

issue number **128** | March 2013

# The Monthly

www.iimonthly.com • Published by Information International sal

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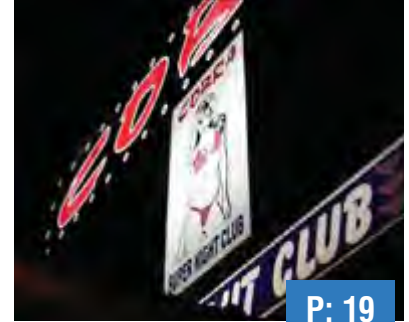
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## KNOW THY HISTORY

“Why did we defeat the Israelis and the Palestinians didn’t?”, the nine-year-old girl inquired, heedless that her question ramified into thousands of questions converging into one single answer.

First, who are “we” and who are the Palestinians? And why did the girl assume we emerged victorious, at a time when a considerable number of Lebanese and Arabs believe otherwise?

Why did she assume that the conflict with Israel did not end with the plunder of Palestine and the displacement of its citizens, standing again at odds with the Camp David Accords, the Oslo Accord and Morsi’s letter to his faithful friend Shimon Peres?

How should I direct the conversation? Should I disclose that our geographical borders were never in the past as she sees them today, and are unlikely to remain the same when she grows up? Should I mention that our kings and rulers seek power and authority at any cost? That our intellectuals aspire to serve the Sultan and master the art of the sword rather than that of the word?

Israel neither defeated us nor them. We were defeated from within. We trivialized killing and violence and transformed our suffering into a laughing stock.

Should I explain that our universities and fields bear no fruit? That the communists, the nationalists, the Nasserites, the secularists and the liberals fell down and that Hezbollah are *Al-Ghaliboun* (Arabic for the victorious)? That the West is a pretentious and hypocritical democracy poking its fingers into our decaying body?

Should I reveal that Palestine had been forgotten long before the occupation of the Gaza Strip? That Abou Mazen shook hands with Sharon?

Knowing that the list can go on forever, I kept the answer simple: “Know thy history to know thyself.”

To be continued...

—Tawad N. Adra

# MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES IN LEBANON

**In an attempt to examine the conditions of mental illness in Lebanon-causes, prevalence, and cures- it is important to underline the quality of the facilities available for treatment in a continuously stressful environment. In light of the limited budget allocated to the mental health care system, it is not surprising to find ample room for improvement within this sector. This is mostly felt in terms of the number of practicing psychiatrists, and the quantity of the research produced.**

## What mental illnesses are most prevalent in Lebanon?

According to a study by the Lebanese Medical Institute for Neuropsychological Disorders (MIND), 16.7% of mental disorders are anxiety related, and 12.6% are related to mood changes. Moreover, research undertaken by Professor of Clinical Psychology Elie G. Karam, suggests that 10% of the Lebanese population experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In the context of Lebanon, a significant correlation is found between war-related events and the incidences of PTSD. The reoccurrence of violence coupled with political instability and the lack of economic opportunities continuously supply renewed tension that can aggravate the mental state of a person. Social anxiety, depression, and PTSD are therefore thought to be the most serious mental illnesses suffered by the Lebanese population.

## Conditions of Mental Health Care

The components of the mental health care system in Lebanon remain incapable of addressing the mental health problems that are endemic in the country. More importantly, the cultural taboo surrounding mental disorders inhibits people not only from treating their illness, but also from the recognition of their condition. This is paralleled with a lack of interest on the doctors' part, as very few practitioners exist in this field. Consequently, research publications relating to mental health compose only 5% of all health research in the country. This factor, among others, has kept mental health care services very basic.

Today, only three mental hospitals exist in Lebanon, and five psychiatric health units are found in other hospitals in the country. The largest of these mental

hospitals contains 1 200 beds, and the average length of stay for patients is 279 days per year. 47% of patients admitted to mental hospitals are diagnosed with schizophrenia, 12% with mood disorders, 10% with substance abuse, 9% with personality disorders, 3% with neurotic disorders, and 19% have other disorders (WHO).

In a 2010 World Health Organization report on the mental health system in Lebanon, the number of practicing psychiatrists in the country was two for every 100 000 people. For the same number of people there are 42 beds in psychiatric hospitals, with 5% of those being reserved for children and adolescents. However, according to the same report, the majority of psychiatrists work in outpatient facilities as opposed to working in mental hospitals.

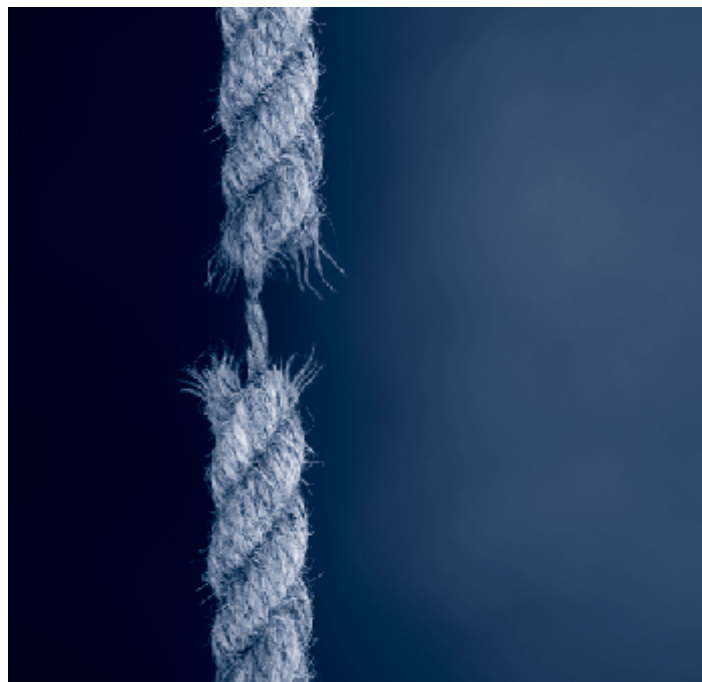
**“47% of patients admitted to mental hospitals are diagnosed with schizophrenia, 12% with mood disorders, 10% with substance abuse, 9% with personality disorders, 3% with neurotic disorders, and 19% have other disorders (WHO).”**

## Socio-cultural factors:

The socio-cultural factors that influence a person's character and therefore the way he carries out his life are absorbed differently according to every individual. Reactions to incidents such as violent conflict, theft or rape could be incited by a set of circumstances such as the intensity of the attack, its duration and repetitiveness, and the personal traits of the people experiencing them. For this reason, highlighting environmental aspects as determinants of mental illness or disorders is risky.

It can be said, however, that certain occurrences or conditions will always have some sort of psychological toll on the people experiencing them. For example, displacement, physical abuse, and violence- which all remain frequent in Lebanon- will inflict at least minimal, if not significant, changes on one's personality. Over the 15 years of civil war that the country has known, 200 000 people were killed and 17 000 went missing. Moreover, a large number of people have been displaced from their homes while fleeing violence.

According to an urban planner Mona Fawaz, the number of people displaced during the civil war was between 700 000 and 900 000. Simultaneously, residents have also seen their homes damaged or destroyed in the conflict. The table below demonstrates the number of demolished houses in different regions at the end of the war.



#### Number of Houses Destroyed in the War by Region

Region	Partially Destroyed	Totally Destroyed	Damaged	Total	Percentage
Mount Lebanon	6410	14778	4630	25818	57.35%
South	4424	4845	3231	12500	27.77%
Beirut	573	2576	344	3493	7.76%
North	673	1053	499	2225	4.94%
Bekaa	235	409	340	984	2.19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12315</b>	<b>23661</b>	<b>9044</b>	<b>45020</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
%	<b>27.35%</b>	<b>52.56%</b>	<b>20.09%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

\*Ministry of Displaced 1996 (note that these numbers refer only to houses registered in the ministry)

An array of social problems can be associated with displacement as such; absence of integration to new surroundings, alienation, and the emotional strain of losing a home or loved ones in the process. Other wars have also triggered waves of internal displacement such as the 1996 Israeli attacks, and the July war in 2006. In the first case, UNHCR estimated that the number of people leaving their homes in the south was between 400 000 and 600 000. In 2006, the number of people displaced within the country was around 750 000, and another 250 000 people fled to neighboring Syria. Upon return- for those who did return- the threat of Israeli violence lingered, as well as the

risk of having to live with 138 246 unexploded ordinances in their surroundings.

The tolls of war do not end with this displacement; its subliminal impact runs deep into a nation's memory through other ordeals such as physical injuries- especially in severe cases- and the fear and anxiety associated with living in a violent and unstable atmosphere. Many families today still struggle to live with the death of one or more of their members, and others continue to search for their missing sons and daughters; a pursuit that is likely to influence the mindset of concerned families.

## Unemployment and Immigration

The economic situation in the country resulting from years of war touches individual lives as well as that of Lebanon as a whole. Today, unemployment figures are at around 10%, a big source of anxiety and depression, especially among the youth. Many are even forced to leave the country in order to find a better source of income. The country has therefore known several waves of immigration throughout its history. According to a study by Information International, the number of immigrants between the years 1991 and 2000 averaged 13 800 immigrants per year. Nowadays, the actual number of people holding the Lebanese nationality and living outside Lebanon is around 1 million.

According to a UNDP research paper titled “Immigration and Human Development: Evidence from Lebanon”, 75% of people between the ages of 18 and 35 said that employment in Lebanon would prevent them from leaving the country. On the other hand, 45% of them also said that the security situation in the country was a main factor for leaving.

The link between the anxiety factor associated with a violent setting and the trends of migration are evident. During the Lebanese civil war for example, it is estimated that 990 000 people left the country to find a better life abroad. As with internal displacement, this also bears an emotional strain and potential problems of adaptation and integration.

## Women and Children’s Safety in Lebanon

Issues that influence one’s psychological development extend farther than matters relating to war and violence and extend of course into the realm of the home and the family. In Lebanon, as is common in Arab cultures, strict disciplining of children remains rarely addressed outside the realm of the family. This is generally because violence against children is seen as a somewhat acceptable manner of teaching obedience. According to the Lebanese NGO Kafa, 40.8% of children are subjected to different degrees of violence in their homes, and 64.9% suffer from psychological abuse.

By September 2012, the Ministry of Social Affairs reported that 850 cases of child abuse had been received from the start of the year. This is not representative of the actual number of abuse that is taking place because children and/or their families hardly ever report it either for fear of embarrassment or because they fail to see what is wrong with the abuse. Studies by Kafa revealed that 16% of children between the ages of 8 and 11 experience some form of sexual abuse, and that 55.8% of these cases happen at home.

Similarly, domestic abuse of women by male members of their families is still quite prevalent. Estimates of the percentage of women who have experienced domestic violence within their home at some point in their lives are as high as 75%.

## Tranquilizers

Against the backdrop of continuous social, political and security turmoil, it is no surprise to find the Lebanese flocking into pharmacies to buy tranquilizers or anti-anxiety pills, sometimes with prescription and often without it.

Self-diagnosis has become a common trend among the Lebanese who prefer to take the matters into their own hands instead of going through the process of medical visits and prescriptions, which are often more costly and time-consuming. Unlike Western and European countries, Lebanon remains lenient in the enforcement of the laws and policies regulating medical practice and drug sale.

According to the Lebanese Syndicate of Pharmacies, the Lebanese have consumed in 2011 around 1 million tranquilizers and 642 000 anti-depressant pills in a bid to handle the stress imposed by everyday life. The staggering numbers expose the seriousness of the situation and the urgency of intervention to curb further deterioration in mental health.

## A Challenging Environment

Constant exposure to stressful situations is of course not exclusive to life in Lebanon, but it is however amplified, especially with the assassinations (page 11), the prevalence of crime (page 15), the crisis of the foreign labor force (page 17) and the prostitution (page 19), which are all signs attesting to far-reaching implications on mental health.

At a time where the psychological toll seems trivial in the face of the physical and material costs incurred by the economic and security conditions, it is important to remember that one’s emotional and mental health are incremental to individual’s progress. With this consideration in mind, a step needs to be taken towards initiating a mental health care policy in Lebanon. Moreover, schools and educational institutions can take on the responsibility of spreading awareness and alternating the view on mental illness among future generations. The lack of mental health services can only be addressed once mental disorders are approached as any other medical condition.

## MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVISION IN LEBANON

Lebanon's health care system has often been praised as the region's best, with highly reputable institutions and practitioners. Yet our health sector has overlooked a major cornerstone; one that is inexcusable in light of the country's social and political instability. Today, mental health is seldom addressed in Lebanon, a country with years of war and economic hardship. Only a minimal number of practitioners are available, with a very small number of funds allocated to mental health care from public expenditures. This then creates a situation where factors leading up to mental disorders are ample, but where services available for the treatment of these illnesses are scarce.

A number of studies have shown that though underestimated, mental illnesses are very much prevalent in Lebanon with the two main ailments being depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). To begin with, a survey conducted in the early 1990s, soon after the end of the civil war, revealed that a staggering 96% of children aged 3 to 16 had experienced at least one traumatic incident in their life (referenced in Chahine and Chemaly, 2009). Moreover, the World Health Organization Mental Health Survey Initiative discovered that in 2006, and prior to the July war with Israel, 49% of the population had been through traumatic experiences related to war, and that an additional 17% suffered from other mental disorders. Finally, a 2008 study by renowned Lebanese psychiatrist Dr. Elie Karam, found that the lifetime prevalence of mood disorders in Lebanon was one and a half times longer than their counterparts in Iraq ([thelancet.com](http://thelancet.com)).

The repeated occurrences of wars and violent conflict have thus proved to have a direct correlation with the mental health of the population. The Syndicate of Pharmacies revealed that in 2011 the most medications sold in Lebanon were tranquilizers and anti-depressants. And although wars are only occasional, other factors pertaining to life in Lebanon further exacerbate the situation. Unemployment and youth unemployment, immigration, the standard of living and inflation- among others- can serve as direct and indirect contributors to the deterioration of mental health.

The pervasiveness of mental disorders in Lebanon is paralleled with the inability of the medical system to accommodate them. To begin with the public sector, to date, there is not a policy on mental health care provision. Within the Ministry of Public Health, there is no division or bureau that is responsible for mental health issues and there are no procedures for referring patients from general health care to secondary psychiatric health care. 9.5% of government expenditure goes to spending

on health. According to the World Health Organization Mental Health Atlas, only 4.8% of government health expenditure is allocated to mental health, of which 54.17% goes to maintaining psychiatric hospitals. This indicates that little is being done to develop human resources and train professionals that are able to adequately address the problems of their patients. The Mental Health Atlas also indicates that for every 100,000 Lebanese, there are 1.41 psychiatrists, and 2.12 psychologists. At the time of writing, the Lebanese Psychiatric Society listed 51 registered psychiatrists.

The majority of patients resort to private health care. But even there the number of specialized practitioners is very low, and the cost of treatment very high. Private insurance companies do not cover mental illnesses in Lebanon. While the National Social Security Fund does cover these illnesses, many hospitals are still not in agreement with it, and therefore attending patients will not get coverage. Thus patients themselves make most payments for treatments. Consequently, the WHO estimated in 2011 that about 70% of people with mental illnesses do not receive treatment.

Apart from the shortcomings of the health sector, the lack of awareness among patients themselves also hinders their reception of care. This is primarily related to the inability of detecting symptoms that might indicate any mental illness. In addition to that, if and when a patient comes to the realization that he might be in need of help, social and cultural factors may prevent him from seeking professional care. This cultural factor revolves around the fear of stigma as societies across the Arab world still associate mental illnesses with negative connotations such as insanity.

It is very surprising that a country that in modern times has suffered from a number of wars does not provide for a comprehensive mental health care system. While other concerns such as economic conditions and physical health are granted due significant importance, mental health care should not be undermined. A comprehensive program should be put in place to tackle the weakness of the mental health sector. From a policy perspective, funding could be directed to providing incentives to physicians specializing in psychiatry and towards countrywide awareness campaigns. On the community level, awareness can start with youngsters at schools and even continue to reach the older generations through community campaigns. Any funding would appear futile if it is not accompanied with the proper awareness that will help people get rid of the negative connotations attributed to mental illness issues. ●

# THE MONTHLY INTERVIEWS

## DR. MAHMOUD KREIDIEH

The frequent wars that Lebanon has suffered throughout history and the incessant conflicts it continues to suffer today have taken their tolls on the psychological and social behavior of the Lebanese. Heedful of the severe consequences that people in war-stricken areas usually experience, *The Monthly* interviewed Mahmoud Kreidieh, MD. FAAN. Clinical Professor of Neurology at the University of California, for deeper insight into the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).



Dr. Mahmoud Kreidieh  
MD. FAAN. Clinical Professor of Neurology at the University of California

### How and when do individuals sense a predisposition to PTSD?

To know whether or not they suffer from PTSD, individuals should first and foremost answer the following questions: Have I ever experienced a frightening or traumatic event during my life? Has it kept haunting me in my dreams? Have I tried so hard not to think about it and to shun places and situations that evoke it in my memory? Have I ever been constantly on guard, hyper-vigilant or easily startled? Have I detached myself from people and activities I used to love and enjoy? If the answer is yes, the person in question might be a PTSD sufferer. But this does not imply he's alone in this, as the prevalence of this disorder is staggering and hardly spares any society.

### What is it that fueled your interest in approaching PTSD and how do you assess its prevalence in Lebanon?

My interest in PTSD is owed partly to having experienced the Lebanese Civil War and its social, behavioral and psychological repercussions and mostly to my educational background and professional status, which has amplified my encounters with PTSD patients in the US, Lebanon and the region. Throughout my practice, I have had the chance to diagnose and treat troops and civilians who were affected by war and armed conflicts, as well as victims of rape, kidnapping and torture who have endured physical, sexual, emotional or other forms of abuse.

As a matter of fact, the statistics related to PTSD remains scanty in Lebanon and the research conducted on this disorder pales in comparison with the studies looking into it in Israel and the United States where there has

been a substantially organized effort to study and investigate this phenomenon, especially among military personnel. The PTSD literature in Israel includes around 800 000 articles against 6 to 10 in Lebanon.

Undoubtedly, the disorder is most common in war-stricken areas and people exposed to military actions are usually the most severely affected by it. In Lebanon and Palestine for instance, people are at higher risk of developing PTSD due to the consistent, systematic and repetitive Israeli raids and attacks targeting these two countries. Reportedly, a generation must pass before the healing process is completed, but with the civilians subjected to frequent episodes of violence, terror and war, surveys will probably continue to observe high PTSD rates, especially in South Lebanon and Gaza.

### **What are the most common effects of PTSD and how are they addressed?**

The impact of the PTSD can be observed on both individual and social levels and its effects can be far-reaching. Individuals diagnosed with PTSD are usually hyper-aroused and irritated. They tend to have sleep disorders and nightmares and keep replaying the traumas in their heads. Avoidance of activities and people, depression and decreased concentration are also associated with PTSD. These attributes take their toll on the patients, causing functional impairment, decreased productivity and bigger failures.

Several social responses to traumas have been recorded over the course of history. Here, it is imperative to stop at Sartre's existentialism movement, which emerged in the wake of World War II, the hippie movement, which grew out of opposition to the Vietnam War and our wondrous Lebanese model, where people fight for their right to exist and live, switching instinctively to pathological behaviors.

