

- Treasury Bonds Maturity Dates
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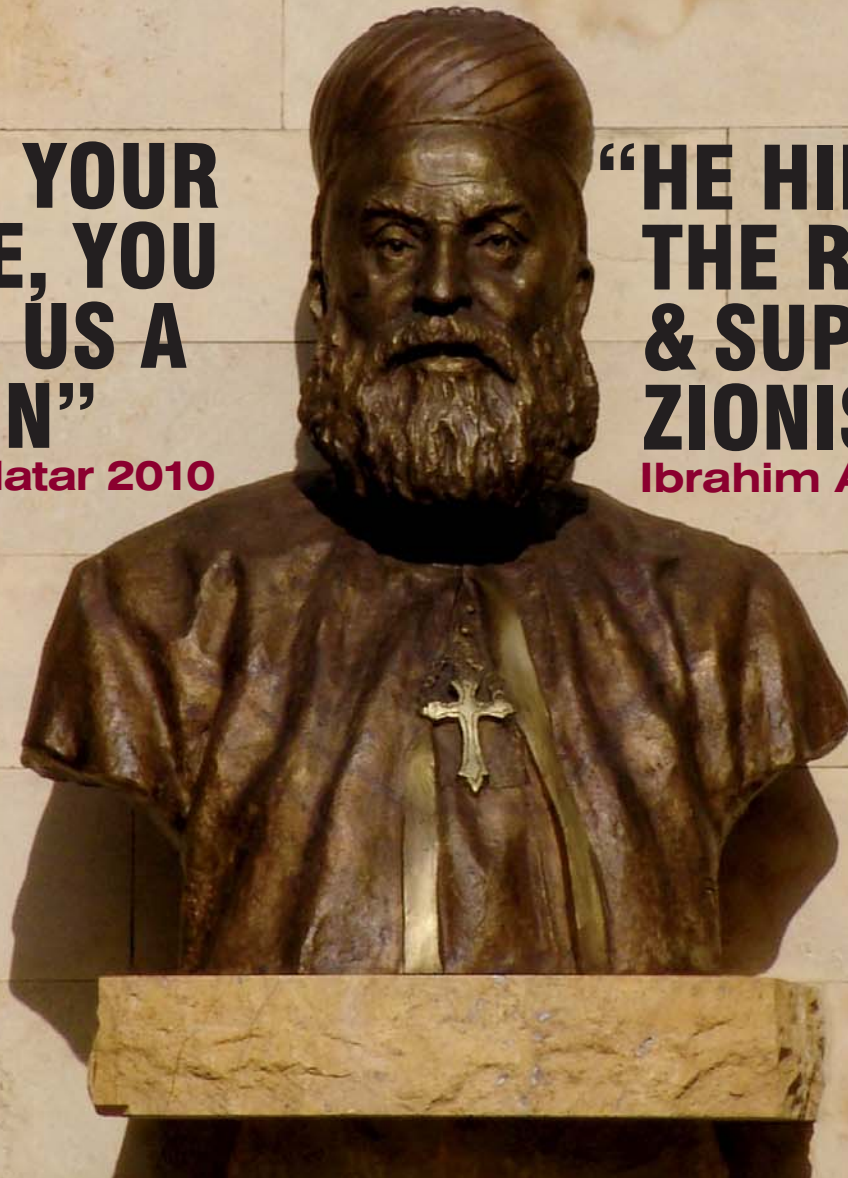
BISHOP IGNATIUS MUBARAK

“FROM YOUR GRAVE, YOU MADE US A NATION”

Bishop Matar 2010

“HE HIDES IN THE ROBE & SUPPORTS ZIONISM”

Ibrahim A'azar 1947



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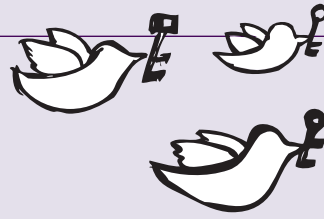
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“THE NECESSITIES OF INDEPENDENCE”



Exasperated with the current state of affairs, the Lebanese might find it enlightening and soothing to read Riad Al-Solh’s response to the complaints regarding corruption, waste of public funds, nepotism and confessionalism in 1943, when he formed the government of independence: those are “the necessities of independence”.

In order for Lebanon to be independent, certain behavior or rules of conduct with foreign powers and nationally are necessary. In order for F.B’s (France and Britain) efforts to be successful and to grant Lebanon independence, Lebanese politicians behaved the way they did. At that time, the issues weren’t as overwhelming, they were limited to some plots of land, the electricity and tobacco companies’ concessions and a few public contracts. The new Lebanese state and system adopted measures of compromise and pragmatism without which Lebanon as we know it now perhaps would not have been formed nor maintained. This was the story of the so called “first independence” and the story of the “second independence” of 2005 is not much different.

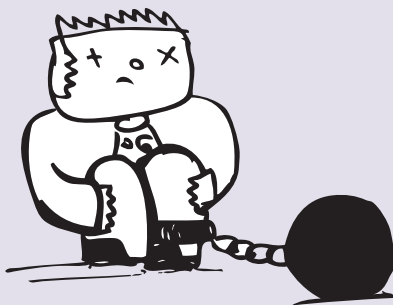
Since F.B, and through “mediation efforts” of Egypt and the US (E.U) and currently of Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the US, “the necessities” have grown exponentially with Solidere, Sukleen, public debt and banks’ profits, while the talk on state building has become even more eloquent.

“The necessities of independence” require that 225 people, since 1943, are assassinated without any indictment. “The necessities of independence” require that we go into a civil war with hundreds of thousands killed and wounded and thousands taken hostage by warlords that we honor and whose photographs we plaster on our dirty balconies with our dirty linen. The same “necessities” also require them to pay us for this advertisement.

“The necessities of independence” require that we be drowned in garbage, waste water and public debt while following the leader and seeking immigration.

“The necessities of independence” require us to name the streets after our occupiers, Foch and Clemenceau. The same “necessities” decree that we also name streets after Jamal Abdel Naser, Kennedy, Gandhi, Syria, Lebanon and Argentina in a strange cocktail that reflects a weird sense of urban planning, in a perpetuated tragicomedy scene.

“The necessities of independence” require us to scream “Thank you Syria” and “Syria out” and to curse the petrodollar and to assume and pretend that the “mediators” are do-gooders while we obediently await the result of the S.S (Syria-Saudi) “mediation efforts”. And this is what we call Independence Lebanese Style.



_____ Jawad N. Adra

52 YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH, BISHOP IGNATIUS MUBARAK

Still creating a schism ... but some think that “his grace” remains and that he “made us a nation”

A way from accusations of treason and praises of sanctification, and in order to get acquainted with phrases that have been repeatedly used, such as “the components of Lebanese society” or “national coexistence”, one must undertake an in-depth study of a specific case that will help us understand the complexity of Lebanese politics. History recalls the names of various Christian and Muslim clerics and politicians who played an important role in Lebanon and in the region, including Palestine. The Monthly has chosen the story or the case of Bishop Ignatius Mubarak as one worth looking into. This was not merely due to the accusations of treason that were laid on him in 1947, following a memorandum he sent to the United Nations supporting the creation of the State of Israel, neither for the tributes he received in 2010, for being a hero of Lebanon’s Independence, but also due to the fact that this Bishop, who was accused of treason by Maronite and Muslim MPs, was carried over the shoulders of the residents of Basta in Beirut in 1943 for his efforts regarding the imprisonment of various figures of the Lebanese government. Some (“The Muslims”) even referred to him as ‘The Great Warrior/Struggler’. Furthermore, he opened the doors of his patriarchy in Beirut to host a parliamentary session, challenging the French Mandate. This article depicts Bishop Ignatius Mubarak’s path and stances, while other religious and political personalities will be covered in upcoming issues.

Biography

Bishop Ignatius Mubarak (originally spelled Moubarak) was born in Rachmaya in 1876. He attended La Sagesse School in Beirut and was sent by Bishop Youssef Al Dibs to Paris to continue his higher education, at the expense of the French government. He was appointed Bishop of Beirut in March 1919. Following Lebanon’s independence in 1943, he was awarded the Independence Medal and was named the Bishop of Independence. He resigned in 1952 and died in 1958 (in the midst of the Lebanese political and military crisis, which ended with the election of then army commander, General Fouad Chehab, as president of the republic).

Bishop Mubarak publicly announced what Bishop Antoine A’arida had started with the Jewish Agency, to the extent that Eliahu Epstein¹ found A’arida ‘more aggressive’ against Muslims than his predecessor Patriarch Howayek, and this was in 1932 (on Bishop Mubarak, refer to the book *My Enemy’s Enemy* by Laura Zittrain Eisenberg).

¹ - Eliahu Epstein (who later changed his name to Eliahu Eilat) was a young Jewish immigrant of Russian origin, who studied at the American University of Beirut between 1931 and 1934. He was one of the most important agents (along with Eliahu Sasson) of the foreign relations section of the Jewish Agency and he focused on Lebanese issues.

Bishop’s stances

The Bishop took several notable stances, we mention two here:

First: following the arrest by the French Mandate of the President of the Republic Bechara El-Khoury, the Prime Minister Riad El-Solh along with other ministers, such as Adel Osseiran, Camille Chamoun, Abdel Hamid Karami and Salim Takla in Rachaya in 1943, the Bishop contacted British officials and sought their support. He also visited the families of the detained, including that of Riad El-Solh. The climax of his campaign was his visit to Basta where the residents attempted to lift his car and called him “The Great Mujahid” or Great Warrior. He then hosted a parliament session in his patriarchy, since the Parliament could not convene due to the French Mandate’s prohibition, where he addressed the MPs making a pledge before God and before them that anyone who would attempt to enter this meeting would do so over his dead body and their hands would be tainted with his blood. General Catroux, the French government’s envoy, submitted a memo in which he protested the Bishop’s opinions and his open call to Lebanon’s independence from France. Dr. Jean Nakhoul declared during an Independence Seminar (a

seminar organized by the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, some of the documentation related to it was published in An Nahar newspaper on January 13, 1994), that “the Bishop was known for his strong attachment to the French but he was more attached to Lebanon’s independence”. His relationship with President Bechara El-Khoury strengthened and he compared Rachaya to the grotto in which Jesus was born because “absolute independence was born in that prison cell”. Munir Takieddine said he was a clergyman who fought hard against the French Mandate (same issue of An Nahar newspaper).

Second: Following the 1947 parliamentary elections, he stood in the opposition camps to Bechara El-Khoury and the government and he issued a memorandum that same year to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. He wrote “I am very thrilled about Zionism which I realize is bringing civilization to Palestine and the Middle East as a whole, and that any resistance to it signifies a return to chaos and barbarism”. He demanded the creation of a Jewish nation in Palestine and a Christian nation in Lebanon. This request led to the dissatisfaction of the president and many Lebanese, particularly the Maronite MPs. Bechara El-Khoury states in his memoirs, “Haqa’ek Lubnaniyyah” or Lebanese Facts, that the resignation of Bishop Mubarak and the appointment of his successor Bishop Ziyadeh came directly from the Vatican without consulting the Patriarch. He alludes that the strike of the Sagesse School students and the demonstrations in Beirut and to Bkirki against Bishop Ziyadeh had the blessing of Bishop Mubarak. The latter told Khoury that the Vatican had reconsidered its decision. The facts however were otherwise, and the Vatican instructed Bishop Mubarak to leave his post.

MPs take a stand: Denunciation

On Monday September 29, 1947, the Lebanese parliament held a special session to discuss the Bishop’s memorandum. The session, which was headed by Speaker Sabri Hamadeh and attended by Prime Minister Riad El-Solh and a number of ministers, resulted in the unanimous adoption of the following:

“The Lebanese parliament, in its session dated September 29, 1947, declares its opposition to all the contents of the memorandum of Bishop Mubarak. On this occasion, it lends the government its absolute support in the defense of the Arab [identity] of Palestine”.

Following are the most notable statements made during that session:

Ra’if Abi Al-Lama’a

“You no doubt read the memorandum filed by Bishop Ignatius Mubarak to the United Nations Special Committee

on Palestine. And you must have been surprised and puzzled by his suggestion given that he was renowned for his courage and patriotism and his honest and effective contribution to the struggle for independence in 1943. He had promised the Lebanese brotherhood, understanding and union among the various confessions and denominations, he had been awarded the Independence Medal for his efforts to attain Independence and had been named the Bishop of Independence. And then this religious figure changed his stance overnight supporting the Zionist cause, calling for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, publicizing opinions that, to say the least, sow the seeds of division between Muslims and Christians. He then attacked the government and the national assembly, accused them of being a tool run by foreign hands and above all claimed to be speaking, not only in the name of Maronites, but in the name of all Christians... No lesson can be learned from such obtrusive voices whose stances vary every other day.”

Wadi’ Na’aim

“What makes us, the Maronites, present this memorandum is the clamor that followed the memorandum of Bishop Mubarak. We feel the need to justify our position, since we consider that what he expressed only represented his personal opinion as he was speaking in his own name, and this is why we immediately met and wrote this memorandum in order to clarify the situation. All the Maronite MPs signed this memorandum except for Mr. Amin Nakhleh, who we could not find, and Mr. Youssef Karam, because he had reservations to it although he supported it” (MPs memorandum can be found on page 8).

“He hides in the robe and supports Zionism,”

Ibrahim A’azar

“... Yes in the midst of these honorable awakenings, alas a man hides in the robe of priesthood and takes refuge in its traditions, supports Zionism and tries to plant the seeds of division among the Lebanese, encouraging them to civil disobedience and the Lebanese army to rebellion and revolt.

We, the Maronite people of the revolution, feel pain when we hear this voice and we almost sense the bad faith that this man has kept dormant. We consider this man to be



a stranger to us. The priest who disobeys the teachings of the Holy See and whose actions are denounced by the patriarch cannot claim to speak in the name of one of Lebanon's confessions nor in the name of his followers and subjects who belong to that confession. Sons of Lebanon, unite your ranks and do not fall for the sayings of a man disguised in the robe of religion and do not be fooled by the statements of this and that... Wasn't Judah the most loyal of Jesus' disciples but then sold him for 30 pieces of silver?"

George Zouein

"... Even if the Bishop holds a place as a spiritual leader, he does not have the right to cross the limits, as he has done in his writings in which he calls for disobedience. I heard, with my colleague Farid Al-Khazen, from the pope's representative that the Vatican denounces any person who carries out such action and strongly disapproves of it..."

Farid Al-Khazen

"We complained about the Bishop to the Patriarch and the Pope and we hold the government responsible for his actions because we are not an executive authority. What happened to us in the case of the Bishop resembles the popular saying "who gave you power A'antar? And the latter replies: I gave myself the power and found no one to stop me".

"It has been some time now that the Bishop has been flaunting his opinions and the government has just been watching without making a move. Allow me to propose to the national assembly to withdraw confidence from the government within five days if no strict measures are taken against the Bishop..."

Khalil Abou Jaoudeh

"His eminence says in his memoranda that this is the opinion of the Lebanese people, so I wonder in what capacity the Bishop represents the Lebanese people. He was named spiritual leader of the Maronite confession in Beirut and was assigned to take care of their religious affairs. He does not have any authority to politically represent them, so where did he come up with this authority?"

Nassar Gholmieh

"I was especially surprised with [the memorandum] because his Excellency Bishop Mubarak is a well-known patriot. I denounce it, because we, the Christians in this land, are patriotic Arabs, before being Christians and Muslims! We did not come for division, hatred and national betrayal! Here are our Arab neighbors of the remaining Ghassanids, they continue to be nomads living in Hauran, Jordan and the Peninsula, and we are nationally connected

to them. Let everyone know that we, the Christians, walk in the forefront to defend the Lebanese and Palestinian homeland and every Arab brotherly country, and we will not accept that any individual carry out a corrupt campaign against our cause..."

Youssef Karam

"Bishop Mubarak says that Lebanon was the sanctuary for the majority of Christians who were persecuted in the world and I tell him it was also a sanctuary for Muslims on the day of the well known Palestine revolution. Perhaps his Excellency has lost some of his sanity and this is my personal opinion. In any case, when he says that this assembly is rigged then I may correct him, as I told him, that I speak in the name of the Maronites more than him..."

Kamal Jumblat

"His Excellency Bishop Mubarak's memo is insignificant and only represents his opinion, and that of a minority in the country. This is why I have pleaded several times for this corrupt paper to be destroyed. Your Excellency knows that I made a proposition, which my colleagues then considered to be "dangerous", and I repeat it now: There will never be real opposition in Lebanon in which every loyal man takes part unless confessionism is abolished and reactionism is destroyed."

"I called for a decision to abolish political confessionism and when the assembly studies the new electoral law I will submit this vital proposal. The government of Riad bek al-Solh will not have completed its mission in Lebanon unless confessionism is abolished..."

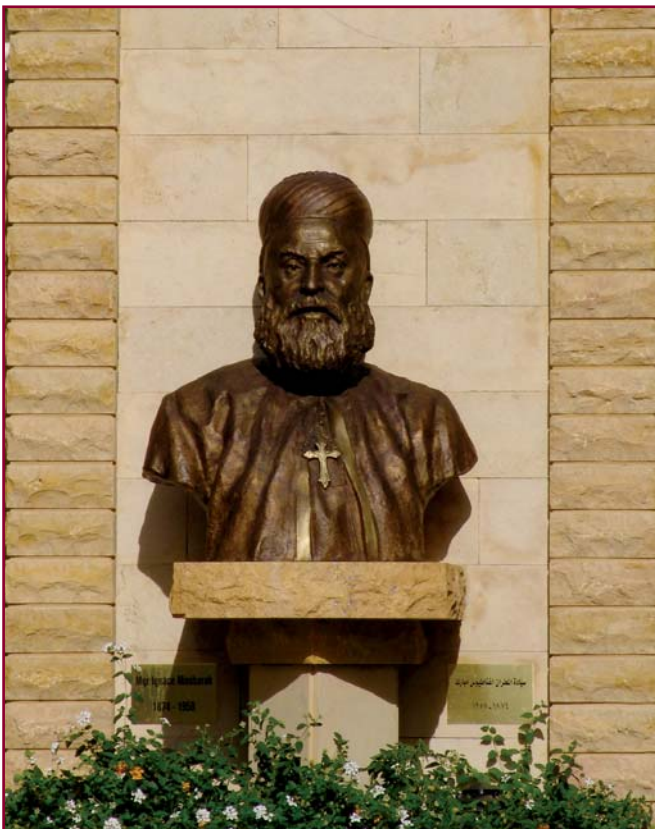
Mohammad Safieddine

"My colleagues the MPs of the south and I will be, when duty calls, at the forefront of fighters defending the first defense line. Here we cannot but thank the government for its honorable position regarding this cause and ask it to strike with an iron fist the hands of anyone who is tempted to conspire against it no matter what his status or how high his position. The cause of Palestine is sacred and in such a critical position the government cannot allow itself to fail."

Prime minister Riad El-Solh

"Allow me to summarize the situation: a daily newspaper in this country published a memorandum sent by his Excellency Bishop Mubarak on August 5 to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. I read the memorandum and was shocked so I went to more than one of my friends and told them to contact his Excellency and

ask him to immediately refute this memo because neither I nor anyone else believed that he had written and signed it. He was contacted but did not refute, rather he distributed the French text that was published a day later in the same newspaper. After that, the Maronite MPs met, and they had the right to meet because his Excellency belongs to the same confession that they belong to, and they prepared the statement that you heard. What happened was that a group of citizens felt insulted by this memo, so they came and literally told me: ‘we know that the aim is to provoke riot and division between the Lebanese and we will not be tools to this end. We will give our souls and our lives to support the mandate that we agreed on and swore to’ ... As for the strike, it was not to protest against this memorandum, but rather it was, I think, to demonstrate the true public opinion. It wanted to prove that Lebanon, in its entirety, is for an Arab Palestine and wanted to renew what was said to the Committee because what had so far been mentioned to it was the official position. Yes, the strike occurred for this reason and the memo had only a fourth degree impact on it and I personally did not care as much about it as others did. Bishop Mubarak issued many leaflets and statements saying “Oh Lebanese do not pay your tax” while he personally was paying his taxes. And finally he came with this memorandum that revealed the truth behind his intentions”.



A tribute and a statue for the Bishop

The positions taken by Bishop Mubarak caused a major rift between the Lebanese but did not alienate his partisans and supporters, even after the passage of time.

In December 1994, the role and stances of Bishop Mubarak were mentioned in a seminar held at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik dedicated to the various roles played by Patriarchs and Bishops in Lebanon's Independence. The seminar was attended by Abbot Boulos Na'man, Father Boulos Sfeir and Dr Jean Nakhoul.

On June 8, 2008, the Maronite parish in Beirut commemorated the 50th anniversary of his death during a mass headed by Beirut's Maronite Bishop Boulos Matar and attended by a group of Maronite MPs, ministers and politicians from various political movements.

In the same context, La Sagesse School unveiled, with Matar's blessing, on November 20, 2009, a plaque in memory of Bishop Ignatius Mubarak with the engraving: "From your grave, you made us a Nation". A laurel wreath was placed on his grave in the Church of Mar Antonius al-Badouni in Rmeil. Some of the speeches in the event called for honoring Mubarak as one of the men of independence.

