra: 39 voters
- Hanna: 33 voters

There are other smaller families as well.

## Local Authorities

The town has a local mayor and a board of 3 members. Recently by virtue of Decision 699 issued on June 6, 2023, a municipality was established.



## Local Attractions

The town hosts a cedar tree forest as well as a number of historical sites such as Mercure Temple and Saydet Al-Qalaa Hermitage.

## Economics

Agriculture is a source of livelihood for the few who live in town year-round, especially apples and grapes. The town is almost deserted in winter.

## Education

There was an elementary school in the town that closed down because there was not enough students.

# THE INTERRELIGIOUS ZEITOUN FAMILIES

*Zeitoun* is Arabic for olive. Olive oil is extracted from the tree that gives us olives. Zeitoun also happens to be the name of a number of Lebanese families.

## Etymology

The Zeitoun family name of Lebanon, as well as the Al-Zeitoun and Al-Zeitouni, trace their origins to Palestine. The name had reached Palestine from Egypt, though we do not know when. From there, it reached Lebanon.

## Number of family members

There are 2100 members in the Zeitoun families.

## Religious and territorial distribution

Members of the Zeitoun families are distributed among the religions and areas of Lebanon. Shi'as constitute half of the family members, of which half live in Southern Lebanon. Sunni family members live in the North and in Beirut. Druze members live between Beirut, Aley, and its suburbs. There are also Christian and Alawite members in the family.

### Shi'a: 1,041 members

- Kfartebnite in Nabatieh: 410 members
- Deirkifa in Tyre: 320 members
- Khartoum in Saida: 125 members
- Kfardounine in Bint Jbeil: 70 members
- Bashoura in Beirut: 45 members
- Ramia in Bint Jbeil: 40 members
- Aita Al-Sha'ab in Bint Jbeil: 31 members

### Sunnis: 721 members

- Al-Souairy in West Bekaa: 427 members
- Akkar Al-Atiqah in Akkar: 125 members
- Kfarshouba in Hasbaya: 57 members
- Koba in Tripoli: 52 members
- Al-Sultan Ya'koub in West Bekaa: 29

- Al-Tall and Al-Haddadine in Tripoli: 8 members
- Al-Mazraa in Beirut: 23 members

### Druze: 169 members

- Ras Beirut in Beirut: 110 members
- Bikfaya in Rashaya: 24 members
- Ainab in Aley: 23 members
- Aley: 12 members

### Orthodox Christians: 96 members

- Rashaya in Al-Midane Neighborhood: 35 members
- Zahle in West Midane: 21 members
- Bourj Hammoud: 18 members
- Batroun: 12 members
- Rmeil in Beirut: 10 members

### Maronites: 49 members

- Kobayat in Akkar: 22 members
- Mreijeh in Baabda: 12 members
- Safinet Al-Draib in Akkar: 10 members
- Hammana in Baabda: 5 members

### Catholic Christians: 31 members

- Ashrafieh in Beirut: 31 members

### Alawites: 8 members

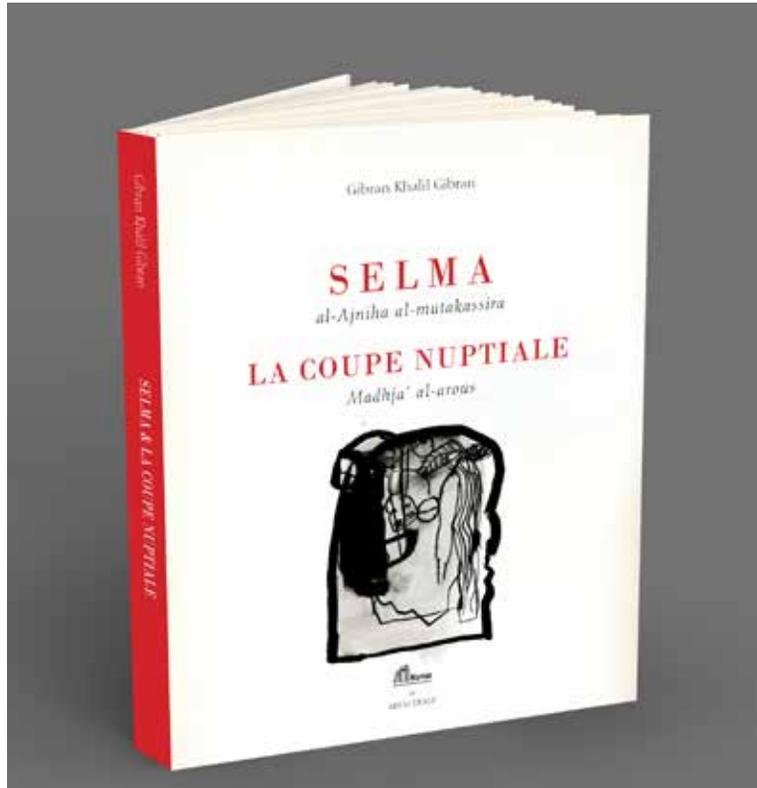
- Al-Mas'oudieh in Akkar: 8 members



# **SELMA** (AL-AJNIHA AL-MUTAKASSIRA) **LA COUPE NUPTIALE**

GIBRAN KHALIL GIBRAN

This book is recently published by Kutub publishing house (Beirut) and the publications of Abencerage (Tunisia), translated into French by the orientalist Charles Pellat, found among his papers after his death. The Book was revised by Salim Mujais & Abdelaziz Ghozzi in collaboration with Badr el-Hage, and illustrated by the Iraqi artist Mahmoud al Obeidi.



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