In Lebanon, PTSD is not limited to social groups, civilians, or military veterans but transcends to reach political spheres. Most leaders have lost members of their families in assassination operations and some have even survived and coped with assassination attempts themselves. Such traumas activate the leaders' pathological intrusive memories and curb their ability to forget and forgive. Unfortunately, susceptible citizens are electing PTSD-stricken leaders, thus creating a vicious cycle that aborts the possibility of resolving conflicts and translates into a failed state.

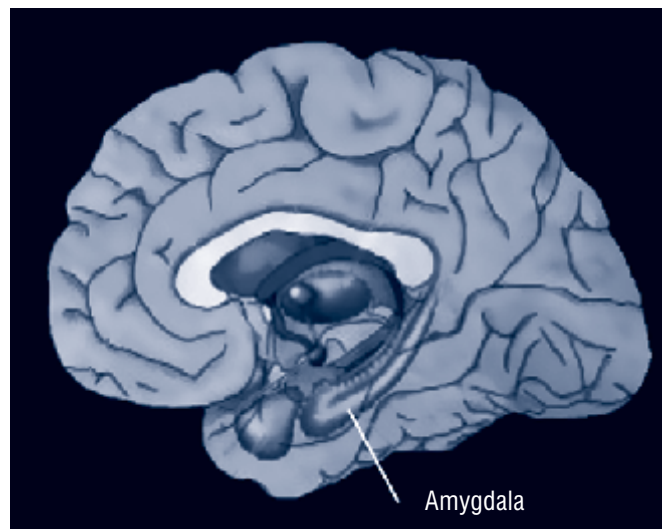
### **Apart from the behavioral manifestations, is there a unique biological profile that distinguishes PTSD patients?**

Research at the brain structure level revealed that amygdala atrophy is prominent in PTSD patients. Hormonal changes can also be observed through Serotonin deficiency and noradrenaline abundance, not to mention the abnormal ECG patterns at the physiological level.

### **Now that we've had a better idea about this disorder and its impact on individual and social behaviors, let us move to the treatment mechanism. Is this disorder curable and can we offer new hope to PTSD sufferers?**

Treatment of PTSD includes three approaches: counseling, medications and rehabilitation. Mild individual cases of PTSD can be cured in 1.5 to 2 years when early and immediate intervention is provided. However, moderate and severe cases need more time and some may have permanent effects. In this respect, it is worthwhile mentioning that Wissam Al-Hassan's assassination in Ashrafieh has motivated many to offer counseling services to those affected by the explosion to help them cope with the losses inflicted upon them.

Violence breeds violence and repression breeds retaliation and this is the reason early detection and treatment are essential to help PTSD sufferers understand and reconcile with the traumas they encountered, instead of responding with social or political or even religious extremism. ●





Dr. Hanna Saadah

## POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

**Our brains are formidable programmers. Everything we ever learn in life is programmed by our brains from simple bits of information relayed by our senses. Languages, skills, actions, thoughts, and feelings are the results of complex brain programs. Whereas most of our programs help us live better lives, certain programs can do the reverse. The Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which was first defined in 1980, is one such adverse program. The criteria, which define the PTSD are strict and have been published in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV and can be viewed in detail on the following web address: <http://www.mental-health-today.com/ptsd/dsm.htm>**

As the name suggests, the PTSD develops after a frightful trauma. The trauma can result from a natural catastrophe, a military conflict, a violent assault, or a horrifying accident. The common denominators are fear, horror, and helplessness, which in certain individuals causes the brain to program an unhealthy response, leading to an alarmed mental state that interferes with natural healing. The facts that only about 15-35% of the victims of trauma acquire the PTSD and that occasionally one acquires the PTSD with no memory of a frightful trauma tells us that certain brains are PTSD prone whereas others are PTSD resistant.

The accouterments of the PTSD such as anxiety, depression, addiction, drug abuse, and the associated physical illnesses such as asthma, high blood pressure, fatigue, and chronic pain combine to make PTSD a multifaceted disorder with myriad medical presentations. However, the three core symptoms that define the PTSD are a) re-experiencing of the horrifying event, b) avoidance of reminders of the event, and c) living in a state of alarmed hyper-arousal for at least one month after the event.

Re-experiencing means having spontaneous, unwanted recollections such as distressing images, nightmares, or flashbacks of the horrifying event. Hyper-arousal means insomnia, irritability, poor concentration, hyper-vigilance, and alarmed startle reactions. Avoidance means staying away from cues that re-ignite memories of the event such as persons, places, situations, sounds, smells, images, etc. PTSD is common, especially in societies that live with violence. Estimates suggest that 5-10% of men and twice as many women experience PTSD during their lives. Moreover, PTSD lasts longer in women, averaging 48 months versus 12 months in men. Although at two years, about half the PTSD victims recover, recovery may not be complete and many continue to experience residual symptoms for longer periods. Chronic or life-long PTSD persists at some level in about a quarter of its victims with increased comorbidities such as drug abuse, alcoholism, addiction, depression, anxiety, fatigue, and chronic pain.

Recognition of PTSD is not always easy because often

patients do not relate their symptoms to the traumatic event or are ashamed to do so. Thus a man with chronic backache, alcohol abuse, and depression may not connect his symptoms to an explosion that occurred few years earlier. And a woman with anxiety, pelvic pain, and fatigue may not be willing to connect these symptoms to a rape that took place when she was in her teens. However, skillful questioning can bring the truth out and that renders treatments much more effective.

The treatment of PTSD is both medical and psychological. The psychological treatment depends on exploring the impact of the traumatic event in terms of persistent symptoms and on tempering these symptoms with cognitive behavior therapy. Cognitive behavior therapy, which is a learned mental skill, empowers the patient to recognize and control the PTSD symptoms. Once it is learned, the patient functions as his own cognitive therapist subjecting his negative thoughts and feelings to evidence based scrutiny and discarding them as irrational when they cannot be backed up by solid evidence.

Medical therapy relies on correcting the brain chemical abnormalities associated with the PTSD and treating the associated comorbidities such as anxiety, depression, fatigue, and body aches. Some of the chemical abnormalities, such as the reduction in cortisol levels and the increase in adrenaline levels, respond to certain blood pressure and antidepressant medications in preference to others. The science of brain chemistry is complex and such treatments are best left to doctors who are highly experienced in treating the PTSD.

Traumatic events are unavoidable and will always influence our lives in good and in bad ways. Whereas certain traumatic events can make us better and stronger, others can make us sicker and weaker. The level of trauma, the cultural-historical context, and the constitution of the individual are the three main variables that determine the outcome. ●

An excellent review of the PTSD can be found on the following web address:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Posttraumatic\\_stress\\_disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Posttraumatic_stress_disorder)

# ASSASSINATIONS IN LEBANON

## PERPETRATORS REMAIN UNKNOWN

The assassinations witnessed in Lebanon since October 2004 have brought back memories of the Lebanese civil war and its numerous crimes, including the targeted killings of many politicians, religious figures, intellectuals, and journalists. The causes for each assassination differ from case to case. In some instances, it is a matter of ruthless murder; in others, it is linked to political brinkmanship, a means to bring about specific political ends. The Lebanese judicial system has investigated several of these assassinations. In some cases, the courts have reached conclusions based on concrete evidence. In other cases, the assassinations remain unsolved and the perpetrators remain unknown due to lack of evidence or to political intervention that prevented the courts from revealing the truth.

103 assassinations have been committed since Lebanon's Independence to date. They are summed up as follows:

### Journalists

18 journalists have been killed since 1943 for taking sides with one country against another in the conflicts that broke out in the region, particularly between Syria and Iraq or Iraq and Iran. Others have been victimized for doctrinal reasons.

Name	Occupation	Location of the Assassination	Date of the Assassination	Investigation Findings
Nassib al-Matni	Publisher of the Telegraph newspaper	Beirut	May 27, 1958	Futile investigations
Fouad Haddad	Journalist for the Labor newspaper	Beirut	September 19, 1958	Futile investigations
Kamel Mrouw	Publisher of Al-Hayat newspaper	Beirut	May 16, 1966	Perpetrators were sentenced to prison
Ghassan Kanafani	Palestinian writer	Beirut	July 8, 1972	Accusations were pointed at Israel
Edward Saab	Journalist	Beirut	May 16, 1976	Futile investigations
Karl Robert Never	Correspondent for the German magazine Sterne	Beirut	May 24, 1979	Futile investigations
Adel Abdel-Majid Wasfi	Assistant Editor in Chief of the Falastin Al-Thawra magazine	Beirut	June 20, 1979	Futile investigations
Salim al-Lawzi	Publisher of the Hawadeth magazine	Beirut	March 4, 1980	Palestinian killer was sentenced to prison
Riyad Taha	Head of Lebanon's press syndicate	Beirut	July 23, 1980	Verdict issued against members of the Moussawi family
Yehia al-Hazouri	Journalist for the Al-Liwaa newspaper and member of the Baath party	Beirut	August 29, 1980	Futile investigations
Samir Assem al-Sheikh	Editor in Chief of the Al-Fahrast newspaper	Beirut	July 9, 1985	Futile investigations
Suheil Tawili	Communist journalist	Beirut	February 24, 1986	Futile investigations
Hassan Fakhr	Journalist	Baabda	June 15, 1986	Futile investigations
Hassan Bazzoun	Editor in Chief of the Beirut Al-Masaa magazine	Beirut	February 22, 1987	Futile investigations
Mahdi Amel (Hassan Hamdan)	Communist journalist	Beirut	May 18, 1987	Futile investigations
Hussein Mrouweh	Leftist thinker and journalist	Beirut	August 17, 1987	Futile investigations
Mostafa Jeha	Journalist	Sabtiyeh- Beirut	January 15, 1992	Futile investigations
Samir Qassir	Journalist for An-Nahar newspaper	Beirut	June 2, 2005	Futile investigations

## Religious figures

A total of 17 religious figures have been assassinated since 1943 including Grand Mufti Sheikh Hassan Khaled and Sheikh Halim Taqiyeddine.

Name	Location of the Assassination	Date of the Assassination	Investigation Findings
Father Habib Khashfa	Taibet (South Lebanon)	1949	The perpetrator was sentenced to death
Father Boulous Massaad	Majdel Baana in Aley	May 13, 1963	The killer was arrested
Jesuit Father Elian Jervanion	-	February 14, 1976	Futile investigations
Imam Hassan al-Shirazi	Beirut	May 5, 1980	Futile investigations
Sayyed Ali Bader Eddine	Harouf (South Lebanon)	August 5, 1980	Futile investigations
Sheikh Ahmad Assaf	Beirut	April 28, 1981	Futile investigations
Father Philip Abu Sulaiman	Aley	April 30, 1982	Futile investigations
Sheikh Halim Taqiyeddine	Beirut	December 1, 1983	Futile investigations
Sheikh Ragheb Harb	Jabcheet (Nabatiyeh)	February 16, 1984	Accusations were pointed at Israeli agents
Father Boutros Abi Aaql	Sour (Tyre)	May 23, 1985	Futile investigations
Father Boulos al-Sahlani	Bab Mareaa (Western Beqa'a)	November 18, 1985	Futile investigations
Sheikh Sobhi al-Saleh	Beirut	October 7, 1986	Futile investigations
Jesuit Father Andre Mas	Saida	September 24, 1987	Futile investigations
Father Albert Khreish	Kessrouan	April 1988	Futile investigations
Lebanese Grand Sunni Mufti Hassan Khaled	Beirut	May 16, 1989	Futile investigations
Father Semaan Boutrous al-Khoury	A'ajaltoun	May 11, 1992	Accusations were pointed at members of the Lebanese Forces
Sheikh Nizar al-Halabi	Beirut	August 31, 1995	Members of the group Osbat Al-Ansar were arrested and sentenced to death

## Politicians

Politicians have been the main target for assassinations with a total of 21 assassinated figures including one president of the republic, 3 prime ministers and a number of ministers and MPs.

Name	Location of the Assassination	Date of the Assassination	Investigation Findings
Former PM Riad Solh	Jordan	July 16, 1951	Assassinated by members of the SSNP
Former minister Mahmoud al-Aboud	Presidential Palace in Kantari	1953	Assassinated by Ahmad sheikh who was reportedly instigated by MP Suleiman Ali
MP Naim Moghabghab	Beiteddine	July 27, 1959	The verdict wasn't put into practice. The perpetrators were believed to be allies of Kamal Jumblat
Former MP Albert al-Hajj	Akkar	April 12, 1961	Futile investigations
Former MP Maarouf Saad	Saida	February 22, 1975	A sergeant in the Lebanese Army was charged with the crime
Governor of the North Fayez al-Imad	-	December 20, 1975	Futile investigations
General Director of the Ministry of Finance, Dr. Khalil Salem	Beirut	August 2, 1976	Futile investigations
MP Kamal Jumblat	Chouf	March 16, 1977	Accusations were pointed at Syrian intelligence
Former minister and MP Tony Frangieh	Zgharta	June 13, 1978	Accusations were pointed at the Lebanese Forces
Former MP Bashir Kairouz	-	March 16, 1982	Futile investigations
President Bashir Gemayel	Ashrafieh	September 14, 1982	Accusations were pointed at SSNP member Habib Shartouni
PM Rashid Karami	Aboard a helicopter transferring him from Tripoli to Beirut	June 1, 1987	Accusations were pointed at Samir Geagea

Name	Location of the Assassination	Date of the Assassination	Investigation Findings
MP Nazem Qadri	Beirut	September 21, 1989	Futile investigations
President René Mouawad	Beirut	November 22, 1989	Futile investigations
Former minister and MP Elie Hobeika	Hazmieh	January 24, 2002	Futile investigations
Former PM Rafik Hariri	Beirut	February 14, 2005	The STL indicted four members of Hezbollah
Former minister and MP Bassel fleihan	Beirut	February 14, 2005	The STL indicted four members of Hezbollah
MP Gebran Tueni	Mkalles	December 12, 2005	Futile investigations
Minister and MP Pierre Gemayel	Jdaideh	November 21, 2006	Futile investigations
MP Walid Eido	Beirut	June 13, 2007	Futile investigations
MP Antoine Ghanem	Sin el-Fil	September 19, 2007	Futile investigations

## Other assassinations

Other assassination operations have occurred in Lebanon targeting 31 figures including party members and political activists as illustrated below:

Name	Occupation	Date of the Assassination	Investigation Findings
Munir Daou	Qaemaqam	1956	Futile investigations
Abdallah Osseiran	Son of former Speaker Adel Osseiran (Saida)	December 22, 1972	A member of the Al-Zain family was charged with the crime
Moussa Sh'eib	Member of the Iraqi Baath Socialist Party leadership	July 28, 1980	Futile investigations
Hassib Abdallah	Ambassador in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	April 28, 1978	Futile investigations
O'smat Murad	Official in the Islamic Unity Movement	August 2, 1981	Futile investigations
Hassan Sharri	Member of the Amal Movement's politburo	October 20, 1981	Futile investigations
Tahseen al-Atrash	Member of the Qatari Baath Socialist Party leadership	November 17, 1981	Futile investigations
Khalil Hatoum	Delegate of the Communist Party in the National Lebanese Movement	April 23, 1982	Futile investigations
Rafiq Bashasha	Official in the Nasserite Popular Movement	May 16, 1982	Futile investigations
Ali Suleiman	Consultant to the Ministry of Foreign affairs and Immigration	January 11, 1983	Futile investigations
Ghaith Khoury	Head of Byblos District for the Phalanges Party	February 15, 1984	Investigations reveled the perpetrators
Sarkis Aznavorian	Member of the Central Committee for the Tashnaq Party	April 23, 1985	Futile investigations
Muhammad Slim	Defense official in the SSNP	June 3, 1985	Futile investigations
Khalil A'akkawi	Official in the Islamic Gathering in Tripoli	February 9, 1986	Futile investigations
Khalil Na'oos	Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party	February 20, 1986	Futile investigations
Zaven Tashjian	Head of the Tashnaq Party in Anjar	February 27, 1986	Futile investigations
Mostafa Ali Kreidieh	Media official for Jama'a Islamiya	May 5, 1986	Futile investigations
Nassib al-Khatib	Head of the Arab Democratic Party	May 6, 1986	Futile investigations
Adnan Qansoh	Official in the SSNP	February 26, 1987	Futile investigations
Habib Kairouz	Communication and Media Officer for the SSNP	October 22, 1987	Futile investigations
Tawfiq al-Safadi	SSNP Labor and Social Affairs Official	October 23, 1987	Futile investigations
Muhammad Shuqeir	Consultant to President Amin Gemayel	1987	Investigations indicted members of the SSNP
Daoud Daoud, Mahmoud Fakih and Hassan Sbeiti	Amal Movement officials	September 22, 1988	Futile investigations

Name	Occupation	Date of the Assassination	Investigation Findings
Elias Al-Zayek	Member of the Lebanese Forces Command Council	January 16, 1990	Samir Geagea was charged with the crime
Dany Chamoun	Head of the National Liberal Party (Baabda)	October 21, 1990	Samir Geagea was charged with the crime
Sayyed Abbas Moussawi	Secretary General of Hezbollah	February 16, 1992	Killed during an Israeli aerial operation
Fouad Moghniyeh	Member of Hezbollah	1994	Ahmad Al-Hallak was sentenced to death
George Hawi	Former Secretary General of the Lebanese Communist Party	June 21, 2005	Futile investigations
Imad Mughniyeh	Hezbollah Leader	February 12, 2008	Accusations were pointed at Israel

## Military officers

Four members of the military fell also victim to assassination.

Name	Location of the Assassination	Date of the Assassination	Investigation Findings
Major General Khalil Kenaan	Baabda	September 28, 1986	Accusations were pointed at members of the Lebanese forces
Major General Francois al-Haj	Baabda	December 12, 2007	Futile investigations
Major Wissam Eid	Hazmieh	January 25, 2008	Futile investigations
Brigadier General Wissam Hassan	Ashrafieh	October 19, 2012	Futile investigations

## Arab and foreign diplomats

The list of the Arab and foreign diplomats assassinated in Lebanon includes 12 diplomatic figures including:

Name	Location of the Assassination	Date of the Assassination	Investigation Findings
Syrian Colonel Ghassan Jdeed	Beirut	February 19, 1957	Assassinated by the Palestinian Ahmad Sha'at upon instructions of Abdul Hamid Siraj
PLO members (Abou Youssef Najjar, Kamal (Nasser, Kamal Edwan	Beirut	September 11, 1973	Assassinated by Israeli commandos
U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Francis Meloy and the economic attaché	Beirut	June 16, 1976	Accusations were pointed at Palestinian organizations
Fateh Movement member Ali Hassan Salameh	Beirut	January 22, 1979	Assassinated by Israeli commandos
French Ambassador Louie De Lamare	Beirut	September 4, 1981	Accusations were pointed at pro-Syrian organizations
Commissar Minister in the Algerian Embassy Rabeih Khrwaa	Beirut	January 13, 1983	Assassination instigated by his wife for personal reasons
President of the American University of Beirut, Dr. Malcom Kerr	Beirut	January 18, 1984	Futile investigations
American diplomat William Buckley	Beirut	October 11, 1985	No clues were found despite the accusation of the Islamic Jihad Organization
Premier Secretary in the Jordanian Embassy Naeb Omran al-Ma'aytah	Beirut	December 29, 1993	Accusations were pointed at Palestinians affiliated with the Fatah Revolutionary council

## Attempted Assassinations

In addition to the assassinations mentioned earlier, Lebanon has witnessed 94 attempted assassinations that targeted presidents, ministers, MPs, politicians, journalists, diplomats and clerics.