On October 2, 2010, the town of Rachmaya celebrated the unveiling of a bust of the Bishop, placed in the courtyard of the Qarqayos Church, during a celebration organized by the town's municipality and the Waqf Committee under Matar's patronage. In his speech Matar said: "We are determined to move his remains (Mubarak) to Saint George's Cathedral as soon as possible to a private graveyard worthy of this great man and shepherd who has grace on all of us, our homeland, our parish and our church."

Bishop Mubarak's support of the Jewish Agency and the creation the State of Israel was not only the result of theoretical or doctrinal convictions but also what he perhaps saw as a pragmatic solution to ensure the continuance of a Christian Lebanon in a region with a majority of Muslims, and this opinion was shared by various Maronite Zua'ama. Communication between political and religious Zua'ama and the Jewish Agency and Zionist leaders was not limited to the Maronite community, as other Muslim, Druze and Christian politicians and clerics were also involved in this.

However, his stance was not widely supported by the Maronites, as demonstrated by the statements of the Maronite MPs. His relationship with the Jewish Agency, while aiming to ensure a Christian Lebanon as he believed, was also inviting external support to strengthen the Maronite Church's position in the internal conflict.

Declaration by Maronite MPs in the Lebanese National Assembly - 1947

We read with bitterness and pain the memorandum of Bishop Ignatius Mubarak dated August 5, 1947, dedicated to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, due to the smears and elements of betrayal and division contained in it. Therefore we, the MPs of the Maronite confession in the Lebanese National Assembly, declare:

First: We vehemently denounce this memorandum and deplore it as we previously denounced the last political statements by Bishop Mubarak.

Second: Bishop Mubarak does not have the right to speak in the name of the Maronite confession or in the name of the rest of the Christian confessions, especially in political affairs.

Third: Lebanon, represented by his Excellency the president of the republic, with the consensus of the government, the Lebanese parliament and the support of the public opinion, both Muslim and Christian, has specified its final position regarding the Palestine cause. It rejects the partition of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state in it, insists on calling for its complete independence as an Arab state and for an immediate halt to the Jewish migration. It completely rejects any Zionist claim to it. And there are official delegations, with a Maronite majority, roaming the world to defend this sacred cause.

Fourth: Lebanon does not belong to one confession or another; rather it belongs to all the Lebanese equally. They live in it without discrimination between confessions and or between majority and minority, they are devoted to their independence, they preserve the Cairo Agreement and are protective of their solidarity with all their brotherly Arab states.

Fifth: Bishop Mubarak's memorandum only expresses his opinion and the opinion of a gang of opportunist conspirators who were and remain spears against independence and solidarity among confessions and who can only achieve their intentions by conspiring against this mandate and its men.

In order to reveal the truth and out of desire to put an end to this reckless attack and in a bid to declare our honest position regarding our brothers in Lebanon and in the Arab east, we dispatched this testament on September 27, 1947.

“Bishop Mubarak was ideologically and psychologically suspicious of the Arab world and its Muslim majority, and he genuinely believed that the creation of Israel would protect the threatened Maronite minority ... [but] has Israel protected the Christians of Lebanon and Palestine?”

What is noteworthy in the efforts to honor Bishop Mubarak is the absence of questioning of the historical stances of clerics and political Zua'ama in Lebanon. Should it be inferred that Bishop Mubarak was right in supporting the Zionist movement to create the Israeli State? If so, then why is this not openly and honestly stated, as the Bishop would have done?

If what is meant is to illustrate the qualities of the Bishop's stances with regard to Independence from the French, then why hide his defaults, such as his support for the establishment of an Israeli State? Why is history not taught objectively, without accusations and sanctifications? Why was he considered a “Great Struggler” when he defended the “heroes of the Independence” in 1943, but then “a traitor” in 1947 when he sent his memorandum to the UN supporting the emergence of a Jewish State? Was he really supporting Lebanon's full independence from the French or was he seeking the establishment of a “Christian Lebanese nation” in the East? Did he seek independence from the French or from Syria and the Arabian Peninsula?

It seems that Bishop Mubarak was ideologically and psychologically suspicious of the Arab world and its Muslim majority, and he genuinely believed that the creation of Israel would protect the threatened Maronite minority. He was definitely vocal in declaring his opinion at a time when most of those, Christians and Muslims, that were in contact with the Jewish Agency kept quiet. However, a more important question emerges: Has Israel protected the Christians of Lebanon and Palestine? The various tributes to Bishop Mubarak failed to mention and consider these important matters. Furthermore, there still exists in Lebanon those who believe that enmity with Israel is but a “point of view”. Thus, it appears that we do not study history as facts to learn from, but as fiction, and therefore we are deemed to repeat it. 🌍

CONFERENCES PALACE: AN UNEXECUTED PROJECT

for which the State has paid USD 8.5 Million

The creation of a palace for conferences was one of the projects proposed by the 1993 government of Rafic Hariri. It is an important project, which would have been executed speedily had Lebanon been in possession of the necessary funds. However, it is reeling under the burden of debt and does not possess the necessary resources to carry out even the most critical endeavors. Therefore, the mere thought of creating a conferences palace at this point would not only be wrong but it would also undermine the country's more important priorities.

Beginning

On November 17, 1993, the Council of Ministers issued Decree No. 29, which selected a part of Estate No. 705 (which constitutes State property) in A'ain Mreisseh, Beirut (facing Bain Militaire), as the property in which a palace for conferences and a special building to host foreign dignitaries on official trips would be built. The Council commissioned then Prime Minister Rafic Hariri to assign the preparation of a comprehensive study of the project to one of the public or private establishments or administrations of the country. The study would include a description of the funding required in addition to a primary construction plan. It would then be presented to the Council of Ministers, who would take the appropriate decisions with regards to the building.

Thus, Hariri assigned the tasks to the Council of Development and Reconstruction, a decision approved by the Cabinet in Decree No. 33 issued on February 2, 1994. The project was to be awarded to a group consisting of:

- ⦿ an investor with a prestigious commercial reputation, which would have to be confirmed by an international bank,
- ⦿ a managing company of international five star hotels experts in this domain, and
- ⦿ an international consultancy firm with experience in designing international hotels (35 hotels).

The Council prepared a draft announcement for the submission of applications to participate in a competition to design, execute, finance and operate a center for conferences that would consist of a five star hotel with a minimum of 500 rooms and a maximum of 1000 rooms. The area for this project was estimated between 250,000 and 350,000 square meters with a

cost ranging between USD 250 million and USD 300 million. The winner would have to operate and invest in the hotel for a certain period of time and then hand it over in excellent condition to the Lebanese State.

Decree No. 54 of August 16, 1995, amended Decree No. 33 and charged the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL) to come up with the best tools and solutions for the construction of this centre. By Decree No. 72 of December 6, 1995, the Cabinet assigned to IDAL the task of establishing a private joint company to build and invest in a center for culture and conferences in Beirut under a B.O.T. (Build, Operate, Transfer) contract. However, IDAL thought it better to rely on the provisions of Law No. 58/67, dated July 5, 1967, which leaves the consideration of touristic projects to the Cabinet and authorizes the establishment of mixed companies, in which the State can invest and have shares. IDAL recommended that the prospective investor should pay the State USD 150 million to participate in encouraging the return of the displaced. Decree No. 7650, issued on December 13, 1995, allowed the acquisition of the following: Estate No. 733 (with an area of 2,993 square meters and owned by the Al-Ahli Real Estate Bank and the Lebanese Real Estate Company-SIL), Estate No. 799 (with an area of 561 square meters and owned by the sons of Elias Z'eini) and Estate No. 800 (with an area of 465 square meters and also owned by the sons of Elias Z'eini). These estates, with a total area of 4,019 square meters, were added to Estate No. 705, which itself has an area of 52,000 square meters. Estate No. 705 was considered private State property whereas the acquired estates (Nos. 733, 799 and 800/A'ain Mreisseh) were considered in-kind donations by the State to the mixed company's capital. The Cabinet approved IDAL's offer



by issuing Decree No. 11957 on March 19, 1998. This authorized the construction of a center for culture and conferences in Beirut as a touristic utility and the creation of a mixed company, with a capital of USD 450 million.

Cancellation

Following the 1998 presidential elections, which resulted in the election of the then army commander Emile Lahoud as President of the Republic, PM Rafic Hariri was replaced by Salim Hoss. The new Cabinet issued Decree No. 1278 on September 13, 1999, which annulled Decree No. 11957 of March 19, 1998, consequently terminating the conferences palace project. It based its decision on the fact that the price of the square meter in that area was estimated at USD 4,000 and as such, Estate No. 705 had a significant financial value that would be better used for other purposes.

Reinstatement of the Project and Return to the Previous Formula

Following the 2000 legislative elections and Hariri's return as Prime Minister, the project was reinstated. In its session of June 21, 2001, the Cabinet issued Decree No. 5815, which enabled the reconsideration of the culture and conference center project in Beirut and the licensing of a mixed company to execute the plan. It based its decision on the following considerations:

- ⊙ **A study by the Ministry of Tourism** found that the establishment of a compound that includes conference halls and cultural centers along with accommodation facilities had become one of the most important factors in attracting tourists and delegations from Arab and foreign countries. The Francophone conference highlighted the need for such a center.
- ⊙ **A study by IDAL** demonstrated the purpose and importance of such a conference center and its positive influence on touristic activity in Lebanon. It also stated that the best location for such a center was that of Estate No. 705/A'ain Mreisseh and adjacent estates, which were added to it by Decree No. 5815 dated June 28, 2001.

A New Cancellation

The change of government in 2004 brought Omar Karami as PM and led to the issuance of Decree No. 14158 on February 8, 2005, which annulled Decree No. 5815 and Decree No. 5951 (allowing the acquisitions of Estates Nos. 733, 799, 800). Incidentally, the licenses to acquire the above-mentioned estates were rescinded and the culture and conference center project was cancelled.

Financial Cost

Approving the project, canceling it, approving it again and then canceling it a second time had a financial cost for the State, mainly due to the several preliminary studies undertaken. In 1996, IDAL signed a contract with the Lebanese Arab Consulting Engineering Company (LACECO, whose former chairman, Salim Diab, was close to Hariri). Under the contract, LACECO was in charge of securing funding, assisting IDAL in analyzing bids and monitoring the execution of the preliminary works until the final adoption of the project. IDAL decided that SOLIPAC, a company which was to be established to gather the required capital for the project, would pay LACECO for the first and second phases of the project, estimated at a cost of USD 10,850,000. SOLIPAC would then be left with the choice of continuing to work with LACECO or stopping there. IDAL had agreed with LACECO that if the project was annulled by government decree, it would pay the latter 1.2% (instead of 1.7%) of the cost of the project's total value (USD 350 million), totaling a sum of USD 4.2 million.

However, when the contract was signed, it did not mention SOLIPAC and failed to address the probability of the project being annulled by government decree.

The contract divided LACECO's tasks into four phases. The company was to be paid for each phase, with the total cost reaching USD 19.2 million, according to the following:

Phase 1: 1.7% of the project's value or USD 5,950,000 including:

- ⊙ Preliminary designs and maps, a sample of the project and a license for construction
- ⊙ Terms and conditions I: Qualifications and conditions
- ⊙ Terms and conditions II: Designs and project elements
- ⊙ Terms and conditions III: Market feasibility study
- ⊙ Terms and conditions IV: Company constitution

Phase 2: 1.4% of the project's value or USD 4,900,000, which covers consultancy files, architectural design maps and execution documents.

Phase 3: 0.3% of the project's value or USD 1,050,000, which covers the launching of a bid, the analysis of tenders, general follow up and supervision.

Phase 4: 2.1% of the project's value or USD 7,350,000, which covers supervision over the execution of the work.

LACECO agreed to follow through despite the several cancellations and disruptions of the project, but demanded its wages. The Court of Audit recommended a settlement for LACECO’s demands.

The project was permanently cancelled on February 8, 2005. LACECO sent a letter to IDAL on November 29, 2005, (at which point Fouad Siniora had become PM) demanding the payment of USD 9.6 million based on the following:

Details sent by LACECO to IDAL				Table 1
Date of disclosure	Value of disclosure	Time frame until 30 November 2005 (60 days)	Interest due	Total amount
9 December 1998	5,950,000	2,486 days	3,697,925	9,647,925

Source: Council of Ministers’ meeting June 18, 2009.

LACECO demanded this amount, but it turned out that the committee assigned by IDAL to take over the project had not approved the documents and maps submitted by the former. Direct negotiations with LACECO were held to reach a settlement based on the Court of Audit’s recommendations. In addition, IDAL’s board of directors formed a committee in 2006, which would be in charge of drafting a report that would describe the extent to which the executed work was in conformity with the prescribed work and specify the value of what had been done. The committee cooperated with a private company and the report showed that the value of what had been executed corresponded with the amount that was being requested.

Payment

On April 9, 2008, IDAL’s president Nabil Itani sent a letter to the then Prime Minister Fouad Siniora asking the government to provide it with funds to pay LACECO, following reconciliation between the two. This was approved by the Legislative and Consultative Commission at the Ministry of Justice, but the amount was reduced to USD 8,543,684—the original amount (USD 5,900,000) with a 5% interest (USD 2,643,684) due to the delay in payment. The interest value was set as follows:

$[5,900,000 \times 5\% \times 3,271 \text{ (number of actual days for interests)}] / 365 \text{ (number of days in a year)}$.

The matter was reviewed by the Cabinet, “based on the instructions of the Prime Minister” as per the Cabinet’s secretary general Sohail Bouji, and approved.

“The company chosen to undertake the preliminary works was owned by an MP close to Hariri, [...] it won its case during Siniora’s premiership and (...) the inspection showed that the company had adequately done its job. But the question is: what was the actual value of these works, how much did they really cost and what were their benefits for the Lebanese government after the project was permanently cancelled?”

A case to learn lessons from

The back and forth creation and cancellation of the project of the conferences palace provides an example of the State’s mismanagement of projects, which has undoubtedly contributed to the financial crisis we are suffering from today.

The thought process behind the project reflects a prioritization problem. The palace was not built, but others were, including A’ain el-Tineh (the residence of Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri) and the Grand Serail (the headquarters of the Council of Ministers and the residence of the Premier).

Tailoring the studies to suit certain individuals’ personal interests and choosing specific locations (the expensive Estate No. 705/A’ain Mreisseh) is a clear signal of the squandering of funds. Back then, the value of this estate was USD 200 million and today it has reached USD 500 million. It can therefore be sold or leased and generate income instead of being used for unnecessary installations. It is a rather strange coincidence that the company chosen to undertake the preliminary works was owned by an MP close to Hariri, that it won its case during Siniora’s premiership and that the inspection showed that the company had adequately done its job. But the question is: what was the actual value of these works, how much did they really cost and what were their benefits for the Lebanese government after the project was permanently cancelled?

The dire economic and financial situation that Lebanon is faced with today is not the result of one faulty decision but of the absence of a governmental plan with a set of established priorities, the irresponsible use of public funds and the accumulation of mistakes at the parliamentary, ministerial, and presidential levels.

TREASURY BONDS MATURITY DATES

\$25 billion in 2011-2012

Public debt is a symptom of financial and economic crisis suffered by most countries around the world. The seriousness of this crisis differs from one state to the other as it varies according to its capacities and resources. Its gravity is limited in countries that enjoy a strong economy or abundant natural resources while it exhausts the economy of poor countries. In Lebanon, it substantially increases every year. Based on estimates of the 2010 draft budget law, servicing the public debt dominates 47.3% of revenues. During certain years where public debt is high, the government is sometimes forced to ask for a renewal of treasury bonds that have reached maturity, which comes with an increase in interest rates that further adds to the cost of servicing the public debt.

Public debt in Lebanon

By the end of October 2010, public debt reached around LBP 76,840 billion. The 2010 draft budget law provided that an estimated LBP 6,100 billion were to service public debt but by the end of September 2010 only LBP 4,710 billion had been paid off. The figures indicate that debt service could surpass the estimated figure by the end of the year and could reach around LBP 6,300 billion-LBP 6,500 billion.

Creditors

Public debt takes the form of local currency treasury bonds (in LBP), which represent 58.5% of the total public debt or around LBP 44,950 billion, and foreign currency treasury bonds, which represent 41.5% of the total public debt or around LBP 31,890 billion. The creditors are the Central Bank of Lebanon, Lebanese banks, foreign governments and international development organizations, as listed in Table 1. According to its figures, Lebanese banks have acquired 57.1% of Lebanon's treasury bonds (in LBP and foreign currencies) worth around \$29 billion.

Distribution of public debt in Lebanese pounds and in foreign currencies by creditor

Table 1

Creditor	Value of bonds in LBP (billion)	Percentage of total public debt	Value of bonds in foreign currencies (billion LBP)	Percentage of total public debt
Lebanese Banks	28,498	37.1	15,342	20
The Central Bank	8,676	11.3	-	-
Public institutions and the public	7,776	10.1	-	-
Foreign banks and financial institutions (Eurobonds)	-	-	11,924	15.5
Paris II loans	-	-	446	0.6
Arab and foreign governments	-	-	1,435	1.8
Private bonds for acquisitions and other bonds	-	-	511	0.66
International development organizations	-	-	2,232	2.9
Total	44,950	58.5 %	31,890	41.5 %

Source: Central Bank of Lebanon

Debt maturity

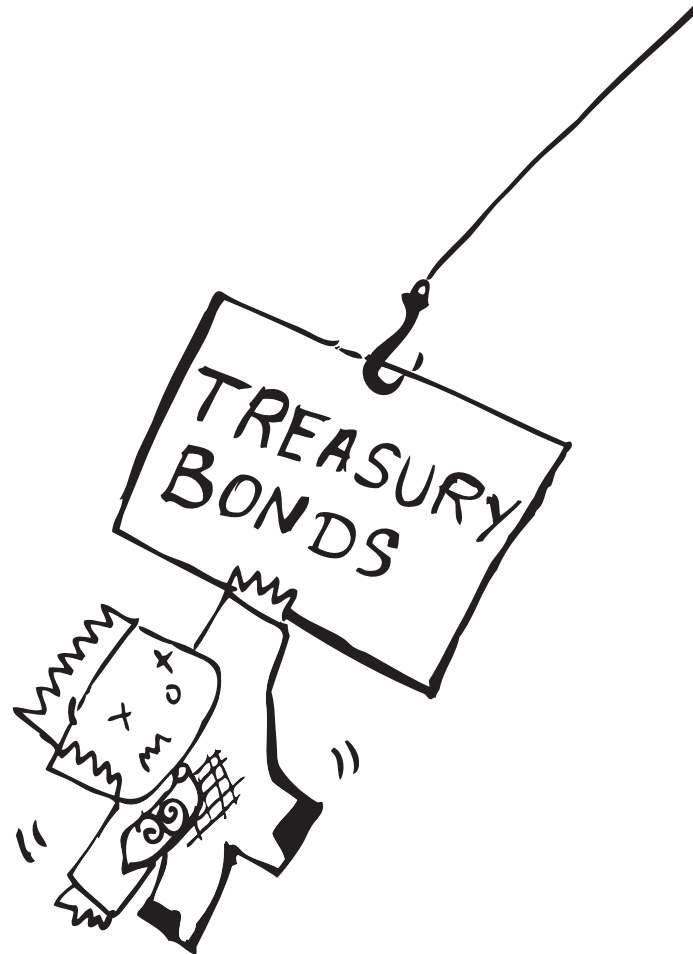
In light of the current financial situation, it is likely that the State will be unable to pay off its public debt and instead it will seek to extend the due date of its settlement. However, the main issue is that the amount of debt differs from one year to the other. Thus, the higher the figure the greater the financial pressure will be, which means that the State will then need to renew the treasury bonds regardless of the financial situation and available liquidity in addition to submitting to creditors’ demands to raise interest, which in turn will reflect negatively on the general financial situation and reduce the availability of financial resources to carry out development projects. In 2011 and 2012, treasury bonds worth around \$25.1 billion will reach maturity, which amounts to half of the public debt and 55% of issued bonds. This is what the government must start realizing as of today. Table 2 shows the value of treasury bonds that will reach maturity by year, which will amount to \$46 billion by 2024.

“In 2011 and 2012, treasury bonds worth around \$25.1 billion will reach maturity, which amounts to half of the public debt and 55% of issued bonds.”

Value of Lebanese government bonds and maturity dates			Table 2
Year	Value of bonds in LBP (billion)	Value of Eurobond (in foreign currencies, USD million)	Total issued bonds (in USD million)
2011	19,832	1,750	14,905
2012	12,295	2,080	10,236
2013	6,343	1,525	5,732
2014	1,987	1,559	2,877
2015	2,429	750	2,361
2016	-	1,150	1,150
2017	-	3,728	3,728
2018	-	1,255	1,255
2020	-	1,200	1,200
2021	-	2,092	2,092
2022	-	225	225
2024	-	250	250
Total	42,886	17,564	46,011

Source: Central Bank of Lebanon

Note: This represents the current state of affairs. However, every year the figures are likely to increase and the grace period will therefore extend beyond 2024. The renewal of local currency treasury bonds and the extension of their maturity dates beyond the period 2011-2015 will create bonds that reach maturity in 2016-2024, since at present there are no bonds that reach maturity during that period.



