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THE LEBANESE CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL 1993-2023



**47 DECISIONS RELATED
TO THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF LAWS
APPEALS TO 1.7% OF THE 2256 LAWS**

**A Preliminary Forensic Audit
Into the Activities of the Central Bank**

**Lebanon's Soaring Treasury Advances
USD 2 Billion Issued by the Lebanese Treasury**

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“The People Demand...” But I Buried my Heart in Marūn al-Rass

By Jawad N. Adra

This article was written 12 years ago, but it still holds true today amongst the despair and hardships we are living through.

The youth of Laïque Pride who demonstrated on the 15th of May 2011 “demanding the fall of the confessional regime” did not know what the 15th of May means to us. Some of Laïque Pride demonstrators may have a selective memory that dates back to the day when they launched their call on Facebook, a platform which is sometimes touted, not only as a tool for change, but as the ultimate goal of revolutions in this part of the world.

Have the youth asked themselves whether the American people will ever forget September 11 or the 4th of July?

The 15th of May 1948 to us is more than a “Nakba” and is not relevant only to the land called Palestine. It is the date our tragedy began, bringing on shame that we will never forget. Our independence from the occupier is something we will always aim for.

The youth of Facebook and twitter do not know that our hearts were buried on the 15th of May 1948, and our memory is still boggled by many dates, especially the 5th of June 1967. The youth perhaps don’t know that Marūn Al-Rass has raised our heads high in 2006. And that the words of the White House about Israel’s rights to defend itself, after shooting peaceful demonstrators on the other side of the borders, brings to memory what the settlers have done to the Apache under the leadership of Geronimo (or Goyaale) in 1829 and to the Miniconjou in 1890 and what they are doing to us in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria today.

Our collective memory is still alive as evidenced by the demonstrations on the 15th of May. The youth will remember that we have buried our hearts, once again, in Marūn Al-Rass, Majdal Shams and Aisawia and that we held our heads high.



Gaza - Palestine, 2023



Marun al-Rass - Thouth Lebanon, 2011



Wounded Knee, 1890

Leader



As an annex of “The Constitutional Council 1993-2023...” in *The Monthly* issue 176/April 2023, we publish in this issue the decisions of the Constitutional Council regarding the appeals filed against possibly unconstitutional laws.



THE CONSTITUTIONAL COUNCIL 1993-2023

**47 DECISIONS RELATED TO THE
CONSTITUTIONALITY OF LAWS**

APPEALS TO 1.7% OF THE 2256 LAWS

Since its establishment in 1993 until the end of July 2023, the Constitutional Council has issued 47 decisions related to the constitutionality of laws that were appealed before the Council.

Procedure for Filing Appeals

Appeals are submitted to the Constitutional Council regarding laws passed by the Parliament within a period of 15 days from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette or any other officially approved publication. Article 19 of Law No. 250/93, which established the Council, grants the right to appeal against laws to the following entities:

- The President of the Republic
- The Speaker of the Parliament
- The Prime Minister
- At least ten Members of Parliament
- The heads of the recognized religious communities, exclusively in matters of personal status, freedom of belief, the practice of religious rituals, and religious education freedom.

Number of Enacted Laws and Appealed Laws

Since the establishment of the Constitutional Council until the end of July 2023, the Parliament has enacted 2256 laws, of which 39 laws were appealed. This means that the percentage of laws appealed accounts for a very low 1.7% of the enacted laws.

Thirty-three laws were appealed by Members of Parliament, 3 by Presidents of the Republic, and 3 by representatives of religious denominations (Druze and Alawite) related to specific laws.

Table: Number of Laws and Constitutional Council Decisions Concerning Them.

| Number of laws enacted | Number of laws appealed | Decisions with Accepted Appeals and Full Law Annulment | Accepted Appeals with Partial Law Annulment | Rejected Appeal Decisions |
|------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| 2256 | 39 | 7 decisions (no decision was issued for one of the laws and it was considered valid) | 12 decisions | 19 decisions |

Mechanism for Reviewing Appeals

Upon the appeal's registration in the Council's records, the President or their deputy promptly calls a Council meeting to assess whether it necessitates suspending the application of the text under review and publishing the suspension decision in the official gazette. The President then informs Council members of the appeal and designates a rapporteur from among them. The rapporteur is tasked with preparing and presenting a report to the Council within a maximum of 10 days from the date of their appointment.

Once the rapporteur finalizes their report, it is submitted to the Council President, who notifies the members and invites them to deliberate in an open session within five days until a decision is reached. The decision is then issued in the deliberation room within a maximum of fifteen days from the session date. Failure to issue the decision within this timeframe results in the text under review being considered as accepted.

The Constitutional Council's decision explicitly states whether the law is in conformity with or in violation of the constitution, either wholly or partially. If the Council finds the text under review to be entirely or partially unconstitutional, it annuls it with a reasoned decision that specifies the scope of nullification.

It's important to note that the Council's decisions are final and not subject to ordinary or extraordinary appeals or reviews. These decisions require the majority agreement of 7 members in a session with a minimum legal quorum of 8 members.

* Salameh left office in July 2023.

Table: Council Decisions on Appeals On the Constitutionality of Laws 1996-2023 (up to the end of July).

| Review number | Date of submission of review to the Constitutional Council | Presenters of the appeal | Appealed law | Decision of the Constitutional Council and date | Result of the decision of the Constitutional Council |
|---------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| 2/96, 3/96 | July 25, 1996 July 26, 1996 | The first review: Mikhael Daher - Zaher Al-Khatib - Riad Abi Fadel - Asmar Asmar - Osama Fakhoury - Samir Aoun - Najah Wakim - Mustafa Saad - Michel Samaha - Habib Sadek. The second review: Habib Sadek - Bashara Marhej - Zaher Al-Khatib - Issam Naaman - Osama Fakhoury - Najah Wakim - Samir Aoun - Hassan Azzeddine - Asmar Asmar - Mustafa Saad. | Provisions from Law No. 530 on the Election of Members of the Parliament, dated July 12, 1996. | 4/96 dated August 7, 1996 | The Council adopted a decision on August 3, 1996, to include the auditors, deciding to invalidate Articles 1-3-4-5, the new second, and the new thirtieth of Law No. 530. |
| 1/97 | August 13, 1997 | Nayla Maawad - Mohammad Youssef Beidoun - Nassib Lahoud - Kamel Ziadeh - Boutros Harb - Ibrahim Al-Sayed - Elias Al-Khazen - Najah Wakim - Zaher Al-Khatib - Mansour Al-Boun - Khaled Al-Daher. | Law No. 654, dated July 24, 1997, on the extension of the mandate of municipal councils and committees performing municipal council functions until the latest date of April 30, 1999. | 1/97 dated September 12, 1997 | Appeal accepted, law annulled, canceling the extension of municipal councils and committees performing municipal council functions. |
| 2/97 | August 13, 1997 | Hussein Al-Husseini - Salim Al-Hass - Omar Karami - Nayla Maawad - Mohammad Youssef Beidoun - Nassib Lahoud - Kamel Ziadeh - Boutros Harb - Ibrahim Al-Sayed - Elias Al-Khazen - Najah Wakim - Zaher Al-Khatib - Mansour Al-Boun - Khaled Al-Daher. | Law No. 655, dated July 24, 1997, on the extension of the mandate of the elected representatives and elective councils until the latest date of April 30, 1999. | 2/97 dated September 12, 1997 | Appeal accepted, law annulled, canceling the extension of elective councils. |
| 1/98 | February 19, 1998 | Najah Wakim - Pierre Daccache - Mustafa Saad | 1998 Budget Law. | 1/98 dated February 25, 1998 | Review rejected because it was filed by only 3 deputies, when at least 10 deputies must submit. |
| 1/99 | November 4, 1999 | Sheikh Bahjat Ghaith, spiritual leader of the Druze community. | Law No. 127, dated October 25, 1999, on the establishment of a board of trustees for the Druze religious endowments. | 1/99 dated November 23, 1999 | The term "5 years" in Article 11 and the phrase "appointment" in Article 21 were canceled. The law was otherwise considered constitutional. |
| 1/2000 | January 19, 2000 | Hussein Al-Husseini - Fares Boueiz - Walid Jumblatt - Marwan Hamadeh - Elias Skaff - Pierre Daccache - Najah Wakim - Nadim Salem - Jamil Shamas - Nahed Saeed - Wadih Aql. | Law No. 163, dated December 28, 1999, on the transfer of expatriate attachés from the Ministry of Expatriates to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. | 1/2000 dated February 1, 2000 | The review was rejected since it does not violate Law No. 163/99 of the Constitution. |
| 2/2000 | June 1, 2000 | Sheikh Bahjat Ghaith, spiritual leader of the Druze community. | Law No. 208, dated May 26, 2000 on the organization of the leadership of the Druze Community. | 2/2000 dated June 8, 2000 | Article 16 of the law was annulled, which stipulates the election of the Druze Sheikh by the Druze deputies. This invalidation served the interest of Sheikh Ghaith. |

| Review number | Date of submission of review to the Constitutional Council | Presenters of the appeal | Appealed law | Decision of the Constitutional Council and date | Result of the decision of the Constitutional Council |
|---------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| 3/2000 | June 10, 2000 | Istfan Al-Douaihi - Ayman Shqeir - Gebran Touk - Abdou Bjani - Abdulrahman Abdulrahman - Abdulrahim Murad - Ghassan Matar - Fayez Ghosn - Khalil Al-Harawi - Hassan Alawieh - Samir Azar - Khaled Al-Daher - Morris Fadel - Jean Obeid. | Law No. 217, dated May 29, 2000, annuls paragraph 7 of Article 1 of Law No. 641, dated June 2, 1997 (National Defense), stipulating that a brigadier general in the army has the right to resign and liquidate his rights on the basis of the rank of major general. | 3/2000 dated June 15, 2000 | Appeal rejected, law considered non-opposing to the Constitution |
| 4/2000 | June 16, 2000 | Najah Wakim - Zaher Al-Khatib - Asim Qanso - Mustafa Saad - Ghassan Al-Ashqar - Marwan Fares - Antoine Hitti - Omar Msqawi - Ghassan Matar - Saleh Al-Khair. | Law No. 228, dated May 31, 2000, on the regulation of privatization operations, specifying their conditions and areas of application. | 4/2000 dated June 22, 2000 | Appeal rejected. Law considered constitutional |
| 5/2000 | June 16, 2000 | Ahmad Karami - Marwan Hamadeh - Bshara Merhej - Salim Diab - Yeghia Jerejian - Adnan Arakji - Bassem As-Sab' - Hagop Demirdjian - Khaled Saab - Bahiya Al-Hariri. | Law No. 227, dated May 31, 2000, concerning the amendment of certain provisions of the State Council Law. | 5/2000 dated June 27, 2000 | Appeal to annul Articles 5-6-7 was rejected since they do not violate the Constitution. Paragraphs 2-3 of Article 64, and the last sentence of paragraph 5 of item 2 of Article 34 were annulled. Judges of the State Council can be appointed in these courts by a decision of the President of the Council. |
| 1/2001 | April 12, 2001 | Hussein Al-Husseini - Omar Karami - Boutros Harb - Nicolas Fattoush - Elias Skaff - Mustafa Saad - Georges Qasarji - Mansour Al-Boun - Fares Saeed - Salah Hanin. | The third paragraph of Article 1 of Law No. 295/2001 on the Council for Development and Reconstruction and the continuation of the implementation of all regulatory decrees and implementing texts on the council. | 1 dated May 10, 2001 | Appeal was rejected since it does not violate the third paragraph of Article 1 of Law No. 295/2001 of the Constitution or any constitutional rule. |
| 2/2001 | April 19, 2001 | Nazih Mansour - Muhammad Yahya - Marwan Fares - Jihad Al-Samad - Alaa Tarro - Muhammad Qabbani - Walid Eido - Abdel Rahman Abdel Rahman - Serge Torsarkissian - Muhammad Raad | The second paragraph (which states that no real rights may be acquired by any person of the nationality of a recognized state if such acquisition conflicts with the principle of naturalization) of the new Article 1 of Law No. 296, issued on April 2, 2001, amending some provisions of the law implemented by Decree No. 11614 dated January 4, 1969, on the acquisition of real estate rights by non-Lebanese in Lebanon. | 2 dated May 10, 2001 | Appeal was rejected since it does not violate the second paragraph of Law 296 of the Constitution or any constitutional rule. |

| Review number | Date of submission of review to the Constitutional Council | Presenters of the appeal | Appealed law | Decision of the Constitutional Council and date | Result of the decision of the Constitutional Council |
|---------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| 4/2001 | - | Hussein Al-Husseini - Omar Karami - Nayla Maawad - Mohsen Dalloul - Nicolas Fattoush - Mustafa Saad Al-Masry - George Kassarji - Mansour Al-Bon - Faisal Al-Daoud - Fares Saeed | Law No. 363, dated August 16, 2001, contained special provisions for the appointment of personnel in the first and second categories in the general administrative staff. | 3/2001 dated September 5, 2001 | Law suspended |
| 4/2001 | - | Hussein Al-Husseini - Omar Karami - Nayla Maawad - Mohsen Dalloul - Nicolas Fattoush - Mustafa Saad Al-Masry - George Kassarji - Mansour Al-Bon - Faisal Al-Daoud - Fares Saeed | Law No. 363, dated August 16, 2001, contained special provisions for the appointment of personnel in the first and second categories in the general administrative staff. | 5/2001 dated September 29, 2001 | Law suspended. |
| 3/2001 | September 1, 2001 | Antoine Andraos - Nabil Al-Bustani - Mansour Al-Bon - Pierre Gemayel - Muhammad Al-Hajjar - Bassem Al-Sabaa - Fouad Al-Saad - Ghazi Al-Aridi - Fares Boyz - Aladdin Trou - Walid Jumblatt - Boutros Harb - Pierre Helou - Marwan Hamadeh - Salah Haneen - Fares Saeed - Ayman Choucair - Akram Chehayeb - Nehme Tohme - Elie Aoun - Antoine Ghanem - Ahmed Fatfat - Abdullah Farhat - George Kassarji - Albert Moukheiber - George Nehme - Nayla Maawad - Farid Makari | Law No. 359, dated August 16, 2001, on the amendment of certain provisions of the Criminal Procedure | 4/2001 dated September 29, 2001 | Appeal rejected. |
| 1/2002 | January 8, 2002 | Hussein Al-Husseini - Omar Karami - Mustafa Saad Al-Masry - Elias Skaf - Muhammad Kabbara - Faisal Al-Dawoud - Mansour Al-Bon - Muhammad Al-Safadi - Jihad Al-Samad - Fares Saeed - Abbas Hashem - Farid Al-Khazen | Law No. 379, dated December 14, 2001 (Value Added Tax) | Number 1 dated January 31, 2002 | Appeal was rejected since it does not violate the provisions of the Constitution. Law No. 379/2001 partially annulled, including some of its articles and paragraphs, for their inconsistency with the Constitution. |
| 2/2002 | June 14, 2002 | Hussein Al-Husseini - Omar Karami - Nayla Maawad - Boutros Harb - Mustafa Saad Al-Masry - Muhammad Kabara - George Kassarji - Nazih Mansour - Muhammad Al-Safadi - Nemat Allah Abi Nasr - Salah Hanin - Farid Al-Khazen | Law No. 393, dated June 1, 2002 on the government's permission to grant two licenses for cellular phone services | Number 3 dated July 3, 2002 | Appeal rejected. Law considered constitutional. |
| 3/2002 | June 22, 2002 | Hussein Al-Husseini - Omar Karami - Naila Maawad - Maurice Fadel - Mustafa Saad Al-Masry - George Kassarji - Muhammad Kabbara - Muhammad Al-Safadi - Nematallah Abi Nasr - Antoine Ghanem - Ali Ammar | Law No. 430, dated June 6, 2002 on the establishment of an account for managing, servicing, and reducing public debt and other accounts for assignment operations | 3 dated July 15, 2002 | Rejecting the appeal and considering the contested law non-opposing to the Constitution or to the general principles with constitutional value, with interpretative reservations specified in the decision. |

