

Arab investments in Lebanon

President's Constitutional Powers delegated to the Government

The Exploitation of Migrant Workers in Lebanon

Money Laundering in 2007

The Lebanese Confessionally “Boxed” in Elections, Marriage & Death



With this issue:

LEBANON'S SECURITY DILEMMA

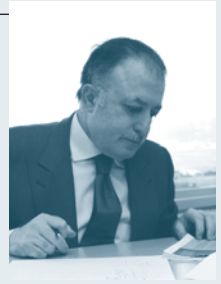
Another Reading into the
Evolution of Lebanon's Politics
by George T. Yacoub



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LEADER

The Tent Part 5



“A Sultan’s orders are empty words until they are written; then they become laws”, govern countries, and sway opinions, once said Ibn Khalkan. “Writing is the tool of the Sultan”. Concurred Ibn Khaldoun.

In this issue, we visit the tent of the intellectuals, journalists, writers, and broadcasters, particularly those who orbit the political realm. For they adorn the tents of the zu’amas and make them whole.

A pupil was once listening to the heated and ever-present debate between three ‘intellectuals’. The first raising the controversial truism of ‘Phoenician Lebanon’, the second touting the nationalistic ‘Arab-Lebanon’, while the third trying to strike a balance between those two perpetually deliberated opinions within Lebanese society.

Just to remind the reader, the first opinion proclaims that Lebanon has in fact been this way for thousands of years, alluding to the birth of the letters of alphabet in the seaport city of Byblos, the sun rising through the robust columns of the temple of Ba’albek. And Beirut ... Beirut ... the “mother of laws.”

Doesn’t that make us Phoenicians?

The second ‘intellectual’, proud of his Arabic heritage, believes that the Lebanese people hail from deep into the Arabian Peninsula, from Yemen. Lebanon’s identity is Arab, because the Lebanese are Arabs. The Lebanese people can’t be Phoenicians! “Phoenicians were traders and slaves,” how can we be Phoenicians, unless we consider them to be ‘Arabs’, at which point it becomes alright if we are.

Isn’t that enough proof that we are Arabs?

The third ‘intellectual’ was flipping between both points of view, raising doubts in the pupil’s mind. Luckily, he had been warned; his father had told him, flip floppers in Lebanon are partly ‘coerced’ and partly ‘ambitious’. The third ‘intellectual’ was brandishing the position of his Za’im; the one he works for editing his newspaper, or his evening broadcast news. Indeed, ambition requires compromise, and wasn’t he well compensated for relinquishing his principles?

The pupil developed his own logic: it must be that we are ‘Phoenicians’ sometimes, ‘Arabs’ other times. As a matter of fact, ‘Phoenicians’ and ‘Arabs’ are sometimes French or Americans, depending on the regional and international upheavals.

Skimming through old history books, the pupil wondered, a ‘Phoenician nation’? What about Phoenicians in North Africa and along the Syrian coast, near Latakia? How about Phoenicians in Palestine? If there was a Phoenician nation, why did Saida conspire with Alexander against Tyre? (Back then neither Saida was Sunni, nor was Tyre Shia’a) What about the discovery of an arrow engraved with Phoenician writings -Hajji Abbas? Where did the name Abbas come from anyway? Isn’t Abbas a Shia’a name? Did it exist before Islam? Before Shia’as? How about Zeinab? When did queen Zanoubya live? Before Islam, before Shia’as? And if the people of Lebanon come from Yemen at the southern most tip of the Arabian Gulf, why were the Northern regions which Lebanon is a part of virtually uninhabited, while the south was over-populated? The pupil was fast to conclude that those empty arguments were nothing but idle talk.

The student found himself in the Gulf, lured there by his own Arab nationalistic feelings. Landing in Abu Dhabi’s International Airport, he was bewildered by a mix of accents and dialects he had never heard before. Hesitantly, he approached an airport official, asking in his native Arabic, for directions. “Me no understand Arabic! Me Indian!” was the reply. Disappointed but not discouraged, he tried again and again falling on all sorts of languages from Farsi to Urdu to Tagalog to Russian, but no one would answered him in Arabic . The universal language is English; no doubt, when he spoke it he finally found his way.