\$343 MILLION: COST OF THE LEBANESE UNIVERSITY'S CAMPUS

Unification of buildings and expansion of faculties into 57 branches

Since its establishment in 1959 by virtue of Regulatory Decree No. 2883, the Lebanese University (LU) did not have a unified campus (work on the university started in 1951 with the creation of the Teachers' Institute). Due to political and confessional considerations, its faculties were distributed across residential neighborhoods in Beirut in residential and commercial buildings. Some have one or two branches in Beirut and others have additional branches in the North, the Beqa'a and the South.

The new unified complex

In November 1993, the Lebanese government announced a plan to launch a project to build a unified campus in the Hadath area that would include all of the university's faculties and academies with a capacity to accommodate 33,000 students. Its estimated cost was \$237 million. Construction was scheduled to start in June 1994, but work on the project only started in August 1997.

The work began on nine faculties: Engineering, Public Health, Medicine, Pharmacy, Information and Documentation, Literature and Humanities, Law and Political Science, Institute of Fine Arts and an auxiliary to the Faculty of Science. Due to the delay in execution, the project's cost increased by \$106 million or 44.7% and reached \$343 million (external funding forms 75% of the total funding). Furthermore, work on the project was only completed in 2005-2006 and the LU's campus in Hadath was named Rafic Hariri University City, following the death of the former prime minister. The high cost of the campus and the realization of this long awaited dream did not stop LU from opening branches in Beirut's suburbs and other regions since the Hadath campus only had the capacity to accommodate 33,000 students or 44.5% of the total number of students (74,000).

The cost of operating the campus reaches LBP 15 billion per annum, which is undoubtedly significant. The money spent on the construction, equipment, maintenance and operation of the campus along with the ongoing need to open more branches, might be proof of the futility of a unified university campus and of the need to develop and equip it with additional dorm rooms to accommodate students coming from remote areas and villages. This would somewhat contain the branching of the university and improve the level of education.



Lebanese University Hadath Campus

LU's faculties and branches

LU includes 13 faculties, 7 institutes, including 3 higher institutes, and 57 branches. In the 2007-2008 academic year the number of students reached 74,000, while university staff amounted to 7,096 individuals.

Faculty of Science: One of the first faculties of the university, it was established in 1959 and has five branches (Hadath, Fanar, Trablous, Zahle and Nabatiyeh). It has around 15,600 students.

Faculty of Literature and Humanities: It is the largest faculty in terms of students (around 23,000) and has five branches (Beirut, Fanar, Trablous, Zahle and Saida).

Faculty of Law and Political and Management Science: The Faculty of Law was established in 1959. Political science was added in 1960 and Management Science in 1966. The faculty has five branches (Hadath, Jal el-Deeb, Trablous, Zahle and Saida). It also has a French branch in Beirut, which was created in 1996. The faculty has some 7,200 students.

Institute of Social Sciences: It was established in 1960 and has five branches (Raouche in Beirut, Rabiyyeh, Trablous, Zahle and Saida). The Institute counts some 6,300 students.

Institute of Fine Arts: It has four branches (Hadath, Forn el-Shebbek, Trablous and Deir el-Qamar). It has some 2,200 students.

Faculty of Pedagogy: It has two branches, one in the UNESCO building in Beirut and the other in Raouda in Dekoueneh. It has 2,100 students.

Faculty of Information and Documentation: It has two branches, one in Beirut and the second in Fanar. It has 1,400 students.

Faculty of Economic Science and Business Administration: It was established in 1967 under the name Faculty of Commerce. Its curriculum was later expanded and the name changed in 1981 to the Faculty of Economic Science and Business Administration. The faculty has five branches (Hadath, Ashrafiyyeh, Trablous, A'aley and Nabatiyyeh). It has around 5,400 students.

Faculty of Engineering: It was established in 1974 and teaches civil engineering, mechanical engineering and electrical, electronic and telecommunications engineering. The faculty has three branches (Hadath, Roumieh and Trablous). It has 2,500 students.

Faculty of Agronomy: It was established in 1974 and has one branch in Dekoueneh. The faculty's main base is in Tal el-A'amara in Beqa'a. It has 284 students.

Faculty of Public Health: It was established in 1981 and has six branches (Hadath, Fanar, Trablous, Kssara, Saida and A'ain w Zein). It has 2,200 students.



Lebanese University Fanar Campus

Faculty of Pharmacy: It was established in 1983 as a branch of the Faculty of Medical Sciences. In 1993, it became an independent faculty and has one branch in Hadath. The faculty has 233 students.

School of Dentistry: It was established in 1983 as part of the Faculty of Medical Sciences and became independent in 1999. It has one branch in Hadath and 255 students.

Faculty of Medical Sciences: It was established in 1983 and has a branch in Hadath. It has 730 students.

Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management: It was established in 1997 and has a single branch in Beer Hassan. It has 350 students.

Institute of Technology: It was established in 1996 and has two branches. The main branch is located in Saida and the other in A'abey (A'aley). It has 530 students.

Institute of Applied Economic Sciences: It was established in 1968 and has seven branches (two in Beirut, Trablous, Zahle, Sour, A'aley and Ba'albeck). It has 3,900 students. ●●



THE EUROPEAN-LEBANESE PARTNERSHIP IS IT BENEFICIAL?!

A long history of bilateral relations and agreements ties the European Union (EU) and countries in the region. Since the beginning of the 1960's and throughout the 1970's these ties began to crystallize on the basis of cooperation agreements strictly limited to the commercial field. Among them was the cooperation agreement between the EU and Lebanon signed in 1977 under which Lebanon gained commercial privileges and preferential treatment with regards to tax exemptions. However, at the beginning of the 1990's, a new framework of ties between the EU and its Mediterranean neighbors surfaced with the aim of boosting cooperation and introducing new frameworks to the deals signed between them. In this context, a meeting was held in Barcelona in 1995, known as the Barcelona Process or Euro-Med, which outlined a project of European-Mediterranean partnership that removes taxation hurdles on the one hand and enhances economic, financial, political and, specifically, socio-cultural cooperation on the other. Negotiations regarding this partnership with Lebanon began in 2002.

The Lebanese-European partnership agreement

The partnership agreement between Lebanon and the 15 European Union member states¹, which replaced the 1977 cooperation agreement, was signed in Luxembourg on June 17, 2002. The commercial chapter of the agreement, the transitional agreement on commerce and matters linked to commerce, came into force in March 2003. European markets were then opened to Lebanese agricultural and industrial products. After it was ratified by the Lebanese parliament, the European parliament and the national assemblies of all the member states, the agreement, in its entirety, came into force in April 2006.

The new agreement emanated from historical ties, a desire to build relationships based on reciprocity within the framework of regular dialogue that leads to joint cooperation and mutual economic growth, especially in the investment and commercial sectors, and a confirmation of the EU's financial support to Lebanon's economic reconstruction, reform, scientific and cultural advancement, in an effort to gradually liberalize its economy in a bid to join the World Trade Organization. The agreement covered all aspects of the existing bilateral relations and included 93 chapters and a number of protocols. The agreement's most important provisions are the following:

Political provisions

- ⦿ The establishment of regular political dialogue with the aim of developing a mutual understanding on joint international matters taking into consideration the best interests of both sides and with the aim of achieving stability and security in the Middle East.

- ⦿ Political dialogue will be held regularly at the ministerial and senior levels by using all the available diplomatic channels and it shall be ensured that such dialogue is held between the European Parliament and the Lebanese Parliament.

Economic provisions

- ⦿ Gradually setting up a free trade zone between Lebanon and the EU during the transitional phase that does not exceed 12 years from the date of entry into force of the agreement.
- ⦿ Industrial products:
 - ⦿ Lebanon is allowed to export to the EU all industrial products that originate from Lebanon without any customs fees, taxes or other fees.
 - ⦿ Lebanon was given a five-year grace period following which imported industrial products from the EU would be gradually exempt from customs fees, taxes or other fees. These products would only be completely exempt after the agreement had been in force for a period of 12 years i.e in 2015. Thus, since March 2003, Lebanon has the right to export all its industrial products to the EU completely exempt from customs fees, while EU members only started to receive exemptions as of 2008, in accordance with a schedule set out in the agreement (from reducing the customs tariff by 12% to completely lifting all customs fees by 2015).
 - ⦿ Until 2015, Lebanon has the right to take extraordinary measures, for a limited period of time not exceeding five years, to increase or re-impose customs fees on new and emerging industries that are subject to restructuring or that are facing difficulties.

¹ - Member states are: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Holland, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

⊙ In terms of agricultural, processed agricultural products and fisheries, both sides should work towards increasing trade liberalization:

⊙ Agricultural and processed agricultural products of Lebanese origin enter the European market without customs fees at specific times, with a specified quota and an annual increase rate that is pre-determined (for example, only 10,000 tons of fresh or frozen Lebanese potatoes can be exported from January 1 until May 31 and the percentage of export cannot exceed 1,000 tons a year). There are 25 kinds of agricultural products including wine, olives, potatoes, garlic, tomatoes, flowers and others.

⊙ Agricultural, fisheries and processed agricultural products of European origin exported to Lebanon (such as meat, dairy, fruits, vegetables, grains and others), which also include products similar to those imported from Lebanon (wine, garlic, zucchini, potatoes and olive oil, etc...), are subject to reduced customs fees that have been pre-determined and only apply after the agreement has been in effect for five years (i.e 2008). The fees and rates for each product are provided for in two protocols that followed the agreement.

⊙ If Lebanon joins the WTO, then the customs fee that is to be implemented by both sides would be the one that Lebanon commits to within the framework of the WTO as of the date of membership.

⊙ Services are established and supplied in accordance with the GATT as of the date Lebanon joins the WTO.

⊙ There will be no restrictions or discrimination between the two sides in terms of the movement of capital and preventing or restricting competition between the two sides should be avoided. Cooperation between them should take place in the customs arena in order to facilitate regulations and customs clearance of goods.

⊙ Pledging to intensify economic and sector cooperation in a manner that would help Lebanon achieve sustained economic and social development in addition to working towards liberalizing the economy, creating work opportunities and working to develop the Lebanese financial markets.

⊙ Cooperating to restructure the Lebanese industry by encouraging initiatives aimed at individuals and small and medium size businesses by facilitating loans to fund their investment projects.

⊙ Encouraging and protecting investment in Lebanon by finding the necessary means to identify investment opportunities and providing information, technical aid and direct financial support.

⊙ Supporting policies that aim to diversify production in the fields of agriculture and fisheries, and supporting research, automation, rural development, the development of techniques of packaging, storing and marketing in addition to supporting the system of agricultural credit.

⊙ Cooperating to protect the consumer, the independence of the judiciary and to combat money laundering, organized crime and drug trafficking.

Social provisions

⊙ Respecting the democratic principles and basic human rights as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⊙ Implementing projects that seek to improve living conditions in poorly developed regions and strengthening the role of women and family planning.

⊙ Improving social security and healthcare systems.

⊙ Working to prevent and control illegal immigration.

Cultural provisions

⊙ Exchanging information and ideas in all cooperation sectors including the provision of advice and expertise, preparing joint activities such as seminars and workshops in addition to providing technical, administrative and organizational aid.

⊙ Defining the means that can improve education and training, especially vocational training, while emphasizing the importance of exchanging expertise and technical know-how between the youth, universities and educational institutions.

⊙ Scientific cooperation by providing Lebanon with access to research programs and technological advancement, improving research capacities in Lebanon, motivating technological innovation and disseminating modern technologies.

⊙ Adequately and efficiently protecting individual, industrial and commercial copyrights based on international standards.

⊙ Carrying out projects that focus on youth integration in social and vocational life, enhancing audiovisual media cooperation and reviving historical and cultural heritage.

Environmental field

⊙ Ensuring the preservation of ecological balance, combating pollution, especially marine pollution, guaranteeing the safe use of natural resources and efficient waste management, stressing on the need for environmental awareness.



Evaluation of agreement

What has been accomplished

1- Cooperation and political dialogue: the EU's commitment to Resolution 1701 and the participation of forces from member states in the UNIFIL with 60% of participating states being from the EU.

2 - Financial support and projects aimed at encouraging investment, creating employment opportunities and improving the living conditions in poor villages:

- ⊙ At the Paris 3 Conference, the European Commission granted Lebanon 500 million euros.

- ⊙ Allocation of 107 million euros to address the repercussions of the 2006 July war, of which 50 million were used to face the 2006 summer crisis and 11 million to evacuate immigrant laborers.

- ⊙ Examples of projects and programs that have been executed or are pending implementation:

- ⊙ **Economic and Social Development Fund** (25 million euros): Many villages in neglected regions benefited from financial and technical support (300,000 euros for each of them) in order to elaborate a local development plan. On the other hand, 1,560 small and very small establishments received bank loans in the services sector (36%), trade (31%), industry (22%) and agriculture (11%). Some 1,272 work opportunities were created.

- ⊙ **Supporting economic revival and reconstruction of Lebanon** (18 million euros): by rehabilitating and reconstructing a number of infrastructures, funding small establishments in damaged regions and working to create 300 new employment opportunities.

- ⊙ **Supporting economic advancement** (18 million euros): by funding 12 municipal gatherings to help rehabilitate the Lebanese administration.

- ⊙ **Integrated support for small and medium-size businesses** (17 million euros): by setting a legislative and organizational framework providing a more appropriate climate to create a network that offers services in tune with business needs, in addition to encouraging banks to offer loans to businesses that have a viable potential for growth and to emerging businesses.

- ⊙ **Quality** (15 million euros): introducing the culture of quality at the institutional level and improving competitiveness.

- ⊙ **Agricultural development project** (12 million euros): to adapt the fruit and vegetables sector to market conditions and work to reduce production cost.

- ⊙ **Supporting political, social and economic reforms in Lebanon** (20 million euros): by boosting the capabilities of the criminal investigation system

in the Ministries of Interior and Justice, strengthening the Customs Authority, providing vocational support to judges and lawyers, and encouraging the privatization of mobile phone operators.

- ⊙ **Tempus Program** (7.5 million euros): it allowed the funding of 21 projects to reform and modernize the higher education system.

3 - Since the agreement which provided for the establishment of a free trade industrial zone between the two sides and the gradual liberalization of markets in terms of agricultural products and industries came into effect in March 2003, Lebanese industrial products started entering the European market without customs fees. This was also the case of some agricultural products and fisheries, as specified by the partnership agreement. In return, and after a five-year grace period, Lebanon took timid steps to reduce customs fees as of March 2008. This is expected to lead to a drop in customs revenues in the future, as shown by Table 1.

Customs fees on imported merchandise from March 2008 until September 2009 Table 1

March 2008	Reduction of customs fees on imported European wine to 25% knowing that the percentage was 70% Increasing customs fees by 5% on imported green coffee beans and cancellation of fees on instant roasted coffee beans
May 2008	Cancellation of customs fees on some food products such as frozen meats, powder milk, vegetarian oil, pasta, tea, coffee, sugar and tuna and sardine cans
June 2009	Exempting imported raw vegetarian oil, tulip oil seeds and some fresh agricultural products from customs fees Increasing customs fees on imported benzene by 97.5% as of June 2008

Source: The official Gazette in Lebanon 2008-2009

What has not been accomplished?

1 - Sustained economic and social development.

2 - Restructuring of the Lebanese industry. In fact, many factories closed down because they could not handle the European competition.

3 - Diversifying agricultural and animal production and developing techniques of packaging, storing and marketing in a manner that allows it to compete in international markets. Such competition would enable Lebanon to achieve a surplus or reduce its deficit in the commercial budget with the EU. So has the deficit dropped?

In reality, the deficit in the commercial budget between Lebanon and the EU was not reduced but rather it increased by 67% between 2003 and 2008. The percentage of Lebanese exports to the EU between 2003

and 2008 increased by 176%. Between these two dates, Lebanese exports increased in general (by 128%), as shown by Table 2. However, the increase in exports to the EU only represented 15.6% of the total increase in Lebanese exports worldwide. On the other hand, Lebanese imports increased in general between 2003 and 2008 (125%) and with the EU in particular (72.4%).

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total of Lebanese exports	677	714	889	1,045	1,524	1,747	1,880	2,283	2,816	3,478
Lebanese exports to EU states (25 states)	192	164	204	177	173	181	212	273	454	478
Total of Lebanese imports	6,207	6,228	7,291	6,445	7,168	9,397	9,340	9,398	11,815	16,137
Lebanese imports from the EU (25 states)	2,985	2,843	3,185	2,922	3,187	3,769	3,744	3,541	4,320	5,497
Commercial budget between Lebanon and EU	-2,793	-2,679	-2,981	-2,745	-3,014	-3,587	-3,532	-3,268	-3,866	-5,019

Source: Ministry of Trade and Economy in Lebanon

It is worth noting that from 2007 until 2008 – the year the five-year grace period ended and Lebanon started to reduce customs fees on some imported EU products – the commercial deficit between Lebanon and the EU increased by 30%. How much more will the deficit increase once Lebanon completely exempts imported merchandise from the EU from customs taxes?!

4 - Encouraging and increasing foreign investment in Lebanon

Table 3 lists the number of EU companies that have established branches in Lebanon between 2000 and 2008. In 2003 – when the transitional agreement came into effect – there were 15 registered EU companies in Lebanon compared to 13 registered companies in 2008. As such, European investment in Lebanon was not positively influenced by the Lebanese-European partnership.

5 - Working on the independence and transparency of the judiciary.

6 - Improving the healthcare and social security systems.

7 - Eradicating administrative corruption.

8 - Progressing in the environmental field .

New European companies in Lebanon 2000-2008 **Table 3**

Year	New European companies	Registered EU companies	Registered foreign companies
2000	-	24	46
2001	6	19	46
2002	-3	16	40
2003	-1	15	35
2004	6	21	50
2005	-10	11	47
2006	-2	9	34
2007	5	14	44
2008	-1	13	38

Source: Ministry of Economy and Trade in Lebanon

The Lebanese-EU partnership agreement increased Lebanon's commercial deficit with the European Union at a time when Lebanese farmers and industrialists are suffering from weak competition with international imports due to the fragility of their exports, either in terms of quality or a lack of abundance with international requirements for packaging and storing. Before liberalizing trade from customs restrictions, the Lebanese state should focus on supporting agriculture and restructuring its industrial sector in order to be able to face global competition. All the grants, projects and expertise presented by the EU to Lebanon represents such a small part of what the Lebanese economy needs to achieve sustained development. With the exception of the steps taken with regards to the UNIFIL, tax reductions and loans, most of the provisions of the partnership agreement have not taken effect. ●●

THE LEBANESE NATIONALITY LAW

lacks modernity and symbolizes a flagrant case of discrimination against women

Male domination in Arab societies is embodied in the laws of various countries. Although the Lebanese Constitution confirms the principle of equality of rights and duties between men and women in article 7¹ and although Lebanon signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1979, it made reservations to article 9 paragraph 2 on the equal right of men and women to grant their nationality to their children. In fact, the Lebanese nationality law, which is based on a decision of the High Commissioner Maurice Sarrail rendered in 1925, is clearly discriminatory as it prevents the Lebanese woman from granting her nationality to her children, further illustrating male domination in society. Objections to amending the law range from the change it would cause to the country's demographic and confessional balance to the risk it would present in terms of permanent Palestinian settlement in Lebanon. To shed light on the discrimination between men and women in the Lebanese nationality law, we will summarize the latter along with the amendments it has incurred since its issuance in 1925.

The emergence of the Lebanese nationality

Under the Ottoman rule, Mount Lebanon or “Small Lebanon” enjoyed relative administrative autonomy, although it was still part of the Ottoman Empire and its inhabitants were considered Ottoman citizens. Following the separation of Lebanon from the Ottoman Empire by virtue of the Lausanne treaty, which entered into force on August 30, 1924, every person of Lebanese origin living in the Lebanese territory was considered Lebanese. Thus, the Lebanese nationality came into existence in 1924 as per article 30 of the Lausanne treaty:

“Turkish subjects habitually resident in the territory, which, in accordance with the provisions of the present Treaty, is now detached from Turkey will become ipso facto, in accordance with the conditions laid down by the local law, nationals of the State to which such territory is transferred”.

In accordance with the Lausanne Treaty, High Commissioner Wegan issued Resolution No. 2825 on August 30, 1924, the first article of which stipulated that:

“Anyone who was a Turkish citizen resident in the Greater Lebanon on August 30, 1924, would ipso facto obtain the Lebanese nationality and henceforth lose the Turkish nationality”.

1 - Article 7 of the constitution: “All Lebanese are equal before the law. They equally enjoy civil and political rights and are equally bound by public obligations and duties without any distinction”.