| Review number | Date of submission of review to the Constitutional Council | Presenters of the appeal | Appealed law | Decision of the Constitutional Council and date | Result of the decision of the Constitutional Council |
|---------------|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1/2003 | November 6, 2003 | Abdullah Kassir - Osama Saad - Ghassan Moukheiber - Saleh Al-Khair - Naila Maawad - Boutros Harb - Fayez Ghosn - Muhammad Kabbara - Maurice Fadel | Law No. 549, dated November 20, 2003, concerning the design, financing, development, and reconstruction of the Tripoli and Zahrany refineries, their operation, and the construction of a final station for natural gas export | 1 dated November 21, 2003 | Appeal rejected. |
| 12/2005 | July 28, 2005 | Ghassan Moukheiber - Nemat Allah Abi Nasr - Walid Al-Khoury - Youssef Khalil - Agob Pakradounian - Michel Aoun - Ibrahim Kanaan - Farid Al-Khazen - Elias Skaf - Abbas Hashem | Law No. 679, dated July 19, 2005, on the postponement of the consideration of appeals before the Constitutional Council | 1 dated August 6, 2005 | Appeal was accepted and the law was suspended for its violation of the Constitution and the constitutional principles established therein or adopted within the constitutional bloc. |
| 1/2012 | - | President of the Republic, General Michel Suleiman | Law No. 244, dated November 13, 2012, promoting inspectors in the General Directorate of General Security holding a Lebanese law degree to the rank of First Lieutenant | 1 dated December 3, 2012 | Law suspended. |
| 1/2012 | - | President of the Republic, General Michel Suleiman | Law No. 244, dated November 13, 2012 (as mentioned above) | 2 dated December 17, 2012 | Law No. 244 dated December 13, 2012 suspended |
| 1/2013 | April 26, 2013 | Walid Jumblatt - Farid Makari - Nima Tohme - Elie Aoun - Ghazi Al-Aridi - Alaa El-Din Trou - Akram Chehayeb - Wael Abu Faour - Henry Al-Helou - Ahmed Karami - Marwan Hamada | Law No. 245, dated April 12, 2013, on the suspension of deadlines in Law No. 25, dated October 18, 2008, on electoral law | 1 dated May 13, 2013 | Appeal was rejected. Law No. 245/2013 not suspended. |
| 2/2014 | - | Ziad Aswad - Youssef Khalil - Edgar Maalouf - Abdel Latif Al-Zein - Elie Marouni - Ghassan Moukheiber - Naji Gharios - Walid Al-Khoury - Michel Al-Helou - Chant Jenjian - Issam Sawaya | Law No. 290, dated May 7, 2014, on the confirmation of the appointment of judicial notaries after conducting a restricted competition | 1, dated May 22, 2014 | Law suspended. |
| 2/2014 | - | Ziad Aswad - Youssef Khalil - Edgar Maalouf - Abdel Latif Al-Zein - Elie Marouni - Ghassan Moukheiber - Naji Gharios - Walid Al-Khoury - Michel Al-Helou - Chant Jenjian - Issam Sawaya | Law No. 290, dated May 7, 2014, on the confirmation of the appointment of judicial notaries after conducting a restricted competition | 3 dated June 3, 2014 | Invalidating Articles 1-2-3-4 of the law and rejecting the request to invalidate Article 5. |

| Review number | Date of submission of review to the Constitutional Council | Presenters of the appeal | Appealed law | Decision of the Constitutional Council and date | Result of the decision of the Constitutional Council |
|----------------|--|---|--|---|--|
| 3/2014 | - | Ziad Aswad - Hikmat Deeb - Marwan Fares - Estephan Al-Duwaihi - Youssef Khalil - Emile Rahma - Fadi Al-Awar - Michel Al-Helou - Nematallah Abi Nasr - Assem Qanso | Law No. 289, dated April 30, 2014, amending some provisions of Decree No. 50/67, dated August 5, 1967, on the Civil Defense organization system | 2 dated May 22, 2014 | Law suspended. |
| 3/2014 | | Ziad Aswad - Hikmat Deeb - Marwan Fares - Estephan Al-Duwaihi - Youssef Khalil - Emile Rahma - Fadi Al-Awar - Michel Al-Helou - Nematallah Abi Nasr - Assem Qanso | Law No. 289, issued on April 30, 2014, on the financing of some provisions of Decree No. 50/67, dated August 5, 1967, concerning the Civil Defense organization system | 4 dated June 3, 2014 | Appeal was rejected while reversing the decision to suspend its application. |
| 1/2014, 4/2014 | May 20, 2019 May 22, 2014 | First review: General Michel Suleiman Second review: Ziad Aswad - Nawaf Al-Moussawi - Dory Chamoun - Al-Waleed Sukkarieh - Marwan Fares - Elie Marouni - Hagop Pakradounian - Nadim Gemayel - Fadi Al-Habr - Kassem Hashem | Rent Law, dated May 8, 2014 | 5 dated June 13, 2014 | Appeal not considered due to the law's lack of effect. |
| 5/2014 | July 11, 2014 | Abdul Latif Al-Zein - Hagop Pakradounian - Kassem Hashem - Al-Waleed Sukkarieh - Ziad Aswad - Nadim Gemayel - Nawaf Al-Moussawi - Bilal Farhat - Elie Marouni - Fadi Al-Habr | Rent Law issued on May 9, 2014 | 6 dated August 6, 2014 | Appeal was rejected while invalidating Articles 7-13 and paragraph b of Article 18. |
| 6/2014 | November 13, 2014 | Michel Aoun - Edgar Maalouf - Ibrahim Kanaan - Hikmat Deeb - Simon Abi Ramia - Naji Gharios - Ziad Aswad - Fadi Al-Awar - Nabil Nicola - Alain Aoun | Effective Law No. 16, dated November 11, 2014, on the extension of the mandate of the Parliament | 7 dated November 28, 2014 | While confirming that the principle of electoral periodicity is a constitutional principle that cannot be violated, the Council decided to reject the appeal as a preventive measure to avoid the occurrence of a vacuum in constitutional institutions. |
| 1/2019 | - | Paula Yacoubian - Nicola Nahhas - Faisal Karami - Ali Darwish - Marwan Hamada - Osama Saad Al-Masry - Jihad Al-Samad - Sami Gemayel - Elias Hankash - Nadim Gemayel | Law No. 129, issued on April 30, 2019, which stipulates the reactivation of the provisions of Law No. 288/2014 on electricity regulation. | 20, dated March 6, 2019 | Appeal was rejected on the grounds of the law's violation of Articles 36, 89, 16, 17, and 65 of the Constitution, and the last section of paragraph B of Article 2 of Law No. 129 was annulled. |
| 3/2019 | July 23, 2019 | Sheikh Muhammad Khader Asfour, Qaimaqam, President of the Alawite Islamic Council | Law No. 140, dated July 11, 2019, extending the term of the Executive Sharia Committee in the Alawite Islamic Council and electing a President and Deputy President, and amending Articles 12 and 16 of Law No. 449 issued on August 17, 1995. | 21 dated July 24, 2019 | Law suspended. |

| Review number | Date of submission of review to the Constitutional Council | Presenters of the appeal | Appealed law | Decision of the Constitutional Council and date | Result of the decision of the Constitutional Council |
|---------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| 3/2019 | July 23, 2019 | Sheikh Muhammad Khader Asfour, Qaimaqam, President of the Alawite Islamic Council | Law No. 140, dated July 11, 2019, extending the term of the Executive Sharia Committee in the Alawite Islamic Council and electing a President and Deputy President, and amending Articles 12 and 16 of Law No. 449 issued on August 17, 1995. | 22 dated July 31, 2019 | Appeal was accepted, resulting in the annulment of paragraph (d) and paragraph (h) of the law, as well as paragraph (a), (j), and (m) of the law. |
| 4/2019 | | Paula Yacoubian and her companions, review number 4/2019 Jean Taluzian and his companions, review number 5/2019 | Law No. 144, dated July 31, 2019, concerning the general budget and attached budgets for the year 2019. | 23 dated September 12, 2019 | Appeal was accepted, partially annulling articles 26, 94, 89, 27, and 81. Articles 83, 90, 82, 67, and 84 were found unconstitutional. However, articles 72, 23, 47, 48, 67, and 80 were not annulled |
| 1/2020 | - | Lawyer Jihad Dhubyan | Constitutional Law dated September 21, 1990. | 1 dated January 30, 2020 | The review was not accepted due to the lack of standing by the plaintiff |
| 1/2020 | March 19, 2020 | George Okais - Eddie Abi Al-Lama - Joseph Ishaq - Imad Wakim - Ziad Hawat - Faisal Al-Sayegh - Paula Yacoubian - Bilal Abdullah - Farid Al-Khazen - Elias Hankash | Law No. 6, General Budget Law for the year 2020 and attached budgets for the year 2019. | 2 dated April 9, 2020 | Appeal was rejected, but part of the eighth item of Article 25 was partially annulled by removing the letter "R." |
| 2/2020 | July 8, 2020 | President of the Republic, General Michel Aoun | Effective Law No. 7, dated July 3, 2020, extending the appointment mechanism in the first category in public administrations and senior centers. | 3 dated July 9, 2020 | Law suspended. |
| 2/2020 | July 8, 2020 | President of the Republic, General Michel Aoun | Effective Law No. 7, dated July 3, 2020, extending the appointment mechanism in the first category in public administrations and senior centers. | 4 dated July 22, 2020 | Appeal accepted, law completely suspending for violating the constitution |
| 3/2020 | November 5, 2020 | Cesar Abi Khalil - Hikmat Deeb - Salim Aoun - Mario Aoun - Roger Azar - Farid Al Bustani - Simon Abi Ramia - Ibrahim Kanaan - Alain Aoun - Edgar Maalouf | Articles 14 and 15 of Law No. 192 issued on October 16, 2020 (Water Law). | 5 dated November 9, 2020 | Law 192/2022 suspended. |

| Review number | Date of submission of review to the Constitutional Council | Presenters of the appeal | Appealed law | Decision of the Constitutional Council and date | Result of the decision of the Constitutional Council |
|---------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| 3/2020 | November 5, 2020 | Cesar Abi Khalil - Hikmat Deeb - Salim Aoun - Mario Aoun - Roger Azar - Farid Al Bustani - Simon Abi Ramia - Ibrahim Kanaan - Alain Aoun - Edgar Maalouf | Articles 14 and 15 of Law No. 192 issued on October 16, 2020 (Water Law). | 8 dated November 24, 2020 | Appeal accepted only for clause 1 and 5 of article 15. |
| 2/2021 | August 12, 2021 | Gebran Bassil - Cesar Abi Khalil - Edgar Maalouf - Mario Aoun - Edgar Traboulsi - Nicolas Sehnaoui - Hikmat Deeb - Asaad Dergham - Alexander Matossian - Salim Houry | Articles 72-78-88-89-91 of Law No. 244 dated July 19, 2021 (Public Procurement Law). | 5 dated September 16, 2021 | Addressed ambiguity of clause y of article 78. Clause 2 of article 22 annulled partially by crossing out the word "members". |
| 3/2021 | November 7, 2021 | Gibran Bassil - Salim Aoun - Ibrahim Kanaan - Edgar Traboulsi - Cesar Abi Khalil - Salim Houry - Roger Azar - Mario Aoun - Alain Aoun - Mustafa Hussein | Effective Law No. 8, dated November 3, 2021, amending some provisions of Law No. 44/2017, Law on the Election of Members of Parliament. | | No decision was issued after the start of the session on December 6, 2021, and 15 days had passed without the decision being issued. |
| 1/2022 | March 23, 2022 | Alwaleed Sukkarieh - Muhammad Khawaja - Ghazi Zuaiteer - Kassem Hashem - Bilal Abdullah - Albert Mansour - Ali Ammar - Osama Saad Al-Masry - Hani Qubaisi - Adnan Traboulsi | Law No. 271, dated March 10, 2022, promoting ranks in the General Directorate of Internal Security Forces to the rank of Lieutenant. | 1 dated April 14, 2022 | Appeal rejected, law considered constitutional. |
| 17/2022 | November 16, 2022 | Paula Yacoubian - Ibrahim Mneimneh - Nabil Badr - Waddah Al-Sadiq - Osama Saad - Firas Hamdan - Elias Jarada - Yassin Yassin - Charbel Saad - Cynthia Zarazir - Rami Fanj - Halima Qaqour - Abdel Rahman Al-Bizri | Law No. 306, dated November 3, 2022, amending the law issued on September 3, 1956, Banking Secrecy, Article 150 of Decree No. 13513, Money and Credit Law, and Article 23 of Law No. 44/2008 and Article 103 of Decree No. 144/1959. | 19 dated December 22, 2022 | Appeal rejected. Expression "" removed within 15 days for violating the constitution. |
| 18/2022 | November 28, 2022 | Paula Yacoubian - Michel Al-Daher - Mark Daou - Melhem Khalaf - Rami Fanj - Adeeb Abdel Masih - Nima Ephrem - Michel Al-Duwaihy - Waddah Al-Sadiq - Cynthia Zarazir - Elias Jarada - Jamil Al-Sayyid | Effective Law No. 10, dated November 15, 2022 (2022 General Budget Law). | 1 dated January 5, 2023 | The annulment of Articles 16, 21, 32, 89, and 119 of the law. The annulment of the phrase "the exempted categories" in Articles 53 and 54, and the word "issued" in Article 101. The annulment of Articles 11, 17, 22, 82, 83, 84, 87, 99, and 111. |

| Review number | Date of submission of review to the Constitutional Council | Presenters of the appeal | Appealed law | Decision of the Constitutional Council and date | Result of the decision of the Constitutional Council |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| 1/2023 2/2023 3/2023 | April 27, 2023 April 28, 2023 May 4, 2023 | Fadi Karam - George Okais - Ghassan Hasbani and 36 other representatives from the Lebanese Forces - the Kataeb Party - the pro-change members and independents | Law No. 310, dated April 19, 2023, extending the term of municipal and elective councils. | 6 dated May 30, 2023 | The law in question was not annulled in its entirety due to the principle of the continuity of the public facility of constitutional value. However, it was confirmed that the contested law is in violation of the principle of periodic elections and Paragraph (h) of the preamble to the constitution, as well as Article 16 thereof. |
| 4/2023 | May 11, 2023 | Paula Yacoubian - Najat Saliba - Osama Saad Al-Masry - Abdel Rahman Al-Bizri - Charbel Massad - Michel Al-Duwaihi - Melhem Khalaf - Cynthia Zarazir - Jamil Al-Sayed - Fouad Makhzoumi | Law No. 309, dated April 19, 2023, amending some provisions of Law No. 244 on Public Procurement issued on July 19, 2021. | 7 dated June 6, 2023 | Appeal was rejected, but Paragraph (3) of Article 11, as amended by the General Procurement Law, was reinforced with a mandatory interpretative reservation: "The security and military forces are exempted from complying with the provisions of this paragraph in contracts characterized by secrecy." |



Public Sector

A PRELIMINARY FORENSIC AUDIT

INTO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRAL BANK

BANQUE DU LIBAN

More than USD 71.9 billion in foreign reserves have been lost due to dollar exchange rate subsidies and decades of economic mismanagement.