Although the identity of the executors and instigators of these assassination plots wasn't difficult to predict in most cases, the investigations failed to gather any clues to bring those to justice and they remained unknown. With each new assassination, the Lebanese cling to the hope that the serial killing will come to an end but acts of violence continue to erupt dashing their hope and transforming Lebanon into a proxy battlefield where politicians and innocent people pay the price. 🍀

# PREVALENCE OF CRIME IN LEBANON

Lebanon has witnessed over the past couple of years a number of appalling crimes that the country has rarely seen before. We may not find final answers as to the reasons and circumstances behind these crimes, for they could stem from social, cultural, economic or retaliatory motives, but it is certain that the prevalence of both licensed and unlicensed weapons has instigated the propagation of crime in addition to other factors including the laxity of the state institutions, the absence of accountability and the amnesty laws acquitting criminals.

## Numbers of crime victims

Statistics issued by the Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces reveal that the murder incidents resulted in 81 casualties in 2009. This number rose to 95 in 2010, while 136 lives were lost in 2011, i.e. up by 41 victims or 43.1%. In 2012, the numbers of murders registered stood at 193, i. e. up by 41%.

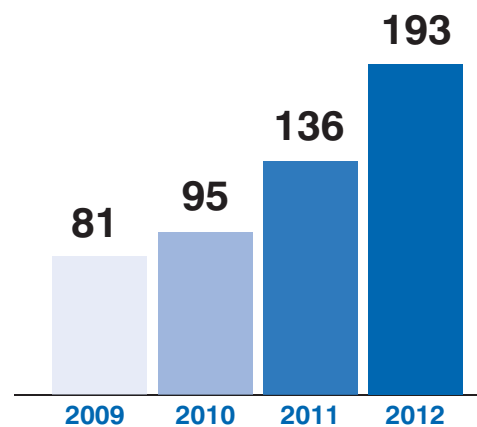
“The prevalence of both licensed and unlicensed weapons has instigated the propagation of crime in addition to other factors including the laxity of the state institutions, the absence of accountability and the amnesty laws acquitting criminals”

## Murders

The most prominent crimes committed in Lebanon in 2010, 2011 and 2012 are:

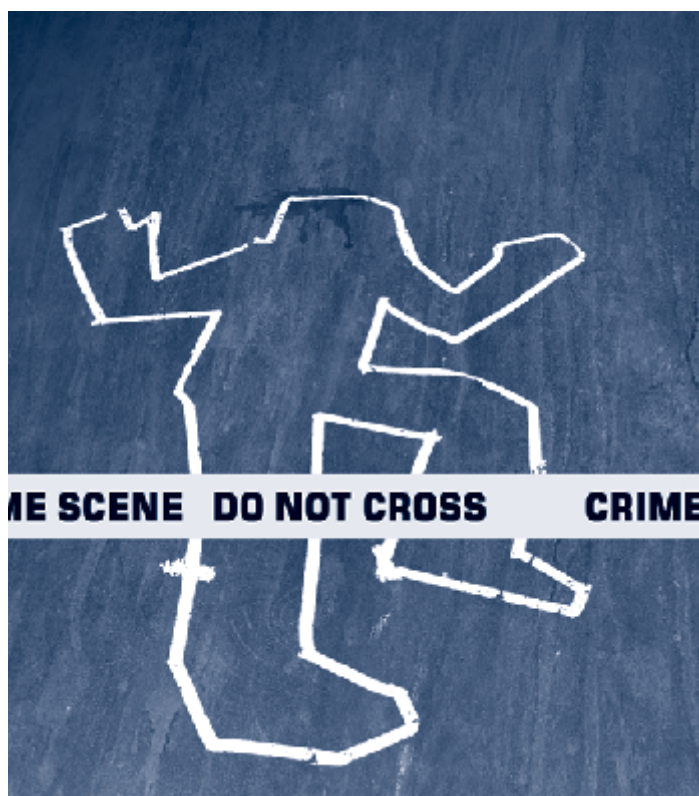
- Serial crimes targeting taxi drivers and resulting in the death of 10 people. Criminals resorted to shooting the victims in their heads, then tossing the bodies on the streets and using the victims' cars for a while before burning them. The serial killings started in April 2011 and ended in November when the criminals, who were 5 Syrian brothers, were arrested. They were: Michel, George, Aziz, Moussa and Maurice Tanalian. The latter three had obtained the Lebanese nationality and were living in al-Naba'a. Investigations failed to find out the motives for the crimes.
- Hanna Michel Abi Samaan from Ehden in the Qada'a of Byblos killed his 31- year old wife Silva Charbel Somain in September 2010 and then committed suicide by shooting himself, leaving two orphaned children behind. The cause of the crime remained unknown although it was reported that the couple were getting divorced.
- Hadi al-Hajj Dib, 25, killed his mother Nawal Youness and his five siblings, Amin, 23, Maha, 20, Manal, 18, Zahraa, 15, and Zaher, 15, and committed suicide afterwards. The incident occurred at the family's residence in Ras al-Naba'a and the real motives behind it remained undercover.
- The bodies of Charles Ghaled and his wife Mariam were found in the Kharba town in the Qada'a of Byblos in August 2011. The couple had disappeared a month before and investigation

Numbers of crime victims in the past four years



suspected that Charles might have killed his wife, then committed suicide although the couple had been married for only a few months. The motives are yet to be revealed.

- The finding of the bodies of Wartosci Janbazian, 52, and her son Dany Assaf, slain and stabbed in Sin el-Fil in April 2011. Security forces arrested the criminals which included Syrian nationals Hagop Mardirossian, 28, and Hrant Arshalos, 21, and the fugitive Syrian Kurd Ziad Mando. It was reported that the victim Dany Assaf used to practice magic and that he cast two spells on the murderers, which disturbed their lives and drove them to seek revenge.
- A crime committed in al-Khraibeh in Baalbeck on the first day of Eid al-Fitr in September 2011 when Fayez Issa shot the children of his sister Mahmoud, Nasser and Ghaleb in addition to Alya, Mahmoud's wife, and Mohammad Kanaan and his wife Rasha. It was reported that the dispute was over a piece of land of no more than 1000 m<sup>2</sup>.
- The Syrian janitor at the Our Lady of the Annunciation monastery, Fathi Salatin, raped Miriam Ashkar, 28, and stabbed her near the convent where she had gone to pray in Sahel Alma in November 2011. He later wrapped her body and threw it down the valley. The Investigative judge requested the execution of the murderer.
- The finding of the bodies of Ghassan Dalal, his wife Nissrine Awde, and their three children Mahdi, 21, Radwan, 10, and Baqer, 4. According to the narratives, Ghassan killed his family and then committed suicide. The oldest son Mohammad was the only family member who survived as he was not home at the time of the killings.
- A murder committed with a knife in Katermaya in April 2010 resulted in the death of Youssef Abou Merii, 79, his wife Kawthar and their two granddaughters Amina, 9, and Zeina, 7. The Egyptian worker Mohammad Saleem acted upon provocation carried out by the victim's niece, for he intended to expose her immoral demeanors. Katermaya's residents reacted violently to this crime, pulling the murderer out of the ISF vehicle, stabbing him to death and dragging his body throughout the town before hanging him naked in the center of the town.
- The Syrian worker Walid Ali al-Hasan, 16, slaughtered a 77-year old Lebanese woman Joulia Sahyoun in July 2011 in Dahr el-Sawan in the Qada'a of Matn after she managed to run away when he attempted to rape her.
- A one and a half year old girl was battered to death by her stepmother in Byblos in May 2012.
- The ninety-day-old baby Ghina Abdul Razzaq died at Saint Thérèse Hospital in Hadath in June 2012 after being brutally battered by her parents.
- Mona Jaweesh, 49, tried to commit suicide in September 2012 after having killed her husband George Fawaz, 55, at their home in the town of Sehayle.
- Charbel Challitta tricked his friend Roland Shbeir, 22, into accompanying him to the Jleisseh town in Byblos, killed him and put his body in his car's trunk in October 2012. Chalitta attended Shbeir's funeral later and even helped carry his coffin. The murder was reportedly committed after Shbeir had requested his friend to pay him back his USD 3000 debt. ●



# FOREIGN LABOR FORCE IN LEBANON

## PROBLEMS AND CRISES

Lebanon is home to thousands of foreign and Arab workers, with the exclusion of the Syrians, whose exact number remains a subject of different estimations. Some workers, amounting to around 70 000 to 100 000, reside illegally in the country, while around 185 000 others have a work permit and a residency card. This work force contributes to numerous social and economic problems as a minimum of USD 1.5 billion are transferred overseas annually in return for services that are not always productive (domestic workers). Furthermore, the presence of such workers is generating a series of incidents and murders, most of which are alien to the traditions of the Lebanese society.

### Status quo

According to the statistics of the Ministry of Labor in 2011, the size of the foreign labor population in Lebanon is 184 960 workers distributed by the following nationalities:

- Egyptian: 25 912
- Ethiopian: 45 705
- Bangladeshi: 40 380
- Sri Lankan: 14 054
- Filipino: 29 141
- Indian: 7367
- Nepali: 9524

According to profession, they are distributed as follows:

- Domestic workers: 137 719 i.e. 75% of the foreign labor force
- Cleaning workers: 15 458
- Farmers: 8475
- Porters: 10 741
- Servants: 2645
- Others: 9922

“According to the statistics of the Ministry of Labor in 2011, the size of the foreign labor population in Lebanon is 184 960 workers”

### Problems and crises

Security reports highlight multiple offences and crimes committed by foreign workers, especially domestic maids. The following were registered in 2010, 2011 and 2012:

- A Filipino maid, called Rivana, stabbed on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2010 Rose, the sister of her employer, who had arrived from Dubai a week earlier and was staying at her sister's. While Rose was giving her 8-year old niece Marie-Rose her bath, the maid walked in and stabbed the aunt and the niece in different parts of their bodies. Rose died as soon as she and her niece arrived at the Abou Jaoude Hospital. The maid admitted to having committed the crime, claiming that she was afraid that her employer might summon a doctor home to kill her, extract her organs and donate them to Matilda. Mount Lebanon Investigative Judge Fawzi Khamiss demanded the execution of the maid for murder and referred her to the Criminal Court.



Photo by Mohammad Mashla

- A Filipino maid kidnapped her 6-month old employer's son in Maamelteyn on June 15, 2010 and fled to Tripoli, where the security forces found her hiding in a parking garage with two false individual status records. Sources believed that she was planning to sell the baby for a certain amount of money.
- An Ethiopian housemaid working in Tallet Khayyat attempted suicide on July 25, 2010 by throwing herself from the 8th floor which caused her to suffer skull fracture and other injuries.
- An Ethiopian domestic worker hanged herself with an electrical wire at the Nour employment office on January 1, 2011. The reason behind her suicide was probably her fear as she had only been in Lebanon for a few days.
- Filipino domestic worker Marites Penno hanged herself on the balcony of her employer's house in Hasbaya on April 20, 2011. No clues were provided regarding the motive for her suicide.
- An Ethiopian housemaid hanged herself in the bathroom of her employer's office in Antelias on May 9, 2011. She allegedly wanted to return to her homeland but her employers refused to grant her this wish, thus driving her to suicide.
- A Sri Lankan maid attacked her 70-year old employer Neemat Munzir on February 23, 2012, beating her severely on the head with sharp objects in her home in Burj Barajni. Mrs. Munzir fainted and was later stabbed to death with a knife. The husband reported that the maid had been working at their home for two years and that he was ignorant of the reason behind her offence because she was treated no differently from other family members. Security sources believe that the maid used to have psychological disorders and that she was suffering difficult conditions at her employer's house.
- Ethiopian housemaid Palici Hendor committed suicide on February 2, 2012 in her employer's house in Ghadeer using female stockings. Some hypothesized that the maid did not hang herself but was killed.
- A Bangladeshi maid hanged herself on June 12, 2012 and was found dead in a domestic workers' office in Byblos. The maid had arrived in Lebanon only a few days earlier and she committed suicide because of her fear of the experience of working in a foreign country.
- On the same note, the most atrocious incident was the suicide of Ethiopian maid Alem Dechasa after video footage was aired of her being beaten by her employer. The video showed a man dragging Dechasa by the hair and pushing her forcibly into a car with the assistance of another man, who turned out to be the owner of the employment agency that recruited her. He reported that the maid had tried to commit suicide several times and that he took her to the Ethiopian Embassy to deport her but she refused and was admitted to Deir al-Salib psychiatric hospital. She later choked herself to death with her blanket on March 14, 2012.
- Domestic worker Rassonia Actar, 45, killed her employer Wafaa Nakhle, 45, on August 26, 2012. Actar had arrived to Lebanon 5 days before the murder to nurse her employer's aging parents in Al-Teebeh in South Lebanon. She spent the first night at Mrs. Nakhle's house in Chiyyah and stabbed her with a knife when she tried to resist her. Actar stole her employer's jewelry and ran away. She later admitted that she came to Lebanon for theft, not for work. ●



Photo by Mohammad Mashla

# PROSTITUTION

## FORBIDDEN, YET INHERENTLY EXISTING IN LEBANON

Prostitution is one of the oldest professions in the world. Although forbidden in most countries, it remains, as is commonly known, an actual phenomenon. The Lebanese law explicitly prohibits prostitution. However, the country is home to multiple legally regulated professions that set the stage for the practice of prostitution, especially that the Lebanese tourism industry makes the total elimination of it highly unlikely. Being a country famous for an unparalleled openness and liberty in the Arab world and the region, Lebanon has become the typical destination for those seeking to engage in sexual activities.

In Lebanon, prostitution occurs in different forms and is practiced in ways and within networks that differ according to the nationalities of women.

### Lebanese women

Hundreds of Lebanese women engage in practicing prostitution, either as a primary or a secondary profession. Communication with customers may occur directly through their presence in cafes, restaurants or on the streets, or through cab drivers and hotel workers, or thanks to organized networks and jobs in nightclubs and cabarets. The activity of these sex workers is not subjected to any supervision, as they may deliver their services at any time in any place, based on a mere phone call with the client. For the most part, prostitutes are paid LBP 100 000 to LBP 300 000 in exchange of a few hours of sexual services. However, the price may be raised, depending on the beauty of the girl or the duration spent with the client. Usually, prostitutes dwell in Greater Beirut, but may move to other regions as well.

### Syrian women

It is common knowledge that the entry from Syria to Lebanon is visa free, and all that the Syrian nationals (both male and female) require to travel to Lebanon is an entry card showing the stamp of the General Security and allowing its holder to reside in Lebanon for 6 months. Some networks solicit Syrian women and summon them to Lebanon to work in prostitution in clubs designed strictly for them, where a client may walk in, then escort the prostitute he chooses out of the club, or have intercourse in

equipped rooms inside the club. Clients may also take prostitutes to their houses or to hotel rooms.

The networks provide houses for the Syrian prostitutes, and send them to the places that the clients specify as per their phone conversation with the pimps. Likewise that of Lebanese women, the business of Syrian prostitutes is not subjected to oversight or to specific timing.

The prices range from USD 100 and USD 200 in exchange of one hour or an hour and a half, while only LBP 100 000 is paid for spending half an hour inside the club. As soon as they spend some time in Lebanon and acquire good connections with their clients, some Syrian prostitutes hurry to break away from their networks and set out on their own, especially that the networks benefit from 70% of the prostitutes' pay in return of the protection and shelter they provide for those.

The number of Syrian prostitutes in Lebanon has proliferated as a result of the current crisis in Syria.



## Foreign “artists”

Under the name “artist”, thousands of women from Ukraine, Moldavia, Romania, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tunisia, Morocco, and Dominica enter Lebanon to serve in the nightclubs in Beirut, Hazmieh, Sin El-Fil and Jounieh among many others. The “artists” carry out their prostitution career by virtue of an employment agreement lasting from 3 to 6 months, after which, they must return to their home countries to spend an equal duration there, before having the permission to fly back to Lebanon, if they so wish. Throughout their stay in Lebanon, foreign prostitutes are to confine themselves in their place of work and residence, which is usually a hotel that they may only leave between 1 pm and 7pm or 8 pm before heading to the club from 10 pm until 5 am. The work at the club is restricted to strip dancing or keeping the clients company. LBP 40 000 to LBP 60 000 is charged for sitting with them for half an hour and the price increases to LBP 100 000 to LBP 130 000 for an extra hour. The two parties agree to meet outside the club on the next day or any other day during the week, and the client should spend a minimum of an hour and a half, so that the girl consents to meeting him later.

**“The Lebanese law defines prostitution as an illegal activity, but fails to take any action to curb its proliferation, especially that it booms in the tourism and hotel market and is being covered by the official authorities responsible for censorship and law implementation”**

The artists receive a monthly pay ranging between USD 600 to USD 800 in addition to a commission for keeping the clients company. They also benefit from USD 100 to USD 200 when meeting the clients, a price that grows proportionally with the woman’s beauty and sex appeal.

In large clubs that include rooms for the residence of artists, clients may visit in daytime between 1 pm and 6 pm, pick one of the women who failed to get a client the night before, and take her out after paying the club a sum standing somewhere between LBP 100 000 and LBP 130 000. Another USD 100 to USD 200 is paid to the girl for engaging in sexual intercourse.

## Brothels

Hotels and furnished apartments are currently considered the most common places for practicing prostitution. Given the recession in the tourism market and the decline in the hotels’ occupancy rates, the hotels who once refrained from permitting sexual encounters in their rooms, are now loosening their grip and welcoming clients and artists of all kinds. Such hotels usually charge USD 20 to USD 60 for a 2 to a 4-hour stay, depending on their level and classification, noting that some hotels are established solely for prostitution purposes.

## Nightclubs

There are 50 nightclubs licensed by the Ministry of Tourism and distributed primarily in Hamra, Phoenicia, Hazmieh, Sin El-Fil, Jounieh and Maameltein. Those include small clubs housing no more than 6 artists and larger ones with over 15 artists. A total of 800 to 1000 foreign artists work in these clubs throughout the year.

The Lebanese law defines prostitution as an illegal activity, but fails to take any action to curb its proliferation, especially that it booms in the tourism and hotel market and is being covered by the official authorities responsible for censorship and law implementation. ●



# POLL ON CIVIL MARRIAGE

**51% PRO-CIVIL MARRIAGE**

**46% PRO-RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE**



The legalization of optional civil marriage has been a demand for decades in Lebanon. Segments calling for the approval of civil marriages have been growing larger but are seemingly incapable of achieving their goal due to several reasons, particularly the deep-rooted sectarianism in the Lebanese society.

The most recent attempt to approve optional civil marriage in Lebanon was also the suggestion that former President Elias Hrawi put forward in the Cabinet on February 5, 1998, when he proposed a personal status draft law that included civil marriage. At the time, Hrawi’s proposal gained 21 supporting votes but was challenged by the late PM Rafik Hariri and ministers Bassem Sabeh, Bahij Tabbara (married civilly), Bechara Merhej (married civilly), Omar Mesqawi and Fouad Seniora. Ministers Walid Jumblat and Hagop Demirjian were absent from the session, while Minister Suleiman Frangieh abstained from voting.