As for those who were of Lebanese origin but were living abroad when the Lausanne treaty came into force, article 34 of the said treaty gave them the right to obtain the Lebanese nationality within a period of two years. In order to implement this article, article 5 paragraph 1 of Resolution No. 2825 stated the following:

“Turkish citizens over 18 years of age originating from Greater Lebanon residing outside the said territory or outside the Turkish territory on August 30, 1924, shall have the right to obtain the Lebanese nationality if their origin can be linked to the origin of the majority of inhabitants of Greater Lebanon. They have a period of two years, starting August 30, 1924, to make their decision, so long as the mandated government so approves”.

Accordingly, immigrants were granted the right to acquire the Lebanese nationality. The period granted to the immigrants to obtain the nationality was extended several times, until September 29, 1956.

According to the current law in place, an individual may acquire the Lebanese nationality at birth or he may acquire it at a later stage. The former is referred to as “original nationality” and the latter as “derived nationality”.

1- Acquiring the original Lebanese nationality

The most important legislation concerning the acquisition of the Lebanese nationality is legislative Decree No. 15, dated January 19, 1925.

Article 1 stipulates:

“Is Lebanese:

Every person born of a Lebanese father

Every person born on the territory of Greater Lebanon who has not acquired by affiliation the nationality of his foreign father

Every person born on the territory of Greater Lebanon to unknown parents or parents of unknown nationality”.

Article 2 provides:

“An illegitimate child whose affiliation is proven while he/she is still a minor can acquire the Lebanese nationality if the parent who first proves affiliation is Lebanese. If the affiliation is proved by a single contract or judgment referring to the father or mother, the child acquires the nationality of the father if the latter is Lebanese”.

Based on these texts, the blood tie with the father is the essential tie rendering the child a Lebanese citizen. However, this blood tie may result from affiliation with the mother in some specific cases limited to legitimate children.² The two situations when this can occur are the following:

(i) a legitimate child whose affiliation is first proven by the Lebanese mother

(ii) a legitimate minor child whose mother has acquired the Lebanese nationality.³

It is only in these two exceptional cases that the child may acquire his mother’s nationality and therefore be considered Lebanese. Apart from the blood tie, a child born in Lebanon may acquire the Lebanese nationality, provided he has not acquired a foreign nationality or is born to unknown parents, but this is considered a secondary means of acquiring nationality.

2 - Acquiring the derived Lebanese nationality

The derived Lebanese nationality is the one acquired by an individual after birth in contrast to the original nationality, which is acquired at birth. Special legislations define the ways to acquire derived nationality, namely naturalization and marriage.

Naturalization

The Lebanese State grants foreigners living on its territory the right to acquire the Lebanese nationality, according to article 3 of Decree No. 15 issued in 1925 supplemented by Decision No. 160 issued on July 16, 1934. This article imposed on a foreigner wishing to

acquire the Lebanese nationality the obligation of living in Lebanon for an uninterrupted period of five years, later extended to ten uninterrupted years by virtue of a law promulgated on May 27, 1939. Moreover, this law gave a foreigner married to a Lebanese woman the right to acquire the nationality provided that he lived in Lebanon for one uninterrupted year, later extended to five uninterrupted years. However, the 1939 law was annulled by virtue of Legislative Decree No. 48 issued on May 31, 1940.

During the presidency of Elias Al Hraoui and the premiership of Rafic Hariri, Decree No. 5247 of June 30, 1994, was issued, granting the Lebanese nationality to the following categories:

- 1 - Individuals whose nationality was under study⁴
- 2 - Individuals with unknown registers⁵
- 3 - Residents of the seven villages⁶
- 4- Individuals with Syrian, Jordanian, Sudanese and other nationalities

According to this decree, the Lebanese nationality was granted to a great number of applicants (numbers range between 150,000 and 350,000⁷) in a random fashion.

A woman married to a foreigner who has acquired the Lebanese nationality has the right to acquire the nationality for herself and her adult children according to article 4 of Decision No. 15. As for the minor children, they become Lebanese, without having to request the nationality.

Article 4: “A woman married to a foreigner having acquired the Lebanese nationality, and the adult children of the said foreigner, may be granted the Lebanese nationality, upon requesting it, without needing to fulfill any residency requirements, by virtue of the decree granting the husband, the father or the mother that nationality or by virtue of a special decree. Furthermore, the minor children of a father who has acquired the Lebanese nationality or those of a mother who has acquired it and has outlived the father can become Lebanese, unless they refute the nationality one year after reaching adulthood”.

4 - These people used to hold unrecognized identification cards that were later withdrawn from them and replaced with residence cards stating that their nationality was under study.

5 - They are the Lebanese who did not obtain the Lebanese nationality in 1932 although they were living on the Lebanese territory on August 30, 1924.

6 - Annexed to the Palestinian state by the Newcombe-Paulet border demarcation commission, in February 1922: Now Lebanon

7- The Monthly issue #3

2 - Whoever is born to parents out of wedlock is considered an illegitimate child.

3 - Article 4 of Decree No. 15 issued on January 19, 1925.



Marriage

A foreign woman marrying a Lebanese man may acquire the Lebanese nationality, according to a law issued on January 11, 1960, amending article 5 of Decree No. 15 issued on January 19, 1925.

Article 5 (of Decree No. 15 issued on January 19, 1925, as amended by virtue of the law issued on January 11, 1960) holds that:

“A foreign woman who marries a Lebanese man may acquire the nationality one year after the formal registration of the marriage in the competent registry, upon her request”.

As per article 1 of the law issued on January 11, 1960, she has the right to acquire the Lebanese nationality following her husband’s death or following a divorce. This is due to the fact that, as abovementioned, a foreign woman becomes Lebanese one year after the registration of her marriage.

This illustrates a clear discrimination between men and women because the law grants a foreign woman married to a Lebanese more favorable conditions to acquire the Lebanese nationality than it does to a foreign man married to a Lebanese woman.

Furthermore, the Lebanese law grants a Lebanese woman married to a foreigner the right to remain Lebanese following their marriage if she so wishes and in the event she abandons her nationality, she has a right to regain it following her husband’s death. This is provided for in articles 6 and 7 of Decree No. 15 issued on January 19, 1925 and amended by virtue of a law promulgated on January 11, 1960.

Article 6 – (as amended by the 1960 Law)

“A Lebanese woman who marries a foreigner remains Lebanese until she requests the striking off of her registration in the census records on account of her acquiring the nationality of her husband”.

Article 7 – (as amended by the 1960 Law)

“A woman who has lost her Lebanese nationality as a result of her marriage to a foreigner may, upon her request, recover her nationality following the dissolution of her marriage”.

Thus, it is not surprising that the “Committee for Law Reform” in Lebanon has noted that the Lebanese nationality law goes back to a decision issued during the French mandate in 1925 and is worthy of modernization in 2010! 🇇🇵

“The “Committee for Law Reform” in Lebanon has noted that the Lebanese nationality law goes back to a decision issued during the French mandate in 1925 and is worthy of modernization in 2010!”



Sources:

- Antoine Al Nashef (1999), 'The Lebanese nationality between law and jurisprudence: an analytical study including all studies, laws and jurisprudence', Beirut, Al Halabi Legal Publications.
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FAMILY CRIMES

Unprecedented and on the rise

For several years now the Lebanese have been witnessing a significant rise in the number of crimes, including family crimes. The latter used to be rare and limited to closed communities but they have become common and take place in various different regions and social environments. Numerous reasons are said to be behind some of these crimes while the causes of others have been buried with their victims and it will perhaps be years or decades before they are revealed and some might never be unveiled. Some of the causes include:

Financial reasons such as disagreement over inheritance or a partnership, financial losses or harsh living conditions; Spousal betrayal; psychological disorder; lack of ethics and the absence of real deterrence and harsh punishment for such crimes; widespread availability of arms among the Lebanese (although some of these crimes were committed using toxic

substances without the use of weapons); the predominance of a violent atmosphere across Lebanon in general; the stalling of the judiciary in issuing its verdicts, which are often too lenient or amount to amnesties.

The following Table 1 chronologically lists the major family crimes committed in recent years.

Major family crimes committed in recent years.

Table 1

Perpetrator and declared motives	Number of victims	Location of the crime	Date of the crime
Ghassan Dalal murders his wife Nisrine Aoudi and their children Baqer, Mahdi and Radouan before killing himself. The declared motive: the father was experiencing financial difficulties.	5	Bir El-A'abed (Southern suburb of Beirut)	October 2010
Nafeth Tarbay (39) fatally shoots his brother Kana'an over a disagreement on inheritance.	1	Blat (Jbeil)	October 2010
Zaven fatally shoots his daughter Julie (6), injures his wife Zarmeeq and commits suicide. The declared motive: marital discord.	2	Antelias	September 2010
A man kills his fiancée's brother, Mohammad Ibrahim Idriss, by strangling him and escapes with her.	1	Ouadi al-Jamous (A'akkar)	August 2010
Ali kills his wife Fatima Al-Mokdad by strangling her in Ouza'ai, moves her body to the outskirts of the town of Nmaireh in the Qada'a of Nabatiyeh and burns it using tires.	1	Ouza'ai	June 2010
Hatem Z. (77) fatally shoots his wife, Wafiq Jaber (54), after he disagreed with her over his desire to travel to Africa to visit his children from a previous marriage.	1	Kfar Tibneet (Nabatiyeh)	June 2010
Murder of Latifa Kassir (46) by her ex-husband Ibrahim Taleb. They had 2 children and divorced in 2009.	1	Sin El Fil	April 2010
Grace Kassab, wife of Paul Jalakh (living abroad), poisons herself and her three daughters Melissa (13), Madison (10) and Alfreda (7) for unknown reasons. They all die.	4	Bhersaf (Metn)	March 2010
A brother (28) kills his sister (24) over suspicions she was having a relationship with a man.	1	Hakr el-Dhahiri (A'akkar)	March 2010
Deeb Al-Qaissi (53) gives his children Omar (7) and Adam (5) poisoned juice and drinks it with them. The children died but the father was saved. The declared motive: marital disputes causing the couple to separate.	2	A'aramoun (A'aley)	July 2009
Murder of pilot Ghassan Hassan Al-Mokdad (54). Investigations revealed that the killer was his brother, Abdul Nasser, who had also killed their other brother Mohammad the previous year for financial reasons.	1	Ouza'ai	February 2009
Janet Shukrallah Hajal (66) kills her son Roy Samir Al-Ashqar (37) using a hammer then commits suicide by slitting her wrists and stabbing herself. The declared motive: she and her son were suffering from neurological disorders.	2	Jal El-Deeb (Metn)	August 2008
Ali Mallah (21) kills his father Mohammad Hassan Mallah (51) by shooting him with a hunting weapon, moves his body with the help of his mother Mariam Saleh Zaouaoui (40) to the rooftop where he buries him under cement. The declared motive: family discord due to the husband's illness and bad temper.	1	A'ain Qana (Nabatiyeh)	February 2008
Ali Hamad A'awwad (52) fatally shoots his wife Najla' Shdeed (54) and daughter Fida' (17) and surrenders to the security forces. The declared motive: his daughter's suspicious relationships and the mother's complicity in keeping them secret. The family had returned to Lebanon nine months prior to the incident after having lived in Germany for 13 years.	2	Mrejeh (Southern Suburbs of Beirut)	April 2006
A husband kills his wife and throws her body from the sixth floor then kills his daughter. The declared motive: the husband spent his life in Germany and returned to discover that his wife had spent all their money. He was also suspicious of her behavior during his absence.	2	Burj Abi Haidar (Beirut)	July 2005
Samer Al-A'ouar kills his friend Rifa'at Al-A'ouar, his fiancée Lubna Abou Al-Hassan, her sister Dana and mother Nuha and himself after his fiancée wanted to end their relationship.	5	Btakhneh (Ba'abda)	April 2005
Mohammad (33 year old Palestinian) kills his wife Hayat (26 year old Palestinian) because he is suspicious of her behavior.	1	Ouadi El-Zineh (Chouf)	March 2004

Note: The declared motives of the murders were taken from daily newspapers. The Monthly takes no responsibility for their content.

LAWYERS' IMMUNITY

Just as a member of parliament has the right to freely express his views during his mandate as deputy, a lawyer cannot be questioned, sued or placed in pre-trial detention for slander, libel or defamation during the performance of his functions (i.e when defending a client in court). The judge who witnesses an alleged incident of slander cannot participate in the subsequent lawsuit against the accused lawyer.

Inspection of a lawyer's office

Any judicial decision to inspect a lawyer's office or confiscate its funds or belongings cannot be executed prior to a delay of 24 hours following the deposit of the ruling at the headquarters of the Syndicate to which the said lawyers belongs, along with an invitation to the president of the Syndicate to either personally attend the inspection or delegate a member of the Syndicate's board to do so.

It is also not permitted to close down a lawyer's office in order to collect taxes or a specific fee that he/she has not paid unless at least ten days have passed since the person in question has been notified in writing and the Syndicate to which he/she belongs has also been informed.

Interrogation and prosecution

Unless caught red-handed (*in flagrante delicto*), a lawyer cannot be interrogated for a crime he/she is being accused of prior to the notification of the head of the Syndicate, who has the right to personally attend the interrogation or delegate a member of the board to do so.

The prosecution of a lawyer for an act done while performing his/her duties is not permitted unless authorized by the Syndicate's board. Indeed, it is for the latter to decide whether the act was committed as a result of practicing the profession and during such practice. The decision to allow or reject prosecution must be issued in writing within a month following the notification of the president of the Syndicate and the commission of the alleged act. If no such decision is made within that deadline, an authorization to prosecute is automatically inferred. The decisions of the Syndicate's board and those of the Committee of the Retirement Fund can be challenged before the court of appeal within ten days of notification, on condition that the Syndicate's board selects two of its members to join the ruling commission.

In some cases, a lawyer is held for questioning without the Syndicate's permission. In such situations, the latter can request to be part of the lawsuit and raise an

objection, given that its permission was not granted thus violating due process. An example to that is the case of Lawyer Elie Kayrouz, who was detained in 2001 following the August events. The Lawyers' Syndicate in Trablous filed an objection to the Public Prosecutor's Office in which it stated that Kayrouz's prosecution violated the laws of the profession, which require the Syndicate's permission prior to prosecution.

It should be borne in mind that the examining magistrate can reject the plea, as occurred in the case of Lawyer Nadim Latif on January 23, 2001.

In some instances, the lawyer himself can file an objection. This is what Minister Shahe Barssoumian did, so that the examining magistrate could not interrogate him without obtaining the Syndicate's permission first. However, on March 1, 1999, the Syndicate decided that the acts attributed to the minister were not derived from him practicing his profession as a lawyer.

Some disbarring instances and prosecution cases

- ⊙ On November 12, 2005, the board of the Syndicate of Lawyers in Trablous agreed to lift lawyer B.A's immunity and authorized his prosecution.
- ⊙ On April 14, 2007, following the detention of suspects for alleged cheating in the notaries examinations, the Syndicate issued a statement saying: "The Syndicate's board stresses that the detention and interrogation of any suspected lawyer, who has been caught in the act, can only take place with the knowledge and approval of the President of the Syndicate, in accordance with Article 79 of the laws of the legal profession, and in the presence of the Syndicate's board members, because the Lawyers Syndicate does not accept covering for someone who has committed a crime, as this damages the message of justice that the profession abides by. It also does not accept protecting any lawyer who

abuses the profession's integrity and dignity, most of all its credibility and fairness".

- ⦿ On October 10, 2007, one of Beirut's examining magistrates issued an arrest warrant against lawyer R.K, who had been interrogated for breach of trust. The Syndicate's board had authorized the prosecution of the said lawyer.
- ⦿ On July 30, 2003, lawyer Elie Firzli was detained at Beirut International Airport, placed in custody for 24 hours and questioned over a security telegram concerning his activities in Iraq. The Syndicate protested against the detention because it violated Article 79 of the laws of the legal profession.
- ⦿ On April 4, 2002, the Disciplinary Council of the Lawyers' Syndicate in Beirut issued a ruling to bar lawyer Mohammad al-Moghrabi from practicing law for three years on charges of professional and disciplinary misconduct and for the commission of acts that harmed the legal profession and the Syndicate. On January 17, 2003, the Council disbarred Moghrabi, after he continued to commit the abovementioned violations.
- ⦿ On September 19, 2005, one of Beirut's examining magistrates issued an arrest warrant against lawyer Naji Aoudeh, one of the signatories of the "Cedar Guards" petition. The Syndicate's permission was not required since the lawyer had been caught in the act (*in flagrante delicto*).

- ⦿ On July 15, 2003, the three children of the then Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, Prince Abdul Aziz and princesses A'adila and Alia, were victims of their private attorney's misconduct, Antoine Hanna Franjeh, who had defrauded them for a sum of \$3 million in 1999 after selling parts of their estate in Msseitbeh and keeping the money. The Saudi royalty's lawyer Sami Nahhas filed a complaint to Beirut's first examining magistrate, Hatem Madhi, against Franjeh for breach of trust and misappropriation of funds, based on legal texts that carry a three year prison sentence. Franjeh had been able to sell seven parts of the Msseitbeh estate because he was acting as an agent for the family, but later failed to hand over the money received. Attempts to settle the case out of court did not materialize. After Franjeh failed to attend the court hearings, Judge Madhi requested permission from the Lawyers' Syndicate in Beirut to prosecute him. Authorization was granted and his immunity was lifted. The court of appeal in charge of Syndicate cases ratified the Syndicate's decision.

Thus, lawyers benefit from judicial immunity as this is indispensable for them to be able to practice their profession liberally and independently. However, as the abovementioned examples illustrate, this immunity is not absolute, it can and has been lifted in many instances. ●●



PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN LEBANON

Attracts 57% of university students

The 39 private institutions of higher education in Lebanon (universities and university institutes) attracted 57% of university students in the academic year 2008-2009. This percentage has been on the rise in recent years. Indeed, it was only at 40% in 2000-2001. Five of these institutions attract more than half of the students (52%) enrolled in private universities.

In September 2010, the Muhanna Foundation published the summary of a study it conducted over the past few months on private universities in Lebanon and in which it treated some important issues that will be explored in this article.

Tuition fees

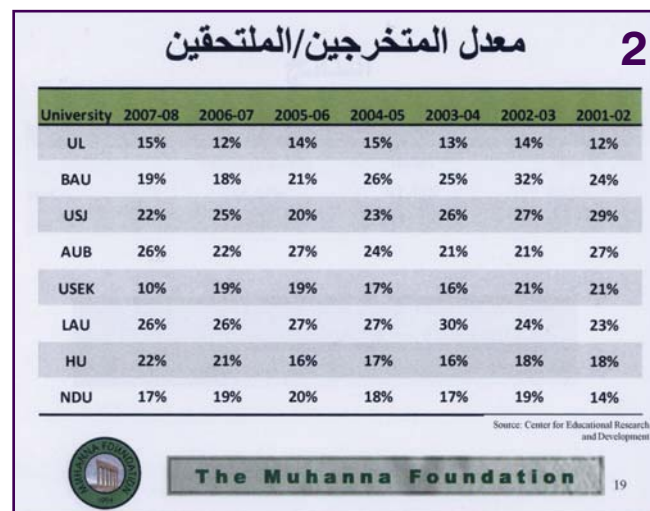
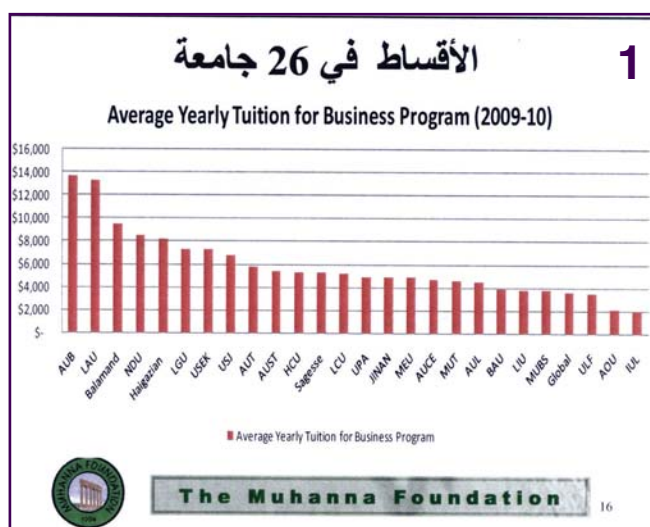
The evaluation showed that the American University of Beirut (AUB) charges the highest tuition fees while the Lebanese International University (LIU) charges the lowest tuition fees, as illustrated by Graph 1.

Rate of enrolled graduates

AUB and the Lebanese American University (LAU) have the highest rate of graduates among enrolled students reaching 26%, as illustrated by Graph 2.

Student - Teacher ratio

The number of students for each professor varies. The maximum is 24 students per professor (LAU) and the minimum is 2 students per professor (the Lebanese German University), as illustrated by Graph 3.