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Many obstacles faced the preliminary report that Alvarez & Marsal filed after their forensic audit of the Central Bank of Lebanon (BDL). The inclusion of the established data and numerical tables in the report was considered inappropriate, and this inappropriateness extends beyond just the expenditures that the report identified as inappropriate. The impropriety in this context pertains to the hardships endured by the Lebanese populace as a result of financial engineering tactics like pegging the Lebanese pound to the US dollar, as detailed in the audit, along with the depletion of foreign currency reserves.

The report states that the deficit in foreign currency reserves calculated up to December 31, 2020 exceeded USD71.9 billion, excluding foreign exchange reserves. Two reasons caused these reserves to be drained: the fixed dollar exchange rate and the mismanagement of monetary and economic policies in the country.

The report does not mention the bank transfers that were authorized between 2019 and 2020. It remains to be seen whether they will be addressed in the company's subsequent report following the preliminary one.

On the 10th of August 2023, Alvarez & Marsal submitted a preliminary report on the forensic audit of BDL's activities to the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance communicated this report to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. The Presidency of the Council of Ministers in turn communicated the report to the ministers, the General Secretariat of the Parliament, and the General Directorate of the Presidency.

The Council of Ministers had delegated a company, by virtue of decision No. 2 dated July 28, 2020, with conducting the forensic audit of the BDL's accounts and activities.

In turn, the Council issued a decision during its session on November 27, 2020, stating that "the accounts of the Central Bank of Lebanon, ministries, independent bodies, councils, funds, and public institutions shall be subject to forensic audit without any contravention due to banking secrecy or the like."

The provisions of the Banking Secrecy Law issued on September 3, 1956, were suspended for one year by Law No. 200 issued on December 29, 2020. Law 200 required the audit of the accounts of the Central Bank of Lebanon, ministries, independent bodies, councils, funds, and public institutions, regardless of the nature of these accounts.

In a later stage, the application of this law (200/2020) was extended until the completion of the forensic audit, and paragraph 2 of the article was amended by Law No. 279 issued on March 7, 2022, to include the following under the suspension's effect:

- All accounts subject to audit.
- Information related to the bank accounts of employees of the Central Bank of Lebanon, along with all transactions recorded on these accounts and the minutes of BDL's Central Council.

Report Contents

The contents of the preliminary forensic audit report included 14 chapters as follows:

- Introduction
- Executive Summary
- BDL's Financial Position
- Foreign Reserves
- Financial Engineering
- BDL's Financial Situation

- Transparency
- BDL's Balances with Commercial Banks and Financial Institutions
- Operating Expenses
- Employee Bonuses
- Regulatory Framework
- Absence of Audit Authority
- BDL's Operations
- Evaluation of the Transparency of the Central Bank

Key Points from BDL's Forensic Audit Report

Here are the key points in the report:

1- Foreign Reserves:

Between the years 2015-2020, BDL's foreign exchange reserves declined significantly. BDL went from having a surplus of USD 2.7 billion (LBP 7.10 trillion) to a deficit of USD 7.50 billion (LBP 4.76 trillion).

2- Financial Engineering:

The financial engineering was carried out with the approval of the Central Council, and the report considered it very costly in terms of assets and interest. The report outlines three stages based on information provided by BDL:

First Stage: The Central Council approved the financial engineering in a decision on January 7, 2015.

Second Stage: In 2016, BDL implemented a new financial engineering program to attract US dollars to Lebanon. This involved paying amounts in LBP from BDL's reserves in exchange for new Eurobonds. This stage of financial engineering was approved by the Central Council in a decision made during its meeting on April 27, 2016. The decision stated that the value of the bonds would be USD 2 billion, and the interest and maturity on the Eurobonds would be determined later by the governor.

Third Stage: In 2017, BDL executed a third financial engineering operation based on the approval of the Central Council on February 22, 2017.

The report concludes that BDL, along with its Central Council and governor, lacks proper standards of governance.

3- The accounts of BDL's previous governor:

Analysis of the accounts held in the name of Riad Salameh, the former governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon, revealed that these accounts received net balances from 23 foreign currency transfers, amounting to USD 98.8 million over the six-year audit period, with an average of USD 5.16 million annually. Credits (deposits and withdrawals) were largely in the form of bank checks.

An investigation traced USD 75 million through SWIFT records to 23 banks in Switzerland, Germany, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Lebanon, the United States, and France. Further investigations are needed to confirm the source of these checks and identify the ultimate beneficiaries of the foreign transfers.

4- Continuous First and Second Auditing of the Central Bank of Lebanon

The company reports that the two firms, Deloitte & Touche and Ernst & Young have been auditing the data of the Central Bank of Lebanon throughout these past years, as follows:

| Fiscal year | Date of signing | First Auditor | Second Auditor |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 31/12/2015 | 5/6/2017 | Deloitte & Touche, Beirut, Lebanon | Ernst & Young p. c. c., Beirut, Lebanon |
| 31/12/2016 | 20/7/2018 | Deloitte & Touche, Beirut, Lebanon | Ernst & Young p. c. c., Beirut, Lebanon |
| 31/12/2017 | 29/5/2019 | Deloitte & Touche, Beirut, Lebanon | Ernst & Young p. c. c., Beirut, Lebanon |
| 31/12/2017 | 30/6/2020 | Deloitte & Touche, Beirut, Lebanon | Ernst & Young p. c. c., Beirut, Lebanon |

The company notes in its report that while the auditors were explaining the impact of the financial engineering, they did not consider the necessity of accounting for financial engineering to reflect the financial position and/or performance of BDL in line with the accounting standards and policies approved by the Central Council of BDL.

It also points out that the auditors were unable to conduct a physical inventory of the gold held at BDL, and they did not receive direct confirmations for all balances related to cash at the central bank, time deposits with interest with banks and financial institutions, and credit balances for the public sector, banks, and financial institutions.

5- How Foreign Currency Reserves Were Used from 2010 to 2021

BDL provided the company with a table that illustrates how foreign currency reserves at BDL were used between 2010 and 2021. The company, in its comments on the table, mentions that it did not audit the data nor confirm its accuracy but rather quoted it from BDL.



Table 1. BDL's Foreign Reserve Expenditures between 2010-2021

| Beneficiary | Amount in USD |
|--|-----------------------|
| Ministry of Energy | |
| Ministry of Energy - Credits for the Benefit of Electricité du Liban (EDL) | 18,386,090,578 |
| Transfers for the Benefit of EDL | 543,098,409 |
| Ministry of Energy | 5,608,275,211 |
| Foreign Currency Needs for the Public Sector | |
| Various Credits | 235,944,610 |
| Transfers | 8,084,096,388 |
| Financing the Import of All Subsidized Goods by the Government | 7,572,914,075 |
| Net Negative Balance Resulting from Eurobond Transactions | 7,446,931,738 |
| Net Total Amount Paid by the Central Bank of Lebanon from Foreign Currency Reserves 2010-2021 | 47,877,351,009 |

6- USD 333 million to Raja Salameh between 2010 and 2021

The report mentions several payments totaling USD 333 million sent between 2002 and March 2015 from one of BDL's accounts with the following IBAN number: LB02099900000001001260632009.

These payments were transferred to HSBC Bank in Switzerland, to an account held by Associates Ltd Forry, which is owned by Raja Salameh, Riad Salameh's brother.

The company is registered in the British Virgin Islands, and it was indicated that it acted as an "agent for marketing BDL products." It received a commission equivalent to 3/8 of 1% of the value of transactions in Lebanese Eurobond securities and several other operations conducted by BDL. BDL states that this was done with the approval of the Central Council, dated December 26, 2001.

7- Recipients of Transfers from the Financial Advisory Account 2015-2020

The company also provided a table in its report showing 27 outstanding credits with a total amount of LBP 168,362,309,500, equivalent to approximately USD 111 million. These credits represent transfers from an account labeled "Financial Advisory" to accounts at HSBC and several Lebanese banks. The company was unable to determine the final beneficiary's name or account from the BDL's records under the title "Transfers from the Financial Advisory Account." BDL removed beneficiary details from SWIFT extracts pursuant to banking secrecy laws.

The report provides details about the account, indicating that it began on January 1, 2015, with an opening credit balance of LBP 27,866,153,322, equivalent to USD 49.18 million. The company could not ascertain how this account was funded and how the balance was established from the records.

The Ministry of Finance is the only entity that disclosed receiving 5 payments totaling USD 55,457 from this account.

The companies that had balances in this same account are Optimum Invest SAL and AM Bank SAL, with the amounts to be paid to an undisclosed third party.

Table 2. Transfers from the Financial Advisory Account 2015-2020

| Beneficiary | Amount | Number of payments |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Banque Misr Liban SAL | 47,023,000 | 6 |
| IBL Bank SAL | 20,475,057 | 5 |
| BLC Bank SAL | 13,445,000 | 4 |
| AM Bank SAL | 7,400,000 | 1 |
| Bank Audi SAL | 5,375,000 | 1 |
| Fransabank SAL | 5,375,000 | 1 |
| HSBC Private Bank (Suisse) SA | 12,134,486 | 4 |
| Ministry of Finance | 55,457 | 5 |
| Total | 111,283,000 | 27 |

8- Government Bonds Sale and Purchase Agreements

Among the agreements involving the sale and purchase of government bonds while preserving the client's commission rights, the following was reported:

- Société Financière Du Liban SAL purchased Treasury bonds with a face value of LBP 228 billion, equivalent to USD 151,243,781.
- BDL purchased Treasury bonds from Société Financière Du Liban SAL at their face value.
- BDL sold LBP 55,619,170,000, equivalent to USD 36,894,972, worth of treasury bonds to Optimum SAL at their face value.
- BDL immediately repurchased the same treasury bonds from Optimum Invest SAL at a premium of LBP 18,743,660,290, equivalent to USD 12,433,605.
- The additional installment of LBP 18,743,660,290, equivalent to USD 12,433,605 (the debtor), was transferred from the Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) financial operations account, relying on the consultancy account, and increasing the credit balance in the account.

9- Aid, Grants, and Patronage

On page 188, the report details a number of expenses that it deems "inappropriate."

Table 3. BDL Expenditures Deemed "Inappropriate" in the Forensic Audit for the Years 2015-2020.

| Number | Expenditure details | Amount in USD millions |
|--------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Various supplies | 331.4 |
| 2 | Aid and donations | 30.7 |
| 3 | Support for activities | 11.4 |
| 4 | Paris Office rent allowance | 5.97 |
| 5 | Artwork | 2.7 |

| Number | Expenditure details | Amount in USD millions |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 6 | Cash payments | 1.4 |
| 7 | Furniture | 1.1 |
| Total | | 384.67 |

Table 4. Names of individuals or entities listed in the Assistance and Donations Account for the top five largest transfers between 2015 and 2020.

| Number | Name | Total transferred in LBP | Amount in USD |
|--------------|---|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Teleport Company SAL | 1,080,515,700 | 720,344 |
| 2 | Hanna Spiro Dumian | 576,000,000 | 384,000 |
| 3 | Management Solutions Experts SARL – MSE | 459,335,249 | 306,223 |
| 4 | Nabil Abdullah Braks | 325,620,000 | 217,080 |
| 5 | Marwan Iskandar M. I. Associates SARL | 331,643,970 | 221,096 |
| Total | | 2,773,114,919 | 1,848,743 |

Table 5. Names of individuals and entities whose activities were sponsored by BDL with amounts exceeding USD 100,000 between 2015 and 2020

| Number | Name | Total in LBP | Total in USD |
|--------|---|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | Bahiya Bahaa Al-Din Al-Hariri | 829,125,000 | 552,750 |
| 2 | Al-Sharq Newspaper | 761,288,000 | 507,525 |
| 3 | ICF International Corporate Events SAL | 753,750,000 | 502,500 |
| 4 | Beirut Marathon Association | 678,375,000 | 452,250 |
| 5 | Lebanese Industrialists' Association | 603,000,000 | 402,000 |
| 6 | ArabNet SAL | 514,058,000 | 342,705 |
| 7 | Lebanese International Finance Executives (LIFE) | 452,250,000 | 301,500 |
| 8 | Green Mind | 376,875,000 | 251,250 |
| 9 | Diverse Supplier | 394,214,000 | 262,809 |
| 10 | Lebanese South and Tyre Festivals Committee | 301,500,000 | 201,000 |
| 11 | Imam Sadr Foundation | 288,712,000 | 192,475 |
| 12 | Al-Bustan Festival | 241,200,000 | 160,800 |
| 13 | Economy and Business Company SAL | 241,200,000 | 160,800 |
| 14 | Friends of Beit Ed-Dine Palace and Museum Association | 226,125,000 | 150,750 |

| Number | Name | Total in LBP | Total in USD |
|--------------|--|-----------------------|------------------|
| 15 | Al-Fajr Press Company SAL | 226,125,000 | 150,750 |
| 16 | Ghosta Festivals Committee | 225,374,000 | 150,249 |
| 17 | Lebanese Association for Franchise Licensing | 218,212,000 | 145,475 |
| 18 | Baalbek International Festival | 188,438,000 | 125,625 |
| 19 | Nudgeco SARL | 169,006,000 | 112,671 |
| 20 | Lebanese Media and Studies Company SARL | 167,333,000 | 111,555 |
| 21 | Jounieh International Festival | 165,825,000 | 110,550 |
| 22 | Majida Mashnouk | 155,000,000 | 103,333 |
| 23 | Simon Khoury Saadeh | 150,750,000 | 100,500 |
| 24 | Various | 3,156,390,000 | 2,104,260 |
| Total | | 11,484,125,000 | 7,656,083 |

10- Artwork and Jaguar Cars

It was revealed to Alvarez & Marsal that BDL purchased artwork from individuals and entities between 2015 and 2020, with a total value of LBP 3,150,552,000, equivalent to USD 2,100,368.