It was all coming together in his mind. Had the Pan-Arab paid a visit to the Gulf before he so confidently proclaimed his Arab nationalism, he would have certainly had a change of heart. And, had the “Phoenician intellectual” visited Tunisia; he too would have realized that Hannibal was indeed not Lebanese.

As far as the third, the flip flopper, he should be awarded an Oscar for his outstanding acting performance.

The pupil like the rest of us is waiting for the curtain to come down on ‘intellectuals’, ‘journalists’, and ‘broadcasters’, when the ignorant, the manipulated, and the mercenaries will cease their domination, while they watch Lebanon being crucified.

— Jawad N. Adra

The Lebanese Confessionally “Boxed”

Three cases representing Lebanon’s current status; the electoral law, marriage and obituaries

Parliamentary Electoral Law

Many are the obstacles and reservations hampering the passing of a new electoral law for the upcoming elections. Each political side or party is looking for an electoral law tailored to meet its own interests. The division and size of electoral districts, as well as their political and confessional structure, represent the main problem, in particular in Beirut. What are the previous formulas adopted in the capital and what about the proposed division?

Formulas adopted in the Past

- The Mohafaza of Beirut was made a single district in the elections of 1943 and 1947 (with nine seats out of 55 parliamentary seats). The other Mohafazas were also made a single electoral district each (Mount Lebanon- the South-North Lebanon- the Beqa’a).
- Beirut was made a single district in the parliamentary elections of 1951 (with 13 seats out of a total of 77 parliamentary seats). The same applied to the Mohafazas of South Lebanon and the Beqa’a, while the Mohafazas of North and Mount Lebanon were divided into three districts.
- The Mohafaza of Beirut was divided into five districts in the elections of 1953 (with seven seats out of a total of 44 parliamentary seats). The North was divided into eight districts, the Beqa’a into four districts, Mount Lebanon into nine districts and the South into seven districts. Beirut’s five districts were as follows:
 - Beirut’s first district, with a seat for the Armenian Orthodox confession and

includes Mdawar area.

- Beirut’s second district, with two seats, one for the Orthodox and the other for the Maronite confession. It includes Achrafieh, Rmeil and Saifi.
- Beirut’s third district, with a seat for the Sunni confession and is formed of Mazra’a.
- Beirut’s fourth district, with two seats, one for the Sunni confession and the other for the Shia’a confession. It includes Zqaq al-Blat, Bashoura, Msaitbeh and Ras Beirut.
- Beirut’s fifth district, with seats for the minority confessions. It includes Mina al-Hosn, Port and Dar al-Mreisseh.
- In 1975, Beirut was divided into two districts (with 11 seats out of a total of 66 parliamentary seats). Mount Lebanon was divided into eight districts, the Beqa’a into three districts, South Lebanon into seven districts and North Lebanon into seven districts. Beirut’s two districts were divided as follows:
 - Beirut’s first district, with five seats (two for the Sunni confession, and one seat for each of the Maronite, Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox confessions). It includes Msaitbeh, Mazra’a, Achrafieh, Rmeil and Saifi.
 - Beirut’s second district, with six seats (two for the Sunni confession and one seat for each of the Shia’a, the Armenian Orthodox, the Armenian Catholic and the minority confessions). It includes Zqaq al-Blat, Port, Mdawar, Mina al-Hosn, Dar al-Mreisseh and Ras Beirut.
- In the elections of 1960, Beirut was divided into three districts (with eight seats out of a total of 99 parliamentary seats). Mount Lebanon was divided into six districts, the South into seven districts, the Beqa’a into three

districts and North Lebanon into seven districts. Beirut’s three districts will be addressed in the next section.