LEBANESE WRITERS' UNION

Establishment

The Lebanese Writers' Union was established in 1965 under Executive Order No. 179/a.d. Among its most important goals are the following:

- ⊙ Gathering writers, unifying their ranks, coordinating their efforts and working on raising their financial status and moral standards
- ⊙ Protecting the writers' rights and establishing relationships with publishing houses, the media and the telecommunication industry
- ⊙ Sponsoring the writers' works and contributing to their publication and translation
- ⊙ Reviving intellectual and innovative heritage by keeping records of it and publishing it
- ⊙ Stimulating intellectual activity and encouraging young writers
- ⊙ Defending freedom of thought and expression
- ⊙ Documenting the relationship between Lebanese, Arab and international writers

The Union is apolitical and has an independent legal personality. As such, it has the right to sue.

Affiliation to the Union

Every Lebanese writer shall have the right to become affiliated with the Union provided he/she meets the following requirements:

- ⊙ Holds a Lebanese nationality and is over 21 years of age
- ⊙ Has practiced writing in an intellectual and innovative field, has had their work published in a book, newspaper or periodical and has achieved a great level of proficiency
- ⊙ Has good morals and has not been convicted of a crime or felony

Once all of these requirements are met, the membership application is submitted to the Administrative Committee that decides whether to accept or reject it. The latter is accepted if it receives the approval of the majority of the Administrative Committee members. The applicant can only become a member after paying the membership fee amounting to LBP 50,000 and the yearly subscription fee also amounting to LBP 50,000.

A member may be dismissed from the Union following a vote by a majority of the Administrative Committee members if he/she commits a disgraceful act, abstains from paying the subscription fee two months after having received written notice to this end, offends the Union, is convicted of a disgraceful crime or refrains, without any legitimate cause, from attending two consecutive general assemblies. A member who loses membership cannot be reintegrated into the Union unless he/she meets all the abovementioned requirements one year after his dismissal.

The Union's organization

The Union's affairs are run by an Administrative Committee composed of 15 members elected by the General Assembly by secret ballot:

- ⊙ Secretary General
- ⊙ Deputy Secretary General
- ⊙ Secretary of External Affairs
- ⊙ Secretary of Internal Affairs
- ⊙ Secretary
- ⊙ Secretary of Administrative Affairs
- ⊙ Secretary of Financial Affairs
- ⊙ Treasurer
- ⊙ Secretary of Cultural Affairs
- ⊙ Secretary of Publication
- ⊙ Secretary of Media and Public Relations
- ⊙ Secretary of Cultural and Social Affairs
- ⊙ Secretary of Heritage Revival Affairs
- ⊙ Secretary of Membership Affairs
- ⊙ Secretary of Office Affairs

The General Assembly includes around 300 members, although it previously included around 800 members. However, political interferences in the Union's work rendered the affiliation process a random one, not taking into consideration the necessary membership





requirements. This compelled the Administrative Committee to strictly implement the Union's bylaws, which resulted in the decrease in the number of its members.

A member is not entitled to participate in the elections of the Administrative Committee unless he/she has paid the annual subscription fee at least one month prior to the election date.

Problems faced by the Union

The Lebanese Writers' Union faces many problems, the most important being:

- ⊙ Political interferences, which have greatly affected the Union weakening it and hindering the performance of its duties
- ⊙ Interference with its work by virtue of a law promulgated by the House of Representatives, pursuant to a decision of the Ministry of Culture, and according to which annual financial aid amounting to LBP 20 million would no longer be granted to the Union. It had benefited from it for merely two years (1997 and 1998) but since it would no longer receive this amount, its financial capabilities would be greatly reduced
- ⊙ Absence of a permanent headquarter office owned by the Union

- ⊙ Lack of health insurance for the Union's members
- ⊙ Lack of interest in intellectuals

The Union's activities

Despite this somewhat tragic situation and the Union's scarce capacities, the members' commitment to the sustainability of the Union and the development of its role has led to a few achievements:

- ⊙ Correcting the Union's internal structure by strictly implementing its bylaws
- ⊙ Organizing activities in honor of great writers and creators
- ⊙ Continuously organizing poetry readings and seminars
- ⊙ Introducing young talented members to rejuvenate the spirit of the Union
- ⊙ Permanently participating in Arab activities organized by the Arab Writers' Union
- ⊙ Contributing in the publication of young writers' books in order to encourage them to write and publish their work more often

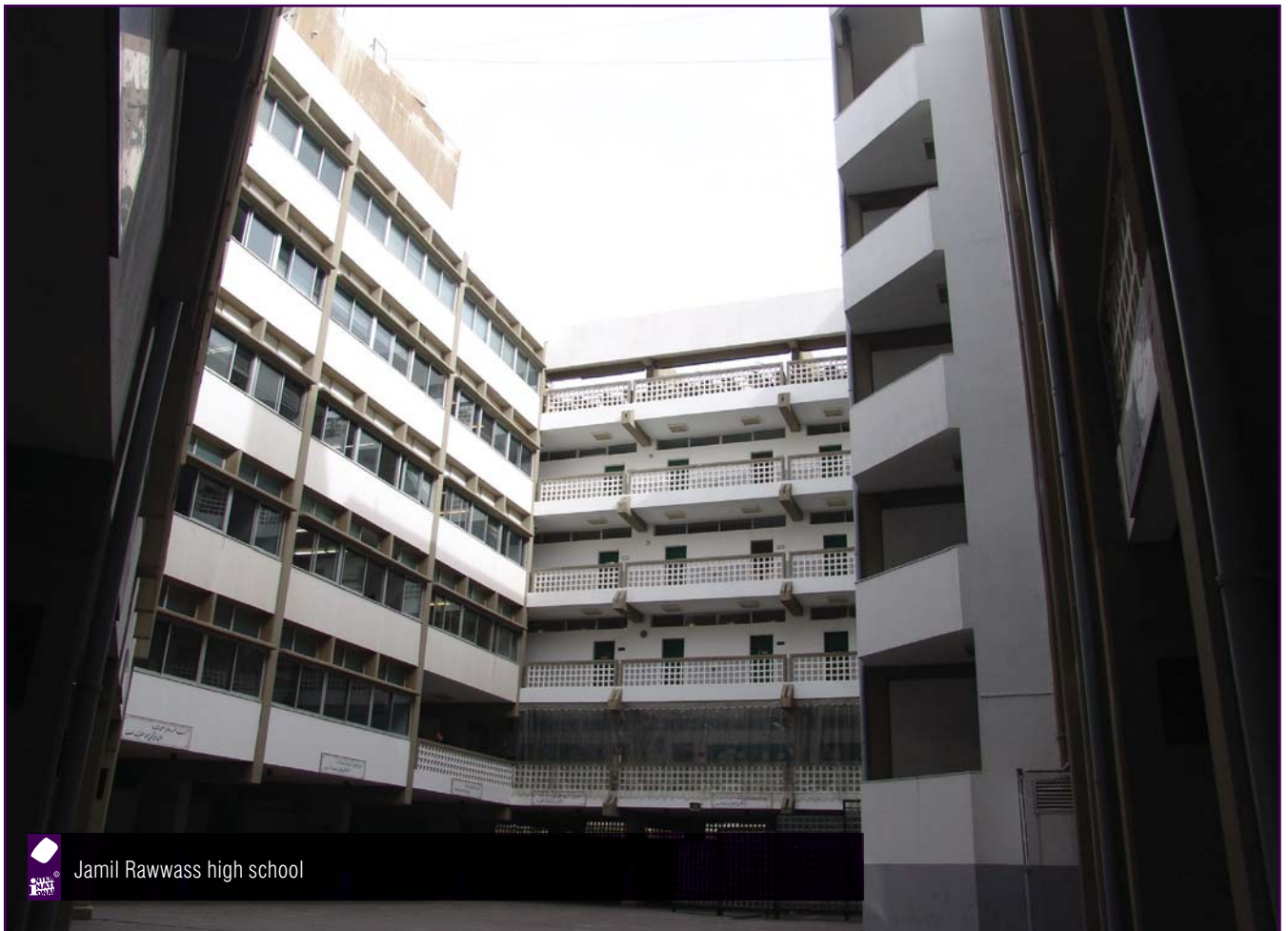
JAMIL RAWASS HIGH SCHOOL

Goal

According to the school officials, the goal of Jamil Rawwas High School is “to educate an innovative and intellectually conscious generation, morally and scientifically distinct, useful to its country and interactive with its community.” The high school aspires to prepare its students to be active citizens in their society by teaching them patriotism and citizenship values as well as embedding in them a sense of cooperation and responsibility. Moreover, it seeks to improve the students’ capacities for them to obtain the highest grades and prepare them to enter university with confidence. As such, it works to eradicate technological deficiencies, develop their critical thinking skills and talents and motivate them to participate in different competitions and activities.

Establishment and content

The idea started with the acceptance of the president of the Devotion and Charity Association, Jamil Rawass, to sell his property in the Tarik Al Jadide region at a very low price in order to build a school in its place. Among the most prominent contributors to the construction of the high school, we mention, in addition to the head of the association Mr. Jamil Rawass, Rashed Al Houry, Saaddine Shatila, Riad El-Solh (who was Prime Minister at the time) and many others. It was built in nine months and was launched as a primary school in 1949, in the era of President Bechara El-Khoury. After the launching, the number of students increased from 200 to 1,000. Today, it is still operating and is considered one of the best public high schools in Lebanon.



Jamil Rawass high school



In 1982, the school was destroyed following the Israeli bombing of Beirut. It was rebuilt in 1996 by virtue of a decision taken by Prime Minister Rafic Hariri and a donation from the Islamic Development Bank. It is worth mentioning that between 1982 and 1996, the school was temporarily annexed to the building of Omar Faroukh Public High School for Girls and offered classes in the afternoon, until its reconstruction.

The building was constructed on an area of 2,637 square meters and the total built area amounts to 13,000 square meters distributed as follows: two underground floors, one ground floor and five upper floors. It contains 66 rooms and can accommodate around 1,500 students.

These floors include a basketball court, a volley ball court, a theater, a public hall, a music hall, an open playground and a covered playground. In addition to the classrooms, the school includes examination rooms and fully equipped laboratories.

The school's structure

The school is headed by Professor Adel Muhammad Al Hashash, who was born in Beirut in 1951 and graduated from the same high school in 1971. He holds a B.A and a Masters degree in Physics from the Faculty of Education of the Lebanese University, which he obtained in 1983. He was appointed by the Ministry of Education according to the established system of appointment of directors of public high schools. He is assisted by a specialized administrative group, composed of general principals and accountants, a students' affairs officer and the parents' committee.

The curriculum and the education

The high school teaches Arabic, French and English at all the educational levels. It offers the Lebanese baccalaureate curriculum, as set by the curricula and laws of the Ministry of Education. The school provides all its students with:

- ⊙ A physics laboratory
- ⊙ A chemistry laboratory
- ⊙ A biology laboratory
- ⊙ A computer hall equipped with 20 computers
- ⊙ A computer hall equipped with internet and used by students for research
- ⊙ A theater used for cultural activities
- ⊙ A music hall
- ⊙ Sports halls

The school achieved good results in the official examinations. The results of the 2008-2009 academic year are as follows:

Degrees	Success rate	Very good ¹	Good ²
General sciences/French	95.83%	-	1
General sciences/ English	96%	1	-
Biology/ French	86.66%	-	3
Biology/English	80.76%	-	4
Economics and sociology/ French	96%	-	-
Economics and sociology/ English	94.44%	-	-
Intermediate/French	72.09%	2	2
Intermediate/English	79.12%	-	3

1 - Level of Academic Distinction
2 - Ibid 1.



School playground



HEART FAILURE

Dr. Hanna Saadah

Hear Failure is a common and serious condition resulting from a critical decline in cardiac output. The heart is a pump, the arteries are pipes, and the body is a dynamic field that requires constant irrigation for proper functioning. As long as the heart pumps enough blood to perfuse the entire body, all the body parts perform properly. But when, due to myriad causes, the heart is unable to pump enough blood to supply the body's energy needs, our organs go hungry and their functions fail in proportion to their hunger—much like a fading flashlight caused by a failing battery.

Although there are many diseases that result in heart failure, the common mechanisms by which these diseases cause a critical decline in cardiac output are basically six:

- 1) Heart valves that start to leak or become narrowed from conditions such as—congenital abnormalities, rheumatic fever, valve infections, abnormal calcifications, cartilage degenerations, and valve inflammations— reduce the heart's efficiency and decrease the amount of blood it can pump to the body.
- 2) Certain heart muscle diseases—cardiomyopathies—weaken the heart muscle and reduce the amount of blood it can pump in proportion to the muscle fatigue they cause.
- 3) Narrowing or obstruction of the coronary arteries—which nourish and feed the heart muscle—reduce the heart muscle's ability to pump in proportion to the damage caused by heart attacks or to the malnutrition caused by a decline in the blood supply to the heart muscle itself.
- 4) Abnormal thickenings of the heart muscle—which impinge on the heart chambers and reduce the amount of blood that can flow into them—cause a decline in cardiac output proportionate to the decline in cardiac filling.
- 5) Uncontrolled high blood pressure—which causes the heart muscle to enlarge and become redundant—reduces cardiac output in proportion to the magnitude and duration of the hypertension.
- 6) Lungs damaged by smoking, asthma, or other diseases can obstruct the flow of blood going through them—which strains the right ventricle and diminishes the amount of blood it is able to pump through such lungs to the left ventricle—thus causing a decline in cardiac output in spite of a normal set of heart valves and left ventricular muscle.

Once the reduced cardiac output reaches a critical level, symptoms begin to appear. This critical reduction varies with each individual and depends on the individual's energy requirements. Thus an athlete will notice his symptoms long before a bed-confined elderly person. Regardless of cause, the primary symptoms are two, shortness of breath and fatigue. Both symptoms increase with physical activity and diminish with rest and both get worse with worsening of the heart failure. On the other hand, the fatigue that diminishes with activity cannot be due to heart failure nor is the fatigue that is not linked to shortness of breath upon exertion.

Before symptoms appear, meaning before the diminished cardiac output reaches critical levels, the heart failure is considered sub-clinical and is only detectable with special tests such as echocardiograms. Such situations mainly arise from defective heart valves and are treated surgically before symptoms develop because waiting until symptoms occur may damage the heart muscle irreversibly.

Hence, suspecting heart failure—in the presence of unexplained fatigue and shortness of breath—is critical because early recognition may enhance recovery while late recognition may render the condition irreversible. Swelling, which may also be a sign of heart failure, is all too common and may be caused by too many other conditions. Thus, if the swelling is not associated with the two cardinal symptoms of fatigue and shortness of breath, it is usually explainable by other diagnoses.

Treatment of heart failure depends on its causes. When the cause is reversible and the recognition of the heart failure does not come inappropriately late, the prognosis is usually good. Prompt replacement of defective heart valves or bypassing of blocked coronary arteries may totally reverse the shortness of breath and fatigue. On the other hand, primary heart muscle diseases or bad lungs or heart muscles severely damaged by heart attacks usually carry bad prognoses. 🌟



SUPERSIZING SHORT TERM MEMORY:

What the Brain Training Industry wants Us to Believe

Dr. Samar Zebian

In the first part of this series we looked at short term memory (STM) pathologies by exploring the case of Clive Wearing who has the most serious documented case of anterograde amnesia (see December 2010 issue). Let's now take someone with a seemingly prodigious STM capacity. Ben Pridmore is the reigning World Memory Champion. Give him 5 minutes and he can recall a shuffled deck of 52 playing cards in their correct order in 26.28 seconds. He can memorize 930 binary digits in 5 minutes. Fatigued by these feats?? There is more..... Given 15 minutes of rehearsal, he can memorise 200 random words and recall the first and last names of 48 randomly presented faces. Despite his achievements, he claims that he forgets everything, unless he comes up with a bizarre image to encode information. Take for example, a shopping list with the following items: fresh mozzarella, olives, basil, chick peas, milk and roka. He might imagine a huge chick pea stuffing fresh mozzarella, basil and roka into tiny olives and throwing them into a milk marinade. Purportedly, memory athletes do this fantastical scene building almost instantaneously. When they do not do it, their memory is as limited as yours and mine which probably means they use grocery lists, call home when memory fails or visit the super market more often than they should.

One quick and dirty way to measure the size of short-term memory (STM) capacity (independent of long term memory aids like the one used by Pridmore) is to give individuals 4 random unrelated words or pictures (presented at equal intervals one at a time) and ask them to repeat them back in order. Most individuals can repeat back 4 items without error. With each new trial n+1 items are presented until the trials consist of 15-30 items. Most people start making mistakes between 5 and 9 items. It seems that this type of RAW short term memory capacity is especially hard to increase but many argue (and I strongly agree) that it is worth the effort because short term memory is the power engine of the brain.

What then do we do to supersize STM? The answer to this question has created a multi-million dollar brain training industry which has grown by 35% (to \$295 million) in 2009¹. There is considerable variability in the quality and effectiveness of the computerized products on the market which range from Nintendo brain training games to highly reputable products developed by interdisciplinary teams of researchers who conduct fully independent placebo-controlled studies. The most well researched product offered by Posit Science works on different parts of working memory; attention, visual tracking and listening.

Some experts endorse computerized brain training², however, and this is a big "HOWEVER", a recent study raises some red flags. A study of 11,430 individuals, sponsored by the BBC program "Bang Goes the

Theory" and published in Nature (a respected science journal), gave volunteers 6 brain training tasks to do for 10 minutes a day three times a week for a period of six weeks. Research participants got better at the games but their gains did not improve their performance in new tasks that required similar cognitive skills. This study and several others suggest that brain training might NOT have transferable gains. As expected, brain training researchers have critically responded to the BBC study pointing out that they only used a few brain training games and therefore cannot make conclusions about all training programs. They also questioned whether 10 minutes a day three times a week may have been enough to show any gains and whether the researchers could be certain that the participants actually trained for the required length of time given that the BBC study was an online study. It will take time to figure out whether the learning gained in these programs is transferable however the effort should eventually yield better brain training products. Despite the potential effectiveness of brain training, it will not be attractive to some people. Next month's article will be about researched alternatives to improving short term memory. ●●

1 - <http://www.sharpbrains.com/>

2 - Smith et al (2009). A Cognitive Training Program Based on Principles of Brain Plasticity: Results from the Improvement in Memory with Plasticity-based Adaptive Cognitive Training (IMPACT) Study. *American Journal of Geriatrics*, 57, 594-603. DOI: 10.1111/j.1532-5415.2008.02167.x



ARE WE ALONE IN THIS UNIVERSE?

Antoine Boutros

And finally the exciting historic moment came to be. For in last September scientists at the University of California announced the discovery of the first planet relatively close to Earth that possesses indicators providing a convincing example of what seems to be the most Earth-like planet “capable of being populated”. The planet was named Gliese 581 g and is located in the constellation Libra, at the center of our galaxy, the Milky Way. It orbits around the red dwarf star Gliese 581, which consists of a planetary system composed of five other planets (Gliese 581 e, b, c, d, f) but the fourth planet, the one in question, is the only one with potential to harbor life, according to scientists.

The planet is located 20 light years away from Earth, and has a mass 3.1 to 4.3 times Earth’s and its radius ranges between 1.5 to 2 times that of the Earth. It is thought to be a rocky planet with a surface gravity resembling that of planet Earth.

Its temperature varies between -12 and -31 degrees Celsius, which is enough to keep water, a necessity for life, in a liquid state, provided it exists. It is known that on Earth, extreme temperatures exist and that does not prevent the presence of life. Such temperatures vary between -70 degrees Celsius in the South Pole and over 148 degrees Celsius near hydrothermal vents at the bottom of the ocean where bacteria multiply.

The question now is: what are the requirements for a planet to be able to sustain human life or even be inhabited and then what are the possibilities of the presence of life on other planets?

It is necessary for there to be a solar system, meaning a central star around which one planet, or more, orbit. This planet should be at a moderate distance from its central star, meaning neither too close, like Mercury and the Sun, nor too far, like Jupiter. Among the primary requirements for life is the presence of liquid water and atmosphere. In other words, this planet should closely resemble Earth and this is what we have found in our new planet. Therefore, once we find a solar system with a moderately distanced planet then we can start looking for elements of primitive, simple or intelligent life.

Ever since human beings became aware of their presence on Earth and in the Universe, a religious and philosophical concept, known as the Anthropic principle (from *Anthropos*, the Greek term for human being) emerged. It considers the human being as unique in this Universe and holds that the Earth alone is the center of existence. When Italian astronomer

Galileo looked through his telescope for the first time and saw the rings of Jupiter, he realized that the Earth was not the centre of everything. When he noticed that Venus’ cycles were similar to the appearance and disappearance phases of the moon and its variations (until it becomes a full moon), he concluded that there must be an orbit around which this planet rotates. That meant that the Sun, not the Earth, was the center of our solar system. Thus, the concept of the centrality of the Earth collapsed scientifically, even though it did not completely vanish from the minds of people, even scientists. For example, Enrico Fermi, the famous scientist who was the first to succeed in creating an atomic reaction that later led to the making of the atomic bomb, used to say that had other worlds existed, they would have contacted us and shown themselves to us.

On the other hand, scientist Jacob Bronowski cautioned that the evolution of life in other worlds in the Universe would not necessarily need to be similar to that on Earth. By extension, it is not unlikely that we might come across forms of life without being able to recognize them as such. They might be completely different to the forms of life on Earth and based on different foundations.