The report states that BDL also purchased two Jaguar cars, the first of which was valued at USD 105,000.

Obstacles Face the “Preliminary” Report.

Upon analysis, it becomes clear that after the company provided its “preliminary” report the following key observations are noted:

- The report did not include an audit of financial transfers that occurred between 2019-2020, and it did not provide the required data. Part of the financial transfer data was removed under the pretext of banking secrecy law before being handed over to the company. This limited the company’s ability to identify the ultimate beneficiaries of the financial transfers, although the report mentions that the Ministry of Finance informed the company that the banking secrecy law had been temporarily suspended, allowing access to the data.
- The report indicates that BDL provided the company with some data in an unformatted text format, even though the data consisted of numbers. However, this required the company to create a new database.
- The financial engineering analysis included a section on the accounts of the former governor Riad Salameh.
- The report included an analysis of BDL’s operating expenses, revealing that the expenses lacked proper governance. Donations and transactions were random.
- The report highlighted the lack of full cooperation from the Central Bank of Lebanon, despite the issuance of a law to lift banking secrecy for the purposes of this audit.

- The company requested to interview 47 employees at BDL. However, BDL asked the company to reduce the number to only 9 employees. The company was not allowed to meet with the employees, and instead, questions and answers were conducted in writing. The company sent written questions to 14 employees at BDL on October 31, 2022, and received responses from them on February 13, 2023, four months later.
- BDL, in order to avoid recording and acknowledging losses, transferred the costs to the general treasury.

***Information International* has fully translated the Alvarez & Marsal report, and the translation is available in printed form. For more information, please call - 00961 1 983008/9**



LEBANON'S SOARING TREASURY ADVANCES

USD 2 BILLION

ISSUED BY THE LEBANESE TREASURY

From January to September 2023, the Lebanese government promulgated decrees authorizing treasury advances, totaling approximately LBP 68 trillion. In addition, there are advances denominated in U.S. dollars, with an approximate value of USD 300 million, resulting in a total of USD 1,086,448,750 in treasury advances.

An aerial night view of a city, likely Beirut, Lebanon. The image is dark and grainy, showing a dense urban landscape with many buildings. In the foreground, a large, multi-story building is visible, with the words "Electricité Liban" (Electricity Lebanon) written on its facade in a light color. The building has a grid-like structure of windows. Other buildings of varying heights and densities are visible in the background, creating a sense of a sprawling city.

Treasury Advances: Non-Expenditure Status

Treasury advances are documented in distinct Treasury accounts, which are exempt from legislative endorsement and are not incorporated into the overarching budgetary framework. Consequently, disbursements made via treasury advances may result in violations of fiscal regulations, which may only manifest in the years ahead due to the absence of comprehensive audits and the Ministry of Finance's omission to pursue the borrowing entity accountable for restitution.

Accumulating debts

In the course of its examination and review of the Treasury Advances disbursed between 1995 and 2018, the Court of Audit identified numerous instances where these advances remained unredeemed and had consequently transformed into delinquent liabilities. This contravenes the legal stipulations governing treasury advances, as indicated in Report No. 6/2021, published on February 2, 2021.

What about the year 2023?

The treasury advances for year 2023, until September, have surpassed eightfold the outstanding balance of advances outstanding between 1995 and 2018, amounting to approximately LBP 8 trillion, as reported in the Office of Central Accountancy's annual report for 2018. Treasury advances are disbursed in two currencies: Lebanese pounds and U.S. dollars.

Table 1. Total treasury advances issued in 2023.

| Description | Value in USD |
|--|------------------|
| Total Treasury Advances in U.S. Dollars (Sayrafa rate of LBP 85,500/USD) | 786,180,886.92 |
| Treasury Advances Issued to Electricité du Liban (EDL) | 300,267,864 |
| Total in U.S. Dollars (Sayrafa rate of LBP 85,500/USD) | 1,086,448,750.92 |

Source: Information International based on issued decrees.

Table 2: Treasury Advances in 2023 (Until End of September) Issued in Lebanese Pounds

| Borrowing entity | Amount in LBP | Purpose | Decree Number | Date |
|---|-----------------|--|---------------|------------------|
| Central Fund for the Displaced CFD | 9,318,000,000 | Assistance and Compensation for CFD Contractors | 11362 | May 29, 2023 |
| Higher Council for Privatization and Public-Private Partnership | 1,203,561,000 | Payment of employees' dues (adjusted by Decree No. 11552 with the same number) | 11552 | June 14, 2023 |
| General Directorate of the Prime Minister's Office | 15,000,000,000 | Procurement of generator fuel, oil, and liquid fuels | 10980 | February 6, 2023 |
| National Higher Conservatory of Music | 270,273,131,000 | Social assistance payment, adjustments as per Article 111 of the 2022 General Budget Law, and hourly teaching rate adjustment for the academic staff and monthly compensation for the Philharmonic Orchestra members | 11232 | April 18, 2023 |

| Borrowing entity | Amount in LBP | Purpose | Decree Number | Date |
|--|-------------------|--|---------------|--------------------|
| National Library | 432,000,000 | Payment of the salary increase for employees for the period from October 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022 | 11961 | August 21, 2023 |
| Elyssar Project | 536,601,000 | Payment of the salary increase for employees for the period from October 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022 | 11345 | May 29, 2023 |
| General Institute for Consumer Markets | 2,985,000,000 | Payment of employees' dues | 11665 | June 22, 2023 |
| National Employment Agency | 903,720,000 | Payment of salary increase for employees for the period from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022 | 11916 | August 18, 2023 |
| High Relief Commission | 221,000,000,000 | Implementation of urgent and critical work | 12159 | September 11, 2023 |
| High Relief Commission | 3,565,000,000 | Temporary Transport Allowance and Compensation for Commission Employees from May 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023 (corrected by Decree 11708) | 11575 | June 14, 2023 |
| High Relief Commission | 4,500,000,000 | Covering various expenses | 11930 | August 18, 2023 |
| High Relief Commission | 100,000,000,000 | Providing housing allowance of LBP 30 million for 3 months for each occupied, affected, and unfit residential unit | 11090 | February 27, 2023 |
| High Relief Commission | 150,000,000,000 | Implementation of urgent and critical work | 10982 | February 6, 2023 |
| State Employees Cooperative | 3,600,000,000,000 | Monthly loan of LBP 450 billion starting from May 1, 2023, until December 31, 2023, to cover the health expenses of all the members of the State Employees Cooperative | 11293 | April 18, 2023 |
| Télé Liban S.A.L. | 16,844,926,000 | Payment of salary increase for employees for the period from October 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, and for the entire year of 2023 | 11921 | August 18, 2023 |
| Télé Liban S.A.L. | 70,000,000,000 | Urgent expenses including contract allowances, fuel, diesel for stations and centers, company and transportation insurance, health insurance, operational cost and maintenance, social security, and dues to various maintenance companies | 11299 | April 18, 2023 |
| Mutual Fund for Sharia and Religious Jurisprudence | 300,000,000,000 | To cover the health expenses of the members of the Fund for Solidarity of Religious and Sectarian Judges | 12161 | September 11, 2023 |
| Council for Development and Reconstruction | 3,600,000,000 | Restarting the operation of the pumping stations of Nahr El-Bared, Al-Minya, and Al-Badawi for 3 months | 11553 | June 14, 2023 |
| Council for Development and Reconstruction | 4,607,016,000 | Payment of social assistance for the period from October 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022 | 11231 | April 18, 2023 |

| Borrowing entity | Amount in LBP | Purpose | Decree Number | Date |
|--|-------------------|---|---------------|--------------------|
| Council for Development and Reconstruction | 45,000,000,000 | Extension of the operation and maintenance contract with the contractor Danash Contracting and Trading Co. and the supervision contract with Lecico in Rafik Hariri University Campus - Hadath for 3 months from the beginning of 2023 | 10984 | February 6, 2023 |
| Council for Development and Reconstruction | 17,640,648,000 | To enable the Council to pay the increase stipulated in Article 111 of the General Budget Law for the year 2022 | 11351 | May 29, 2023 |
| South Lebanon Council | 43,602,410,000 | Payment of social assistance to the public sector, including increase stipulated in Article 111 of the effective law No. 10 issued on 10/15/2022, for employees of the Southern Council and the families of resistance martyrs | 11297 | April 18, 2023 |
| Basil Fuleihan Institute for Economic and Financial Studies | 144,100,000 | Payment of salary increase for contractors for the period from October 1, 2022, to January 15, 2023 | 11960 | August 21, 2023 |
| National Archives Foundation | 224,365,000 | Payment of salary increase for the period from October 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022 | 11296 | April 18, 2023 |
| Lebanese Standards Institution | 812,750,000 | Payment of salary and wage increase (Article 111 of the 2022 Budget) for the period from January 1, 2023, to May 31, 2023 | 11492 | May 29, 2023 |
| OGERO | 1,500,000,000,000 | Provision of fuel and essential supplies for the operation and maintenance of the fixed network for the year 2023 | 12145 | September 11, 2023 |
| OGERO | 469,000,000,000 | Payment of salaries for OGERO employees for the first half of 2023 | 11091 | February 27, 2023 |
| OGERO | 2,000,000,000,000 | Payment of salaries, board member allowances, production worker, medical, marriage, and birth aids, school aids, phone & transportation allowance, social assistance (Article 111 of the 2022 Budget), compensations for attachments from the Ministry of Communications, social security subscriptions, and end-of-service benefits (adjusted by Decree 11881) | 11680 | June 22, 2023 |
| Ministry of Public Works and Transportation - General Directorate of Civil Aviation | 294,000,000,000 | Transfer to the General Directorate of Civil Aviation via the Technical Cooperation Office Fund in Canada, for airport safety and security equipment and services on behalf of member states | 10983 | February 6, 2023 |
| Ministry of Public Works and Transportation - Railway and Public Transportation Authority | 5,965,000,000 | Payment of increase as per Law No. 10 issued on November 15, 2022, for Railway and Public Transportation Authority employees | 11475 | May 29, 2023 |
| Ministry of Education - Lebanese University - Mutual Fund for Faculty Members in the Lebanese University | 150,000,000,000 | Providing transportation allowances for contractual professors with the Lebanese University (amended by Decree 11568) | 11506 | May 29, 2023 |

| Borrowing entity | Amount in LBP | Purpose | Decree Number | Date |
|---|-------------------|---|---------------|--------------------|
| Ministry of Education and Higher Education | 500,000,000,000 | Financial incentives for public education faculty members and the Lebanese University, in line with the Cabinet's plan from 17/8/2023 | 12158 | September 11, 2023 |
| Ministry of Education and Higher Education | 170,000,000,000 | Incentives for teachers and staff involved in official intermediate and high school certificate exams, as well as vocational and technical education. | 11563 | June 14, 2023 |
| Ministry of Education and Higher Education | 1,050,000,000,000 | Supporting teachers, educators, contractual professors, and staff in official schools, high schools, technical institutes, and the Lebanese University. | 11046 | February 15, 2023 |
| Ministry of Education and Higher Education - Lebanese University | 180,000,000,000 | Conducting a public procurement for maintenance and spare parts in Rafik Hariri University City (corrected by Decree 11664/2023) | 11513 | June 5, 2023 |
| Ministry of Education and Higher Education - Directorate General of Education | 101,000,000,000 | Providing transportation allowances for contractual teachers | 10968 | February 6, 2023 |
| Ministry of Education and Higher Education - Lebanese University Mutual Fund | 30,000,000,000 | Covering medical and healthcare needs for the professors at the Lebanese University | 12225 | September 29, 2023 |
| Ministry of Interior and Municipalities - General Directorate of Internal Security Forces | 1,500,000,000,000 | Funding fuel, technical equipment, international contributions, subscriptions, and healthcare. | 11988 | August 29, 2023 |
| Ministry of Interior and Municipalities - General Directorate of Internal Security Forces | 210,000,000,000 | Providing coverage for nutrition expenses | 11238 | April 18, 2023 |
| Ministry of Interior and Municipalities - General Directorate of Internal Security Forces | 1,200,000,000,000 | Covering healthcare expenses for the Internal Security Forces | 11300 | April 18, 2023 |
| Ministry of National Defense - Army Command | 1,200,000,000,000 | Covering fuel expenses in the Ministry of National Defense - Army Command | 11689 | July 6, 2023 |
| Ministry of National Defense - Army Command | 5,368,000,000,000 | Payment of transportation allowances in the Ministry of National Defense - Army Command | 11688 | July 6, 2023 |
| Ministry of National Defense - Army Command | 2,400,000,000,000 | Covering fuel expenses in the Ministry of National Defense - Army Command | 12156 | September 11, 2023 |
| Ministry of National Defense - Army Command | 2,680,000,000,000 | Covering nutrition and hospitalization expenses for 2023 | 11687 | July 6, 2023 |

| Borrowing entity | Amount in LBP | Purpose | Decree Number | Date |
|---|---------------------------|---|---------------|--------------------|
| Ministry of Public Health | 578,031,871,913 | Payment of arrears to employees in government hospitals. The loan amount and attached tables were modified by Decree No. 11510 issued on 05/31/2023 | 11648 | June 22, 2023 |
| Ministry of Public Health | 1,092,000,000,000 | Support for cancer and chronic diseases medications and raw materials for drug manufacturing, and kidney dialysis supplies for a period of 3 months | 10973 | February 6, 2023 |
| Ministry of Public Health | 1,000,000,000,000 | Covering the needs of private and government hospitals for the treatment of kidney dialysis patients | 11927 | August 18, 2023 |
| Ministry of Public Health | 90,844,272,000 | Covering social assistance for employees in government hospitals | 10979 | February 6, 2023 |
| Ministry of Industry - Lebanese Standards Institution | 431,460,000 | Payment of social assistance and temporary increase provided for in Article 111 of the effective law No. 10 dated 15-10-2022 (General Budget Law for 2022) | 11298 | April 18, 2023 |
| Ministry of Justice - Judges' Solidarity Fund | 1,000,000,000,000 | Covering healthcare expenses for the members of the Judges' Solidarity Fund | 12168 | September 12, 2023 |
| Ministry of Justice - Judges' Solidarity Fund | 150,000,000,000 | Covering healthcare and social expenses for the members of the Fund | 11239 | April 18, 2023 |
| Ministry of Finance | 5,000,000,000 | Specialists completing study on public sector employee productivity compensation and transport allowance. | 11095 | February 27, 2023 |
| Ministry of Finance - General Directorate of Real Estate Affairs | 12,000,000,000 | Directorate work reorganization and payment of after-hours allowances for employees." | 11889 | August 9, 2023 |
| Ministry of Finance - General Finance Directorate | 100,000,000,000 | General Finance Directorate expenses coverage, including vehicle maintenance, power generators, elevators, fire equipment, fingerprint and cash counting machines, publications, communications, and generator subscriptions across governorates. | 12147 | September 11, 2023 |
| Ministry of Finance - General Finance Directorate | 1,000,000,000,000 | Payment of electricity bills issued by EDL or covering the cost of diesel to secure electricity in public administrations | 11303 | April 18, 2023 |
| Ministry of Finance | 36,000,000,000,000 | Temporary social assistance payment for all employees in the public sector, regardless of their job titles, and retirees who receive a retirement pension | 11301 | April 18, 2023 |
| Ministry of Finance | 300,000,000,000 | Securing stationery expenses for all public administrations | 11302 | April 18, 2023 |
| Total (in L.L.) | 67,218,465,831,913 | | | |
| Total (in USD) according to the Sayrafa rate (85,500 L.L./USD) | 786,180,887 | | | |

Source: Information International Based on the decrees issued regarding treasury advances.