The survey conducted by Information International on optional civil marriage resulted in the following findings:

**Marriage system: 51% for optional and compulsory civil marriage, 46% for religious marriage**

The Lebanese were divided in their opinions regarding the optimal marriage system. A majority of 46% supported religious marriage, 18% supported civil marriage and 33% called for a system endorsing both religious and civil options. 3% expressed indifference on the subject.

As illustrated in the following Table 1, these stances are distributed by sect. It is mostly the Muslim that back religious marriages, especially the Sunni (66%). This option is less agreeable among Christians and it reaches its lowest percentage among Armenians with only 20% supporting religious marriages.

Stance on marriage system by sect										Table 1
What is the marriage system you prefer in Lebanon?	Maronite (%)	Orthodox (%)	Catholic (%)	Armenian Orthodox/Catholic (%)	Sunni (%)	Shia'a (%)	Druze (%)	Alawi (%)	Christian minorities (%)	Total (%)
Religious	28	41	22	20	66	55	30	50	60	46
Optional (Religious or civil)	46	28	33	55	26	29	26	25	40	33
Civil	23	31	41	25	5	13	37	25	0	18
No answer	3	0	4	0	3	3	7	0	0	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

By religion, 30% of the Christians who were polled stood up for religious marriage against 58% of Muslims. 42% of the Christians and 27% of Muslims welcomed the optional marriage system.

The evident support of the religious option was highlighted through the following responses:

- When asked what option they would choose if they were to get married, 60% of single respondents chose religious marriage, 20% civil marriage and 20% said they didn't know.
- On the other hand, when asked about the option that married respondents would want for their current or prospective children, 60% chose religious marriage, 17% picked civil marriage and 23% said they didn't know.

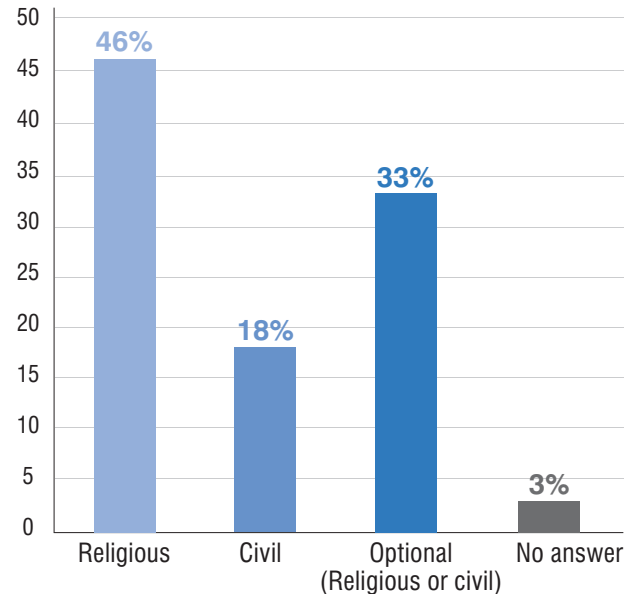
However, endorsement of a religious marriage system doesn't necessarily imply opposition to the optional civil marriage. 18% expressed full support of a purely civil system, while 33% showed more flexibility saying a person should have both options, which brings the total of those supportive of either optional or compulsory civil marriage to 51%.

### Grand Mufti's fatwa greeted with opposition

42% of the respondents were opposed to the fatwa issued by Grand Mufti Mohamad Rashid Qabbani that suggested any Muslim with legal or executive authority who legalizes civil marriage is deemed an apostate and an outcast from Islam. 26% welcomed the fatwa, 22% were indifferent and 10% refused to answer. ●●



Stances of the respondents on the marriage system



To conclude, the Lebanese are divided into three categories when it comes to the marriage system they consider best:

- 46% cling to religious marriage as their only choice
- 18% cling to civil marriage as their only choice
- 33% believe in adopting a system that provides both options, although 18% of those would opt for a religious ceremony.

Should the optional marriage system be approved, 64% would prefer to tie a religious knot, 21% a civil one, and 15% are still undecided.

This telephone survey was conducted on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2013 and included a sample of 500 male and female respondents distributed among all social classes and age groups and belonging to different regions and sects across Lebanon.

## HEPATITIS C

(CHRONIC, SILENT, TREATABLE)

| Dr. Hanna Saadah |



**Viral hepatitis, or viral liver infection, can be caused by five types of viruses known as A, B, C, D, and E. Each virus has a unique clinical course, which varies among individuals depending on their immune status. In some cases, these viruses are cleared by the body's immune system without need for treatment. Treatment in any case is available only for the Hepatitis B and C types. By causing inflammation of the liver, these viruses impair the liver's many functions such as helping digest food, store energy, provide nutrients, remove harmful chemicals from the blood, fight infections by making antibodies, manufacture essential proteins, and prevent bleeding by producing clotting factors. Among these five known viruses, Hepatitis C is the most common and the most treatable.**

The main way to acquire Hepatitis C is through exposure to blood or blood products. Such exposures occur if

blood from someone with Hepatitis C is unintentionally introduced into the body of another. Before 1992, blood and blood products such as platelets and plasma were not screened for Hepatitis C because the virus had not been discovered yet. This implies that persons who had blood transfusions before 1992 could have received contaminated blood and thus could possibly carry the infection. The highest incidence occurs in those born between 1945 and 1965, approaching 4.3% in the USA and that figure could be higher in other countries. Consequently, screening for the virus is currently indicated for those who are between 48 and 68 years of age.

Other common routes of exposure to the virus include illegal intravenous drug injections, reuse of needles and syringes, and accidental needle sticks. Cosmetic procedures such as tattooing or piercing are usually safe unless infection control measures are violated. Viral transmission in dialysis centers occurs in 8.9% of US patients, probably because of inadequate infection control practices. Sexual transmission occurs in 0% - 0.6% of partners in monogamous relationships and in 0.4% - 1.8% of those with multiple partners. Infected mothers transmit the infection to 4% - 7% of their newborns. Sharing toothbrushes, razors, and nail clippers is also considered hazardous.

Screening for Hepatitis C is required in all exposed persons and in patients with unexplained liver enzyme abnormalities. However, having no liver enzyme abnormalities does not exclude the diagnosis of Hepatitis C. Patients with unexplained fatigue, nausea, abdominal pain, arthritis, kidney disease, blood disorders, thyroid disorders, inflammations, etc. may have hidden Hepatitis C. Testing for Hepatitis C antibodies is the screening method of choice because it is highly sensitive and specific.

Hepatitis C can remain silent for many years and many who have it may never develop symptoms.

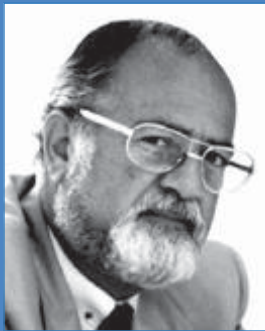
However, liver cirrhosis does develop in 15% - 20% of chronically infected patients and of those, 3% per year develop cancer of the liver. Alcohol is best avoided by all infected patients and all medicines should be used cautiously. Protein restriction is unwise because it can lead to malnutrition, especially in those with liver cirrhosis.

There is no vaccine against Hepatitis C but infected individuals should take all the required vaccines such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis A, influenza, pneumonia, tetanus, whooping cough, diphtheria, etc.

Treatment for Hepatitis C differs, depending on the viral genetic type. Type 1 is the most treatable, whereas types 2 - 6 are less responsive to treatment. Treatment is cumbersome, takes between 6 to 12 months, and causes numerous adverse effects. Of the patients who complete their treatment courses, some are cured whilst others are not. Those who are not will need to be followed carefully because almost a third of them could end up with liver cirrhosis or cancer of the liver and they are the ones who may require liver transplantation. The commonest reason for liver transplantation today is chronic Hepatitis C.

In the US, if all those born between 1945 and 1955 were screened for Hepatitis C, 800 000 new cases would be diagnosed. If the same screening were to be done in all nations, millions of new cases would be uncovered. Treating asymptomatic carriers before they succumb to cirrhosis or liver cancer has been shown to be cost effective, but such an undertaking would require enormous health resources, which most nations cannot afford.

Having a high index of suspicion for Hepatitis C is crucial, especially in patients who do not have abnormal liver enzymes but do have unexplainable symptoms that defy diagnosis. ●



Antoine Boutros

## KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY: A LONG WAY TO GO

**Knowledge economy is not one of those new topics that emerge out of the blue due to the evolution of economic theories. However, it still carries great significance for being one of the instruments used to measure the nations' resources and progress. Many sources that date back to the first half of the past century refer to this measurement, including in particular a lecture titled "Economics and Knowledge", delivered in London in 1937 by British economist and philosopher Friedrich Hayek.**

In 2011, 19 years after the death of Hayek, his article, "The Use of Knowledge in Society", was selected among the top 20 studies published by American Economic Review during its first century.

Undoubtedly, the development of economic correction theories and the entire economic thought has resulted in re-thrusting knowledge economy to the forefront. There are dozens of modern publications on knowledge economy with exactly the same title, as if writing about this topic is a scientific degree that elevates its holder.

### Knowledge and human evolution

Knowledge has walked hand in hand with human evolution and contributed greatly to changes in civilization. Although it has operated through tight margins and was often restricted to industrial and cultural loci, knowledge proved capable of triggering successive revolutions that altered the course of history.

At the top of those revolutions was that of computer technology, which broke out in the second half of the twentieth century as a result of a structural transformation in civilization. Thanks to the evolution of computer technology, knowledge spread at a faster pace and went on growing and expanding by the day, or rather by the second in order to respond to the rapid nature of such technology, thus heading to far-reaching horizons that we did not even know existed before. Nowadays, half the GDP of modern western countries is based on knowledge intensive economics.

This turning point manifested in a drastic change that extended to the entire environment of human civilization including the resources, tools and capabilities of human beings. Evidently, the long-term impact of the fruitful historic pairing between computer and telecommunications can be tracked easily on the course of human life and the potential, facilities, convenience and opportunities that this pairing has granted so far, serve as a title to a historic tilt in the relation of human beings with their universe. Nowadays, economic growth is tied to technologies rather than an increase in capital and workforce.

The spread in knowledge and its tools in an unparalleled manner was a natural outcome in the aftermath of information technology. A massive flux of science and knowledge, of which the greatest thinkers of the past centuries couldn't even dream, became accessible to all humans, and the monopoly of knowledge was no longer possible in an era of immediate information diffusion. The communities based on industrial economies shifted into technology-oriented economies focusing on producing and distributing information. Services emerged as a critical element in contributing to the nations' revenues and the traditional historic structure of economy took a different shape and paved the way for the domination of the third sector over the first two. Today, the isolated independent national economies are fading and becoming parts of an integrated interdependent global economy. As for the industrial community, one quarter of it is absorbed in manufacturing and development operations, while the rest is attending to services, with two quarters in the information technology sector. In other terms, we came up with a new information-intensive capital to replace the energy-intensive one.

Another critical factor revolves around the radical change that affected the meaning and nature of living and non-living natural resources, due to the rise of information as a brand new strategic resource that complements natural resources in the economic life. This resource is unique in the sense that, unlike natural resources, it may be divided, expanded, compressed and transferred and doesn't necessarily diminish with excessive use. Unlike natural resources, immoderation in the use of information doesn't induce its depletion but rather amplifies its value.

Today's economic world is split into two main trends. The first dominates those countries known as the post-industrial countries whose economy has evolved into a service and information-based one and is heading now towards an economic understanding of knowledge through an accommodation of the economic sectors striving to produce information and services and to create new technologies to process, spread and distribute them. The second and most prevailing trend is that based on traditional and non-futuristic economy wallowing between traditional industries, agriculture and some services. ●

## ATTAINING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Dr. Michel Nawfal

MD Mental Health Professional



**People have the tendency to associate the term psychology with the image of a patient reclining on a couch, disclosing memories and secrets to a psychologist who listens while taking notes. Unfortunately, the stigmas coupled with this domain may undermine the true objectives of a trained therapist. How we think, feel, handle stress and cope with life are all parts of our mental health, which, like physical health, should be looked after, from childhood through to adulthood.**

The importance of psychology is starting to gain ground in Lebanon and people are becoming more aware of the need to ensure good mental health.

Unlike psychoanalysis, which tackles the unconscious, cognitive therapy suggests that human emotions are dictated by thoughts. One might, for instance, feel anxious, for misconceiving a certain situation as dangerous. Correcting this misconception or thought lies at the core of cognitive therapy.

Numerous are the mistaken notions surrounding the practice of psychology and people still fail to view it as an independent science just like physics or math. Psychology is not fortune-telling and therapists do need proof before they can make any claim.

Although cognitive therapy can be applicable to almost every psychological disorder, it works best when addressing obsessive compulsive disorders, social anxiety disorders and phobias. Being a biological dysfunction, schizophrenia, for instance, responds to medical intervention better than psychological one. Severe or complex diseases are rare and entering the clinic doesn't necessarily imply a serious condition. OCD, depression and panic attacks are among the most common disorders that patients wish to overcome with the guidance of a professional.

In recent years, more people have come to terms with the need to seek professional help when needed. The Lebanese, in particular, have always consulted professionals when it came to their mental health, but today, there is a growing tendency among them to speak of it openly. It is clearly evident that the population in this country and the region at large are in need to see psychologists and specialists to process their emotions and engage in open dialogues

aimed to alleviate their troubles and rid them of their psychological burdens.

The average age of clients seeking consultation is between 25 and 35 years – about two thirds of clients are women. Those suffering from severe OCD are the most challenging as they are very guarded and rigid and their excessive need to be in control makes them far less accessible.

Luckily, Lebanon has come a long way as far as mental health awareness is concerned. However, reaching out to all segments and communicating the message of mental health with the disadvantaged coming from less privileged backgrounds remains a major challenge.

Another challenge hindering the improvement of psychology in Lebanon is the lack of qualified personnel. Patients must be certain that the psychologist they are approaching is fully trained and qualified. Unfortunately, there is no syndicate for psychologists in Lebanon to decide on whether one has the competency to practice therapy or not.

Bigger attention is given to raising mental health awareness among students within Lebanon's schools and universities. It is of the utmost importance to have a professional team on hand to ensure that children and teenagers have the necessary support and guidance in assuring good mental health.

If untreated, children with Attention Deficit Disorder are likely to develop low self-esteem as well as anxiety and poor academic performance. This is where professional psychological assistance should come in handy to minimize the adverse effects of a certain disorder and lay the foundations for better self-development and progress. ●●

# THE MONTHLY INTERVIEWS

## SHEREEN KREIDIEH

In conformity with its belief that children's literature is a fundamental tool for child's growth and development, and mindful of the major role that children's book publishing houses have to play in this respect, *The Monthly* interviewed publisher Shereen Kreidieh for deeper insights into her publishing house, Asala.

### Who is Shereen Kreidieh and what brought her to the publishing industry?

I grew up in a reading-friendly environment and my encounters with publishers, distributors and authors started at a very early age. My father, Moustafa Kreidieh, may his soul rest in peace, was the founder of Dar An-Nahda Al Arabiyah, a leading publishing house in the Arab world. My exposure to the family business and my educational background were central factors that propelled me into publishing. After gaining a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, a Teaching Diploma in Early Childhood Education and a Master's degree in Children's Literature, I was interested in exploring the wider spectrum of the children's literature world, and thus I established Asala in 1994, as a publishing house specializing in Arabic children's books.

### Was it a rough start back in 1994?

Business start-up can be challenging. At the time, people were unfamiliar with the concept of children's literature and did not know where to find children's books. Another obstacle was the ability to reach out to authors, editors and illustrators.



Shereen Kreidieh

During my training in Egmont, a leading UK publisher of children's books and magazines, I used to be amazed at the wealth of the manuscripts they received every day. I wanted to get Asala to that stage and the first thing I did was to place ads in newspapers. We started from scratch, and fortunately, the number of submissions- whether manuscripts or illustrations- delivered to our house today keeps on growing by the second. I can even go as far as saying that Asala deals with the largest list of authors and illustrators in Lebanon.

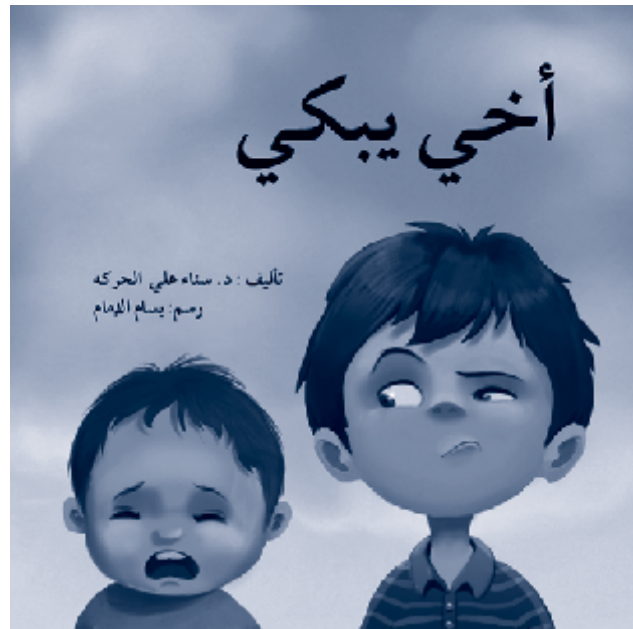
### Do you encourage communication with amateur writers and illustrators?

Most publishing houses in the Arab world reach out to the same reputed illustrators to benefit from their previous experience, which sadly fosters the copy-paste approach and manifests in similar

products. Asala believes that this industry needs young energy and publishers should invest in fresh and new talent. Two or three years ago, I used to navigate the web in search for random sketches for talented illustrators and I used to get in touch with those and offer them the chance to work with us. This market needs creativity and originality, two features that are present abundantly in the younger generation, let alone that amateurs exhibit more flexibility and adaptability and are more open to criticism. Children should be exposed to diverse texts and illustrations to refine their aesthetic taste and help them develop a sense of distinction between mediocre and good productions.

### What makes Asala stand out in the publishing landscape?

Asala's inherent strength lies in its diversity. We address all age groups (3 to 16), work with numerous authors and illustrators and tackle many diverse subjects and titles. This exotic mixture enriches our experience and makes us a unique platform enfolding a great variety of choices and attracting readers from all backgrounds and orientations. We publish around 100 titles every year, and schools continue to be a major market for us. Usually, publishing houses with such a huge output, translate 40% to 50% of their books, but Asala is committed to producing original material coupled with equally authentic pictures and illustrations.



### Have you had any experience with writing or are you committed to publishing only?

The problem in the Arab world is that everybody wishes to be a Jack-of-all-trades. I believe in specialty and mastery of one's field and this is why I am fully dedicated to publishing and I refuse to venture into the writing area. When one gears their absolute effort, knowledge and attention towards a particular field, they stand out and become an undisputed reference, capable of delivering value to their customers. He who writes and publishes at the same time would always show bias to his manuscripts and would spontaneously nominate his own titles for potential awards, in order to promote his own name and gain wider exposure.