The disk of the Milky Way Galaxy is approximately 100,000 light years in diameter and in remote areas, on a clear summer night, it appears as a bright white cotton cloud inlaid with stars. Scientists estimate that it contains no less than 400 billion stars. If we assume that 10% of the galaxy resembles the Sun in terms of age and formation, then this means that there are 40 billion stars that are qualified to form a solar system. And if we consider that 10% of them are linked to planets located at moderate distances from them, therefore with moderate temperatures, then the possibility increases to 4 billion habitable systems. 🌌

The Monthly interviews

KHALED SAMAWI, FOUNDER OF AYYAM GALLERY

Since its establishment in 2006, Ayyam Gallery has become one of the Arab world's leading art spaces with a selection of cutting-edge paintings, sculptures and photographs that represent some of the Middle East's most exciting talent.

Ayyam was initially established in Damascus and later expanded to Dubai, Beirut (Solidere in 2009) and Cairo (19 October 2010). As Ayyam Gallery grows, it continues to find new and innovative ways to further its original mission—to ensure that the Arab world's finest artists receive the international recognition they deserve.

How would you define the Arab Artists that display their work in your gallery?

Ayyam Gallery's mission is to give Arab artists the global recognition they deserve. For years, the artists that live and work in this region have been neglected by regional and international collectors. Ayyam Gallery is working hard to find the best contemporary artists in the countries it is present in. The artists that we represent and exhibit are artists that we believe will set a new trend of what Arab art exemplifies. We are not looking for artists who are living in the past and idealize the Western masters; we are looking for artists who believe that the future starts now and that their art will influence the world. This is why Ayyam Gallery focuses on younger artists. Obviously, we make exceptions for great Arab artists such as Asaad Arabi and Samia Halaby who have always been ahead of their time.

How would you describe Ayyam's role in developing and advocating Arab Art?

Art is a sign of culture and development. We are trying to expand the representation of Arab Art to an international level, to display it to a wider audience. We believe we have potential in terms of talent and richness. We do not need to conform to the Western culture, because the culture we already detain, as Arabs in general and as Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians, etc, in specific, is a part of us and needs to be reinforced instead of replaced by other cultures. Besides the opening of great spaces that befit our artists, we are also active in cultural and educational exhibitions and have just inaugurated the Ayyam Art Center in Dubai as the first private museum space dedicated to exhibiting Middle Eastern art.



Ayyam Gallery in Beirut

What are the different levels of media coverage that you provide?

We have the most comprehensive website of any gallery or art institution active in the region. We have published more than 40 artist books in the last four years, all of which are available online free of charge.

How would you describe the role of Ayyam's omnipresence through four galleries around the Arab world?

As a gallery and auction house we are committed to our artists and collectors. By having an aggressive expansion policy, we are making sure that the art we represent, and the quality of Arab art in general, is viewed by as many art lovers across the world as possible. We believe it is

“We are looking for artists who have something new to offer and are not blindly influenced by the older generation.”

our duty to ensure that art from our region is properly and professionally exhibited worldwide.

Most of the top international galleries and auctions houses such as Christie's, Sotheby's, Gaggossian, Pace, etc.... have multiple branches. We like to be close to our artists and collectors so we have decided to be present in the most important Arab capitals. We are eagerly looking for new young creative artists in Beirut, Dubai, and Cairo. Furthermore, our most significant trait is the first class quality of exhibitions we hold in all our spaces and not the spaces themselves.

How would you describe the interaction between the exhibiting Artists and their audience via Ayyam's frame?

The fact that Ayyam Gallery exhibits Arab art worldwide has, for the first time, given Arab artists international feedback on their work. Ayyam Gallery believes that an artist's success is directly related to his collector's base. We live in 2010 and a great artist should have a great collector base. If an artist does not have a good international collector base it means the artist has failed. This is the risk that any artist takes when working with Ayyam Gallery, his or her art gets international exposure and feedback from the international collector base, which will lead to his success or failure. Historically, an artist's success or failure was very local. While some historically famous Arab artists failed internationally, many low key Middle Eastern artists have now become local, regional and international stars.

We have noticed the contests that you hold to recruit young artists. How do you evaluate those artists?

We are looking for artists who have something new to offer and are not blindly influenced by the older generation. Unfortunately, in the Arab world, the older generation of artists dismisses any younger artist who is not influenced by them or who wants to be different. While we believe you need a past to have a future, we also believe that if you live in the past, you do not have a future.



Ayyam Gallery in Dubai

We have noticed your constant innovation by organizing events such as auctions and contests. What can you tell us about the conception and development of such ideas?

In order for us and our artists to succeed, we need to help in the building of the contemporary art infrastructure. Our region has a lot of extremely talented young artists that want to influence the world. We need more galleries, more collectors, more museums and more auction houses to give them the credit they deserve.

The 2009 opening of Ayyam's solidere outpost, in the heart of downtown Beirut, has come amidst the reemergence of Lebanon's commercial art scene and is already making waves. Seeking to honor the country's long standing tradition of art collecting and connoisseurship, the "First Beirut Sale", an in-house auction of Arab art that is the first of its kind, was organized as a groundbreaking network through which Arab art can be appreciated and valued. In addition to highlighting the gallery's regular artists, the sale included works by several prominent Lebanese painters demonstrating one of the many ways in which Ayyam seeks to stimulate and support Beirut's diverse artistic landscape.

Other programs such as "Shabab Ayyam Project" provides a research-based environment for talented young artists by seeking to foster their creativity, while its "Young collectors" auctions in Dubai have opened up the market to budding art patrons by offering some of the hottest names in Middle Eastern art in an informal setting at accessible prices.

POPULAR CULTURE

A lamb for Mar Geryes and a bottle of oil for Virgin Mary

... Once when I was little I felt a pain in my neck, and I felt something big was growing under my skin, it was swelling and left a red scar. First, they told me it was a pimple, then they said it's a lump and then they said... In those days, there were neither clinics nor doctors... We did not have telephones to call and say 'Rida is unwell', and have doctor Idriss or Dunbadyan or Bouchinder show up a few minutes later with medical supplies to check Rida, take a blood sample from his finger, and tell him he would get better two days later. No, medicine was restricted to the elderly. But the elderly could not agree on the cause of the swelling on the left side of my neck. And thus they disagreed on the treatment...

But the medication they gave me did not work. So they said, get Tannous... Tannous was the only doctor in the region. He was illiterate, he could not read or write and he had never seen a school in his life... But according to the villagers, 'Tannous's influence on the sick was excellent. His hand is light on the patient, and he heals miraculously, he heals better than the medicine of today!'

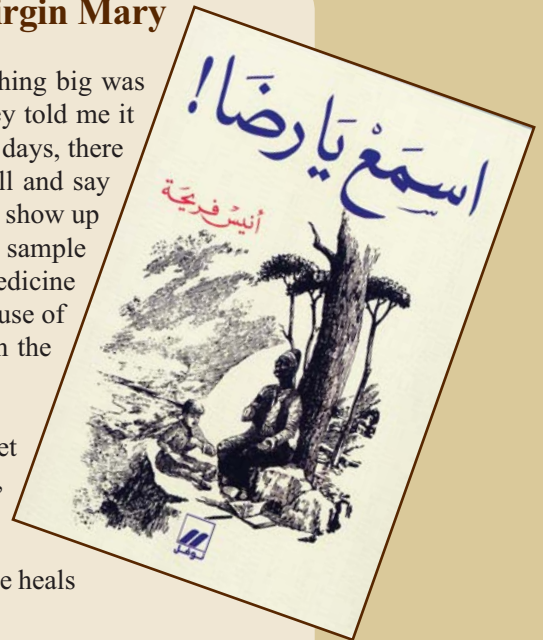
They sent a messenger to get doctor Tannous. But Tannous said: 'It's okay, it's not worthwhile for me to go with you in this heat, take this black cream, clean the swollen part with some Arak and then spread the cream, the swelling will disappear within a few hours and tomorrow I will pass by'.

But Tannous's black odorous cream did not work. The swelling intensified and it became hard for me to swallow. Another symptom emerged: my fever rose significantly and they said I was going to get poisoned and die from this lump. Mother cried, father prayed, the neighbors were upset: 'this child is going to pass away!'

So my aunt came to her sister -my mother- and whispered in her ear: "Stop crying, God is almighty and powerful! Yesterday I prayed for the boy and made a vow to Mar Geryes, may he rest in peace. And I consecrated a bottle of oil to Virgin Mary's lamp. Oh Sharifa, don't worry, God will heal him, stop crying in front of the boy, you are scaring him!'

The next morning, a doctor from a far away land was passing by... When he saw me he said: 'We must cut open the lump right this instant. Give me some Arak! Give me a clean knife, give me a bowl! Two minutes later I was being held down by four hands and could not move. And I heard the sound of the knife slitting my neck, it sounded like a saw, and I felt my spirit had parted with me... The next day I was asking for food and water. One of the elderly women exclaimed: 'The boy is cured!'

My aunt said: "He healed thanks to Virgin Mary and Mar Geryes, may he rest in peace, God is almighty. What a coincidence that this doctor passed by at the right moment! Mar Geryes sent him! Virgin Mary healed him!'



Sources translated from: Anis Freiha, *Isma'a ya Rida - First Edition 2006, Dar Nawfal, Beirut*

Myth #41

THE LEBANESE CONSTITUTION

Myth: The Lebanese Constitution was drafted to “reward the Lebanese people for their peaceful attitude toward France”

Fact: The Lebanese Constitution was a product of necessity

Maurice Sarrail, High Commissioner of Syria and Lebanon in 1924, was strongly opposed to the confessional system and sought to turn Lebanon into a secular state, burying its confessional divisions and putting an end to the monopolization of the education system by religious groups, in order for it to be in the hands of the secular state. Dr. Fawwaz Traboulsi writes in his book ‘Tarikh Lubnan al-Hadith: Min al-Imara ila Ittifaq al-Ta’ef’¹, that “Maurice Sarrail, the secular freemason General, represented the exception in French politics towards Lebanon”. He adds: “he initiated a series of bold reforms, he unified the taxation system, thus minimizing the gap between the inhabitants of the areas under mandate and those of Greater Lebanon, he opened up administrative posts to Muslims and suggested a secular education program based on an official curriculum. He also divided Lebanon into 11 mixed muhafazat and did not adhere to the confessional partaking of the electoral system”².

Facing pressure from the Maronite Church, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected most of Sarrail’s reforms and replaced him with Henri De Jouvenel in 1926. According to one of the Lebanese history books pertaining to the official Lebanese curriculum, the latter wanted to “reward the Lebanese people for their peaceful attitude toward France and grant them their demands of a constitution”. He therefore asked the Lebanese Representative Council (later known as the Founding Council) to form a national parliamentary committee to assist the French Boncour Committee in drafting the constitution.

The parliamentary committee was composed of 12 members, most notably Michel Shiha and Petro Trad. It “consulted clergymen, intellectuals and political and legal [experts] in Lebanon and used the French Boncour Committee’s draft constitution as inspiration”. Following consensus on the texts, another committee was formed and included prominent figures, such as Charles Debbas, to draft the constitution’s articles. Once finalized, they were amended and ratified by the Founding Council.

On May 23, 1926, De Jouvenel presented the Lebanese Constitution to Parliament and put it into effect. As such, Lebanon was meant to become an independent state and a democratic republic with a system of governance based on three separate authorities: the Executive, represented by the president and the ministers, the Legislative, formed of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and the Judiciary, composed of judges who issue rulings in the name of the people.

In fact, in 1925, the Syrian revolution led by Sultan Pasha Al-Atrash broke out across all the Muhafazat and resulted in the destabilization of the French policy in Syria. As such, the constitution was not drafted as a “reward to the Lebanese” but rather out of necessity, in order to establish political confessionalism and equality between Christians and Muslims. Indeed, it was a reassuring instrument for the Maronites who had been uncomfortable with the civil reforms proposed by Sarrail. The French also needed the constitution because they feared that the Lebanese, especially the Druze, would join Sultan Pasha Al-Atrash’s revolution or lead a similar one in Lebanon, further undermining the French mandate. In this context, Traboulsi notes that “following the shock of the Syrian revolution and the imminent gathering of the Mandates’ Commission of the League of Nations, France was forced to work hard to provide Lebanon and Syria with a constitution”³.

Thus, the constitution merely granted Lebanon ‘so-called’ independence because the actual governor of the country was the High Commissioner. According to the constitution, he had the right to remove the president and the ministers from power, dissolve parliament, veto legislation, suspend the constitution and manage Lebanon’s political and foreign affairs. In fact, between May 23, 1926, when the constitution went into effect, and November 22, 1943, the date of Lebanon’s independence, the High Commissioner suspended the Lebanese constitution three times.

1 - Fawwaz Traboulsi, ‘A History of Modern Lebanon’.

2 - Ibid.

3 - Ibid.

ONE FAMILY'S RESPONSE TO TERRORISM: A DAUGHTER'S MEMOIR

The story of the search for justice by the family of Malcolm Kerr, the assassinated president of the American University of Beirut

As a daughter bereaved by the assassination of her father, Malcolm Kerr, the president of the American University of Beirut shot in the back of the head as he stepped out of an elevator on campus on his way to work on January 14, 1984, Susan Kerr Van De Ven presents her book "One Family's Response to Terrorism: A Daughter's Memoir" as a personal account of a judgment of evidence concerning her father's assassination. The perplexed and grieving daughter desperately seeks the truth while delving into the intertwined history of two countries, the United States and Lebanon.

An early investigation into the accident was impossible as it occurred in the midst of the Lebanese civil war. Furthermore, the father's sympathetic stance towards the Arab world, particularly the Palestinian cause, and aggressive attitude towards Israeli soldiers created a sense of uncertainty as to the identity of the murderer: Was it the Lebanese Christians? The Israelis? The CIA? The Islamic Jihad?

According to Terry Anderson in his book *Den of Lions* published in 1993, "the assassination of Kerr was a carefully planned operation of Hizballah. Kerr was labeled a "dangerous spy" by Ali's Centre, the central data bank on foreigners in Beirut". After reading this, Kerr went on a quest for her father's murderers. Later, her brother Andrew was appointed to the Situation Room at the National Security Council (NSC), which meant that he had access to sophisticated information from the U.S. government intelligence apparatus. He managed to get important information on two people involved in his father's assassination from a three page document he stumbled upon accidentally. The document also suggested "that the assassination had been commissioned and approved by senior authorities in the Hizballah apparatus, which included officials of the Iranian government". The writer states that her brother later came across other documents that supported the conclusion that Iran had sponsored her father's assassination. This prompted her to undertake extensive research about the Shia's a population in Lebanon. She found that "with its large and discontented Shi'ite population, its lack of national authority, and an imperialist enemy in the form of Israel and America, Lebanon was ripe for the export of Iran's fundamentalist blueprint for a new Islamic order". In 1982, following the Israeli Army's invasion of Lebanon, Iran established its foothold

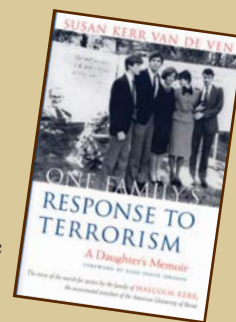
in the Bekaa Valley giving birth to the Hezbollah organization, which soon after launched its Anti-Western campaign. After reading Magnus Ranstorp's *Hizb'allah In Lebanon*, she familiarized herself with Phase One of the campaign, which comprised of three targets aiming to systematically eliminate symbols of American power in Lebanon: the April 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy, the October 1983 bombing of the American Marine and French Barracks, and the January 1984 assassination of AUB's President Malcolm Kerr. What perplexed Kerr was that "AUB's outlook on Middle East politics was traditionally at odds with that of the U.S. government", which made it difficult to understand why it would be a target.

The decision to start legal action in December 2002, nineteen years later, was a "moral one set against a backdrop of complex international politics". The lawsuit was motivated by a sense of idealism, especially after an increasing number of American families, "who had been caught in that web of Iranian-sponsored anti-Western violence in Lebanon", decided to take their cases to court. For those families, "it was perhaps impossible [...] to have realized the resentment among ordinary Arabs toward the U.S. government", a resentment caused by the American-Israeli solidarity.

It is noteworthy that in her book, Susan Kerr mentions the disagreements between her father and other parties, namely the Israelis and the Gemayel family, who considered AUB as an intellectual base for terrorism, without further dwelling on these discords. It is also worth noting that Kerr mainly relies on documents from the U.S. intelligence apparatus NSC accessed by her brother and on Terry Anderson's note in accusing Hezbollah. Whether this constitutes reliable and tangible proof is questionable. It should however be borne in mind that this book was written by a daughter grieving her father's assassination. Keeping emotions aside would thus prove quite difficult.

Despite her belief that her father was assassinated by Hezbollah, she remains empathetic to the Palestinian cause and does not defend the US policy in the Middle East.

This book was published by Syracuse University Press, New York - First Edition in 2008.



“MIMI AND THE MAGIC GLOBE”

“Mimi in Sri Lanka”, “Mimi in Ethiopia” and “Mimi in the Philippines”

“Mimi and the Magic Globe” is a collection of books about a little girl called Mimi who travels in her dreams to different countries using her magic globe and discovers their cultures and traditions. The collection includes three books: “Mimi in Sri Lanka”, “Mimi in Ethiopia” and “Mimi in the Philippines”.

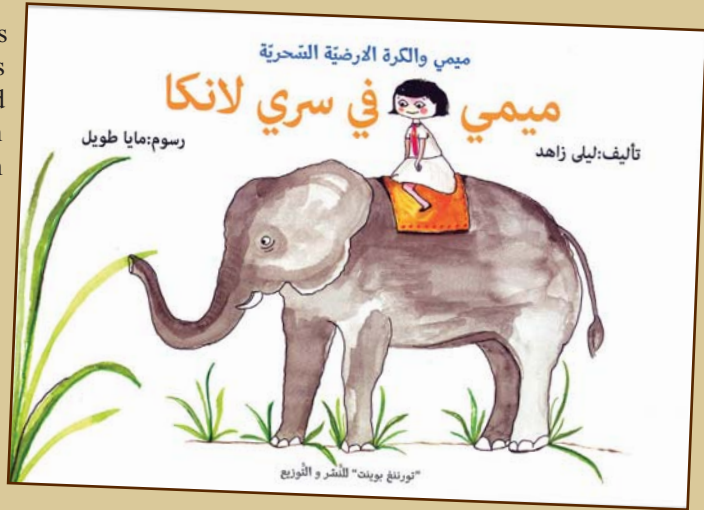
The books are designed to introduce Lebanese children to the cultures of foreign domestic workers in order to teach them to be compassionate, tolerant and understanding. They also encourage children to communicate with the foreign domestic workers by asking them questions about their countries. For example, in one of her stories Mimi asks “Do you really have this kind of animal in your country, like the book says?”

The distinctive features of the books are that they introduce the readers to foreign traditions and cultures in a fun and informative manner yet indirectly teach children not to be racist.

The books contain a collection of drawings and real photographs of traditional food, professions, people, places and animals from each country. Maps and other geographical information about each country are included at the end of each book. The texts also include a number of key sentences in the local dialect of the country.

The collection is recommended for children at the elementary level because the sentences are easy and simple. Any person who enjoys traveling and learning about new cultures would enjoy reading these books.

“Mimi and the Magic Globe” was written in Arabic by Layla Zahed and illustrated by Maya Taweel. It was first published by “Turning Point” in 2009 in Beirut and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency and supported by the French Ministry of Culture and the International Labor Organization (ILO).



MIKATI FAMILY

All are Sunni Muslims initially involved in religion and then turning to business and politics

“Mikati” is an Arabic name given to the person who sets the prayer times and religious duties in the mosque. This person is expected to be an astronomist.

The main ancestor of this Islamic family is Sheikh Mohammad Mikati, who was brought by Sultan Qalawun from Egypt in 1280 and resided in Tripoli. Sheikh Mohammad Mikati took control over the Sultan’s grand mosque and had the main task of setting prayer times in the city. When he died, he was buried in the grand mosque’s cemetery and his family succeeded him in the Islamic Fiqh. Of the most prominent are “Sheikh Moustapha Abdel Hay Mikati” and “Sheikh Ibrahim Mikati”.

The Mikatis became involved in “Al-Ifta’a”. Sheikh Mohammad Rachid Mikati became a Mufti in the 1920’s followed by Sheikh Kazem Mikati in 1955. On the other hand, Taha and Najib Mikati flourished in business. In 1998, Najib Mikati went into politics as Minister of Public Works and Transportation and was elected deputy of Tripoli in the year 2000 and re-elected in 2009. In 2005, he was appointed Prime Minister but held the post for merely three months.

According to Forbes magazine, Najib Mikati and his brother Taha were the 374th richest people in the world in 2010.