Table 3: Treasury Advances in 2023 (Until End of September) Issued in U.S. dollars at the benefit of EDL.

| Borrowing entity | Amount in USD | Purpose | Decree Number | Date |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--|---------------|------------------|
| EDL | 54,000,000 | To secure funds for operation, maintenance contracts, and expenses across production, transmission, and distribution sectors | 10961 | January 18, 2023 |
| EDL | 142,248,522 | To secure funds for Electricité du Liban's fuel requirements to operate production facilities and implement the emergency plan by opening two deferred payment documentary credits for the purchase of 66,000 metric tons + 5% of Fuel Oil Type B and 102,000 metric tons + 5% of Gas Oil over six months. | 10962 | January 18, 2023 |
| EDL | 62,019,342 | To secure the necessary amount to open a six-month deferred payment documentary credit to cover the purchase cost of 66,000 metric tons of Gas Oil from Vitol Bahrain E.C | 10963 | January 18, 2023 |
| EDL | 42,000,000 | To secure the necessary amount to open two six-month deferred payment documentary credits to cover the purchase cost of 28,000 metric tons + 5% of Fuel Oil Type B (16.5 million dollars) and 46,000 metric tons + 5% of Fuel Oil Type A (25.5 million dollars) from Vitol Bahrain E.C | 10964 | January 18, 2023 |
| Total (in USD) | 300,267,864 | | | |

Source: Information International Based on the decrees issued regarding treasury advances.



Public Sector

TURNING TÉLÉ LIBAN INTO A PROFITABLE COMPANY

WHY WAS LBP 111.5 BILLION ALLOCATED TO THE STATE TV IN 2017-2022?

For years, Lebanon's sole television channel, Télé Liban, captivated viewers for hours on end without any competition.



Prior to August 2023, news spread that Télé Liban had ceased its broadcast. The Minister of Information in the caretaker government, Ziad Makary, swiftly provided clarification. Broadcasts had indeed halted on Friday, August 11th, but only for a few hours.

The broadcast was disrupted because of an employee strike resulting from the government's prolonged delay in disbursing their salaries and outstanding financial obligations spanning a two-year period.

Makary clarified in an official statement from his office that he chose to suspend the broadcasts because of the Television Employees' Union's insistence on halting programs and airing statements. The statement deemed this action likely to result in "unexpected expenditures" for the state.

Télé Liban was established without an accompanying investment plan, and instead of being a profitable company, it became a burden on the state. Why?

1977: Foundation and Temporary Solutions

Télé Liban is a national company tasked with managing a public facility, "television," for which the Council of Ministers should make a proper investment that yields profits and revenues rather than losses. The television station should be capable of covering its overhead costs and other expenses from its own revenue stream, and not be a burden on the public treasury. The company's capital and assets consist of public funds. The turnaround strategy must develop Télé Liban into a profitable self-sustaining entity.

Télé Liban was legally established in its current form by Decree No. 770 issued on December 30, 1977, in implementation of Legislative Decree No. 100 issued on June 30, 1977. The latter allowed the government, in its first article, to establish a mixed joint-stock company named Télé Liban through a decree to be issued by the Council of Ministers. According to its third article, the company's board of directors is subject to the provisions of the Trade Law. Télé Liban SAL was considered one of the public institutions responsible for managing a public facility by virtue of Decree No. 4128 issued on August 29, 1987.

1994: Reorganization

In 1994, the government was granted the right to reorganize Télé Liban SAL through decrees to be issued by the Council of Ministers, in accordance with Article 41, Paragraph 3 of the Television and Radio Broadcasting Law, Law No. 382 issued on November 4, 1994. Despite multiple attempts by successive cabinets and interventions to achieve the company's intended purpose, these interventions remained temporary solutions in the form of financial transfers and did not lead to a comprehensive plan to revive the company, despite the law allowing for modern solutions.

Article 8 of Decree No. 7576 issued on March 8, 2002, regulating Télé Liban SAL, allows the Council of Ministers, based on a proposal from the Minister of Information, to authorize the company to enter into a free management contract through a public tender. The provisions of the Public-Private Partnership Law may also be applied, with consideration for public procurement laws.

In 1978, the Lebanese state owned 50% of Télé Liban's shares, and in 1995, it acquired all of the company's shares. The state increased the company's capital by an amount equivalent to 41.4 billion Lebanese pounds, or \$26 million at the time. Since then, the company has continued to grapple with financial crises.

In 2007, Télé Liban was granted two treasury loans totaling approximately \$3.2 million, and the treasury assumed responsibility for debts owed by the company to public institutions, which exceeded \$20.7 million. This was despite the treasury providing approximately 123 billion Lebanese pounds to the company, consisting of contributions and advances to cover operational costs, compensation, salaries, and other expenses, from 1990 until 2007. Télé Liban also contributed to the company's capital with investments totaling about 83 billion Lebanese pounds, resulting in the Lebanese state's total con-

tributions to Télé Liban until 2007 amounting to \$145 million. At that time, the total debts owed by Télé Liban to the public sector amounted to 31.162 billion Lebanese pounds, and it remains unclear whether Télé Liban has actually paid these debts to the creditors.

Table 1: Debts Owed by Télé Liban to the Public Sector, 2007.

| Creditor | Amount due in LBP | Amount in USD (at a rate of 1500 LBP/USD) |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| Beirut Municipality | 3,800,000,000 | 2,533,333 |
| Social Security | 20,000,000,000 | 13,333,333 |
| Ministry of Finance | 5,000,000,000 | 3,333,333 |
| Electricité du Liban, Telecom, Water, Sidewalk Fees, and Sewers | 2,300,000,000 | 1,533,333 |
| Council for Development and Reconstruction | 62,000,000 | 41,333 |
| Total | 31,162,000,000 | 20,774,665 |

Source: *Information International*, based on a 2007 report by the Ministry of Information.

The State Pays its Obligations and Compensations to Employees

On August 27, 2007, cabinet decision No. 85 was issued approving the payment of obligations and compensations due to the human resources.

These obligations and compensations were distributed as follows:

- Various social compensations for the year 2005, amounting to \$301,000 USD.
- Contribution to employee health insurance in the amount of \$120,000 USD (annually).
- Improvement in the situation of school grants with an annual amount of \$100,000 USD.

In 2007, a treasury loan decree was issued in the amount of LBP 4,003,400,000 (USD 2,655,651) to pay the amounts due to the private sector by Television Lebanon.

Approval was granted by Decision No. 161, dated October 27, 2007, to grant a treasury loan to Television Lebanon to settle debts due to the private sector. The decision stated:

- The amounts due to the private sector in the amount of \$2,655,651 USD, shall be disbursed.
- Debts owed by the company to public sector departments and institutions will be subject to a staggered repayment plan, with the responsibility of determining their amount and arranging installment payments falling under the purview of the Minister of Information.

Table 2. The actual amounts paid from private sector debts and the dues of employees at Television Lebanon in 2007.

| Type | Amount in USD | Reference |
|---------------------|------------------|---|
| Private sector dues | 2,655,651 | Decree No. 956 issued on November 21, 2007 |
| Workers' dues | 521,000 | Decree No. 952, issued on November 21, 2007 |
| Total | 3,176,651 | |

Source: *Information International* based on the mentioned decrees. The value was specified in US dollars in both decrees.

The Amounts Allocated in the Budgets for the Years 2017-2022

Between 2017 and 2022, successive cabinets have budgeted for the company in the annual budgets, totaling LBP 111.4 billion. In contrast, an amount of LBP 102.7 billion was allocated in the draft budget for 2023. It should be noted that out of the 102.7 billion, LBP 70 billion for the treasury loan was deducted. This loan had been previously granted to the company under a decree issued on April 18, 2023, but the Ministry of Finance has not paid it until now. On April 18, 2023, the Council of Ministers decided to grant the company a treasury loan worth 70 billion Lebanese pounds to cover essential and urgent expenses, as stated in the decision. The most important of which are:

- Contractual allowances
- Fuel allowances, diesel for stations and centers
- Insurance for the company and external transportation vehicles
- Health insurance
- Operating cost
- Equipment maintenance
- Maintenance of cars and machinery
- Operating cost to ensure the continuation of program production and broadcasting
- Social security contributions
- Dues to companies for satellite broadcasting, BMS, and dues to maintenance companies for tools, equipment, generators, and elevators
- UPS maintenance and computer devices.

Table 3. The amounts allocated in the budgets for the years from 2017 until the 2023 draft budget.

| General Budget / Year | Amount (in thousand LBP) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 2017 | 20,000,000 |
| 2018 | 18,927,800 |
| 2019 | 17,962,000 |
| 2020 | 18,169,900 |
| 2021 | 18,169,900 |
| 2022 | 18,169,900 |
| 2023 draft | 102,715,000 |

Source: *Information International* based on the budgets of the mentioned years.

Fruitless Government Measures

Since the state purchased all the shares of Télé Liban, the government has failed at financially securing the company. Some of the attempts include:

- The Cabinet decided on June 12, 1996, to exempt Télé Liban from customs duties imposed on media equipment under Decree No. 9198 issued on September 20, 1996.

- On December 27, 1996, the Cabinet granted Télé Liban SAL a license and the right to lease a channel for transmitting and receiving the accompanying image to sound via industrial satellites using ground stations belonging to the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, exempting it from all fees and rents payable under Decree No. 10084 dated March 27, 1997.
- On March 8, 2000, the Cabinet decided to exempt Télé Liban from customs duties on its imports, including the minimum duty of 6%.
- The company's budget is subject to approval by the Ministers of Finance and Information, and the company has been subject to retrospective auditing by the Court of Accounts under Article 35 of Law No. 173 issued on February 14, 2000.
- On February 7, 2002, the Cabinet decided to reorganize Télé Liban SAL after all of its shares became owned by the Lebanese state under Decree 7576/2002.
- The Lebanese state took on some of the debts incurred by the Télé Liban SAL under Cabinet Decision No. 85 dated August 27, 2007, and granted it a treasury loan under Decree No. 956/2007 (Table 2).
- In 2007, the Japanese government provided equipment worth \$450,000 in the form of technical equipment and studio equipment, which the government accepted under Decree No. 223/2007.
- In 2009, Decree No. 1195/2009 was issued to regulate the Lebanese Television Company S.A.L. and replace some provisions with new ones.
- In 2011, an allocation was transferred from the general budget's reserve to the Ministry of Information's budget to cover the expenses of broadcasting the 2010 World Cup matches through Télé Liban, totaling LBP 1,206,000,000.
- According to the amended 2019 General Budget Law, as per Law No. 6 dated March 5, 2020, a maximum limit was set for salary compensations and their appendices, benefiting public sector employees, institutions, councils, funds, bodies, and public facilities, including Télé Liban's employees.
- When the government approved temporary compensations and assistance for all employees in the public sector, it included Télé Liban's employees. This increase was stipulated in Article 111 of the General Budget Law for 2022 (effective law No. 10 on November 15, 2022) and others.
- Dozens of decrees were issued regarding the transfer of appropriations and treasury loans, reaching a total value of one million dollars in 2013 in a single decree. The latest was the granting of a treasury loan to the Lebanese Television Company S.A.L. worth LBP 70 billion under Decree No. 11299 issued on April 18, 2023.
- Due to the failure to make board appointments, the Cabinet finally instructed the Minister of Information to carry out the ordinary administrative tasks.



The Cabinet and the Minister of Information

“The appointment of the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Télé Liban and the state’s representatives is carried out through decrees issued by the Cabinet, as specified in Decree No. 1095 issued on March 22, 1978, which ratified the company’s bylaws.

However, in light of the existing vacancy within Télé Liban’s Board of Directors, the Minister of Labor has formally requested Cabinet approval to allow the Minister to assume the necessary responsibilities assigned to Télé Liban’s Board of Directors. The Cabinet, through Resolution No. 24 dated May 26, 2023, has granted authorization to the Minister of Information, in the event that the position of Chairman of Télé Liban’s Board of Directors remains vacant. This authorization empowers the Minister of Information to make essential decisions related to routine administration. These decisions encompass activities such as disbursing salaries, wages, taxes, rent, satellite broadcasting fees, and other expenditures, in accordance with prevailing laws, regulations, and contractual agreements. This measure is taken to ensure the uninterrupted operation of this public institution, as per the guidance of Opinion No. 195 from the Legislation and Consultation Authority at the Ministry of Justice, issued on March 7, 2018.”

The Solution

The previous actions taken to sustain Télé Liban’s ongoing operations lack transparency regarding their long-term nature, and they were essentially short-term solutions without an underlying strategic plan to render the company financially self-sufficient and prevent further strain on Lebanon’s national finances.