### How do you promote the importance of books amid a staggering decline in the reading rates in our society?

We try to engage in diverse book-related activities like storytelling in public libraries and workshops for parents and teachers on how to use books and encourage reading. We also organize book-signing events for authors and illustrators and participate in book fairs and reading competitions for bigger exposure. The revival of reading habits should be the joint responsibility of parents, schools and publishing houses, in order to partly detach the children from our over-networked technological world and offer them an opportunity to contemplate and distance themselves from the noise and the cacophony. ●

# NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION



The National Organization for Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation (NOOTDT) was established in 1999 by virtue of Decision No. 1509 issued by the Ministry of Public Health. The organization is chaired by the Minister of Public Health, with the President of the Order of Physicians serving as its Speaker. The NOOTDT did not receive sufficient financing to carry out its activities until 2009, when the then Minister of Public Health Jawad Khalifeh, allocated the organization its first budget in years. An agreement was also signed in 2009 with the Spanish government to project its organ donation model, which is the most successful worldwide, onto the Lebanese society.

## Mission of the NOOTDT

The NOOTDT is responsible for all the missions and tasks aimed at promoting and organizing the organ donation program in Lebanon in a comprehensive manner and it communicates with hospitals, media outlets and NGOs to serve this aim. In 2010, the cooperation agreement signed with the Spanish government included 15 Lebanese hospitals, a number which grew to 23 in 2011. A manual briefing on the requirements needed to make part of the organ procurement process is usually handed out to hospitals, and it's up to them to join the cause or opt out. Spreading the concept and culture of organ and tissue donation and transplantation and staying informed of the medical progress and the latest advances in this field fall also within the work the organization. It is noteworthy that the NOOTDT has organized during the past three years awareness campaigns in more than 60 military centers, 65 public schools in addition to diverse private schools and NGOs, and has met deans from Lebanon's universities to arrange the inclusion of an organ procurement course in all the faculties of medicine, pharmacy and nursing across Lebanon.

## Donation mechanism

The Lebanese law recognizes two modes of death: the classic manner resulting from cardiac arrest and cessation of breathing and the scientific manner meaning brain death or actual death. At the moment, the NOOTDT is focused on providing the organs and tissues of brain dead patients. In scientific terms, a patient is diagnosed as brain dead, when there is a

total loss of the entire activity of his central nervous system and all its vital functions. The model adopted entails the formation of hospital committees consisting of procurement coordinators, coroners and physicians trained to determine potential donors, inform the NOOTDT thereof, report their death immediately when it occurs, communicating with the parents of the deceased to gain their approval regarding the donation of their tissues or organs, and manage, distribute and use the organs, thus establishing the link between the organization and hospitals.

**“In 2010, the cooperation agreement signed with the Spanish government included 15 Lebanese hospitals, a number which grew to 23 in 2011”**

Brain death must be confirmed through bedside examinations administered by neurologists and anesthesiologist, together with an electroencephalogram (EEG) aimed to assure that the death has occurred before proceeding with the donation mechanism. The NOOTDT has a waiting list including the names of the patients who need and are ready to undergo organ transplantation, along with the compatibility criteria between donors and

recipients (blood type, age, immunity level...) and the contact details of the surgeons assigned to carry out the transplant surgeries. Those details steer the transplantation process at a faster pace and increase its success rate. Once removed from the donor's body, the heart, for instance, can remain usable for 6 hours depending on preservation conditions. Therefore, it is preferable that the NOOTDT have all the details and updates regarding the condition of the waiting recipient at their disposal, to gain time and move to the surgery immediately after obtaining the organs or tissues.

The organs that are transplanted most often in Lebanon are kidneys. With the artificial kidney device now in the market, patients suffering from kidney failure can wait longer on the waiting list, contrary to those with heart or liver failure, to whom time can be a life-saving factor.

Currently, the NOOTDT is providing in addition to the corneas, a yearly average of 40 organs from 10 donors, a number, which pales in comparison to other countries. However, the transplant success rates are considerably high and survival increases to over 10 years if recipients are committed to taking their immune suppressing drugs for life, to rule out the possibility of their body rejecting the transplant, which naturally makes them susceptible to other infections and illnesses.

Dr. Antoine Stephan, Vice President of NOOTDT, assures that the stringency of laws in Lebanon curbs the spread of organ trafficking. He adds that should there be any illegal organ donation practices, they are limited to individuals, not clinics or hospitals.

### Between law and religion

The Lebanese law 109/1983 and its amendment 1442/1984, legalize "donation of human tissues and organs for medical and scientific purposes". The law also requires the consent of the family to the disposition of the organs of the brain dead patients, even if they had signed when alive a card giving their permission to donate their organs or tissues.

From religious and ethical perspectives, most religions have voiced their support of organ and tissue donation, provided that the process remains far from commercialism and respects the dignity of both the recipient and the donor, insisting on the importance of receiving the approval of the donors or their families.

It is our duty to support and promote a generous and noble cause such as an organ donation, as it brings hope of life and a better tomorrow and spreads sublime values among humans. ●



## AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY SOPHOMORE YEAR

The first year ended and students parted, each anticipating a joyful summer vacation with family and friends. I, on the other hand, was pondering about how to earn some cash to survive my second year. What should I do?

Before heading back to Ras El-Matn, I received a letter from Ramallah from the lady who once advised me to pursue higher education. In a nutshell, her letter implied the following: the Friends' Association decided that the new missionaries should study Arabic in Ramallah, instead of going to Souk El-Gharb. We are five: the President and his wife, a fellow teacher and his wife and me. I recommended that they summon you as our teacher, for I have learned so much from you. Will you accept the offer?

The President said he would pay you 25 Palestinian liras over a period of two months and a half. Your round-trip travel cost would be part of the package and you may sleep on school premises and share meals with us.

God disposes! A tempting offer and a summer in Ramallah. I have never been to the Holy Land and 25 Palestinian liras can cover my first semester's tuition fees. I was in seventh heaven and I wrote back immediately: I will be there on the fourth of July, as classes were scheduled to begin on the fifth. I went up to Ras El-Matn to bid my parents goodbye. Jerusalem, here I come.

I got my passport and the very next day, we hopped into a taxi and headed for Haifa. The road between Akka and Haifa wasn't asphalted and I recall that the taxi's tires got mired in mud so we rolled our sleeves up to lift it and get it back on track.

We reached Haifa at noon and took another taxi to Jerusalem. I arrived at the Boys' Boarding School in Ramallah shortly before sunset. The group welcomed me heartily and the servant showed me to my room. After taking our rest, we headed to the dining room and struck up acquaintances with each other.

Classes started the next day. The group was at beginner's level, except for the lady who had spent two years in Souk El-Gharn, and with whom I used to read excerpts from Arabic literature and daily newspapers.

Boredom used to creep in the afternoon. Ramallah's lovely summer and fresh air couldn't withdraw my dismal sense of solitude as the school was large but almost empty with a couple of servants only. ●●



## CARTHAGE'S SALTY DEFEAT

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### **Myth:**

*In the year 146 BC and with the end of the Third Punic War, Carthage was finally conquered by the Romans and burned to the ground. After the destruction of the city, the Romans sowed all the fields with salt in order to damage the crops and prevent the land from producing again in the near future.*

### **Fact:**

The salting of a city's crops, though a practice of many ancient cities at war was never mentioned in any historical texts or references for the city of Carthage. It is however known that in the Third Punic War, the Romans captured and killed a great number of Carthage residents, took slaves, and burned down the city (the main reason why so little remains of it today). To this day, even though it is commonly spoken of and despite Vladimir Putin's recent and detailed account of it, no historical documents have been found that speak of the salting of Carthage.

Tackling the lack of resources on this alleged salting, R. T. Ridley, in his 1986 article "To be Taken with a Pinch of Salt: The Destruction of Carthage" reveals through extensive research that the earliest mention of this salting was actually during the twentieth century (1930 to be precise) in the Cambridge Ancient History VIII encyclopedia where the author B.L. Hallward adds in the salting element with no reference. It is hard to decipher what may have triggered this, but the author could have been influenced by other ancient imageries of salted cities.

In refuting this myth, it is interesting to note that at the time, salt was worth much more than it is now and was used for the storage of food. Since obtaining it was also more difficult, it became a very valuable commodity. Would the Romans then, after having spent so much on their wars, squander ridiculous amounts of salt (which is what would have been required to cover the farms of Carthage) merely to hinder crops?

The value of salt to the Romans is also exemplified by the fact that they used to pay their soldiers' wages in salt, for its high value and its ability to preserve food. It is no surprise then, that the word salary used today is derived from the Latin word sal, meaning salt. The word then developed to indicate any type of stipend, salty or otherwise. It is unlikely then that the city of Carthage was taken "with a pinch of salt". ●

## A LIFE THROUGH MEMORIES

Through her writing style that reads mostly like a personal journal, Aida Talhouk exposes the details of her family life, motherhood, career, and political affiliation. She traces the progress of her life from a young student through to her retirement, stopping at the most memorable lessons of her career. Her informal language intercepted with writings in the Lebanese dialect creates a friendly tone in which the reader almost finds himself in conversation with “Mrs. Talhouk” rather than merely reading something she wrote.

Reminiscing about her life as a young student of psychology, she starts the book with the brave confession that she, upon discovering from doctors that her father was ill with cancer, kept this knowledge a secret from her father and their family. Knowing that any kind of treatment would be too costly for her family and would only prolong his life by one year, she told the family that her father was suffering from a lung abscess instead. After his death, her life was focused on her education and activism with the Syrian Social Nationalist Party of which she was a member. She regrets the change that has taken over the party today as she explains that the one she had joined was one that cultivated its members and focused mostly on spreading political awareness.

She designates one chapter of her book to speak of her marriage, her two sons, and their life in Beirut. This she corroborates with old family photos and memories of birthday parties, schools, friendships, the likes and dislikes of her sons... Her heartfelt affection for her sons is translated in the pride she takes in their achievements and her close ties with their wives and families.

Talhouk finished a Master’s degree in Guidance and Counseling at the American University of Beirut and continued working for the university until twelve years later she accepted a job at the Lebanese American University. Becoming the head of Health Services, she took a decision to shut down the infirmary as she found it was giving an excuse for students to be lazy, and in order to make room for other more useful things (such as a Red Cross training room). She strived to be more active in spreading health awareness and not only providing health services. In addition, she also initiated two new courses at the university; Basic Health and Community Health.



She recalls very fond memories of her experiences with students, but with the start of the war her job became more complex. At the onset, she was assigned head of student affairs where she found herself having to play the balancing act among different factions of students and prevent the university from tilting into chaos. As she mentions a few incidents where she had to interfere with students either in student protests or brawls, ripping down posters of any party leader, or even confiscating weapons, her emphasis on treating everyone alike is always underlined. Though she refers to several parties that were present on campus, she keeps them all anonymous except Hezbollah, which she explains is because of her admiration of the party’s cause and the maturity of its students when engaging in dialogues. The biggest achievement that could be attributed to Mrs. Talhouk is most likely to be her success in preventing outside intervention in campus life.

In the 7th chapter, Talhouk draws on her experience with Syrian students to refute the common wisdom among the Lebanese concerning the Syrian interventions into matters of the civil war. She finds herself surprised at the Lebanese attitude that was critical of intervention while Lebanon had been a country that was too weak to play any active role, whether internally or regionally. Personally, she thought that the Syrian soldiers who were meant to guard universities and Syrian students were always respectful of the university’s rules and administration. It may seem a little simplistic however to base one’s judgment of such a multifaceted matter on the behavior of a group of young students.

The final chapter, which is perhaps the most structured one in the book, surveys her impressions on the political sphere in the Arab world and reinstates her belief in the ideals of the SSNP though she admits she is no longer a participating member of the party. Secularism, civil marriage, and the plight of women in the Arab world are issues of prime concern for her, as well as the lagging behind of Arab countries within the globalized world we live in. ●

## **BEIRUT IN WORDS, PICTURES AND COLORS (LAWNOULI, RSEMOULI, KTEBOULI BEIRUT)**

By Michel Standjofski. Illustrations by Michel Standjofski. Published by Dar Onboz in 2009.

Michel Standjofski's *Lawnouli, Rsemouli, Ktebouli Beirut* depicts the life in Beirut in its various aspects and manifestations from its people to its streets and buildings, in a simple style, aimed to introduce the children to their capital and deepen their understanding of it. The book addresses the imagination of the child, offering him the chance to draw or color all that he sees in Beirut, as well as the chance to spot and color the area where he lives, thus promoting interaction with the content and illustrations and granting the child a margin of freedom and self-expression.

“In Beirut, ancient houses stand next to modern buildings... Abandoned houses neighbor properly maintained buildings... And some small houses have a flowerpot shape.

In Beirut, there are glass buildings that reflect the sky, the clouds and other surrounding structures. In Hay el-Syrian, people are living with their neighbors as one big family.

And sometimes, while roaming Beirut's crowded and ancient streets, one might push a door and find themselves in a small and tranquil garden...”



## LEBANESE FAMILY NAMES DENOTING COLORS

Many Lebanese families are named after colors. Some are limited to certain regions and sects, while others extend to multiple ones. These families are distributed as follows:

### **Asfar (Yellow) Family: 84 members**

49 Greek Orthodox members spread in Rmeil, Mazra'a and Zahle (Barbara, Wadi Dulm)

35 Sunni members spread in Haddadine

### **Ahmar (Red) Family: 3015 members**

- 1729 Shia'a members spread in Beirut (Bachoura, Mazra'a, Msaytbeh, Zqaq el-Blat), Saida (Bnaf'oul, Rijal el-Arb'in), Tyre (Hay el-Manara, Ain B'al, Bazourieh, Shhour, Sel'ata, Abbasieh, Joya, Bsateen, Ayteet), Marjeyoun (Hawla, Bra'shit, Soltanieh, Aitroun), Nabatieh (Kfarreman, Arabsalim, Jba'a, Houmine Tahta, Nabatieh Tahta).
- 1198 Sunni members spread in Beirut (Mazra'a, Msaytbeh, Zqaq el-Blat, Saifi), Saida (Share'e, Kenan), Zahle (Qeb Elias el-Fawqa, Qeb Elias el-Tahta), Western Beqa'a (Manara, Marj), Ain Remmaneh).
- 80 Greek Catholic members spread in Kfardeblian (Kessrouan), Rasiya el-Fawqa (Zahle) and Saghbine (Western Beqa'a).
- 8 Greek Orthodox members spread in Hay Baskinta Jnoubi (Northern Matn).

### **Hamra (Red) Family: 1223 members**

- 1006 members spread in Beirut (Bachoura, Mazra'a, Msaytbeh), Tripoli (Mina, Haddadine, el-Qebbeh, Nouri, el-Mhatra, el-Hadid, el-Mina), Saida (Msalkhiyeh), Hasbaya (Hay el-Saraya)
- 91 Greek Orthodox members spread in Beirut (Rmeil, Ashrafieh)
- 126 Greek Catholic members spread in Beirut (Msaytbeh, Rmeil), Northern Matn (Bekfaya), Saida (Mar Nqoula), Bint Jbeil (Ain Ebl), Zahle (Haoush el-Zaraneh)
- 56 Maronite members spread in Ashrafieh and Chouf (Joun, Damour)
- 18 Latin members spread in Beirut (Ras Beirut, Saifi)
- 81 Shia'a members spread in Marjeyoun (Markaba) and Nabatieh (Hay el-Bayad, Hay el-Midan)

### **Abyad/ El-Abyad (White) Family: 1160 members**

- Syrian Catholics spread in Zahle, Saifi, Msaytbeh
- Greek Catholics spread in Ashrafieh, Aley, Haret Hreik
- Sunnis spread in Mazra'a, Tripoli, Zqaq el-Blat, Msaytbeh, Qalamoun, Ras Beirut
- Maronite members in Dlebita
- Greek Orthodox members in Zqaq el-Blat and Rmeil

- Aswad/El-Aswad (Black) Family: 820 members
- Greek Catholics spread in Rmeil, Ain Remmaneh, Mdawar
- Maronite members spread in Antelias, Ain Remmaneh, Ashrafieh, Bsharri, Mhaydseh, Broumana, Bkassine, Neqash, Saqiyet el-Misk)
- Greek Orthodox in Broumana and Baabda
- Syrian Catholics in Ashrafieh, Burj Hammoud and Safra
- Sunnis in Kamed el-Lawz, Tripoli and Zqaq el-Blat
- Alawis in el-Tebbaneh (Tripoli)

### **Akhdar/El-Akhdar (Green) Family: 1020 members**

- Shia'a majority in Halousieh, Jebshit, Khrayeb, Zerarieh, Saksakieh, Arzi and Smayeh (Tyre)
- Sunnis in Msaytbeh and Saida

### **Benni/El-Benni (Brown) Family: 300 members**

- A Sunni majority in Tripoli, Chhim, Saida and Beirut
- Druze members in Bennay
- Maronite members in Hazmieh

### **Ramadi/El-Ramadi (Grey) Family: 120 Greek Orthodox members in Amioun**

### **Azraq/El-Azraq (Blue) Family: 200 members**

- Armenian Catholics spread in Rmeil, Saifi, Jdeideh, Dekwaneh
- Syrian Catholics in Baouchrieh
- Greek Catholics in Ashrafieh
- Sunnis in Majdal Anjar
- Maronite in Bsharri

### **Zahri (Pink) Family: 200 members**

- A Shia'a majority in Nabatieh
- Maronite in Saghbine
- Sunnis in Ras Beirut

### **El-Asmar/Asmar (Tan) Family: 5400 members**

- Sunnis in Mazraat Beyt el-Tashm (Hermel), Barbara (Jbeil), Tripoli, Berqayel and Saida
- Maronite in Erbanieh, Zandouqa, Qortada (Baabda)-Sheikh Mohammad (Akkar), Bhorsaf (Baabda), Salima, Qnaytra (Akkar), Jezzine, Hadath, Bqerzla (Akkar), Aintoura, Oubei, Damour, Te'elbaya, Nfeesi (Akkar), Bsharri, Hasroun, Jdeeta
- Shia'a in Oudeissi (Marjeyoun), Kfakala, Markaba, Mazra'a (Beirut)
- Syrian Catholics in Mdawar and Zalqa
- Syrian Orthodox in Msaytbeh

# WADI EL-SIT

## A TOWN AWAITING RETURN

### Etymology

The origin of the name “Wadi el-Sit”, Arabic for “Valley of the Lady”, may not be accurate, but folk stories attribute the name to the shape of the town which resembled a valley, and which was home, long time ago, to a lady descending from the Al-Shihab family.

### Location

Wadi el-Sit is located in the Qada’a of Chouf in the Mohafaza of Mount Lebanon, at an altitude of 700 m above the sea level. It lies 52 km from Beirut, 7 km from the Qada’a center in Beiteddine and 47 km from the Mohafaza center in Baabda. It spreads across 140 hectares and can be reached by two different roads:

- Deir el-Qamar- Maaser Beiteddine- Wadi el-Sit
- Aley- Shartoun- Reshmayya- Majdal M’oush- Wadi el-Sit

### Population

The number of registered inhabitants at the town’s personal status register is estimated at 1300 people, all of whom are Maronite. There are around 100 houses in Wadi el-Sit in addition to 5 commercial and artisan shops.