- In the elections of 1964, 1968 and 1972, the division was the same as in 1960.
- In the elections of 1992, the first after the end of the civil war, Beirut was made a single electoral district (with 19 seats out of a total of 128 parliamentary seats). South Lebanon, Nabatieh and North Lebanon were also made a single district each, while the Beqa’a was divided into three districts and Mount Lebanon into six.
- In the parliamentary elections of 1996, Beirut remained a single district. The same applied to the Beqa’a, North Lebanon, South Lebanon and Nabatieh. Mount Lebanon was divided into six districts.
- In the elections of 2000 and 2005, Beirut was divided into three districts (but different from the districts in the 1960 electoral law.) It included 19 seats out of a total of 128 seats. South Lebanon and Nabatieh were merged into one electoral district (of 23 seats). The Beqa’a was divided into three districts (of 23 seats), Mount Lebanon into four districts (of 35 seats) and North Lebanon into two districts (of 28 seats).

Eligible Voters in Beirut

Based on the number of eligible voters registered in the 2007 electoral lists in Beirut, the number of voters in 2009 is estimated at 455,000 who are distributed by area and confession as shown in Table no.1.

Estimated number of eligible voters in Beirut in 2009 and distribution by confession

Table 1

Area	Total # of voters	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Armenian Orthodox	Armenian Catholic	Protestant	Minorities and other Christian confessions ⁽¹⁾	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Achrafieh	54,300	6,200	17,000	6,500	7,700	2,550	700	6,450	5,500	1,500	200
Mdawar	44,200	2,400	1,330	1,200	27,650	3,100	2,100	1,350	4,650	400	20
Rmeil	31,000	7,200	6,300	3,350	8,100	1,500	1,320	3,000	200	20	10
Port	8,900	110	250	140	510	150	100	130	5,400	2,100	10
Saifi	10,100	3,160	1,770	2,740	580	700	50	700	100	300	-
Mina al-Hosn ⁽²⁾	15,000	1,700	1,250	1,000	870	180	400	600	1,000	2,600	40
Dar al-Mreisseh	12,000	550	350	300	680	100	200	220	6,600	1,700	1,300
Zqaq al-Blat	46,800	550	360	500	2,500	300	230	440	22,800	19,000	120
Bashoura	48,000	1,400	850	900	1,330	400	210	1,800	19,000	22,000	110
Mazra'a	82,000	700	4,200	700	200	200	100	600	71,100	4,000	200
Msaitbeh	69,000	1,260	6,500	1,400	750	240	750	6,000	40,000	10,000	2,100
Ras Beirut	33,700	1,200	4,500	1,900	500	120	1,500	1,200	21,100	730	950
Total	455,000	26,430	44,660	20,630	51,370	9,540	7,660	22,490	197,450	64,350	5,060

Source: Compiled by Information International based on the number of voters in 2007 and the growth percentage in 2000, 2005 and 2007

⁽¹⁾ Including the Syriac Orthodox, the Syriac Catholic, the Latin, the Chaldean and the Assyrian confessions

⁽²⁾ There are 5,360 registered Jews but they do not reside in the area

Noteworthy is the fact that the percentage of balloters (actual voters) does not exceed 50%. In the elections of 2005 and 2000, the percentage in the first district reached 31.5% in 2005 compared to 40.2%, in the second district 30% compared to 35.3%, in the third district 21.4% compared to 31.8%, which means that the overall percentage reached 27.5% in 2005 compared to 35.6% in 2000.