In order to safeguard Télé Liban, given its historical significance and both tangible and intangible value, those in charge must refrain from duplicating past errors and demonstrate a genuine commitment to conducting comprehensive studies for investing in the company. This approach should replace the recurring reliance on financial injections whenever the company encounters financial difficulties.



Private Sector

PRINT JOURNALISM OUT DIGITAL CONTENT IN

Despite many issues related to political funding and foreign alliances, for over a century, Lebanese journalism was known for its leadership for being the boldest in the Arab world.

Throughout the Lebanese Civil War, Lebanese journalism persisted. It bore witness to repression, arrests, threats, and assassinations. Today, we observe challenges and upheaval within numerous journalistic organizations, resulting in the shutdown of several, particularly those with a long history.

Lebanese Newspapers that Ceased Publication

Table. 1

| Newspaper | Years Active | Issues Published | Additional Information |
|----------------|--------------|------------------|---|
| Al-Bairaq | 1912 - 2011 | 20,410 | Closed after 99 years of publication. |
| As-Safir | 1974 - 2016 | 13,552 | Discontinued after 42 years. |
| Al-Ittihad | 2017 - 2017 | 54 | Closed after only two months of publication. |
| Al-Hayat | 1948 - 2018 | - | Closed after 70 years; founded by the late Kamel Mroue; based in London |
| Al-Anwar | 1943 - 2018 | 19,911 | Founded by Sa'ïd Freiha. |
| Al-Balad | 2013 - 2018 | - | Closed after 5 years of publication. |
| Al-Mustaqbal | 1999 - 2019 | 6,585 | Discontinued print and continued online; owned by the late Rafik Hariri and edited by Nabil Khoury. |
| The Daily Star | 1952-2020 | - | English-language newspaper; Discontinued print edition in February 2020 and stopped updating its website in October 2020. |

Reasons for Closure

There are multiple reasons for the closure of these newspapers, with the most prominent ones being:

- Rapid decline in revenue from print advertising and a decrease in income from sales and subscriptions.
- Decrease in the number of readers in Lebanon.
- The rise of digital content, often lacking competition for traditional print media.
- Rising costs of paper and raw materials and reduced distribution efficiency.
- Decreased purchasing power of citizens.
- Financial crisis, particularly after the collapse of the Lebanese Pound against the dollar and other foreign currencies.
- Loss of financial support from political, external, or partisan sources due to regional developments.
- Legacy newspapers either failed to transform into successful institutions or disappeared after the death of their founders.
- The Arab press, particularly the Gulf-based media, has advanced its media landscape, whereas Lebanese media, once a prominent voice for Arab nations, encountered difficulties and even closures during specific periods.
- Shortcomings in government action, unions, and the failure to implement effective measures and update relevant laws.

Table. 2

| Newspaper | Start Date | Owner/Publisher | Issue Count | End Date | Years in Operation |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|---|--------------------|
| Al-Bairaq | 1912 | Sa'id Fadel Aql | 20,410 | August 01, 2011 | 99 |
| As-Safir | March 26, 1974 | Talal Salman | 13,552 | December 31, 2016 | 42 |
| Al-Ittihad | October 23, 2017 | Mustafa Naser | 54 | December 28, 2017 | 2 months |
| The Daily Star | 1952 | Jamil Mroue | - | February 2020 | 69 |
| Al-Anwar | August 28, 1959 | Sa'id Freiha | 19,911 | September 29, 2018 | 59 |
| Al-Balad | December 15, 2003 | Bashar Kiwan and Majd Suleiman | - | July 01, 2018 | 5 |
| Al-Mustaqbal | 1999 | Owned by Rafik Hariri | 6,585 | February 01, 2019 | 20 |
| Al-Hayat (London) | January 28, 1946 | Kamel Mroue | - | May 2018 (print) / March 03, 2020 (online) | 70 |

Source: *Information International*, based on newspaper archives.



Active Newspapers

The newspapers that have continued to publish in print include An-Nahar, Al-Akhbar, Al-Liwa, Ad-Diyar, Al-Joumhouria, Nidaa Al-Watan, Al-Sharq, and L'Orient-Le Jour.

Table. 3

| Newspaper | Start Date | Founder/Owner | Issues until July 26, 2023 | Years in Operation | Price in Lebanese Pounds |
|------------------|--|---|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| An-Nahar | August 04, 1933 | Gebran Andraos Tueni / Nayla Tueni | 28,058 | 90 | 100,000 |
| Al-Akhbar | Founded in 1953. Relaunched on August 14, 2006 with the late Joseph Samaha (1) | Mohammad Hamdan / Ibrahim Al-Amin | 4,970 | 17 | 50,000 |
| Al-Liwa' | 1963 | Abdel Ghani Salam / Salah Salam | 16,723 | 59 | 20,000 |
| Al-Diyar | Founded in 1941. Owned by Charbel Ayoub since 1988 (2) | Charbel Ayoub since 1988 | 12,278 | 35 | 20,000 |
| Al-Joumhouria | Founded in 1924. Resumed publication in 2011 | Sajei Al-Asmar / Elias Murr | 3,615 | 12 | 50,000 |
| Nidaa Al-Watan | Founded in 1992. Ceased in 2000. Resumed on July 1, 2019 (3) | Henry Safer / Bashara Sharbel | 1,177 | 4 | 20,000 |
| Al-Sharq | 1926 | Awni Al-Kaaki (Grandfather) / Awni Al-Kaaki | 22,155 | 97 | 20,000 |
| Al-Binaa | 2008 | SSNP | - | 15 | 5,000 |
| L'Orient-Le Jour | 1971 | Gabriel Najjar and Georges Nehme founded L'Orient, and Michel Chiha founded Le Jour. It is currently owned by Michel El-Helou | 16,713 | 53 | 130,000 |

Source: *Information International*, based on newspaper archives.

(1) On December 25, 1953, Mohammad Hamdan purchased Al-Anqoud from Nicolas Elian and Sheikh Abdullah Al-Alaile, and Al-Ummah Al-Arabiyyah from Joudat Hashem and Nisib Nimr to create the Al-Akhbar. After a year, its ownership was transferred to Mohammad Salim Sibai. It was later sold to Sharif Abdul Rahman Al-Ansari. And in 1959, its ownership was transferred to Kamal Sinno, who then sold its rights to Suheil Yamout and Youssef Khattar Al-Helou. Considering that it became the mouthpiece of the Lebanese Communist Party starting from 1954, this means that the Communist Party rented it for five years before purchasing rights to the newspaper.

(2) On May 9, 2020, Al-Diyar published another announcement titled "The End of Al-Diyar... Al-Diyar is on the verge of ceasing publication for those who wish to donate to Al-Diyar to keep it going."

(3) Nidaa Al-Watan was founded in 1992, owned by Henry Safer. It ceased publication in 2000. Its rights were sold before being purchased by the late Michel Mekhteff in 2019, and journalist Bashara Sharbel was appointed as the editor-in-chief of the newspaper.

(4) Currently, 43 current and former presidents, ministers, or deputies have shares in media companies. The list of owners also includes six political parties in addition to the Lebanese state (according to a study by the Samir Kassir Foundation).

The Effects of Instagram and TikTok on Adolescents' Attention Span

In an effort to understand news consumption patterns in an increasingly technological world, a survey was conducted by the UK's Office of Communications (Ofcom) in late 2021 and early 2022. The study provided significant insights regarding news consumption methods.

Teenagers, seem determined to move beyond traditional journalism to consume digital content. Instagram has asserted its dominance as the primary news source, with 29% choosing it as their preferred source of information, closely followed by TikTok at 28%.

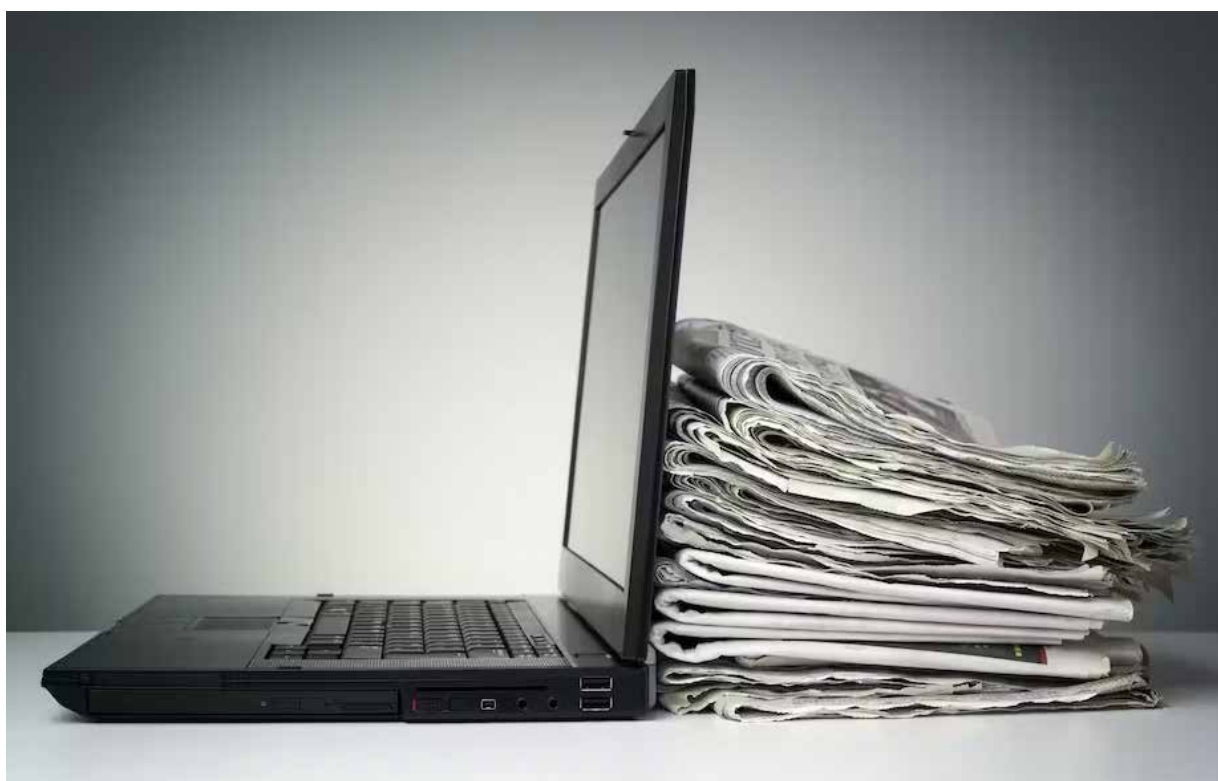
These results are not arbitrary, as TikTok has witnessed remarkable growth. The percentage of news consumption through TikTok increased from 1% in 2020 to 7% in 2022, largely due to its appeal to young audiences- half of its users are aged between 16 and 24 years. In this context, participants in the survey made harsh remarks about print journalism, with one saying, "I don't care at all about print journalism; my relationship with it is limited to using it to light the living room fire-place." This highlights the challenges faced by print journalism in the digital age.

The Resurgence of Written Journalism

Journalism, commonly known as the "fourth estate," has traditionally represented the voice of the public, delving into their concerns and shedding light on their issues. However, in today's world, it confronts a unique set of obstacles.

Despite the significant historical role played by Lebanese journalism, there is an urgent need for revitalization. This can be accomplished by embracing contemporary methods, enhancing investigative and analytical content, and presenting interactive material that resonates with the aspirations of the younger audience. Routine content, often likened to "stale, old vanilla," no longer meets readers' expectations.

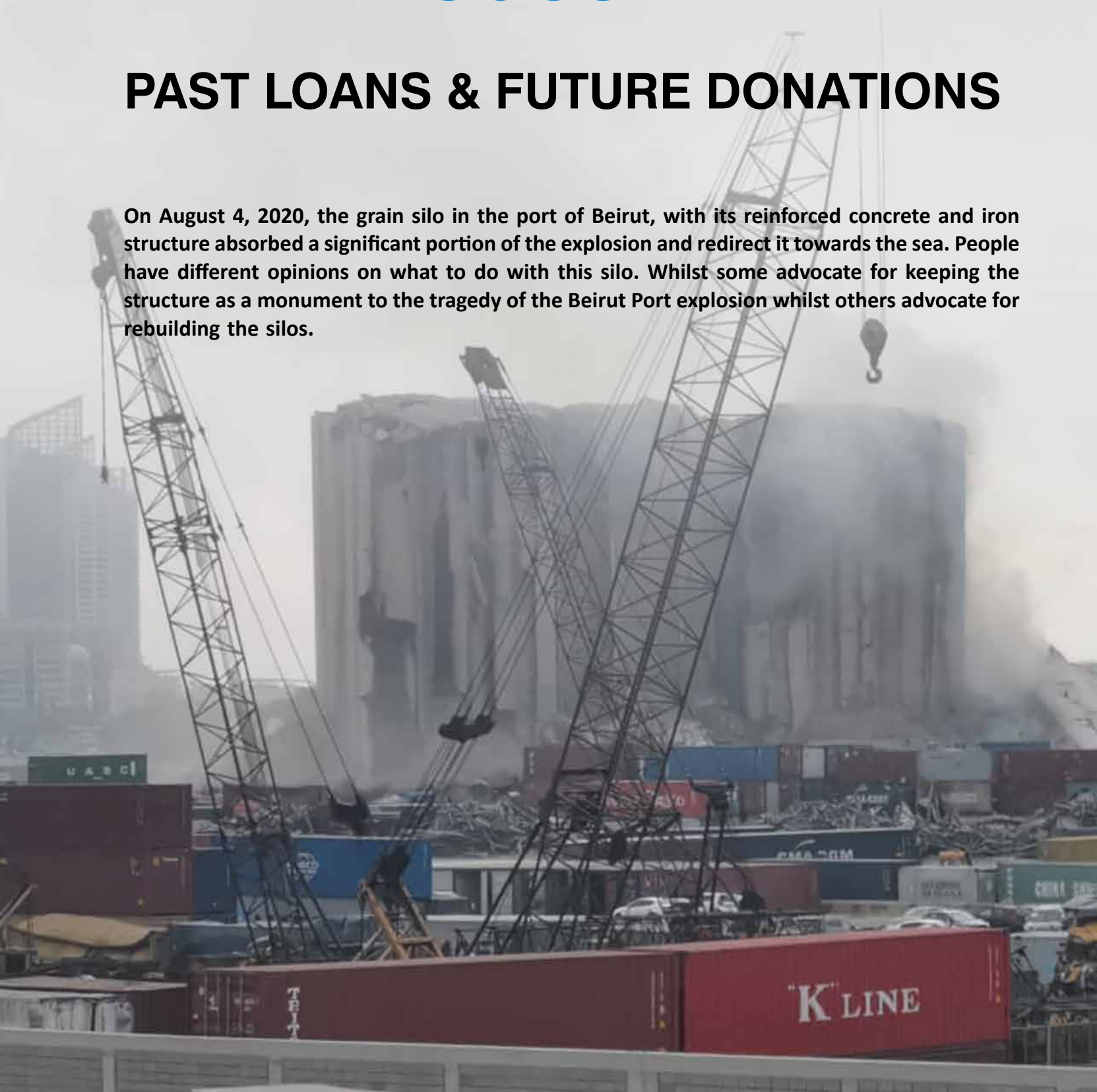
Written words continue to hold significance among people, but for them to remain influential, they must maintain a strong connection with real-life situations and serve as a standard for honesty and objectivity. As Marty Baron, the Executive Editor of The Washington Post, once emphasized, "Building trust is our most significant challenge."