### Voters

In 2000, the number of voters in Wadi el-Sit was 795 of whom 417 cast their ballots. This number increased to 887 in 2005 with 517 casting their ballots. In 2009, 982 people were eligible to vote, of whom 532 headed to the ballot boxes. Voters in Wadi el-Sit are distributed among the following families:

- Maqsoud: 195 voters
- Jawhar: 120 voters
- Abi (Bou and Abou) Shahla: 110 voters
- Abi Hanna: 110 voters
- Shehwan: 66 voters
- Dargham: 54 voters
- Farah: 50 voters
- Abi Hassan: 50 voters
- Saadeh: 40 voters
- Nqoula: 37 voters
- Merhej: 35 voters
- Abi Shebli: 31 voters
- Bou Qaddaha: 20 voters
- Fransis (Greek Catholic): 10 voters
- Nakhli: 10 voters



### Local authorities

The Wadi el-Sit municipality was established by virtue of Decision No. 199 issued on February 11, 1964 by the then Minister of Interior and Municipalities, Kamal Jumblat. Wadi el-Sit’s municipal council consists of 9 members and is headed by Youssef Maqsoud. Its share in the Independent Municipal Fund in 2010 was LBP 81.3 million, up from LBP 64 million in 2009. Said Nadim Jawhar serves as Mukhtar of the town, which also has a 3-member Ikhtiyariyah body.

### Archaeological sites

Wadi el-Sit is home to ancient manuscripts inscribed in rock and dating back to the Roman era.

### Educational institutions

There aren’t any schools in Wadi el-Sit, and students attend the public and private schools of the neighboring towns.

### Economic activities

Some people in Wadi el-Sit survive on expatriate remittances, while others have jobs or work in agriculture and trade.

### Problems

The town suffered from the displacement of its residents, especially during the Mountain War in 1985, and today, despite the restoration of security, inhabitants still hesitate to return to Wadi el-Sit due to lack of economic opportunities; and they only visit on Sundays or during holidays.

### NGOs

The town is home to Wadi el-Sit’s Social Union, which was founded in 1993. ●●

# THE LEBANESE DETAINED IN SYRIA

**The term “Lebanese detainees in Syria” has become an old phrase associated with past decades. During the presence of the Syrian army in Lebanon between 1977 and 2005- with the exception of short interruptions in some areas of Beirut and Mount Lebanon during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (1982-1985)- the Syrian intelligence abducted thousands of Lebanese for several reasons: personal, political, religious, or criminal. Some of the detainees were released within days, others spent years in prison, while many were never seen again. The Syrian authorities deny they hold any Lebanese detainees while the families of those detained confirm that their loved ones are held in Syrian prisons through witness reports or letters they have received.**

This problem of missing persons and detainees has been exacerbated since May 2012 when members of the Syrian opposition abducted 11 Lebanese people near Aleppo on their way back from Iran, traveling through Turkey and Syria (two of the kidnapped were later released). This development made the plight of those detained in Syria a national cause after it had previously been an issue concerning only those who are anti-Syrian, with those who were pro-Syrian avoiding it.

The Lebanese consensus on the necessity of finding a solution to this problem- be it positive or negative- and on unmasking the fate of those abducted and detained has not yet led to any results. This cause is still prominent today, along with the psychological toll it bears on families, and the legal obstacles it puts forth.

“I demand the Lebanese government to form a ministerial committee to follow up on the hundreds of Lebanese people detained in Syrian prisons; much like the committee tasked with pursuing the case of the 11 Lebanese kidnapped around 3 months ago in Ezaz, Syria”.

(Statement by Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea- August 2012)

“If you were champions of freedom then release the detainees, and if you were demanding justice then do not oppress them. As for this attempt to coerce, it will not lead to any results”.

(Television interview with Hassan Nasrallah, Secretary General of Hezbollah- September 2012)

“The humanitarian file has been drained, and needs to be pulled out of this political bazaar. The party will not stall in determining the fate of any Lebanese citizen wherever he might be, in realization of our moral and national obligations, and without the expectation of any political gains”.

(Interview with Ghaleb Abou Zeinab, Hezbollah official in charge of the case of detained persons within the party- September 2011)

“I will strive to make the issue of the missing Lebanese one of the main clauses in the mission of the observers that the Arab League will send to Syria”.

(Statement made by Phalange party president Amin Gemayel- November 2011).

“Work should be done to solve the problem of those missing in Syria, but I am wondering why this humanitarian case was not investigated 20 years ago. It is the responsibility of whoever was in power during the past years, and I will put an effort into raising awareness and solving this issue”.

(Statement by General Michel Aoun- December 2008)

“Syria does not admit to having any Lebanese national detained within its land, and demands the release of a thousand Syrians detained in Lebanon”.

(Statement made by former minister of Justice Ibrahim Najjar after visiting Syria as part of a ministerial delegation- July 2010).

“Demanding the committee concerned with the detainees to complete the task assigned to it as soon as possible and to issue a report about its procedures would help finalize this case”.

(From the closing statement made by former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri after visiting Syria and meeting with President Assad- July 2010).

Meanwhile the cries of the families of those detained echo on: “if they are alive we want them back, and if they are dead we want their remains”.

# JANUARY 2013 HIGHLIGHTS

## ORTHODOX GATHERING PROPOSITION

- Displaced Breeh residents to return home
- Orthodox Gathering proposition between support and opposition
- Postponement of dialogue until further notice
- Sheikh Assir in Kfardebian
- Exacerbation of the Syrian refugees' crisis
- Mikati in KSA
- Attack on Minister Karami in Tripoli
- Escalatory campaign for the approval of optional civil marriage in Lebanon

### January 3

- Families of the abducted pilgrims stage a protest outside the Turkish Airlines office in downtown and end it only after the Minister of Interior promises further efforts to ensure their release.

- Former PM Fouad Seniora denies having sent the Saudi ambassador to Lebanon a letter requesting the dismissal of Grand Mufti Mohammad Rashid Qabbani as claimed by the Free Patriotic Movement.

- MP Dory Chamoun announces his candidacy for a Maronite seat in Al-Shouf Qada'a district.

- Members of Hezbollah, Amal Movement and the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) convene to discuss the electoral law.

### January 4

- On the occasion of Arbaceen (40th day after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein), Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah urges the government to start direct negotiations with the kidnappers of the Lebanese pilgrims. Nasrallah added that Turkey, Qatar and KSA have power over the fighters in Syria and are providing them with funds and weapons, stressing his opposition to closing the borders with Syria.

- The Cabinet convenes in Baabda and approves measures to assist Syrian refugees despite the opposition of FPM ministers and their request to close the borders with Syria. Minister of Interior

and Municipalities suggests constructing camps for the refugees.

- Following the meeting of the Change and Reform Bloc, General Michel Aoun reveals his willingness to comply with any electoral law granted that the President of the Republic reclaims some of his powers.

- Minister of Interior and Municipalities Marwan Charbel announces that he will run for president if there was consensus over him.

- Lebanese University contract teachers stage a sit-in at the Hadath campus demanding full-time employment.

- Dar El-Fatwa's media office issues a statement confirming that Grand Mufti Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Qabbani has no intention whatsoever of extending his term as Grand Mufti.

### January 5

- President Michel Suleiman, PM Najib Mikati and MP Walid Jumblat hold a meeting at the Presidential Palace to discuss the status quo and the electoral law.

- MP Walid Jumblat visits Cardinal Al-Rai and announces that the demolition of Beit Al-Daya'a in Breeh will pave the way for reconciliation and allow the return of Christians after 30 years of displacement.

- Families of Islamist inmates in Roumieh prison and those of the victims and detainees of Talkalakh ambush hold a sit-in in front of PM Mikati's residence in Tripoli.

### January 8

- A severe snow storm sweeps across Lebanon and floods streets and houses causing the deaths of 5 people and prompting a 2-day closure of schools on the 8th and 9th of January.

- The Phalanges and the Lebanese Forces will back the Orthodox Gathering proposition if the FPM receives the approval of its allies. Otherwise, they will opt for the 50-district. Former PM Fouad Seniora reiterates his opposition to both the Orthodox Gathering proposition and the proportionality-based one.

- Former Prime Ministers, including Fouad Seniora and current PM Najib Mikati, convene at the Grand Serail to put forward suggestions for the settlement of the Higher Islamic Council dilemma. Mikati visits Grand Mufti Qabbani later in the evening to hand him the suggestions, among which is the holding of the Council's elections next March.

- President Michel Suleiman postpones the dialogue session scheduled on the 7th of January without setting a new date.

- The Committee tasked with drafting the electoral law convenes in Bkerke and agrees to approve the Orthodox Gathering proposition.

### January 9

- The parliamentary subcommittee tasked with reaching consensus over the electoral law holds its first meeting with the majority of members approving the

Orthodox Gathering proposition, save the representatives of MP Walid Jumblat and the Future Movement.

- President Michel Suleiman tells Anbaa Online that he opposes the Orthodox Gathering proposition and will challenge it at the Constitutional Council if approved.

- Following his visit to Speaker Nabih Berri, MP Walid Jumblat reiterates his commitment to the Taif Accord and opposition to any electoral law that contradicts it.

- STL Prosecutor calls on pre-trial judge Daniel Fransen to summon 28 more witnesses, bringing the total number of witnesses to 585.

- Major General Jamil Sayyed visits Syrian President Bashar Assad and hands General Prosecutor Hatem Madi recordings that prove the involvement of MP Okab Sakr in financing and arming the Syrian opposition.

- Minister of Tourism Fadi Abboud launches 50% campaign for 50 days.

## January 10

- PM Najib Mikati chairs a Cabinet session, which concludes with the approval of LBP 3 billion for those who incurred losses due to the storm, the Ashrafieh explosion and the Bab el-Tebbaneh incidents. The Cabinet also approves the distribution of the mobile revenues on the municipalities.

- In their monthly statement, the Maronite Bishops call for the formation of a government that respects coexistence, reiterating their support of a new electoral law securing equality between Muslims and Christians.

- Cypriot President Demetris Christofias arrives in Beirut on an official visit to discuss the dispute over maritime borders.

- Future MPs of Akkar slam Grand Mufti Mohammad Rashid Qabbani describing him as a tyrannical dictator for appointing a new Mufti in Akkar.

- The storm continues and snow falls in coastal cities.

- MP Boutros Harb refuses the Orthodox Gathering proposition and the proportionality.

- Middle East Airlines signs a firm contract with Airbus for 10 aircrafts at USD 1.05 billion.

## January 11

- French appeals court grants the release of a Lebanese prisoner George Ibrahim Abdallah under the condition that he be deported from France. Abdallah who had spent 29 years in prison is likely to arrive in Lebanon on Monday, January 14, 2013.

- An explosion targets a liquor store in Sarafand.

- MP Alain Aoun boycotts the meetings of the parliamentary subcommittee debating proposals of the electoral laws, justifying that it's a waste of time as some refused to sign the minutes of the first meeting, which ended with the majority approving the proposition of the Orthodox Gathering.

- Families of the abducted pilgrims stage a sit-in in front of the Qatari embassy in Beirut, urging Qatar to intervene to secure their release. Protesters fail to break into the embassy and end their sit-in following the mediation of Interior Minister Marwan Charbel.

- March 14 MPs and Christian representatives hold a meeting at the residence of Boutros Harb and announce their rejection of the Orthodox Gathering proposition, which they believe jeopardizes the Christians and exposes Lebanon to the risk of collapse.

- MP Michel Murr highlights from Baabda his opposition to the Orthodox proposition.

- General Michel Aoun holds a press conference at his residence in Rabieh in the presence of Telecommunications Minister Nicolas Sehnaoui and Head of the Finance and Budget Parliamentary Committee Ibrahim Kanaan, to tackle a project suggesting the distribution of the mobile revenues standing at USD 1.2 billion to municipalities.

## January 12

- Cardinal Al-Rai chairs a meeting in Bkerke in the presence of former President Amine Gemayel, General Michel Aoun

and MP Suleiman Frangieh to discuss the electoral law. The statement issued after the meeting underlines the urgency of reaching consensus over a law that secures fair representation to all parties. LF leader Samir Geagea was absent due to security reasons.

- Michel Eddeh points out that 80% of the Maronite are abroad during the launching of the Maronite Academy.

- MP Nadim Gemayel slams the Orthodox Gathering proposition as being made by Rustom Ghazaleh, which bothers MP Sami Gemayel.

- A force of the Lebanese Army Intelligence breaks into the premises of the Lebanese University and shuts down the Cafeteria in a bid to curb the encroachments.

## January 14

- Advocates of Sheikh Ahmad Assir protest across Saida against the domination of weapons.

- Court releases Maher El-Meqdad on LBP 12 million bail.

- Future Movement MPs report that the Orthodox Gathering proposition lays the foundation for a political May 7.

- Minister of Energy and Water Gebran Bassil attacks the Future Movement and the Christian sponsors of treason who cover up all the schemes targeting the Christians, stressing that the Orthodox Gathering proposition is the sole option of the Free Patriotic Movement.

- Protesters from the Phalanges Party and the National Liberal Party demonstrate outside the Syrian Embassy in Baabda, calling for the expulsion of the Syrian ambassador.

## January 15

- The parliamentary subcommittee discussing proposals of electoral laws finishes its first round of talks and files its report to Speaker Berri with a majority of 6 votes for the Orthodox Gathering proposition and 2 against it.

- French Minister of Interior delays the release of George Ibrahim Abdallah until January 28, 2013,

prompting Abdallah's supporters stage a sit-in near the French Embassy in Beirut in protest of the decision.

- Military Investigation Judge of Beirut Riad Abou Ghaida summons Miled Kfoury to hear his testimony.

## January 16

- President Michel Suleiman reiterates during his address to the diplomatic corps the need to find a solution for the growing numbers of Syrian refugees and calls on the Cabinet to endorse a draft electoral law for the 2013, including amendments if need be.

- MP Akram Chehayeb suggests the alteration of the electoral system by approving the formation of a senate on sectarian basis and the election of non-sectarian Parliament, a proposition opposed by Alian Aoun, George Adwan and Sami Gemayel.

- Head of the Lebanese Forces executive committee Sami Geagea admits that the Orthodox Gathering proposition is far from perfect, but calls on its adversaries to come up with a better alternative.

- General Michel Aoun announces on OTV his adherence to the Orthodox Gathering proposition, accusing Jumblat of being an isolationist and daring him to reveal the funds paid to the displaced.

## January 17

- A number of MPs quote Speaker Nabih Berri saying that the Orthodox Gathering proposition buried the 1960 law, and we are seeking a consensual law.

- MP Walid Jumblat heads for Moscow on an official visit to discuss the situation in the region and in Syria particularly.

## January 18

- The Cabinet convenes at the Presidential Palace and approves the transfer of LBP 600 million credit to the budget of the Interior Ministry for the electoral process. It also calls for consistency in discussing the amendment of the law that grants Lebanese women the right to pass down their nationality to their children and foreign husbands.

- Speaker Nabih Berri addresses the consulate corps stressing that he is not against the Orthodox Gathering proposition and he will continue to push towards consensus.

- Minister of Interior and Municipalities Marwan Charbel returns from Doha accompanied by the Director General of General Security Abbas Ibrahim and stresses that Qatar is concerned about the Lebanese pilgrims kidnapped in Syria and has appointed a security officer to follow up on this file.

## January 19

- The convoy of Sports and Youth Minister Faisal Karami comes under attack and gunfire results in the injury of 8 people. Former PM Omar Karami dismisses the attack on his son as being a "mistake" by armed Islamists.

- Accompanied with the Lebanese Army Commander, President Michel Suleiman inspects UNIFIL troops in Naqoura and reiterates during his speech the need to reach an electoral law that reflects national unity instead of reinforcing sectarian divides.

- Speaker Nabih Berri receives former PM Fouad Seniora and a Future Movement delegation to discuss the electoral law.

- MP Walid Jumblat continues his visit to Russia and meets Russian Foreign Secretary S.V. Lavrov, stressing that the government won't collapse and dialogue is inevitable.

- Nidal Darwish and Khoulood Sekkarieh announce that they had wed in a civil ceremony after having removed their sects from their respective IDs according to Decision No. 60 issued by the French governor in 1936. The couple is awaiting registration of their marriage, but the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities is not responding positively.

## January 21

- President Michel Suleiman leaves for Moscow following an official invitation by the Orthodox Patriarchy.

- A ministerial delegation chaired

by PM Najib Mikati arrives in KSA to participate in the Arab Economic Summit. Mikati holds meetings with the Arab League Secretary General and the Palestinian President.

- MP Boutros Harab suggests on Al-Jadeed TV an electoral law implying the election of 99 MPs by plurality and 29 by proportionality.

- Protesters hurl eggs and tomatoes at the French Embassy in Beirut in demand of the release of George Ibrahim Abdallah.

## January 22

- President Michel Suleiman receives the Orthodox People's Unity Award in Moscow.

- On the sidelines of the Arab Economic Summit, PM Najib Mikati holds a series of meetings with the King of Jordan, the Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs Saud Al-Faisal and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdul Aziz Abdallah.

- MP Marwan Hamadeh accuses Al-Akhbar's Editor-In-Chief of threatening him.

- Guards at the Roumieh prison thwart an attempted escape of 60 Fatah Al-Islam inmates.

- Russia decides to evacuate its citizens from Syria through Beirut's international airport.

- Speaker Nabih Berri calls for electing Senate and Parliament at the same time with the former on non-sectarian basis and the latter on sectarian one.

## January 23

- PM Najib Mikati returns to Lebanon after having met Saudi Crown Prince Salman Bin Abdul-Aziz in Riyadh, a move suggesting Saudi openness towards Mikati.

- Minister of Interior and Municipalities Marwan Charbel says that failure to approve an electoral law before the end of February will translate into a 3 to 5 month delay in the elections.

- The Cabinet convenes at the Grand Serail and approves measures to promote security in Tripoli. PM Mikati reiterates that elections will take place as scheduled

stressing that the civil marriage issue is not on the table at the moment.

- 73 Russian nationals leave Syria through Beirut's international airport aboard aircrafts provided by the Russian government.

### January 24

- President Michel Suleiman returns to Lebanon after having met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

- The parliamentary subcommittee debating the electoral law ends its meetings without reaching consensus.

- The Union Coordination Committee stages a demonstration demanding the referral of the salary scale to Parliament and warns of escalatory steps and closure of public institutions in February.

- PM Najib Mikati heads to Switzerland to participate in the World Economic Forum Meeting 2013 in Davos.

### January 26

- Together with around 300 proponents, Sheikh Ahmad Assir heads up to Faraya to ski and enjoy the snow during the Prophet's birthday holiday, prompting the protest of Kfardebian's residents who block the road to prevent him from arriving at the resort. The Internal Security Forces open the road later and Assir arrives at Faraya's ski area where he holds prayers.

- Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah announces that he supports the proportionality-based electoral law that adopts Lebanon as one district or the government proposition. Nasrallah adds that Hezbollah will back the Orthodox Gathering proposition if put to vote stressing that media and money are more dangerous than weapons.

- A number of Muslim religious scholars condemn civil marriage assuring that it shall not be approved, as long as Muslims are present in Lebanon.

### January 28

- Former PM Fouad Seniora reveals that the Future Movement will come up with a new electoral proposition that addresses the concerns of all

parties, highlighting that the Orthodox Gathering proposition divides the country and violates the constitution.