Proposed districts and expected results

There are several formulas currently discussed for the division of Beirut:

- 1- A single electoral district: this means that the Sunni voice, led by Deputy Sa'ad al-Hariri, will prevail over the other confessions and will win 19 seats in Beirut.
- 2- Division based on the 1960 electoral law:
 - ⊙ First district (Achrafieh, Rmeil, Mdawar, Saifi, Port and Mina al-Hosn), with eight seats, including three for the opposition and five for the pro-government forces
 - ⊙ Second district (Zqaq al-Blat, Bashoura and Dar al-Mreisseh) six seats expected for the pro-government forces
 - ⊙ Third district (Ras Beirut, Mazra'a and Msaitbeh), where the pro-government forces are likely to win the five seats
- 3- Division based on the 2000 electoral law, where the pro-government forces are likely to win all seats in the three districts:
 - ⊙ First district (Achrafieh, Mazra'a and Saifi)
 - ⊙ Second district (Msaitbeh, Bashoura and Rmeil)
 - ⊙ Third district (Dar al-Mreisseh, Ras Beirut, Zqaq al-Blat, Mdawar, Port and Mina al-Hosn)
- 4- Division of Beirut based on the draft-law proposed in 2005 by then Minister of Interior and Municipalities Suleiman Franjeh:
 - ⊙ First district, with six seats and includes: Mazra'a, Msaitbeh, Ras Beirut, Dar al-Mreisseh, Mina al-Hosn and the Port. Seats are mainly controlled by the Sunni voice, led by Sa'ad Hariri.
 - ⊙ Second district, with nine seats and includes: Bashoura, Zqaq al-Blat, Rmeil, Mdawar and Saifi. The results of the elections will depend on the Christian voice.
 - ⊙ Third district, with four seats and is formed of Achrafieh. Seats are likely to be equally divided between the opposition and the pro-government forces.
- 5- Division of Beirut into districts of one seat. This would allow each confession to choose its own deputy and might give more power to the Sunni voice. However, this division should not only be adopted in Beirut but in all districts across the country; but this is far from being implemented today.

The Lebanese Confessionally "Boxed"

Matching Singles in Lebanon

Criteria: co-religionist and nicely shaped

In Lebanon, finding the "right" partner can be subject to social, mainly confessional boundaries. In some areas, it is a task assumed by the parents or relatives, who usually take into consideration the future partner's confession, age and financial status.

A new trend has recently emerged that is the establishment of agencies and companies with the role of "matching" singles.

A person wishing to find a spouse submits an application form, in which they specify the main characteristics they want in a partner.

The company sorts the applications and schedules dates between the applicants.

Usually, the applicant pays \$50 when submitting the application and between \$100-500 when the date is scheduled.

Advertisements are also being published in newspapers and magazines. They include, in addition to the general characteristics requested in a partner, intimate and personal details, like the religion or confession and the morphology (body shape, size of lips, etc.)

These ads highlight a major contradiction represented in the strong adherence to one's confession on one hand, and their audacity in requesting intimate and morphological details on the other hand.

Some observers doubted the credibility of these ads, saying that clandestine networks could be behind them.

The following are advertisements published in local newspapers. *The Monthly* does neither intend to harm the reputation of any individual or corporation nor market them and is not responsible for any information published in these ads.

1 Arab businessman would like to marry a university girl. For serious girls only.

3 A 45 year-old lady seeks an educated Sunni man who respects marriage life.

2 An important and wealthy businessman from the Gulf wants to marry a Lebanese woman, blond, thin and educated. Age between 20-28.

“Usually, the applicant pays \$50 when submitting the application and between \$100-500 when the date is scheduled”

رجل أعمال عربي
يرغب بالزواج
من فتاة جامعية
للحالات فقط

17937
70-18-41-42

مهندس ورجل أعمال
عربي مقيم في
البحر وعمه منزل
في بيروت غير مرتبط
سابقاً وسيم
ميسور - يود الزواج
من فتاة جميلة
متفقة - نحيفة
العمر بين 27 و 35
للحالات فقط

17937
03-703599

سيدات: الزواج من الأجنبي
والوحدة قاتلة
مهيا كان عمرك
أو وضعك الاجتماعي
فهم وهم لك
الشريك المناسب
مع السيرة الثابتة

17937
70-18-41-42

رجل أعمال قطري
متوسط العمر
يطلب الزواج من فتاة
تتكلم الإنكليزية
العمر من 27 حتى 35
للإتصال مباشرة