THE BEIRUT PORT SILOS AFTER AUGUST 4

PAST LOANS & FUTURE DONATIONS

On August 4, 2020, the grain silo in the port of Beirut, with its reinforced concrete and iron structure absorbed a significant portion of the explosion and redirect it towards the sea. People have different opinions on what to do with this silo. Whilst some advocate for keeping the structure as a monument to the tragedy of the Beirut Port explosion whilst others advocate for rebuilding the silos.



Before these silos were built, grain and wheat were stored in wood and plastic structures (1948) which were not suitable for the hot and humid climate of the area. During the presidency of Charles Helou (1964-1970), Lebanese-Palestinian businessman Yousef Beidas proposed the construction of grain silos in the port of Beirut. And in 1965, the government commissioned the silos to be built

The Kuwaiti Loan to Build Beirut's Port Silos

In 1968, Lebanon requested a loan from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development to finance the grain silo project in the Port of Beirut. The loan named the "Project for Grain Silos in the Port of Beirut," was approved and signed for on August 7, 1968.

In 1970, by virtue of Law No. 14029 issued by decree on March 16, 1970, the government was authorized to enter into a loan agreement between Lebanon and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development to finance the grain silos project in the Port of Beirut. Under this agreement, the Kuwait Fund was to provide the borrower, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement, a loan equivalent to one million Kuwaiti dinars. The annual interest rate was set at 3.5% on all amounts drawn from the loan and not repaid, with an additional 0.5% annual interest added to cover the costs of fund management and loan agreement implementation services.

The Administration of the Grain and Sugar Beet Office

The agreement stipulated that the borrower (Lebanon) is to place the loan proceeds at the disposal of the Council for the Implementation of Construction Projects under the conditions and terms approved by the Kuwait Fund. Upon completion, the project was to transfer management to the Ministry of Economy and Trade's Grand and Sugar Beet Office. Management was to be conducted through an agreement with the Beirut Port Management and Investment Company, utilizing systems and rules that were capable of achieving the project's objectives and had been approved by the Fund.

The borrower must obtain the lender's approval for modifications to the agreement with the Beirut Port Management and Investment Company. Furthermore, approval from the lender must be sought in the event that project management is to be handed over to a company other than Beirut Port Management and Investment Company.

Silos and Warehouses

The grain silo facility is responsible for receiving grain materials from the relevant parties and transporting them to silos or external warehouses where they are stored and appropriated for local consumption, re-export or transit. It also carries out processes such as sterilization, aeration (ventilation), purification (sifting), weighing, and packaging or unloading, all in accordance with the provisions of the Beirut Port Grain Silos Investment Law, the applicable tariffs, and customs and port regulations.

On December 31, 1990, the concession of the Beirut Port Management and Investment Company for managing and investing in the grain silo facility at the Port of Beirut came to an end, and the contract with them for the management of the silos in the Port of Beirut was mutually terminated.

Undefined Identity of the Silos

Following the conclusion of the management contract between the Ministry of Economy and Trade's General Directorate of Grains and Sugar Beets and the Beirut Port Management and Investment Company, the government and the parliamentary council failed to enact any legal or regulatory measures to clarify the legal status of the silos, their management, or their investment in accordance with the standards for public institutions. Consequently, the silos retained their "administrative"

classification, despite not being a public administration, and remained under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Economy and Trade's General Directorate of Grains and Sugar Beets.

The Ministry of Economy and Trade - General Directorate of Grains and Sugar Beets took charge of managing the silos "until their identity is determined," as stated in the justifications for the ministry's decision at that time.

In 2010, the Minister of Economy issued the Beirut Port Grain Silos Investment Law under Decree No. 25/Directorate of Beans and Beets, dated September 15, 2010. This decree outlined the complete functioning of the silos, including the relevant regulations, the extent of their authority in operations, responsibilities, and specific steps to follow before and when ships arrive. It also covered the principles governing receipt, delivery, storage, and associated services. However, it still did not provide a legal framework to define the legal status and structure of the silos.

In 2017, the unloading of wheat shipments arriving at the Port of Beirut was restricted to the port's silos by virtue of Decree No. 38/Directorate of Beans and Beets, issued on November 14, 2017, by the Minister of Economy. This decision aimed to ensure food safety. However, this decision became irrelevant after the explosion at the port.

Silo Donations and Loans

In the year 2020, the Kingdom of Belgium donated three mobile grain pumps, estimated to be worth approximately €700,000. The Lebanese government had borrowed in 2001 from the Belgian government an amount of €352,872 to finance the commercial share of the contract signed with Belgian company VIGAN for the supply of equipment for the silos at the Port of Beirut. This was done under the Lebanese-Belgian financial protocol established since 1995, pursuant to Law No. 398 issued on 12/01/1995.

What's Next?

In summary, regardless of the choice made—whether it is to demolish the remaining silos, preserve them as a testament to one of Lebanon's enduring tragedies, or construct new silos with updated specifications—it is crucial to reconstruct this facility and establish its legal status and identity transparently. Above all, any plan should adhere to the Public-Private Partnership Law and the Public Procurement Law, safeguard the rights of the state and its citizens, and uphold food security for the Lebanese people.



Public Sector

MOUNTING ECONOMIC STRAIN LEBANON FACES USD 8.58 BILLION DEFICIT IN AUGUST 2023

The import and export figures for the first two-thirds of the year 2023 revealed a trade deficit amounting to USD 8,581,789,235.

The value of exports and imports from January 1, 2023, to mid-August 2023



Top Imports

Petroleum derivatives claimed the top position on the imports list with a value of USD 2.6 billion, followed by jewelry with a value of USD 1.45 billion, and then cars with a value of USD 333 million.

Table 1: The value of the three most valuable imports from January 1, 2023, to mid-August 2023.

| Type of import | Value | Percentage of total imports |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Gas products (gasoline, diesel...) | 2,639,785,759 | 25.7% |
| Jewelry (diamonds, gold, etc.) | 1,494,649,197 | 14.5% |
| Tourist vehicles and other vehicles | 333,661,441 | 3.2% |
| Total | 4,468,096,397 | 43.4% |

Source: Information International, based on figures published by the general directorate of customs.

Analyzing this information reveals that the import activity for consumer goods, after deducting the value of petroleum products, jewelry, and cars, amounted to only USD 5.8 billion. This figure reflects a decline in purchasing power among the population.

It is evident that exports, totaling USD 1.7 billion, are led by jewelry and ornaments with a value approaching 380 million dollars, followed by scrap with a value of 149.8 million dollars. This highlights the need to enhance Lebanon's exports, especially since industrial exports remain low.

Table 2: The value of the three most valuable exports from January 1, 2023, to mid-August 2023.

| Type of export | Value | Percentage of total exports |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Jewelry (diamonds, gold, etc.) | 382,238,038 | 22.4% |
| Scraps (iron, copper, aluminum) | 149,899,616 | 8.8% |
| Electricity generation sets and rotary current converters, etc. | 70,113,381 | 4.1% |
| Total | 602,251,035 | 35.4% |

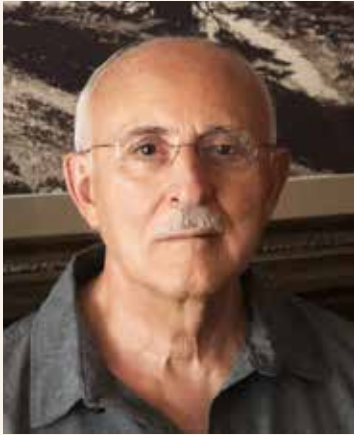
Source: Information International, based on figures published by the general directorate of customs.

Jewelry

There is a noticeable decline in export figures of jewelry, including pearls, diamonds, gemstones, gold, silver, and more, even though these numbers represent only eight months of the year. 2023 appears to be the least export-oriented year for jewelry and the highest in terms of imports. The import activity reached approximately USD 1.49 billion, whereas the average for the past ten years did not exceed USD 1.22 billion.

Table 3: The value of jewelry imports and exports from 2017 to August 2023."

| Year | Jewelry imports | Jewelry exports |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2017 | 996,118,107 | 586,001,086 |
| 2018 | 1,252,303,202 | 648,046,416 |
| 2019 | 931,390,351 | 1,454,914,472 |
| 2020 | 894,095,799 | 1,409,840,878 |
| 2021 | 1,238,344,191 | 1,017,737,435 |
| 2022 | 1,682,088,550 | 752,808,134 |
| 2023 (until mid-august) | 1,494,649,197 | 382,238,038 |



THE WEDDING

By Dr. Hanna Saadah

When I picked up the phone that Monday evening in August of 2011, I thought I was hearing the voice of my hero, Ghalib, Mirza Assadullah Khan (1797-1869) boing across the half-night, *“Ghalib, I think we have caught sight of the road to death now. Death is the string that binds together the scattered beads of the universe.”*

I gazed at the rouge Oklahoma sunset hovering between the day and night and notioned that, in the East, that very same sunset is a sunrise poised between the night and day. How confusing is relativity? I thought. How can the same thing be two different things at the same time?

My brother’s voice across the time-space wilderness resounded in my head, another echo of confusing relativity. How can we dialogue, ear to ear, from two dissonant times and places? “Brother,” he said, “can you hear me?”

“What’s wrong?” I gasped. “Your voice portends a heartache.”

“Uncle Ibrahim gifted us his years.”

“Oh. When? When’s the funeral?”

“Whenever you arrive?”

“If I leave tomorrow morning, I can be there Wednesday evening.”

“Good; I’ll tell Father Elias to set the funeral for Thursday afternoon then.”

Another of my hero’s sayings scrolled before my burning eyes, *“O Assad, don’t be taken by the delusion of existence; The world is but a ring in the web of thought.”*

Uncle Ibrahim was the baby, the last of my father’s eight siblings, the only one who did not remember his father. His father, Priest Nicholas of Amioun, died at eighty-two when Ibrahim was only five months old and his mother, Grandma Khuriyeh, was fifty-two. The saga of this frail woman—who, singlehandedly, raised eight good children between the Two Great Wars and died at 102—is an unsung Odyssey. Lebanon was under French mandate then, having been extricated by forceps from the womb of the dying Ottoman Empire.

Flying east across eight time zones confounds the brain’s circadian rhymes and spins vertiginous thoughts around the half-awake mind. Looking from above the clouds, I thought that I could see eternity’s dome bending under the weight of time. My thoughts grew wings. *Homo sapiens* originated in Africa about 200,000 years ago out of a planet that is four-and-a-half-billion years old, I mused. And, throughout that entire time span, no one had ever experienced air travel until the 1930s. That was when *Homo sapiens* first travelled against time. I felt privileged as I recited to myself lines from John Gillespie Magee’s *High Flight*:

“Up, up the long, delirious burning blue

I’ve topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace

*Where never lark, or ever eagle flew —
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high, untrampled sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God."*

Beirut airport was abuzz with immigrants returning from the circumferences of earth to their little hometowns in Mount Lebanon where, awaiting them, were all the loving arms and brimming eyes of relatives and friends.

"What is the purpose of your visit?" asked the officer as he examined my American passport.

"A wedding," I replied.

"Oh, congratulations; who's getting married?"

"My uncle."

He eyed me with consternation as he took a second look at my birth year, 1946. Then, as if it were his duty to investigate this sexagenarian oddity, he held the passport stamp in midair—to indicate that he was not going to stamp my passport until I had answered his questions—and wryly queried, "How old is your uncle?"

"Eighty-eight," I replied, with a matter-of-fact tone.

"Is it going to be a big wedding?" he teased.

"A very, very big one, indeed." I nodded knowingly.

"And how old is his bride?"

"Four-and-a-half-billion years," I sighed.

He grinned knowingly—to say that he understood that I wished to withhold the bride's true age from him—and muttered, "Alf mabruk."

Then, with automatic disregard, he stamped my passport, handed it back to me, and yelled, "Next Please."

Amioun, our hometown, stretched like a sly cat atop the long, rocky mount that framed the olive plane beneath—its nightlights in the distance glowing like a halo around a golden crown. At my uncle's home

family and friends were sitting on the cool, long veranda and all the women were dressed in black. His wife, Aunt Salam, walked towards the car as I was pulling my suitcase out of the trunk. She was smiling when we started hugging but her smiles turned into tears over my shoulder. I kissed my five cousins, their spouses, and their twenty children before I sat next to my aunt and asked, "Did he suffer?"

"He went peacefully and quickly. We were all with him. He smiled at us before he took his last breath. Pneumonia was his friend."

The funeral services were held at St. George's Orthodox Church, one of the oldest in continuous use in the world—it used to be a heathen temple, dating back to about two thousand years before Christ. One could see the different strata of stones carved during different eras to rebuild its walls after its myriad destructions by wars and elements. The floor, the walls, and the arched ceiling were all of ancient stones. It could only hold in its bosom my uncle's family and close friends; the rest of the attendees—hovering around the church like a black, humming belt of pilgrims encircling the Ka'bah—savored the siren tunes of the Byzantine mass as it crept into their ears out of anachronistic loudspeakers.

"No hand shaking or kissing, please," announced Father Elias, as he ended the mass and led the family into the condolence's hall. There, we all stood in an arch while the masses of condolent faces passed us with bowed heads and uttered, "Allah yirhamu." The passing endured close to four hours, causing our eyes and feet to surrender their stamina to mounting fatigue. It was not possible for some of us to remain standing—my mother at ninety-five, my aunt at eighty-two, and many who had frail joints sat down after the first hour or two and escorted the long, black line of 'pilgrims' with their eyes.

It was deep into the night before we could retire back to Uncle Ibrahim's home for a huddled family time. Faces were relieved at the closure of an eighty-eight-year-long life, filled with love and smiles. We talked of simple matters, admired all twenty boisterous grandchildren, and memorialized with endless tales an entire generation whose last ambassador had just bid us farewell.