- Prayers are held in Aley for Syrian First Lieutenant Khaldoun Zeineddine who was killed in fight against the Syrian Army. MP Wiam Wahhab calls for punishing the Druze Spiritual Leader Sheikh Naim Hassan for attending the memorial service.

### January 29

- A car bomb explodes in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut.

- Protesters express anger over the postponement of the appeal session related to the release of George Ibrahim Abdallah.

- The Phalanges and the Lebanese Forces announce that they will attend the meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committees, while the Future Movement is still undecided whether or not to participate.

- French President Francois Hollande receives Walid Jumblat in France and the latter reiterates the need for stability and dialogue.

- Former PM Saad Hariri holds a meeting with former President Amin Gemayyel in France.

- Military Investigation Judge of Beirut Riad Abou Ghaida refrains from hearing the testimony of Miled Kfoury for failure to find him.

- Grand Mufti Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Qabbani states that any Muslim with legal or executive authority who legalizes civil marriage is deemed an apostate and an outcast from Islam.

- MP Sami Gemayel reiterates his opposition to delaying the elections.

### January 30

- Debate heats up between President Michel Suleiman and PM Najib Mikati over civil marriage during a Cabinet session held at the Presidential Palace. The Cabinet postpones the formation of the electoral supervisory committee and decides to extend the contracts of the two mobile operators.

- Hariri and Jumblat reiterate their commitment to the Taif Accord and opposition to the Orthodox Gathering proposition from France.

- The Future Movement continues to boycott government activities, refusing to take part in the meeting of the Joint Parliamentary Committees.

### January 31

- PM Najib Mikati arrives in Turkey for an official visit and holds meetings with Turkish officials to discuss the issue of the Lebanese pilgrims abducted in Syria.

- President Michel Suleiman attends a donor-conference in Kuwait aimed at collecting funds for the Syrian refugees and demands a grant of USD 375 million so that Lebanon can meet the growing needs of the Syrian refugees.

- The session of the Joint Parliamentary Committees chaired by Nabih Berri decides to extend the work of the electoral subcommittee for 15 non-renewable days.

- French President Francois Hollande receives former Lebanese President Amine Gemayel.

- Former PM Saad Hariri and Speaker Nabih Berri examine the status quo during a phone conversation.

### February 1

- Former PM Saad Hariri tells Kalam El-Nass that he supports civil marriage but he, personally wouldn't marry in a civil ceremony, criticizing the Grand Mufti for his Fatwa. Hariri suggests the establishment of a senate and the preservation of Parliament on sectarian basis, reiterating his opposition to the Orthodox Gathering proposition.

- The Higher Shia'a Islamic Council challenges civil marriage for moral, national and religious considerations.

- The "Basmat Watan" show refrains from airing a sketch on Sheikh Ahmad Assir following threats sent to LBC.

- Minister of Energy and Water Gebran Bassil announces the arrival of the first Turkish power ship in one week. ●

# THIS MONTH IN HISTORY- LEBANON

## ASSASSINATION OF KAMAL JUMBLAT ON MARCH 16, 1977: ACCUSATIONS POINTED AT SYRIA

**March 16, 1977 marked the date of an appalling security event that shook Lebanon: the assassination of MP Kamal Jumblat, the Head of the Progressive Socialist Party, one of the main pillars of politics in Lebanon. All the facts and findings that have been revealed thus far point an accusing finger at Syria, which was known for its hostility towards Jumblat. The son of Kamal Jumblat, Walid Jumblat, also held Syria accountable for the killing of his father, covertly during the presence of the Syrian troops in Lebanon, and more openly after their withdrawal in April 2005.**

### Facts

On March 16, 1977, Kamal Jumblat was on his way to Aley, accompanied by his driver Hafez Ghoussaini and ISF corporal Fawzi Chdid, who was sitting in the back seat. A Pontiac car bearing an Iraqi license plate was lurking at the bend in Deir Dourit in wait for Kamal Jumblat, who was traveling from Baakline to Beirut. The moment Jumblat arrived in Deir Dourit, four gunmen got out of the Pontiac and forced the driver and bodyguard out, thrusting them into the Pontiac. Then, two of the gunmen hopped into Jumblat's car and drove off. As they were driving, the car stopped suddenly, and the Pontiac, which was right behind it, rammed into its rear. Jumblat was shot dead in his car, and his driver and bodyguard were dragged out of the Pontiac, only to encounter a similar fate. The gunmen hurried back into their car to flee the crime scene, but the Pontiac crashed into an earthen barrier, destroying the car. The gunmen had to leave the car and forcefully stopped a Fiat that happened to be driving down the road, commanding the driver, Salim Hadda, to drop them at the Saloumi roundabout in Sin el-Fil. Retired Brigadier General Issam Abou Zaki says that the Pontiac had a bizarre story behind it. On January 8, 1977, the Beirut port customs confiscated 79 kilograms of cannabis hidden in a Pontiac. A judicial order commanded the arrest of the car passengers, but when an ISF patrol came to seize the car, the passengers and the drugs, a Syrian checkpoint thwarted its mission and the car was sent back to Syria. Later, Major Ibrahim Houeiji facilitated its re-entry to Lebanon with an Iraqi license plate no. 72719, registered under the name of Hussein Jaafar Kazem Jawad. Eye witnesses reported having seen the car driving in the opposite direction of traffic in Hamra, adding that when stopped by a traffic cop, the gunmen

in the car responded: "we are intelligence agents. Clear out the way." Later investigations revealed that the four gunmen checked in at the Lorenzo Mozart Hotel in Hamra and that two of them registered their names as Hussein Jaafar Kazem Jawad and Saher Mahmoud Joubeli.

In Antoine Basbous and Enny Lauren's *Secret Wars in Lebanon* published in 1988, there is reference to the involvement of the Syrian intelligence officer Ibrahim Houeiji in the assassination of Jumblat, noting that Houeiji became the Head of the Syrian Air Force Intelligence.

Igor Timoviev highlights in his book *Kamal Jumblat, the Man and the Legend* published in 2000, the attempts held between the Egyptians and Palestinians to ensure the transfer of Kamal Jumblat to Egypt. However, when Mohsen Daloul called the Egyptian embassy in Beirut to inquire about the security guarantees that would be provided for Jumblat, he learned that the embassy was not given any instructions in that respect, which lead Jumblat to opt for staying in Lebanon and thus meeting his destiny. Timoviev added: "although the identity of Jumblat's assassins was not officially disclosed, and none of the assailants was brought to justice, there is a widespread belief that the crime wouldn't have occurred if it weren't for the frequent Syrian insinuations suggesting that the end of Jumblat was approaching."

## THE JUMBLATS AND POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS

Numerous were the political figures of the Jumblat family who fell victims to assassination or imprisonment, which became inherent features in the family's history. Despite the hostilities they faced, the Jumblats remained at the forefront of the political life and persisted in their political and national activism, refusing to forfeit their role and status. The assassination saga started with Bashir Jumblat, and might not stop with the killing of Kamal Jumblat.



Kamal Jumblat

**Sheikh Bashir Jumblat**, who was also known as Bashir Bin Qassem Bin Ali Bin Rabah Bin Jumblat (Jumblat Bin Said was the first to move from Turkey to Lebanon in 1607), entered into disputes that were later aggravated into hostilities with Emir Bashir al-Shihabi II, after a 10-year alliance that put Mukhtara, Jumblat's stronghold, at the core of the decision making centers in Mount Lebanon. The Wali of Akka, Ahmad Basha, contributed to reinforcing the fissures between Jumblat and al-Shihabi, but the two remained united to curb the expansion of Basha's power. The death of Ahmad Basha signaled the first spark of tension between them, as Emir Bashir believed that the elimination of Jumblat would foster his presence as the sole and absolute ruler of Mount Lebanon especially that, according to him, the Chouf area had no room for two Bashirs. January 31, 1825 marked the final blow for Bashir Jumblat who was defeated and fled to Akka. But Emir Bashir turned to Mohammad Ali Basha, the Wali of Egypt, and persuaded him to execute Jumblat, which occurred on October 11, 1825.

**Said Jumblat**, son of Bashir Jumblat, tried to regain the influence of his father. He was accused of igniting conflicts between the Druze and the Maronite and was sentenced to life in prison. He died in the prison's

hospital on May 11, 1861, leaving his two sons, Nassib and Najib, under custody of his wife Badr Amineddine who played a significant role to maintain the position of Jumblat.

**Fouad Jumblat**, son of Najib Jumblat who died at 34, had another brother called Ali and was appointed by the French authority as Qa'imaqam of the Shouf region in 1919. Jumblat's Druze opponents championed the Syrian revolution, while he was an advocate of the French, which translated into disputes and divides that flared up tension in Mount Lebanon. After the killing of the Christian pro-French Mukhtar of Za'arouriyeh in Wadi Ainbal by supporters of Shakib Wahhab, an ally of the Syrian revolution, Fouad Jumblat headed with the police commander Youssef Kesbar on August 6, 1921, to the crime scene to chase down the assailants. However, Wahhab's men ambushed and shot him in the chest, he fell to the ground realizing that he would not make it out of there alive. And so, he died at the age of 36, entrusting his wife, Nazira Jumblat, 32, with the upbringing of his two children, Kamal and Linda. Nazira Jumblat played an influential role in the history of Lebanon, turning Mukhtara to a pivotal political center during that era. The assassination of Fouad Jumblat was deemed the first political assassination in the history of modern Lebanon. As for Shakib Wahhab, he fled to Syria, denying all claims accusing him of purposefully killing Jumblat. He argued that the police chief was the intended target, but the similarities between his horse and that of Jumblat, lead to shooting the latter instead. Wahhab came back to Chouf and passed away in 1980.

**Assassination attempt of Walid Jumblat:** Walid Jumblat survived a car bomb in 1983 in Al-Sane'e in Beirut, unlike his bodyguard Jamal Saab who died in the attack. Rumors circulated that Asaad Chaftari, a close associate of Elie Hobeika and a senior intelligence official of the Lebanese Forces. Chaftari, was behind this attempt. ●

# THIS MONTH IN HISTORY- ARAB WORLD

## ISRAEL AND EGYPT SIGN PEACE TREATY IN MARCH 1979

March 26, 1979 marked a turning point in the historical relations between Egypt and Israel. After three decades of war, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli PM Menahem Begin signed in the White House a peace deal brokered by the then American President Jimmy Carter.



Under the treaty, which was first of its kind between Israel and an Arab country, the two nations agreed to end the state of war that had been dragging since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and to establish diplomatic and commercial ties, provided that Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula, which it had seized from Egypt during the Six Day War in 1967. This agreement emerged in the wake of the Camp David Accords signed earlier in September 1978 and outlining the framework for the peace treaty and for the establishment of an autonomous self-governing authority in the West Bank and the Gaza strip.

It is noteworthy that President Sadat and PM Begin were jointly awarded the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts in forging the Camp David Accords. However, Sadat's rapprochement with the Israelis wasn't greeted with as much acclaim in the Arab world. A strike was held in the West Bank in protest of the treaty and angry demonstrators took to the streets and stormed the Egyptian embassy in Kuwait, deeming the settlement a betrayal of the Arab cause. Not only did Sadat lose his popularity for his decision to shake hands with Israel, but also his life as he was assassinated by extremist Islamists on October 6, 1981 during the annual victory parade held in Cairo to celebrate Egypt's crossing of the Suez Canal. Egypt's membership in the Arab League was also suspended and wasn't reinstated until 1989.

Despite having been able to withstand many challenges throughout the years, the Israeli-Egyptian Peace treaty has been navigating risky waters recently, especially following the fall of Hosni Mubarak, Israel's staunchest ally in the Arab region. On a relevant note, Egypt terminated in April 2012 its long-term gas supply deal with Israel, a move that has been sought for long by the Egyptian opposition during Mubarak's term. Israelis slammed the termination of the gas deal as a violation of the economic agreement of the Camp David Accords. Some fear that this move might start paving the way for tense relations between the two countries.

Jordan followed in Egypt's footsteps, thus becoming the second country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1994. ●



## SYRIAN CRISIS SPILLS OVER INTO THE ECONOMY

**Syria is well into its second year of uprisings against its persistent regime, and the country's economy, which was facing a downturn before the uprising started, seems to be about to collapse. A serious drought had seriously damaged the agricultural sector before the current violence/uprising started. Today, the unstable security situation, along with the disappearance of tourism altogether has devastated the economy and threatens to extend into neighboring countries. With the regime under close scrutiny from its people and the international community, the direction in which it will steer the economy will be a crucial component of its future.**

It is important to keep in mind that information on the state of the Syrian economy remains hard to attain since the regime still retains control over what data on the economy is released. However, estimates show that for the year 2011, the GDP growth rate for the country was at -2%. For 2012, the World Bank estimated this to decline by another 6.4%. In addition, the Syrian pound has lost 51.06% of its value. All this comes with a diminishing monetary reserve that has been cut in half. To back this up, the Central Bank has been supporting the pound with its reserves of hard currency and increasing interest rates on local currency deposits. This is expected to encourage people to keep their money in local banks and to continue using the Syrian currency.

Apart from the numbers and the general figures, the economic situation is translating to tangible hardships felt by the Syrian people. After increased investment in tourism, and total revenue of 8 billion dollars from this sector alone in 2010, tourist arrivals decreased by 41% in 2011, and a further decrease of 25% is expected for 2012 (marketresearch.com). There is a huge shortage of fuel across the country, and consequently, electricity is unavailable for hours every day. Even in the capital Damascus, residents are complaining of a lack of power affecting the pace of their lives. Moreover, the prices of food items have reached new heights with the rate of inflation reaching 7% in 2011. The domestic situation is not alone in crippling the economy; sanctions imposed by the international community are also expected to intensify the situation.

The political crisis has caused great economic implications and their scope is spreading to Syria's neighbors. Iraq and Lebanon are two of its most important trading partners. In both directions, the movement of imports and exports has decreased significantly. In the case of Iraq, violence on the Syrian border disrupts the country's only access to Mediterranean ports. In Lebanon, a substantial amount of the country's agricultural supplies are imported from Syria. While the damage to its economy was of course

not as serious, Lebanon's GDP growth still recorded a poor 2% in 2011. Numbers for 2012 remain ambiguous with estimates ranging from 1% to 3%.

In addition to inhibiting the trade between Syria and Lebanon, the crisis has decreased the assets of Lebanese banks' affiliates in Syria by 400 million dollars (according to Lebanon This Week, a Byblos Bank report published November 12th, 2012). This is expected to keep rising with the continuous conflict. Lebanese banks are very active in Syria, but have been adhering to international sanctions. This will exacerbate their loss as more assets are frozen.

Apart from the banking sector, tourism in Lebanon has also been sharing a piece of the situation in Syria. According to the Lebanon This Week report mentioned above, the number of tourists for the first 10 months of 2012 decreased by 15.8% from the same period the year before. Expectedly, the number of travelers coming into Lebanon by land has severely shrunk. On the other hand, the continuous entry of Syrian refugees into the country is pressuring the Lebanese state to alter the management of its resources to accommodate for this change.

This far on into the political and economic developments of Syria, basic items that are generally consumed by lower income families have had their prices controlled by the government. This however does not solve anything since most of these price ceilings have been imposed at the expense of foreign currency reserves, which, in accordance with the monetary reserve have been declining as well. The government has also issued more currency in order to enhance liquidity. This will prove counterproductive, as the devaluation of the Syrian lira to 71 pounds per US dollar (previously at 47 pounds) will only cause more inflation. With the regime's current standing being so closely linked to its responsiveness to the people, a sound economic policy would be a turning point. But with the crisis expanding well beyond the political, this might just be too late. ●

## IRAQI ECONOMY

Post-war Iraq still captures media attention for violence and political turmoil as the country recovers from years of invasion. But another of its faces is now emerging. The country with the 4th largest reserve of oil in the world today is now able to realize its potential among the biggest oil producing countries. It has been showing a steady growth in the production of crude oil, and is producing more than 3 million barrels a day. This number is expected to reach 6 million barrels a day by 2015. But the sector that has for years been hindered by the country's politics is still subject to internal struggles between the central government and the provincial governments, corruption, and the lack of an infrastructure that is able to accommodate its growth.

The table below details the growth in the production of crude oil in Iraq since 2007. The capacities of refineries and local oil consumption have also exhibited a steady increase. The information retrieved from the latest annual report by the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (opec.org) is presented below.

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Crude Oil Production	2558.0	2358.0	2336.0	2280.5	2035.2
Installed Refining Capacity	860.0	858.0	789.0	597.0	597.0
Oil Consumption	590.8	538.5	495.4	417.1	344.6
Crude Oil Exports	2166	1890	1960	1855	1643

\*Numbers are in thousands of barrels/day

After years of sanctions and the US invasion that followed, the oil sector finally began to flourish in 2009. With an almost complete destruction of the private sector during the war years, oil came as the first resort that would restore the economy. In 2011, it accounted for as much as two-thirds of Iraq's GDP. 90% of the government's revenues is a product of the oil sector. This has made way for increased spending on infrastructure and development projects. Apart from the reconstruction of a war-torn country, this is critical for further expanding the oil industry. The revenues made from oil production are then generated into infrastructure, which in turn allows for more growth in the oil sector.

However, being that Iraq is at a juncture of state consolidation after years of a power vacuum, corruption remains rampant. This is exemplified in exaggerated salaries for public employees, cronyism, and delays in bureaucratic procedures and legislation. Should this prevail it is expected to slow down infrastructure development and therefore inhibit the thriving oil sector. Officials trying to keep the government employee salaries as is have hindered their legislation for regulation for months. Moreover, the fragile state of the federal government has kept it from any agreement on a national oil law.

The differences between Nouri el Maliki's central government and the aspirations of regional governments were most recently demonstrated when the autonomous Kurdish region began exporting oil to Turkey. The central government responded by prohibiting the exportation of oil resources by regional governments without acquiring consent from Baghdad first. The reason for the government's reaction is the absence of an agreement over the division of profits made from exporting oil. Prime Minister Maliki has expressed concerns over how the oil policies of the Kurdish region can inspire an inclination towards greater autonomy in other provinces of the country as well.

The government's attempt to exert its authority over the oil sector comes at a time when the federal system remains fractured. The Ministry of Oil has announced that it will confiscate any oil or gas taken out of the country without its permission. This is likely to increase already existing tensions between the federal government and regional governments. Thus the oil industry also becomes a factor of destabilization. Until a nationwide law that governs its use is reached, oil will continue to play both a critical role in the development of post-war Iraq. Not only will it contribute to economic growth, but also to the formation of this new political settlement. ●●

## A SPRING NOT SO ROSY FOR WOMEN

**The time when Arab women were to arrive at a critical landmark in their plight for equality was thought to be near when uprisings calling for change in the political order moved across the Arab world. Since women make up half of the population, any developments of the political sphere need to incorporate improvements to their status. In the countries of the ‘Arab Spring’, new governments seem to be pulling women’s rights in the opposite direction. While women have grown more outspoken and conscious of their status, this status may very well be worse off in the aftermath of these revolutions. If democracy cannot be achieved at the social and cultural level, the democratization process as a whole will be delusive.**

The main political change that has occurred is the voting in of new governments in countries that were previously authoritarian states. But on the other hand, these governments with Islamist majorities seem to be advancing new forms of social conservatism. The potential return to Islamic law has made women’s rights activists concerned with how this could change their way of life. In Egypt, after the fall of Mubarak, the military decided to remove the 64-seat parliamentary quota that was reserved for women. Consequently, today they only make up 2% of parliament representatives. The new parliament, still debating the return to Sharia, has even discussed amending the legal age of marriage from 18 to 14.