There are 880 members of the Mikati family, the vast majority of whom reside in the North, namely in Tripoli. They are all Sunni Muslims and are distributed as follows:

Tripoli: 537 members distributed in the following regions:

- ⦿ Hadadeen: 169 members
- ⦿ Tal: 211 members
- ⦿ Tabbeneh: 55 members
- ⦿ Swaika: 53 members
- ⦿ Nouri: 43 members
- ⦿ Zahrieh: 6 members



Beirut: 308 members distributed in the following regions:

- ⦿ Mazraa: 281 members
- ⦿ Dar Mreiseh: 21 members
- ⦿ Achrafieh: 6 members

Karkaf – Akkar: 27 members

Dekerman – Saida: 8 members

DERDGHAYA

Qada'a Sour

Etymology

In Anis Freiha's book "Names of Lebanese Towns and Villages", the name is made up of two parts:

"Dar", which means circle, barn or home.

As for the second part, there are 2 opinions regarding its origin:

- ⊙ "dekhayya": pure and clean, and thus the word would mean a pure and clean home.
- ⊙ "dar d ghayya": happiness and beauty and thus it would mean the home of happiness and beauty.

Location

The town of Derdghaya is located in the Qada'a of Sour, a Mohafaza of the South, at an altitude of 410 meters above sea level. It lies 90 kilometers away from Beirut, 50 kilometers from the center of the Mohafaza of Saida and occupies an area of 376 hectares. It can be reached via Zahrani, Borj Rahhal and Deir Qanoun Al-Nahr.

Population

There are an estimated 1,243 registered residents in Derdghaya, mainly Catholics and Maronites, living in 250 houses and occupying around 110 commercial shops.

Voters

In 2000, the number of registered voters was 797, of whom 138 cast their ballots. In 2005, the number reached 837, with 131 casting their ballots. As for the year 2009, the number dropped to 832 of whom merely 85 cast their ballots. They belong to the following families:

Catholics

- ⊙ Al-Zarqa: 149
- ⊙ Al-Khoury: 108
- ⊙ Al-Badawi: 107
- ⊙ Rizk: 56
- ⊙ Raad: 54
- ⊙ Eliya: 25
- ⊙ Daher: 16
- ⊙ Moussa: 11
- ⊙ Asaad: 9
- ⊙ Hourani: 7
- ⊙ Saba: 5
- ⊙ Zarqa': 4



Shia'a

- ⊙ Matar: 11
- ⊙ Herz: 3

Maronites

- ⊙ Semaan: 12
- ⊙ Toubya: 9
- ⊙ Mezher: 4

Local authorities

There is a municipal council, currently headed by Haitham Raad, consisting of 9 members. There is also a mukhtar, Milad Elias Eliya, and a three-member ikhtiyariah body.

Education

There is no educational institution in the town and the students go to schools in Sour.

Economy

The town's main source of income is employment and agriculture (namely olives, tobacco and cereals). It also relies on incomes from immigrants and jobs in the cities.

Archeological sites

The town has 85 traditional homes, dating back to the olden age.

Challenges

Of the most prominent challenges faced by the residents are the non-closure of the files of the displaced and the non-payment of compensation for the damaged homes. The village also suffers from a lack of electricity.



SULEIMAN FRANJIEH ON MICHEL AOUN AND SAMIR GEAGEA

THE FORMER IS THE STRONGEST WHILE THE LATTER IS AN INSOLENT CRIMINAL

Suleiman Franjeh, Michel Aoun and Samir Geagea represent Christian political Za'amat, each with its own vision and goals. The current political scene evidences a rapprochement between Aoun and Franjeh, which stems from the closeness in their nationalist, Arab and Christian beliefs, marking a stark contrast with the dissonance between the latter and Geagea, whose views are closer to Western ideologies. This is perhaps the result of the structure of the Lebanese political system, which tends to specify the roles of political figures.

Relationship with Aoun

“The Christians have always known how to weaken each other. This is an unacceptable policy that must be abolished for we must support the strongest and the strongest today on the Christian scene is MP General Michel Aoun” (Al Mustaqbal on December 5, 2005).

“Our relationship with the Free Patriotic Movement is much closer than some might think, our offices complement one another and the Marada and the Aounists are a single body such that their colors are harmonious. Even if we wanted to disagree, our partisans wouldn't allow it” (During Hadith al-Sa'a talk show on Al Manar on November 18, 2007).

“No one can [create] discord between us and General Michel Aoun” (During an interview with OTV on October 8, 2008).

“I consider that General Aoun has the right to demand the largest Christian share since he represents the largest Christian bloc. So why do we consider that we do not have the right to demand that? This is our right and others have to respect it” (Al Mustaqbal on August 26, 2009).

“Our relationship with General Michel Aoun is one of unfaltering and positive fate” (During an interview with Kalam el Nass talk show posted on the Marada Movement website on November 27, 2009).

Relationship with Geagea

“We (in the presence of General Aoun) would meet with Samir Geagea in Bkirki, if he wants that then let it be and if not “then let him never accept” (During an interview with Hadith al Sa'a on Al Manar on November 18, 2007).

“Samir Geagea is an insolent criminal. His problem is that he is not only a criminal but an insolent one... When he was released, many considered that his experience in prison was enough to change him. Personally, I was sympathetic to him when he was in prison. But the fact of the matter is that he came out proud of his past and we have been sensing tension since then, which forces the question: if he hadn't been released, would there be disagreement between Christians?” (An Nahar on January 28, 2008).

“Dr. Samir Geagea apologized but he launched a campaign against General Aoun and myself. Our understanding is that he was in a struggle with himself and his entourage advised him on the need to apologize ... Thus, we do not consider that he apologized to us, because he considers he was performing his national duty in Ehden when he killed 30 people, but rather to those he killed on the way to murder Rachid Karami”. (Asharq al Awsat on September 23, 2008).

“Today, Geagea says ‘hurry so that no more blood is shed’. Isn't there a State in charge or is he trying to scare us? Or has he become the innocent party? If you want reconciliation, there is a road map that we are willing to follow but scoring points is not reconciliation.”

“I am not enthusiastic about a meeting with Geagea because to me he has no depth. And I tell my partisans, if something should happen to me then Samir Geagea is responsible or stands to benefit” (During an interview with OTV on October 8, 2008).

“If the reconciliation does not abide by our terms then we are not in a hurry to offer Samir Geagea gifts or to exonerate him” (An Nahar on October 22, 2008).

“Reconciliation with the head of the Lebanese Forces' executive body cannot take place in a sideline meeting on the margin of the dialogue table; Geagea must create a favorable atmosphere for reconciliation. It does not matter if they try to take a picture of [all the political leaders] in Ba'abda this will not change anything. Even if President Michel Suleiman invited them to a luncheon, the story remains the same (...) Dr. Geagea's approach is arrogant and will not lead to flexibility in matters” (As Safir on March 3, 2010).

* Samir Geagea: “Suleiman Franjeh's statement is a Syrian statement [delivered] through a Lebanese man's mouth” (An Nahar on November 27, 2008).

November 2010 Timeline in Lebanon

NASRALLAH: “WE WILL SEVER THE HAND OF WHOEVER TRIES TO TOUCH ANY OF OUR FIGHTERS, AND THE SOLUTIONS MUST COME BEFORE THE INDICTMENT NOT AFTER”

Hariri: “I did not accuse Hezbollah of the assassination”; Premier goes to London, Rabat, Riyadh, Moscow, Tehran and Paris; Assem Qanso: “Ma’arab will not take us more than two hours”; Erdogan visits Lebanon

October 28

- ◉ A delegation of international investigators into the assassination of former PM Rafic Hariri visit Dr. Iman Sharara, according to a pre-scheduled meeting, in her women’s clinic in Dahyieh in a bid to look into the files of 17 of her (female) patients. The delegation comes under attack by a group of veiled women.

October 29

- ◉ During a speech broadcast on Al Manar TV, Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah urges the Lebanese people to boycott the International Investigation Committee in Lebanon because it transfers all the information it obtains to Israel.

- ◉ French President Nicolas Sarkozy meets Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri in Paris.

- ◉ Vandals dig graves in a Christian cemetery in the town of Jiyeh.

October 30

- ◉ The Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon Ali Awadh Al Asseiri visits the North and meets various political and religious figures.

- ◉ Following a meeting headed by PM Hariri, a statement of the Future bloc confirms the latter’s commitment to the International Tribunal.

- ◉ MP Walid Jumblat describes the attitude of the investigators as “unethical”.

November 1

- ◉ PM Hariri leaves the country heading to Kuwait then the UK. From Kuwait, he declares that stability in Lebanon is an Arab responsibility.

November 2

- ◉ During a lecture at Boston University, MP Sami Gemayyel says: “We are seeking a new political system based on territorial unity, since our present system has proven its ineffectiveness in the past 60 years.”

- ◉ During a ceremony at the Lebanese Embassy in London, Prime Minister Hariri, on a visit to Britain, states: “Lebanon will not remain prone to intimidation, rather it will continue to be a model of national coexistence between all confessions and the international tribunal will triumph in the end.”

November 3

- ◉ A meeting attended by the Iranian and Saudi ambassadors takes place at the Yarzeh home of the Syrian Ambassador to Lebanon, Ali Abdel Karim Al Ali.”

- ◉ PM Hariri’s return from London is delayed and the Cabinet’s session, scheduled for Wednesday to discuss the matter of the false witnesses, is postponed. Speaking to The Times, Hariri says: “I do not think that President Assad had anything to do with my father’s murder”.

- ◉ General Michel Aoun attends a meeting of the Finance and Budget Committee in which the Minister of Finance offers her explanations on the manner in which public funds are being spent. MP Ammar Hourri presents a document signed by Aoun, when he was prime minister of the transitional government in 1990, and in which he asks one of the banks to transfer funds to the account of his wife, Nadia Al-Chami, in France.

- ◉ A report by UN Secretary General

Ban Ki-moon on Resolution 1701 holds the Lebanese army responsible for the clashes that occurred in A’adeisseh and calls on Hezbollah to disarm.

November 4

- ◉ Announcement of a USD 10 million donation by the United States as a contribution to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL).

- ◉ Hariri visits Morocco and meets Saudi Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz.

- ◉ Syrian Ambassador to Lebanon Ali Abdel Karim Al Ali meets with Aoun at the latter’s residence in Rabieh.

- ◉ MP Assem Qanso states: “Indicators on the ground suggest a confrontation will occur and Ma’arab will not take us more than two hours.”

November 5

- ◉ Hariri receives a call from US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton confirming her support.

- ◉ The Higher Shia’a Council issues a statement in which it holds that the “tribunal’s path threatens the nation and exposes the State to international and Israeli intelligence.”

November 6

- ◉ French Minister of Foreign Affairs Bernard Kouchner arrives in Lebanon on a visit.

- ◉ Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir hosts a meeting gathering March 14 politicians in Bkriki. Following the meeting, a statement entitled “A Call for Lebanon” is issued.

- ◉ The UN Security Council holds a closed meeting to discuss the STL



and progress in the international investigation after the incident that occurred in a clinic in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

November 8

◉ The Beirut Marathon took place the previous day (November 7) with the participation of Hariri and a number of ministers.

◉ MP Franjeh visits the Lebanese Maronite Order in Ghazir and announces that the assassination of former PM Rafic Hariri is a major issue but the security, stability and wellbeing of the Lebanese people are more important, calling on PM Saad Hariri to take a courageous and historic stance that will make him a historic figure.

◉ Four people are killed in Wadi Khaled after being shot by security forces controlling the border.

◉ Before leaving Lebanon, Kouchner says that any accusation that will be made will be against individuals not political parties.

November 9

◉ Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea tells reporters in Ma'arab that "if we were to choose between the government and the tribunal, then we are better off without a government".

◉ Jumblat, accompanied by ministers of the Democratic Gathering bloc, visits Suleiman at the Ba'abda Palace and condemns the statements made against the latter. He describes the meeting of March 14 in Bkirki as confessional and declares that he has some concerns regarding internal unity.

◉ The chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, John Kerry, visits Lebanon and meets with Suleiman and Hariri.

◉ Hariri heads a meeting of the March 14 coalition in Bayt Al Wasat.

November 10

◉ After its meeting in Qoreitem headed by former PM Siniora, the Future bloc made the following statement: "The case of the false witnesses will be ruled

on by a competent judiciary after, and not before, the indictment is issued."

◉ Aoun criticizes Bkirki's statement and declares that "all the State's pillars are currently unstable".

◉ Jumblat, accompanied by Minister Ghazi Al-Aridi visits Damascus and meets with the Assistant Vice President, Major General Mohammad Nassif.

◉ Fire erupts in a depot of chemical substances in A'ain El-Remmeneh. A cloud of smoke covers the affected area and reaches the capital Beirut.

November 11

◉ The Cabinet meets in Ba'abda and the session ends without an agreement on the false witnesses' case.

◉ The STL Appeals Chamber rejects Bellemare's appeal of the decision of the pretrial judge, Daniel Fransen, and considers the tribunal competent to rule on Sayyed's petition to access evidence and documents regarding his case.

◉ The Director General of the Internal Security Forces (ISF), Major General Ashraf Rifi, declares that representatives of 16 Arab States met in Doha on the margin of an Interpol meeting and decided to reject the implementation of the Syrian arrest warrants.

November 12

◉ In a speech dedicated to the commemoration of Hezbollah martyrs, Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah declares that the party rejects any accusations made against it and adds: "We will sever the hand of whoever tries to touch any of our fighters and he who accuses us is the one who killed Rafic Hariri".

◉ Clinton tells An Nahar newspaper: "Violence will not stop the work of the special tribunal and American support for Lebanon is not subject to negotiation or compromise".

November 13

◉ Siniora considers Nasrallah's remarks, concerning the fact that the Lebanese government did not want a ceasefire during the July 2006 war, as

dangerous and calls on the Hezbollah leader to release his documents on this matter.

November 15

◉ The Information Branch in the north arrests Islamist Sheikh Omar Bakri Fustuq, who is wanted by the military court for training Islamist groups to carry weapons.

November 16

◉ Hariri continues his trip to Moscow and receives military donations for the Lebanese army: 6 helicopters, 31 tanks, 36 cannons, 30,000 cannonballs and half a million various types of ammunitions.

◉ Aoun meets French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris and announces that he informed the latter of his concerns over Lebanon's stability.

November 19

◉ The Israeli mini-cabinet declares Israel's readiness to withdraw from the northern part of the town of Ghajar and to hand it over to the UNIFIL, without setting a date for the withdrawal.

◉ Suleiman visited Syria on November 16 and congratulated Assad on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha.

◉ Mufti Qabbani leads Eid Al-Adha prayers in Mohammad Al-Amine Mosque in Beirut in the presence of the Iranian and Saudi ambassadors to Lebanon. They then go on to visit Hariri's grave.

◉ On the first day of Eid Al-Adha, Tuesday November 16, a member of Fatah al-Islam, Walid al-Bustani, manages to escape from Roumieh prison while his cellmate, Munjid al-Fahham, is caught before escaping.

November 20

◉ The Commander of the US Central Command, General James Mattis, visits Lebanon for the first time and conveys President Obama's continued support for arming the Lebanese army.

◉ Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon Ghazanfar Roknabadi visits Gemayyel

in his residence in Bekfayya, and the latter praises Iran's role in Lebanon's stability.

November 22

While addressing the Lebanese people on the occasion of Independence Day, President Suleiman stresses on the need to preserve national unity and the institutions in place, to follow through with the Ta'ef and to establish a defense strategy that relies on the army.

The elections of the Council of the Beirut Bar Association result in a tie between the March 8 and March 14 camps, with two members of each coalition thus being appointed to the Council.

In a speech commemorating the anniversary of his son's death, Amine Gemayyel, says: "We do not need a second charter or a second Ta'ef or a second Doha, but rather a first sentence against those who have killed our martyrs."

General Aoun visits MP Franjeh in Bensha'aya.

November 24

Telecommunications Minister Charbel Nahhas holds a press conference in the presence of MP Hassan Fadlallah during which he presents Israel's tapping of the telephone and telecommunication networks.

A corporal in the Lebanese army (Youssef Youssef from the town of al-Soueiri in the Western Beqa'a) is killed in an ambush organized by armed men in the Masna'a area.

President Michel Suleiman visits Qatar and inaugurates the headquarters of the Lebanese Embassy there.

November 25

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrives in Lebanon and visits A'akkar to inaugurate projects funded by Turkey.

In an interview with Agence France Presse, MP Walid Jumblat says: "The international tribunal aims to destabilize Lebanon instead of upholding justice

in it." He calls on the Cabinet to condemn the tribunal and to reject the indictment.

The military court releases Sheikh Bakri following the payment of a LBP 5 million bail. Upon his release, Bakri thanks Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah for standing by the oppressed and calls for "a reconsideration of some of the positions accorded to the Sunni confession in the country".

Student elections at the American University of Beirut result in the victory of the opposition in five out of six faculties, thus acquiring 53 seats compared to 31 for the pro-government camp.

MP Suleiman Franjeh travels to Qatar following an invitation by Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani.

November 26

Erdogan continues his visit in Lebanon. He inaugurates the Turkish hospital for wounds and burns in Saida and meets a number of political figures including Geagea and Hezbollah. Armenian sit-ins and demonstrations in protest of his visit take place.

Investigations into an Israeli breach of telephone lines belonging to Hezbollah members begin.

Geagea visits the Tashnag party's headquarters.

November 27

Franjeh visits Qatar.

Hariri leaves to Iran on an official visit. While speaking to the Iranian news agency IRNA, he says: "I do not accuse Hezbollah of my father's assassination". He adds that the leaks on the indictment do not serve justice and the ties with Syria are ten times better.

November 29

During a speech on November 27, 2010, Nasrallah announces that solutions before the indictment will protect the country and the resistance but if they come after the ruling it will be too late. He adds that the telecommunications

evidence that was presented against Hezbollah loses all its weight when one takes into account Israel's violation of the sector.

Hariri continues his trip to Iran and meets with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Wikileaks publishes secret correspondence between the American administration and its embassies abroad, including 2,368 telegrams from the US Embassy in Beirut.

November 30

Hariri ends his trip to Iran with a meeting with the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who urges him to boost his relationship with Nasrallah.

Geagea describes Nasrallah's last speech as positive and calm.

Wikileaks reveals that Iran used ambulance cars pertaining to the Red Crescent to send weapons and fighters to Hezbollah during the 2006 July war, and that former PM Fouad Siniora prompted the US to push Syria to respect the sovereignty of other States and not to promise them any rewards.

December 1

On a visit to France, Hariri meets President Nicolas Sarkozy who affirms that France is committed to the international tribunal.

During a lecture at King's College in London, former PM Fouad Siniora says: "An explosion will lead to the explosion of the Middle East as a whole" and Hezbollah is not the enemy, Israel is.

President Michel Suleiman begins meetings with the national dialogue committee to discuss current affairs.

Following a meeting of the Change and Reform bloc, Aoun states: "If anyone wants to do something, let them do it before the indictment is issued."



ARAB FIRST LADIES, QUEENS AND SHEIKHAT

For decades, Arab queens, first ladies and sheikhat had no apparent role. If anything, they were confined to attending official ceremonies, intellectual forums and heading charity organizations but their voices were seldom heard and the media would generally not report their activities.

In Lebanon, very little was known about the first ladies that came to power since independence in 1943. With the exception of Zalfa Tabet Chamoun, wife of Camille Chamoun, who was active in the cultural field as patron of the Ba'albeck Festival, most first ladies kept a low profile. Another example is that of Mona Hraoui who founded the Chronic Care Centre and she headed the National Heritage Association. When looking at other Arab States, we find that the role of Arab first ladies, queens and sheikhat was also limited to the social and cultural fields, such that these women would attend activities as the wives of presidents, kings or sheikhs and not because of their personal interest and dedication to the cause at hand.


Their role really began to change recently. In the year 2000, the Arab Women Organization, a non governmental organization composed of 15 Arab States, was established by Suzanne Mubarak, first lady of Egypt and wife of Hosni Mubarak, and met in Cairo. Prior to Mrs Mubarak, Jehan El-Sadat, wife of Anwar Al-Sadat, stood out for her interest in developmental projects and social initiatives, namely her pro-active stance regarding family planning. She was also known for discussing political matters with her husband. In this article, we have chosen to focus on three influential women.

Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned of Qatar is internationally recognized, particularly in the education field. She was largely responsible for the push for Doha's Education City and often provides advice to Qatar on educational reform. She is Chairperson of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, the Silatech initiative and the Arab Democracy Foundation. She was also appointed UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education in 2003. She has been awarded a number of honorary doctorates from various prestigious universities, including Imperial College London and Georgetown University. In September 2010, she was named 74th most powerful woman by Forbes Magazine.

Queen Rania Al Abdallah was proclaimed queen on March 22, 1999, making her the world's youngest queen. On July 12, 2001, she was awarded an Honorary Doctor

of Laws (LLD) degree from the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom. In May 2007, she established the Children's Museum in Jordan, providing over 150 interactive exhibits. In April 2008, she launched the "Madrasati" initiative, which aims to refurbish around 500 public schools over a five year period. In May 2008, she launched the Arab Sustainability Leadership Group, the first of its kind in the region. In June 2009, she launched the Queen Rania Teachers' Academy, which provides teachers with training, professional support and access to the latest research on educational methods and policies. She holds various national, regional and international positions. In September 2010, she was named 76th most powerful woman by Forbes Magazine.