The following three days were equally grueling. Visitors filled the condolences hall on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and we all took turns in sitting and standing up. They came from remote corners with faces that have aged along with mine. I renewed contacts and friendships with many I had not seen since I left Lebanon, forty years before. We made covenants with each other and promises, which we knew we could not possibly keep, but which felt so dear at the moments of making. *“Let’s get together soon. Come visit us, please. We’ll call you when we visit the US. We’ll have so much to talk about.”*

During these few days, I said so many good-byes to so many old faces that I might never see again. Lines from a poem, *‘How Do You Say Good-Bye’*, which I had written to a departing friend a long time ago, floated before my gaze:

“Let us wander to the tavern at the corner of the street

Share a jug of frothy spirit, something warm to eat

Watch the many faces of a lazy afternoon

Exit together in the dimming light

And then, pretending we shall be together soon

Depart on separate ways into the night.”

Back at the airport, a high school friend and classmate shouted my name from above the throngs. We hugged after forty years as if we had never been apart, sat in an isolated corner, and began reminiscing. Then, as if seized by an afterthought, he looked at me and said, *“I’m sorry about your uncle. I saw the pictures in the paper. It was a massive funeral, said the reporter who wrote the article.”*

“Do you happen to have a copy?” I asked, wanting to return with something to show my Oklahoma family.

“No, I’m sorry.”

“Never mind; I’ll get one from one of my cousins.”

“He must have been a very rich and famous man, judging by the thousands of people who showed up to pay their respects.”

“Uncle Ibrahim? Rich and Famous? He was anything but that.” I smiled.

“Well? How come such a massive funeral then?”

“He was a kind man who spent his entire life glowing with joy. It was his joy, his indelible smile, and his tireless readiness to help anyone in need that touched all those who knew him.”

“Does he have children?”

“Five, and they’re all like him.”

“You mean kind, helpful, and glowing with joy?”

I smiled and nodded. I did not tell him that my ordinary uncle and aunt raised five highly intelligent, educated, and very successful children. Relative to kindness and joy, such attributes seemed much too perfunctory to mention.

Back among the clouds between East and West it suddenly came to me that funerals are reunions just like sunsets are sunrises. Feeling smug at my startling discovery, I picked up the new book I had planned to read on my way back, David Hume’s *‘A Treatise of Human Nature’* and began browsing. A group of lines that contemplated death clung to my eyes. *“We all were part of the inanimate for four-and-a-half-billion years. Then we all experienced miniscule specks of sentient existence, which we came to call life. Why then, when we are returned to our primary state, do we so protest?”*

Funerals are not just reunions, I thought; indeed, they are also weddings. We are returned to our original home, to be what we had forever been, wedded to earth. Two thousand years ago, the Stoics figured out that *‘the goal of life is to live in agreement with nature, which is to live according to virtue. For nature leads to virtue.’* And Epictetus (55-135), not Hume, was the one who said it best: *“Never say of anything, ‘I have lost it’; but ‘I have returned it.’ Is your child dead? It is returned. Is your wife dead? She is returned.”*



CHARQIYEH A VILLAGE IN THE NABATIEH DISTRICT

When we mention the name Charqiyeh (Arabic for “The Eastern part”), East Beirut comes to mind. However, Charqiyeh is also the name of a town in the Nabatieh district.

Origin of the Name

It was named Charqiyeh due to its location in the eastern part of the south of Lebanon.

Location and Area

The town of Charqiyeh is located in the Nabatieh district. It is 70 kilometers out of the capital, Beirut, and can be reached via the Beirut-Sidon-Nabatieh-Toul-Charqiyeh road or through the Beirut-Sidon-Zefta-Namariya-Charqiyeh road. Charqiyeh covers an area of 500 hectares and is 400 meters above sea level.

Population and Housing

The registered population of Charqiyeh is estimated to be around 4,520 people, the majority of whom are Shia Muslims. There are approximately 1,400 households in the town.

Registered Voters

In the year 2000, there were 1,403 registered voters, out of which 818 exercised their right to vote. By 2009, the number of registered voters had risen to 1,853, with 1,107 participating in the voting process. In 2018, the count of registered voters reached 2,309, and 1,429 individuals voted. As of 2022, the number of registered voters had increased to 2,539.

Voters' Families

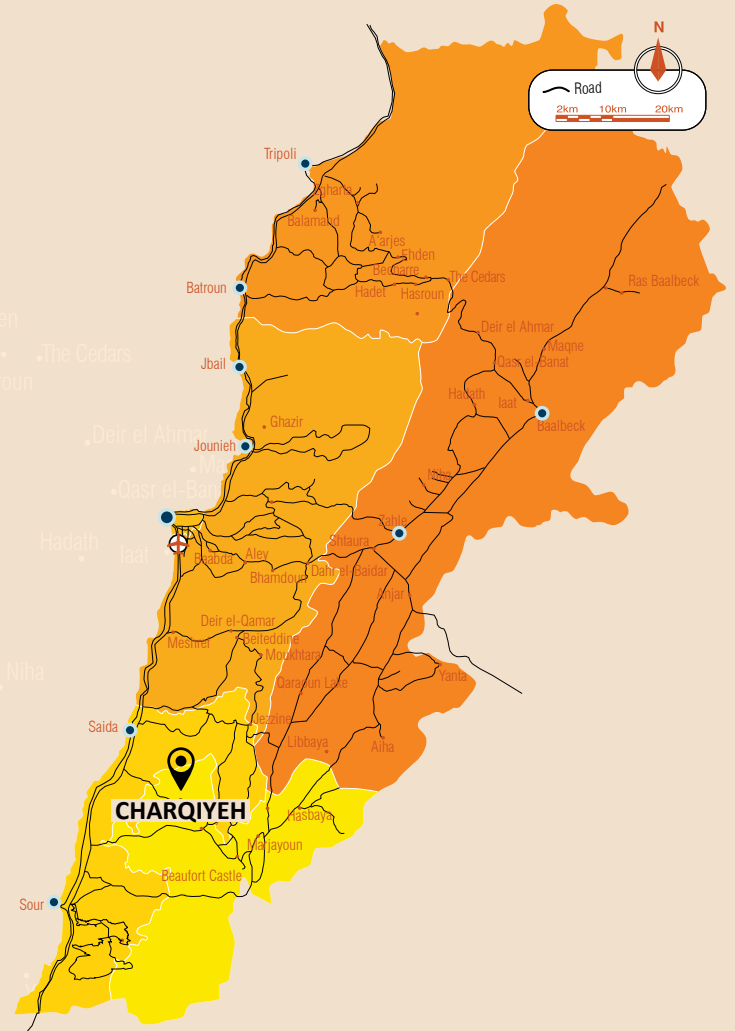
The voters are distributed among the following families:

- Shuaib: 1,702 voters, the largest family
- Qaisi: 206 voters
- Haddad: 130 voters
- Badran: 110 voters
- Awarke: 105 voters
- Jaradi: 76 voters
- Tohmaz: 60 voters
- Barou: 50 voters
- Zaarour: 40 voters
- Halal: 30 voters

There are also other families with fewer voters, including Mroueh, Awada, Hamadeh, and Trabulsi.

Local Authorities

In the town, there is a municipal council consisting of 15 members, along with two Mukhtars and three appointed members.



Economic Life

The economic life of the town primarily depends on emigration and business activities, especially in commercial establishments. Agriculture is also a source of income for some residents.

Educational Institutions

As of the 2020-2021 academic year, Charqiyeh has the following educational institutions:

- In the official middle school of Charqiyeh, there are 246 students and 18 staff members.
- In the Al-Mahdi Model School (a private school that offers free education), there are 1,330 students and 57 staff members.
- In the Imam Al-Mahdi School (a paid private school), there are 1,104 students and 86 staff members.

THE MARONITE AND SHIITE CHAMOUN FAMILIES

The Chamoun families are well-known in Lebanon. One of their prominent members was President Camille Chamoun who played a significant role in Lebanese politics before becoming the President in 1952 and until his death in 1987. These families are mostly Maronite and are distributed in numerous towns and villages in Lebanon. The Shiite Chamoun families are mainly located in Nabatieh and Khiam.

Origin

There are many stories about the origin of the family. One of them suggests that the family's lineage traces back to the Prophet Chamoun ibn Hamoon ibn Amila, also known as Peter (the successor of Christ). He was born in 10 BC, and his mother was the sister of the Prophet Imran, the father of the Virgin Mary. It is said that Chamoun accompanied Jesus Christ during his travels, including to Lebanon, where one of his sons settled and carried his name.

Members

The Chamoun families consist of 4,957 individuals distributed across various regions and sects.

Maronites: 4,013 individuals

- Zahle: 1,156 individuals
- Deir al-Qamar (Chouf): 350 individuals
- Abadiyeh (Bsharri): 230 individuals
- Riyaq (Zahle): 212 individuals
- Jwar al-Hawz (Baabda): 210 individuals
- al-Marjat (Zahle): 152 individuals
- Harajel (Keserwan): 165 individuals
- Kfar Salwan (Baabda): 152 individuals
- al-Baoushriyeh (Matn): 110 individuals
- Ashrafieh: 103 individuals
- Harat Sakhra (Keserwan): 82 individuals
- Hasrun: 72 individuals
- Terbol (Zahle): 65 individuals
- Ramil (Beirut): 61 individuals
- Taalabaya (Zahle): 41 individuals
- Tahouitet al-Nahr (Baabda): 21 individuals
- Adonis w Sannur (Jbeil): 12 individuals
- Harat al-Batm (Baabda): 28 individuals
- al-Suwayfi (Beirut): 12 individuals
- al-Ferzol al-Tahta (Zahle): 14 individuals
- al-Ferzol al-Fawqa (Zahle): 39 individuals
- Anfeh (Koura): 10 individuals
- Kobayat (Akkar): 25 individuals
- Batroun: 14 individuals
- Jdeide (Matn): 18 individuals
- Hadath (Baabda): 7 individuals
- Mkalles (Northern Matn): 11 individuals

- Dikwaneh (Northern Matn): 13 individuals
- Baabdat (Matn): 26 individuals
- Jezzine (South): 18 individuals
- Zalqa (Matn): 20 individuals
- Jourat al-Balout (Northern Matn): 8 individuals
- Bint Jbeil (Jbeil): 5 individuals
- Jdeideh (Zahle): 35 individuals
- Bshamzin (Koura): 6 individuals
- Jbeil (Jbeil): 15 individuals
- Rmeish (Bint Jbeil): 22 individuals
- Qalhat (Koura): 12 individuals
- Falougha (Baabda): 85 individuals
- Qaa al-Rim (Zahle): 12 individuals
- Ghazir al-Jami (Keserwan): 15 individuals
- Nammurah w Kfar Jareef (Keserwan): 12 individuals
- Baskinta (Matn): 8 individuals
- Kfar Hurra (Zgharta): 42 individuals
- Aley: 12 individuals
- Salima (Baabda): 8 individuals
- Sabnieh (Baabda): 21 individuals
- Sada al-Bushriyah (Matn): 34 individuals
- Sin al-Fil (Matn): 13 individuals
- Rishmea (Zgharta): 10 individuals
- Amshit (Jbeil): 8 individuals
- Ayn Arar (Matn): 22 individuals
- Wadi Shahrou al-Sufli: 18 individuals
- Hush Hala (Zahle): 25 individuals
- Zuq al-Kharrab (Matn): 8 individuals
- Rishmaya (Aley): 8 individuals

Syrian Orthodox: 447 individuals

- Msaytbeh (Beirut): 170 individuals
- Zahle: 160 individuals
- Sad al-Baoushriyeh (Matn): 65 individuals
- Mina (Tripoli): 36 individuals
- Burj Hammoud (Matn): 30 individuals
- Mdawwar (Beirut): 16 individuals

Syrian Catholic: 51 individuals

- Mazraa (Beirut): 22 individuals
- Mina al-Hosn (Beirut): 21 individuals
- Botshiyeh (Baabda): 8 individuals

Melkite Catholic: 43 individuals

- Bdadoun (Aley): 25 individuals
- Zahle: 18 individuals

Chaldean Catholic: 48 individuals

- Burj Hammoud (Matn): 30 individuals
- al-Zahriyye (Tripoli): 18 individuals

Evangelical: 32 individuals

- Msaytbeh (Beirut): 32 individuals

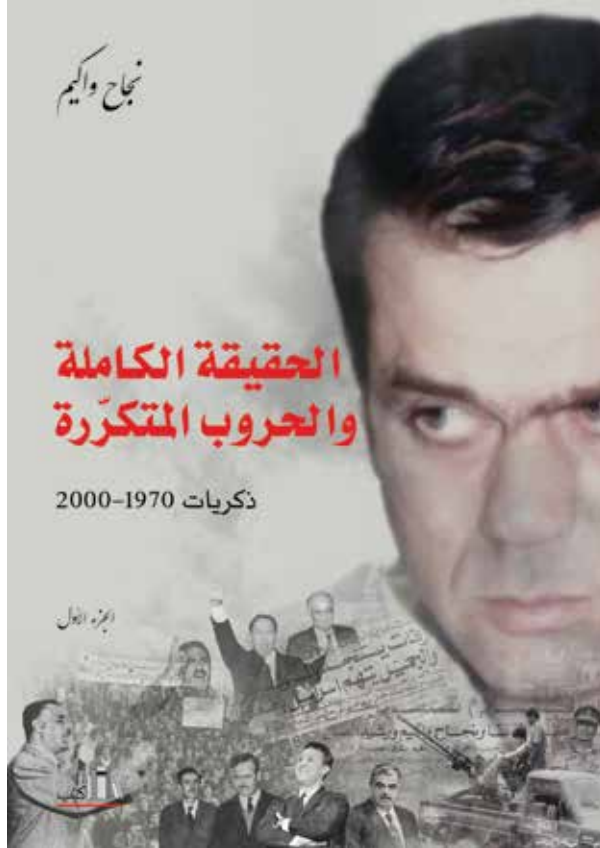
Shiites: 323 individuals

- Nabatiyah al-Fawqa: 220 individuals
- Khiyam al-Sharqi (Marjayoun): 103 individuals

THE FULL TRUTH & THE RECURRING WARS

MEMORIES FROM 1970-2000

Recently, *Kutub Publishing house* released a new book in Arabic, by former deputy Najah Wakim, titled *Al-Haqiqi al-Kamila wal-Hurub al-Mutakarrira, zekrayat 1970-2000 (The Full Truth and the Recurring Wars – Memories from 1970-2000)*, and it is the first volume in a series. The book contains 280 pages in medium format with introductions by Nazih Abu Afsh, Ghassan Matar, and Saad Mehyo. The author's forward immerses the reader in the heart of the subject. Although the memories conveyed are personal, they do belong to the wider audience. The former deputy follows a clearly defined intellectual and political path that is supported by his convictions and belief- during one of the most critical periods in Lebanon's history.



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