Tunisia is the Arab country where women enjoy the most comprehensive laws protecting their rights. In light of the new Islamist majority in parliament, the October 24 Front was established by activists to safeguard these legal guarantees. The Al-Nahda party has repeatedly ensured that they will not create a burden in the face of women’s achievements. They also realize that to keep their tourism sector functioning, they have to remain protective of human and women’s rights. So far, it has not made any initiatives towards including Sharia in the constitution.

The strength of Tunisia’s civil society is not representative of its counterparts in other Arab countries. For this reason, new state actors can have a great effect on the way things are administered. Though much has changed, the patriarchal values of our society are still very constricting of women. An important factor to consider in this equation is that much of women’s rights activism in the Arab world had been connected to the regimes that are being ousted.

Important initiatives were made by the first ladies in previous or current regimes. Both Asma al-Assad and Queen Rania of Jordan have been very active in promoting the development of women’s rights. Leila Ben Ali, Tunisia’s former first lady, was president of the Arab Women Organization. In Egypt, Suzanne Mubarak ran women’s rights NGOs and was very active in pushing for legislation that protects women, most notably banning the practice of female genital mutilation. This may make the issue of gender equality seem closely allied with the practices of these regimes- regimes which are now stigmatized and shunned by their populations. It is not surprising then that new Islamist governments may find it in their favor to abort the advances made under previous regimes.

While women were prominent participants in the protests that took place from Tunisia to Yemen, they might not reap any benefits from their activism. Female representation in post Arab spring parliaments has been minimal. It is feared that the status of women is at a start of a decline in the face of a rising political ideology that might yield a more conservative social system. The importance of social democracy should not be undermined. If new democratically elected governments bring in the rule of Sharia, a field mostly covered by male scholars, this does not have to be exclusive of women’s rights. This logic can only be developed through better education and an enhanced knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence among women in order to bring new interpretations of Islam into the political sphere. ●

# REAL ESTATE PRICES- JANUARY 2013

Lebanon's real estate market picked up slightly in January 2013, compared to the trend that had prevailed in the previous month. The housing market made evident progress with more sales involving apartments between USD 250 000 and USD 750 000. Less momentum was registered in property transactions due to the high prices of land and the absence of new projects, which await developments in Lebanon and Syria.

Prices maintained stable levels and are likely to increase should there be greater demand following the resumption of housing loan activity.

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the prices of some estates and apartments sold in January 2013.

Prices of some estates sold in January 2013			Table 1
Region	Area m <sup>2</sup>	Price (USD)	USD/m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Beirut</b>			
Ramlet Al-Bayda	1,600	12,800,000	8,000
<b>Baabda</b>			
Louaizi	1,100	1,650,000	1,500
Yarzi	1,000	2,000,000	2,000
Hazmieh (Mar Taqla)	1,200	2,220,000	1,850
<b>Matn</b>			
Antelias	2,300	5,750,000	2,500
Beit Meri	800	800,000	1,000
Jal El-Dib	2,000	3,000,000	1,500
<b>Aley</b>			
Aramoun	1,100	550,000	500
Ain Dara	4,000	400,000	100
Khaldeh	1,400	1,400,000	1,000
<b>Kessrouan</b>			
Ballouneh	900	585,000	650
Kfardebian	1,100	231,000	210
Ajaltoun	1,000	350,000	350

Source: Information International- January 2013

Prices of some apartments sold in January 2013			Table 2
Region	Area m <sup>2</sup>	Price (USD)	USD/m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Beirut</b>			
Ashrafieh- Rizk	160	480,000	3,000
Sodeco	220	528,000	2,400
Geitawi	150	315,000	2,100
Mar Elias	200	600,000	3,000
Bourj Abou Haidar	100	200,000	2,000
Sanaye'e	220	704,000	3,200
Tallet El-Khayyat	150	600,000	4,000
<b>Baabda</b>			
Hadath- Saint Thérèse	200	380,000	1,900
Ain Remmaneh	150	210,000	1,400
Brazilia	200	400,000	2,000
Mar Taqla	250	500,000	2,000
<b>Matn</b>			
Bourj Hammoud	100	100,000	1,000
Mansourieh	150	210,000	1,700
Beit Meri	220	396,000	1,800
Sin El-Fil (Horsh tabet)	200	370,000	1,850
Broummana	330	825,000	2,500
<b>Aley</b>			
Aramoun	120	132,000	1,100
Doha Hills	250	600,000	2,400
Bshamoun (Yahoudieh)	180	252,000	1,400
Doha Aramoun	190	285,000	1,500
<b>Kessrouan</b>			
Adma	160	272,000	1,700
Adoniss	120	156,000	1,300
Haret Sakhr	170	204,000	1,200
Sahel Alma	130	130,000	1,000

Source: Information International- January 2013

# PRICES OF 100 FOOD PRODUCTS

## JANUARY 2013

Of the 100 food products we investigate every month, 60 maintained stable prices, 3 registered lower prices and a slight increase was registered in the prices of the remaining 29 items. This trend comes as no surprise at the beginning of the year, when prices are likely to remain unchanged due to decline in consumption on the one hand, and to forecast future trends on the other. Meat and cereals ranked first among the higher priced items with the former increasing by 4.5% to 15.3% and the latter by 5% to 20.6%.

Table 1 shows the prices of 100 food products in January 2013 compared to december 2012.

Prices of 100 food products in January 2013 compared to December 2012 (in LBP)				Table 1
Item and Brand	Prices beginning of January 2013	Prices end of December 2012	% of price change	
<b>Oil</b>				
Afia corn oil (3.5 liters)	17,450	17,450	0	
Mazola corn oil (3.5 liters)	17,500	17,500	0	
Mazola corn oil (1.8 liters)	9,250	9,450	2.1 +	
Slim corn oil (2 liters)	8,000	8,250	3.1 +	
Wesson corn oil (2 liters)	9,000	9,000	0	
Ghandour soya oil (3.8 liters)	17,000	17,000	0	
Alfa corn oil (4 liters)	14,500	14,500	0	
Al-Wadi olive oil (1/2 liters)	6,450	6,450	0	
<b>Ketchup and Sauces</b>				
Libby's Ketchup (567 g)	2,250	2,250	0	
Extra Ketchup (340 g)	1,550	1,650	6.4 +	
Extra Ketchup (2.2 kg)	5,500	5,500	0	
Dolly's Mayonnaise (500 ml)	4,000	4,500	12.5 +	
Al-Wadi Mayonnaise (500 ml)	3,500	3,750	7.1 +	
Al-Bsat Tahina (900 g)	7,450	7,450	0	
Al-Bsat Tahina (450 g)	3,900	4,000	2.5 +	
Taos tomato sauce (70 g)	730	745	2 +	
Taos tomato sauce (425 g)	3,200	3,200	0	
Tala tomato sauce (675 g)	3,300	3,300	0	

Prices of 100 food products in January 2013 compared to December 2012 (in LBP)				Table 1
Item and Brand	Prices beginning of January 2013	Prices end of December 2012	% of price change	
<b>Dairy Products</b>				
Candia full cream milk (1 liter)	2,600	2,600	0	
Candia full cream yoghurt (1 kg)	3,000	3,250	8.4 +	
Bonjus labneh (1 kg)	5,000	5,000	0	
Taanayel labneh (500 g)	5,700	5,800	1.7 +	
Candia labneh (500 g)	5,150	5,300	2.9 +	
Taanayel yoghurt (1 kg)	3,750	3,750	0	
Smeds cheese (400 g)	4,850	4,850	0	
Picon cheese (360 g)	3,900	3,900	0	
Picon cheese (160 g)	1,975	1,975	0	
Double-crème cheese (1 kg)	11,000	11,000	0	
Fresh country cheese (1 kg)	11,500	11,500	0	
Kashkawan cheese (1 kg)	13,500	16,100	19.2 +	
Lurpak butter (200 g)	2,750	2,750	0	
Tatra butter (200 g)	2,600	2,750	5.7 +	
Al-Malaaqtain margarine (2 kg)	9,450	9,750	3.2 +	
Al-Baqara al-Haloub margarine (2 kg)	35,000	35,000	0	
Vegetaline margarine (2 kg)	18,900	18,900	0	
Nido full cream milk (bag) (2,250 g)	21,850	21,850	0	
Nido full cream milk (bag) (2,500 g)	26,250	26,250	0	
Tatra full cream milk (1,800 g)	20,500	20,500	0	
<b>Cereals</b>				
Khater white lentils (1 kg)	3,750	3,750	0	
Khater chick-peas (1 kg)	3,750	3,750	0	
Khater beans (1 kg)	2,000	2,000	0	
Peeled wheat (1 kg)	2,000	2,100	5 +	
Pineal Lima Bean (1 kg)	3,750	4,000	6.7 +	
Brown Fine Burgul (1 kg)	1,750	2,000	14.3 +	

**Prices of 100 food products in January 2013 compared to December 2012 (in LBP)** Table 1

Item and Brand	Prices beginning of January 2013	Prices end of December 2012	% of price change
Egyptian rice (1 kg)	1,790	2,000	11.7 +
American rice (1 kg)	1,750	1,750	0
Italian rice (1 kg)	2,350	2,350	0
Al-wadi Hommos Tahina (380 g)	1,500	1,500	0
Chtoura Hommos Tahina (380 g)	1,500	1,500	0
California Gardens beans (450 g)	1,500	1,500	0
Al-Wadi beans (450 g)	1,200	1,200	0
Chtoura beans (480 g)	1,250	1,400	12 +
Libby's corn (340 g)	1,450	1,750	20.6 +
<b>Pasta</b>			
Barilla spaghetti (500 g)	2,250	2,250	0
Antonio Amato spaghetti (500 g)	2,200	2,200	0
Monte spaghetti (500 g)	2,300	2,300	0
Sugar (2 kg)	3,200	3,200	0
Al-Ousra sugar (5 kg)	7,500	7,500	0
Salt (700 g)	500	500	0
Box of salt (738 g)	1,500	1,650	10 +
<b>Meat, Fish and Eggs</b>			
Zwan chicken (200 g)	2,550	2,550	0
Zwan beef (200 g)	2,500	2,500	0
Luncheon meat beef (198 g)	2,100	2,100	0
Al-Mona chicken (200 g)	2,000	2,000	0
Al-Taghzia beef (200 g)	1,950	2,000	2.5 +
Al-Taghzia chicken (200 g)	2,000	2,000	0
Geisha sardine (125 g)	1,500	1,500	0
Deli sardine (125 g)	1,250	1,250	0
Milo sardine (125 g)	1,400	1,400	0
Geisha tuna (200 g)	3,000	3,000	0
White Bell tuna (200 g)	3,100	3,100	0
White Diamond tuna (200 g)	3,000	3,000	0
Skipper tuna (185 g)	2,850	2,950	3.5 +

**Prices of 100 food products in January 2013 compared to December 2012 (in LBP)** Table 1

Item and Brand	Prices beginning of January 2013	Prices end of December 2012	% of price change
Eggs (30 eggs)	8,000	8,500	6.3 +
Beef (1 kg)	13,000	15,000	15.3 +
Lamb (1kg)	22,000	23,000	4.5 +
<b>Coffee and Tea</b>			
Najjar coffee (1 kg)	17,200	17,200	0
Brazil coffee (1 kg)	15,000	15,000	0
Al-Hisan tea (180 g)	2,750	2,750	0
Nestle (250 g)	2,000	2,000	0
<b>Halvah and Jam</b>			
Al-Wadi halvah (454 g)	4,500	4,500	0
Al-Bsat halvah (450 g)	3,800	3,800	0
Chtoura apricot jam (1 kg)	6,000	6,000	0
Al-Wadi apricot jam (1 kg)	4,750	4,750	0
<b>Tissues and Detergents</b>			
Mimosa tissues (500 g)	3,000	2,950	1.7 -
Fine tissues (200 tissues)	1,500	1,500	0
Primo tissues (200 tissues)	1,500	1,500	0
Gipsy tissues (300 tissues)	2,900	3,000	3.4 +
Mimosa toilet paper (4 rolls)	6,000	6,000	0
Yes detergent (750 g)	2,600	2,850	9.6 +
Clorox (1 liter)	1,560	1,560	0
Persil (4 kg)	20,000	20,000	0
Ariel (4 kg)	20,500	20,500	0
<b>Fruit and Vegetables</b>			
Oranges (1 kg)	750	1,000	33.4 +
Tomatoes (1 kg)	1,250	1,000	20 -
Cucumbers (1 kg)	1,500	2,000	33.4 +
Bananas (1 kg)	1,250	1,250	0
Lemons (1 kg)	750	500	33.4 -
Apples (1 kg)	2,000	2,000	0
Potatoes (1 kg)	1,500	1,500	0

Source: Information International

## Depression Around the World

- 121 million people worldwide have depression and 850,000 die of it every year.
- 36% is the highest depression rate worldwide, and is most common in India.
- Women living in the United States are six times more likely to be depressed than men in China.
- 1 of 10 people in America, suffer from symptoms associated with depression at some point in their life.
- 15% of those living in the 10 richest nations reported having had at least one depressive episode in their lifetime.
- 18% is the percentage of depression in France, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the U.S.
- 11 % of those living in poorer countries reported having had at least one depressive episode in their lifetime.
- 12% is the lowest depression percentage worldwide, and is present in China.

Ref: Bio medical center- 2011

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/presscenter/pressreleases/20110722>



## Beirut International Airport

### Rafic Hariri International Airport Traffic- January 2013

463 972 passengers used Rafic Hariri International Airport in January 2013 compared to 495 760 in December 2012 and 430 472 in January 2012, i.e. up by 33 500 passengers or 7.8%. The flow of imported and exported goods has also increased by 14.6%.

The following Table 1 illustrates the traffic in Rafic Hariri International Airport in January 2013 compared to December 2012 and January 2012.

Airport traffic in January 2013 compared to December 2012 and January 2012					Table 1
Traffic	December 2012	January 2013	January 2012	of change % December 2012/ January 2013	of change % January 2012/ January 2013
Arriving airplanes	2,540	2,245	2,314	- 11.6	- 3
Departing airplanes	2,546	2,243	2,314	- 11.9	- 3
<b>Total no. of airplanes</b>	<b>5,086</b>	<b>4,488</b>	<b>4,628</b>	<b>- 11.7</b>	<b>- 3</b>
Arriving passengers	251,129	201,507	182,973	- 19.8	+ 10.1
Departing passengers	243,268	261,195	241,768	+ 7.3	+ 8
Transit passengers	1,363	1,270	5,731	- 6.8	- 77.8
<b>Total no. of passengers</b>	<b>495,760</b>	<b>463,972</b>	<b>430,472</b>	<b>- 6.4</b>	<b>+ 7.8</b>
(Imported goods (per ton	4,788	3,683	3,120	- 23	+ 18
(Exported goods (per ton	3,113	2,625	2,381	- 15.6	+ 10.2
<b>Total amount of goods</b>	<b>7,901</b>	<b>6,308</b>	<b>5,501</b>	<b>- 20.1</b>	<b>+ 14.6</b>

Source: Information International and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

# Stats & Numbers

- **USD 7.58 billion** is the expatriates' remittance inflow to Lebanon in 2012, compared to USD 7.61 billion in 2011.
- **LBP 53 million** is the cost of the car purchased for the Ministry of State for Administrative Reform.
- **LBP 28 million** is the annual fee for Lebanon's membership in the International Organization of the Vine and Wine.
- **LBP 16.3 million** is the phone bill due on the Directorate General of Oil for the year 2013.
- **LBP 5 billion** is the advance granted to the High Relief Committee to meet the needs of the Syrian refugees, thus upping the total of advances to LBP 20 billion.
- **19000** is the average number of speeding tickets registered every month by the radars of the Internal Security Forces on Lebanon's streets. This number is likely to increase to around 1 billion.



Photo by Alaa Sakr

## 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 in Figures 2007-2008
- 9- Lebanon's MPs and Lebanese Parliamentary Elections 1960 - 2009
- 10- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-North District
- 11- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Beirut District
- 12- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Mount Lebanon District
- 13- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Beqa'a District
- 14- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-South and Nabatiyeh District
- 15- 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

### Publications by Kutub (in Arabic):

- 1- Trablous Al-Sham
- 2- Jeniyat Al-Nabi
- 3- Mokhber Al-Konsoliya
- 4- Antoun Saadah 1932-1949
- 5- Antoun Saadah, A Biography, Volume 1. The Youth Years
- 6- The Face of the Prophet, Khalil Gibran and the Portraits of the Temple of Arts
- 7- May Ziadeh, Evolution of a free female thinker
- 8- USA in the Middle East
- 9- Alone Together
- 10- Mission in Hijaz - Lion Roche
- 11- Aleppo Cuisine
- 12- From An-Nabk to Florida
- 13- Institution of Aesthetic Discourse -Saad el-Kassab
- 14- Jounoun el Kouloud, Al-Masihiyah Wal Mouhammadiyah wal Qawmiyah - Antoun Saade

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Al-Borj Building, 4th Floor, Martyrs Square  
Beirut Central District  
Telephone: 961-1-983008/9 961-3-262376  
Fax: 961-1-980630  
info@iimonthly.com  
www.iimonthly.com  
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# PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2013

## DRAFT LAWS, ELECTORAL PROPOSITIONS AND PROSPECTIVE RESULTS

With the parliamentary elections scheduled before June 20, 2013 approaching, Lebanese political groups have started their discussions to reach consensus over the optimal electoral law that would govern the elections. Each party put forth its desired electoral proposition, which may secure its victory. The actual and serious discussion was restricted to 6 propositions:

- The current electoral law known as the 1960s law
- The government proposal calling for the division of Lebanon into 14 electoral districts and the adoption of a proportional system
- The Orthodox Gathering proposal suggesting to make all of Lebanon one electoral district, with each sect electing its MPs according to proportionality
- The 50-district proposal stipulating the division of Lebanon into 50 electoral districts and the adoption of a plurality system
- The Future Movement proposal calling for a plurality voting system with Lebanon divided into 37 electoral districts and for the establishment of a Senate on sectarian basis according to the Orthodox Gathering proposition
- The National Commission's proposal, known also as Fouad Boutros' Draft Electoral Law, which merges between plurality and proportionality with 77 MPs elected by voters in each Qada'a according to the former and 51 by voters in each Mohafaza according to the latter.

The booklet outlines the main principles of each of the above-mentioned proposals and draft laws, as well as the potential results including the shares of each political group and the number of Christian MPs represented by Christian votes. Additional electoral content related to proportionality and the numbers of eligible and actual voters and their sectarian distribution forms also part of this booklet.



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Information International  
Al-Borg Building, 4th Floor Martyr's Square, Commercial Center  
Beirut - Lebanon  
P.O.BOX: 11-4353 Beirut, Lebanon  
Tel: (961-1) 983008/9 Fax: (961-1) 980630  
E-mail: [infointl@information-international.com](mailto:infointl@information-international.com)  
Website: [www.information-international.com](http://www.information-international.com)