Asma Al Assad, First Lady of Syria worked in the financial sector in London prior to her marriage to President Bashar Al Assad in December 2000. Upon becoming first lady, she took a prominent public role, in contrast to her predecessors. In July 2001, she established Syria's first rural development NGO, known as the Fund for Integrated Rural Development of Syria (FIDROS). On World Children's Day in June 2002, she launched the first National Children's Book Fair, bringing together authors, artists and publishers from across the country. In July 2002, she initiated the first Mobile Information Center in the Middle East, a fully equipped mobile computer classroom, able to travel across Syria, to access the most remote of villages to conduct Information and Communication Technology literacy programs. In 2003, she launched MAWRED, a Syrian NGO aimed at enhancing the role of women in Syria's economic development. She actively supports the Syrian Business Women's Committee in the Chamber of Commerce. In 2004, she was awarded an honorary doctorate in Archaeology from La Sapienza University, Rome. She is also an active sponsor of events that promote the history, culture and arts of Syria and is seen as a role model for Syrian women.

The empowerment of women in the Arab world is aimed at women from different social classes and positions. The active participation of a first lady or queen in social, cultural, educational and even political fields may encourage women to become involved in these important aspects of life, although this influence alone is insufficient. 

REAL ESTATE PRICE INDEX IN LEBANON – NOVEMBER 2010

During the month of November, the state of concern regarding negative developments in the real estate industry increased and this affected real estate acquisitions by Arabs and Lebanese expatriates. In parallel, prices remained stable and did not witness any decline despite the surplus of offers and the lack of demand. This discrepancy can be explained by the current tense political state of affairs and it is believed that demand will resume once the situation unravels. Tables 1 and 2 list the prices of a number estates and apartments sold in November 2010.

Prices of some apartments sold in November 2010 Table 2

Region	Area m2	Price (USD)	USD/m2
Beirut			
Achrafieh (Monot)	270	837,000	3,100
Achrafieh (Hotel Dieu)	130	260,000	2,000
Achrafieh (Rmeil)	200	338,000	1,690
Ain Al-Teeneh	180	693,000	3,850
Qantari	160	528,000	3,300
Hamra (Jeanne D'arc)	200	700,000	3,500
Talaat Shhadeh	170	340,000	2,000
Koreitem	200	600,000	3,000
Verdun	160	440,000	2,750
Ras Al-Nabei	120	294,000	2,450
Baabda			
Hadath (Kafaat)	130	143,000	1,100
Hadath (Jamous)	140	189,000	1,350
Mar Taqla	400	840,000	2,100
Mar Taqla	320	576,000	1,800
Louizeh (Baabda)	210	388,500	1,850
Sfeir	180	189,000	1,050
Nasrallah Highway	150	172,500	1,150
Matn			
Rabieh	170	314,500	1,850
Sin el Fil (Horch Tabet)	190	418,000	2,200
Mansourieh	160	160,000	1,000
Ain Saadeh	180	252,000	1,400
Beit Mary	150	195,000	1,300
Qornet Shehwan	160	248,000	1,550
Broumana	230	315,100	1,370
A'aley			
Khaldeh	150	150,000	1,000
Dohat Aramoun	220	220,000	1,000
Khaldeh (Haroun Al-Rashid)	190	157,700	830
Bshamoun	120	126,000	1,050
Dohat Hoss	100	120,000	1,200
Keserouane			
Sahel Alma	200	400,000	2,000
Sahel Alma	140	196,000	1,400
Adonis	200	240,000	1,200
Kfar Hbab	180	324,400	1,800
Ballouneh	210	231,000	1,100
Zouk Mosbeh	100	95	950
Zouk Mkayel	140	140,000	1,000

Source: Information International November 2010

Prices of some estates sold in November 2010 Table 1

Region	Area m2	Price (USD)	USD/m2
Beirut			
Ras Al-Nabei	400	3,000,000	7,500
Achrafieh	320	1,280,000	4,000
Achrafieh	250	850,000	3,400
Verdun	800	9,200,000	11,500
Baabda			
Kfarchima	900	270,000	300
Hadath	1,100	517,000	470
Hazmieh	780	990,600	1,270
Baabda	1,500	1,950,000	1,300
Matn			
Broumana	900	540,000	600
Broumana	1,200	756,000	630
Dbayeh (Highway)	720	1,296,000	1,800
Beit Mary	1,050	866,250	825
Mkallès (Industrial zone)	1,730	1,557,000	900
Bekfaya	1,000	250,000	250
Fanar	1,250	887,500	710
A'aley			
A'aley	750	225,000	300
Dohat Aramoun	820	270,600	330
Khaldeh (Highway)	1,150	1,725,000	1,500
Dhour (Aabadieh)	1,400	420,000	300
Bhamdoun (village)	950	171,000	180
Keserouane			
A'ajaltoun	1,100	363,000	330
A'ajaltoun	3,000	540,000	180
Ballouneh	980	637,000	650
Faraya	1,000	180,000	180
Ghadras	1,000	170,000	170
Jeita	1,150	276,000	240
Adma	1,300	754,000	580

Source: Information International November 2010

TOWARD A LEBANESE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

FOOD PRICE INDEX OF 100 PRODUCTS: NOVEMBER 2010

The prices of most of the products we list every month witnessed a decrease or remained unchanged during the month of November 2010. The prices of 27 products increased, those of 39 products stayed the same and the prices of 34 commodities dropped. This is due to a state of fear and concern in light of the negative developments that Lebanon is witnessing while awaiting the issuance of the indictment regarding the assassination of the former PM Rafic Hariri in addition to the threats and statements made by the leaders of various political parties.

Table 1 lists the price of products during November 2010 (in LBP)

Price of products during November 2010 (in LBP) Table 1			
Item and brand	Prices beginning of November 2010	Prices beginning of December 2010	% of price change
Oil			
Afia corn oil (3.5 liters)	12,250	13,750	12.2+
Mazola corn oil (3.5 liters)	12,200	13,100	7.4+
Mazola corn oil (1.8 liters)	6,500	6,950	6.9+
Slim corn oil (2 liters)	7,000	7,500	7.1+
Wesson corn oil (2 liters)	7,500	8,250	10+
Ghandour soya oil (3.8 liters)	8,250	8,500	3+
Alfa corn oil (4 liters)	11,250	11,250	0
Al-Wadi Olive Oil (1/2 liters)	7,500	6,550	12.7-
Ketchup and Sauces			
Libby's Ketchup (567 g)	3,100	3,000	3.2-
Extra Ketchup (340 g)	1,000	980	2-
Extra Ketchup (2.2 kg)	5,750	5,500	4.3-
Dolly's Mayonnaise (500 ml)	3,950	3,500	11.4-
Al-Wadi Mayonnaise (500 ml)	4,200	4,300	2.4+
Al-Bsat Tahina (900 g)	6,490	6,900	6.3+
Al-Bsat Tahina (450 g)	3,500	3,600	2.8+
Taous tomato sauce (70 g)	890	780	12.3-
Taous tomato sauce (425 g)	4,450	3,250	27-
Tala tomato sauce (675 g)	3,500	3,500	0
Fruits and Vegetables			
Orange (1 kg)	1,250	1,000	20-
Tomatoes (1kg)	1,750	2,000	14.3+
Cucumbers (1kg)	1,000	1,000	0
Bananas (1kg)	1,250	1,000	20-
Lemons (1 kg)	1,000	1,000	0
Apples (1 kg)	2,000	2,000	0
Potatoes (1 kg)	800	1,000	25+

Price of products during November 2010 (in LBP) Table 1			
Item and brand	Prices beginning of November 2010	Prices beginning of December 2010	% of price change
Dairy Products			
Candia full cream milk (1 liter)	2,500	2,500	0
Candia full cream yoghurt (2 kg)	5,200	4,500	13.4-
Bonjus labneh (1 kg)	3,750	3,990	6.4+
Taanayel labneh (500 g)	3,750	5,650	50.6+
Candia labneh (500 g)	3,500	3,800	8.5-
Taanayel yoghurt (1 kg)	3,250	3,000	7.7-
Smeds cheese (400 g)	4,000	4,000	0
Picon cheese (360 g)	3,350	3,350	0
Picon cheese (160 g)	1,750	1,700	2.8-
Double-crème cheese (1 kg)	8,000	8,000	0
Fresh country cheese (1 kg)	10,000	8,950	10.5-
Khashkawan cheese (1 kg)	11,000	11,000	0
Lurpak butter (200 g)	2,500	2,500	0
Tatra butter (200 g)	2,400	2,400	0
Al-Maalaqtain margarine (2 kg)	7,950	7,950	0
Al-Baqara al-Haloub margarine (2kg)	28,050	30,075	7.2+
Vegetaline margarine (2 kg)	14,950	14,750	1.3-
Nido full cream milk (bag) (2,250 g)	18,950	18,950	0
Nido full cream milk (2,500 g)	23,100	23,100	0
Tatra full cream milk (1,800 g)	17,500	17,500	0
Halvah and Jam			
Al-Wadi halvah (454 g)	3,850	3,850	0
Al-Bsat halvah (450 g)	3,250	3,150	3-
Chtaura apricot jam (1 kg)	4,600	5,500	19.5+
Al-Wadi apricot jam (1 kg)	5,900	4,500	23.7-

Price of products during November 2010 (in LBP) Table 1

Item and brand	Prices beginning of November 2010	Prices beginning of December 2010	% of price change
Cereals			
Khater white lentils (1 kg)	3,700	3,750	1.3+
Khater chick-peas fahli (1 kg)	3,500	3,750	7.1+
Khater beans (1 kg)	2,000	2,000	0
Peeled wheat (1 kg)	2,500	2,500	0
Pineal Lima Bean (1 kg)	3,850	3,850	0
Brown Fine Burgul (1 kg)	2,000	2,100	5+
Egyptian rice (1 kg)	2,000	1,900	5-
American rice (1 kg)	2,000	2,000	0
Italian rice (1 kg)	2,750	3,500	27.2+
Al-Wadi Hommos Tahina (380 g)	1,350	1,300	3.7-
Chtaura Hommos Tahina (380 g)	1,000	1,000	0
California Gardens beans (450 g)	1,350	1,750	29.6+
Al-Wadi beans (450 g)	990	900	9-
Chtaura beans (480 g)	1,450	1,300	10.3-
Libby's corn (340 g)	1,540	1,540	0
Pasta			
Barilla spaghetti (500 g)	2,200	2,100	4.5-
Antonio Amato spaghetti (500 g)	2,400	2,200	8.4-
Monte spaghetti (500 g)	2,200	2,000	9-
Sugar and Salt			
Sugar (2 kg)	3,350	3,250	2.9-
Al-Ousra Sugar (5 kg)	8,750	9,500	8.6+
Salt (700 g)	350	350	0
Box of salt (738 g)	1,250	1,250	0

Price of products during November 2010 (in LBP) Table 1

Item and brand	Prices beginning of November 2010	Prices beginning of December 2010	% of price change
Meat, Fish and Eggs			
Zwan chicken (200 g)	2,300	2,200	4.3-
Zwan beef (200 g)	2,400	2,250	6.2-
Luncheon meat beef (198 g)	1,350	1,150	14.8-
Al-Mona chicken (200 g)	2,100	2,100	0
Al-Taghzia beef (200 g)	1,950	1,850	5.1-
Al-Taghzia chicken (200 g)	1,900	1,750	7.9-
Geisha sardine (125 g)	1,400	1,400	0
Deli sardine (125 g)	1,100	1,100	0
Milo sardine (125 g)	1,000	1,090	9+
Geisha tuna (200 g)	3,950	4,000	1.2+
White Bell tuna (200 g)	2,050	2,150	4.8+
White Diamond tuna (200 g)	2,100	2,250	7.1+
Skipper tuna (185 g)	1,750	1,750	0
Eggs (30 eggs)	3,500	5,000	42.8+
Beef (1 kg)	22,000	18,000	18.2-
Sheep (1 kg)	30,000	25,000	16.7-
Coffee and Tea			
Najjar coffee (1kg)	12,000	12,000	0
Brazil coffee (1 kg)	11,000	11,000	0
Al-Hisan tea (180 g)	2,600	2,700	3.8+
Nestle (250g)	2,750	2,750	0
Tissues and Detergents			
Mimosa tissues (500 g)	2,650	2,650	0
Fine tissues (200 tissues)	1,350	1,350	0
Primo tissues (200 tissues)	1,370	1,370	0
Gipsy tissues (300 tissues)	2,550	2,550	0
Mimosa toilet papers (4 rolls)	2,500	2,500	0
Yes detergent (900 g)	2,250	2,250	0
Clorox (1 liter)	1,500	1,500	0
Persil (4 kg)	18,250	17,850	2.1-
Ariel (4 kg)	18,250	18,000	1.3-

Source: Information International 2010



Statistics from around the World

Breast Cancer in the USA

- ◉ **192,370 estimated new cases** of invasive breast cancer emerged among women in 2009.
- ◉ **40,170 women** were expected to die from breast cancer in 2009.
- ◉ **1,910 cases of breast cancer** were expected to occur among men in 2009, accounting for 1% of all breast cancer cases.
- ◉ **440 men** were expected to die from breast cancer in 2009.
- ◉ **Relative survival rates** for women diagnosed with breast cancer are: **89 %** at 5 years after diagnosis, **82 %** after 10 years and **75 %** after 15 years.
- ◉ **There is a 50 % greater risk** for women who gained 55 pounds after the age of 18 of having breast cancer.
- ◉ **There is an 18 % greater risk** for women who gained 22 pounds after the age of 18 of having breast cancer.
- ◉ **There is a 57 % lower risk** for women who lose 22 pounds or more after menopause and maintain this weight loss of having breast cancer.
- ◉ **10 % of diagnosed breast cancer cases** involve patients whose cancer has spread to other parts of the body.

Beirut International Airport

Rafic Hariri International Airport - Traffic November 2010 Monthly increase of 12% and yearly rise of 12.4%

Airport traffic was significant during the month of November with the arrival and departure of thousands of Lebanese and Arab tourists, namely due to the Eid Al-Adha holiday. In comparison with the month of October, traffic rose by 49,753 passengers or 11.9%.

The total number of passengers from the beginning of the year until the end of November reached 5,127,286 compared to 4,559,479 during the same period last year, amounting to an increase of 567,807 passengers or 12.4%.

Airport traffic in November 2010 compared to October 2010 and November 2009.

Table 1

Traffic	Oct-10	Nov-10	Nov-09	% of change Oct 2010 - Nov 2010	% of change November 2009 - November 2010
Arriving airplanes	2,735	2,863	2,499	4.7+	14.5+
Departing airplanes	2,745	2,867	2,488	4.5+	15.2+
Total No. of airplanes	5,480	5,730	4,987	4.5+	14.9+
Arriving passengers	197,611	227,544	194,811	15.1+	16.8+
Departing passengers	215,172	236,441	183,038	9.9+	29.1+
Transit passengers	4,595	3,146	2,493	31.5-	26.2+
Total No. of passengers	417,378	467,131	380,342	11.9+	22.8+
Imported goods (per ton)	3,871	3,480	3,571	10.1-	2.5-
Exported goods (per ton)	3,193	2,864	2,806	10.3-	2+
Total amount of goods (per ton)	7,064	6,344	6,377	10.2-	0.5-

Source: Information International and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation

Stats & Numbers

- **LBP 200 million** is being paid – with the knowledge of every MP – for road works, the construction of retaining walls and channels. As is the norm, the Finance and Budgetary Committee listed the amount (the total value for 128 MPs is LBP 25.6 billion) to be allocated to the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation in the 2010 draft budget. The MPs, however, did not benefit from these funds from 2006 to 2009 as the budget was not being ratified during those years. When preparing the draft budget law, the government does not list these funds, which are registered by the deputies themselves when discussing and ratifying the budget.
- **LBP 2,369 billion** were allocated in the 2010 draft budget law to support Electricité du Liban, compared to LBP 1,861 billion in 2009.
- **LBP 1,400 billion** were paid in pension funds and end of service indemnities in 2010 to civil and military employees in the public sector. The figure is estimated to increase by 8% annually.
- **LBP 885 million** were paid by the Lebanese government in contribution to the expenses of the Syrian-Lebanese Higher Council in 2010, compared to LBP 500 million in previous years. The Council was established by virtue of the Fraternity, Cooperation and Coordination Treaty signed by Lebanon and Syria in 1991.



Photo by Waddah Joma'a 2009

Publications

Publications by Information International (in Arabic):

- 1-Salaries and Remunerations in the Public Sector
- 2-Public Seaside Properties
- 3-Lebanon's Parliamentary History 1920-2000
- 4-Taxes and Fees
- 5-Lebanon in Figures 1992-2002
- 6-Lebanon in Figures 2003-2004
- 7-Lebanon in Figures 2005-2006
- 8-Lebanon's MPs and Lebanese Parliamentary Elections 1960 - 2009
- 9- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-North District
- 10- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Beirut District
- 11- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Mount Lebanon District
- 12- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Beqa'a District
- 13- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-South and Nabatiyeh District
- 14- Municipal Elections 2010

Publications by INMA (in Arabic):

- 1-"I am Responsible, All of Us are Responsible"
- 2-"Our Environment is Our Home"
- 3-"My Society is My Responsibility"
- 4-"My Society is My Responsibility" Workbook
- 5-"I am a Student, I am a Citizen: Ways Towards State Building"
- 6-"I am a Student, I am a Citizen: Ways Towards State Building" Workbook
- 7-"Lebanon Wars, why?"
- 8-Discrimination in Lebanon

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ALEPPO CUISINE

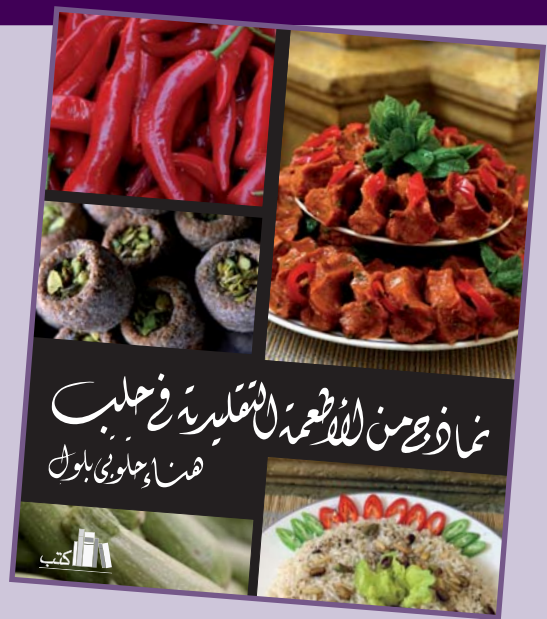
Hanaa Hloubi Baloul's book on Syrian cuisine, which will soon be published by Kutub, is the first accurately documented encyclopedia concerning Syrian cuisine in general and Aleppo dishes in particular.

In the past decade, cook books have become very popular. Most of them include recipes mixing traditional Arabic food and western dishes that have become widely spread in our societies. However, what distinguishes Mrs. Baloul's book is that it includes more than four hundred traditional Syrian dishes, without any reference to foreign dishes and foods. In the introduction, the author notes that Syrian cuisine enjoys many special and healthy characteristics, is mainly based on natural ingredients that do not contain any processed materials and "blends aspects of different cultures and civilizations into its dishes".

The book focuses on Aleppo's traditional cuisine and its dishes, which seem threatened with extinction either because they remain undocumented or due to the rapid infiltration of western lifestyles into our societies, doing away with a lot of our countries' traditional way of life.

Aleppo's cuisine has been famous for over hundreds of years and the author succeeded in documenting the recipes of a great range of traditional Aleppo dishes some of which had become unknown.

The art of cooking and the science of food are not new to the Syrian civilization. In fact, Arab scientists, pharmacists, physicians and historians, such as Ibn Al Adim, Al Razi, Ibn Bitar, Ibn Sayyar and many others studied the various types of food, their harms and benefits and described their preparation methods. Moreover, in the olden times, Arab scientists discovered that some foods could cure illnesses and diseases and therefore, adopted the saying of Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, "Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be



your food". Based on these grounds, the author says: "As a matter of scientific fact and modern studies, Syrian cuisine is the healthiest".

Reading the book of Hanaa Hloubi Baloul and carefully examining the preparation method of each dish leads us to an obvious conclusion: cooking is an art, an industry and a science. In fact, knowing how to cook is a part of knowing how to take care of a household. Furthermore, important nutritional issues have occupied the minds of scientists and researchers over the centuries and this lead them to attribute some chronic diseases to malnutrition.

Mrs. Baloul concludes the introduction of her book by saying: "I hope the readers will understand that I limited my description of the dishes and foods to those of the city where I was born and in which I grew up. It is the old grey city of Aleppo with its innumerable features that no introduction can justly describe. But certainly, the most remarkable feature of my city is the wide variety of its foods".

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