17900
03-829400

للزواج
إمرأة جميلة أرملة
29 من العمر جميلة جداً
لديها جنسية أجنبية تبحث
عن شاب متواضع
بشعره وجنسيتها وعمره
لا يتهاون

17936
03-118373

شاب خليجي
يود الإرتباط
بفتاة لبنانية جميلة جداً
رشيقه وبيضاء
الطول 165 - 175
الوزن 50 - 60
العمر 20 - 28
مسنة الحلو والعمارة

+965-6647410

عندما أحس قمارك
سيمي سيدتي شريك
العمر بانتظارك من عدة
جنسيات ومستويات
أعزب مطلق - أرمل

08-512398

تصريح الفرص
رجل أعمال خليجي مهم جداً
صاحب شركات متعددة ميسور
مكثف يريد بالزواج بفتاة
لبنانية تحمل شهادات عالية
أو سكرتيرة بارعة درجة أولى
على أن تكون جميلة
متفقة - نحيفة - لينة
وجذابة. للعيش في دولة قطر
للحالات فقط

03.703599

سيدة في الـ 45
17870
جميلة تبحث عن رجل
سني - متعلم
يحترم الحياة الزوجية
للإتصال المباشر
03-870 342
No missed call

شاب عمره
34 سنة
يود التعرف
للزواج فتاة
27-22 سنة
مسلمة، يفضل
معلمة مدرسة

17960
NO MISSED CALL
03-693113

إمرأة لبنانية
جميلة وأنيقة
تحمل الجنسية الأميركية
تود الزواج من رجل
مسيحي محترم
العمر بين 40 - 50
للعيش معها في الخارج

17964
70-820493

رجل أعمال
في منتصف
الثلاثينات - متزوج
حسن المظهر -
يطلب فتاة ما بين
18 و 35 سنة

70-906495

فتاة جامعية للإرتباط
شاب درزي عمره 35
وما فوق وعلى أن
يكون جامعي

للجادين
70921220

شاب لبناني صادق
مقيم في دمشق
و مستعد للسفر
يرغب بالزواج
من لبنانية صادقة
أو عزباء ميسورة الحال
دون وسيط

17892
00963955341791

دون وسيط
رجل أعمال وسيم
مستقر مادياً
يود الزواج من فتاة
مسيحية طوية
جميلة جامعية
تحمل الجنسية
الأمريكية أو الأسترالية
العمر بين 20 و 26 سنة
للعمل معها في الخارج
لحالات بعد التمسيد

70-935370

رجل أعمال مهم جداً
يسافر كثيراً
يود الزواج من
فتاة لبنانية
شراء - بيضاء
نحيفة ومتفقة
اجتماعية

17937
العمر بين 20/27
70-35 99

بهدية لبنانية
جميلة مطلقه
تحمل الجنسية الكندية
تملك منزل خاص
ترغب بالزواج
من شاب جدي ومحترم

17937
03-01 88 20

للزواج
فتاة لبنانية جميلة متفقة
موظفة تحمل الجنسية
الكندية تود الزواج
من رجل مستقر مادياً
للعيش معها في كندا
العمر 40 / 45

17937
03-703599

فتاة لبنانية
جميلة حديثة
جامعية تحمل
جنسية الأميركية
ترغب بالزواج
مع شاب جدي

03-01 88 20

شاب وسيم
ومستقر مادياً
متكف - اجتماعي
يود الزواج من فتاة
تحمل الجنسية الأميركية
جميلة متفقة محترمة
العمر بين 27-20
للحالات فقط

03-703599

The Lebanese Confessionally “Boxed”

Even obituaries are confessionally divided!

An-Nahar for Christians and As-Safir for Muslims

Around 18,191 Lebanese pass away every year (as average of the three past years, 17,774 died in 2004; 18,012 in 2005 and 18,782 in 2006). Notifying the relatives and friends of the death of a person is considered part of the funeral rituals.

This is done through one (or all) of the following means:

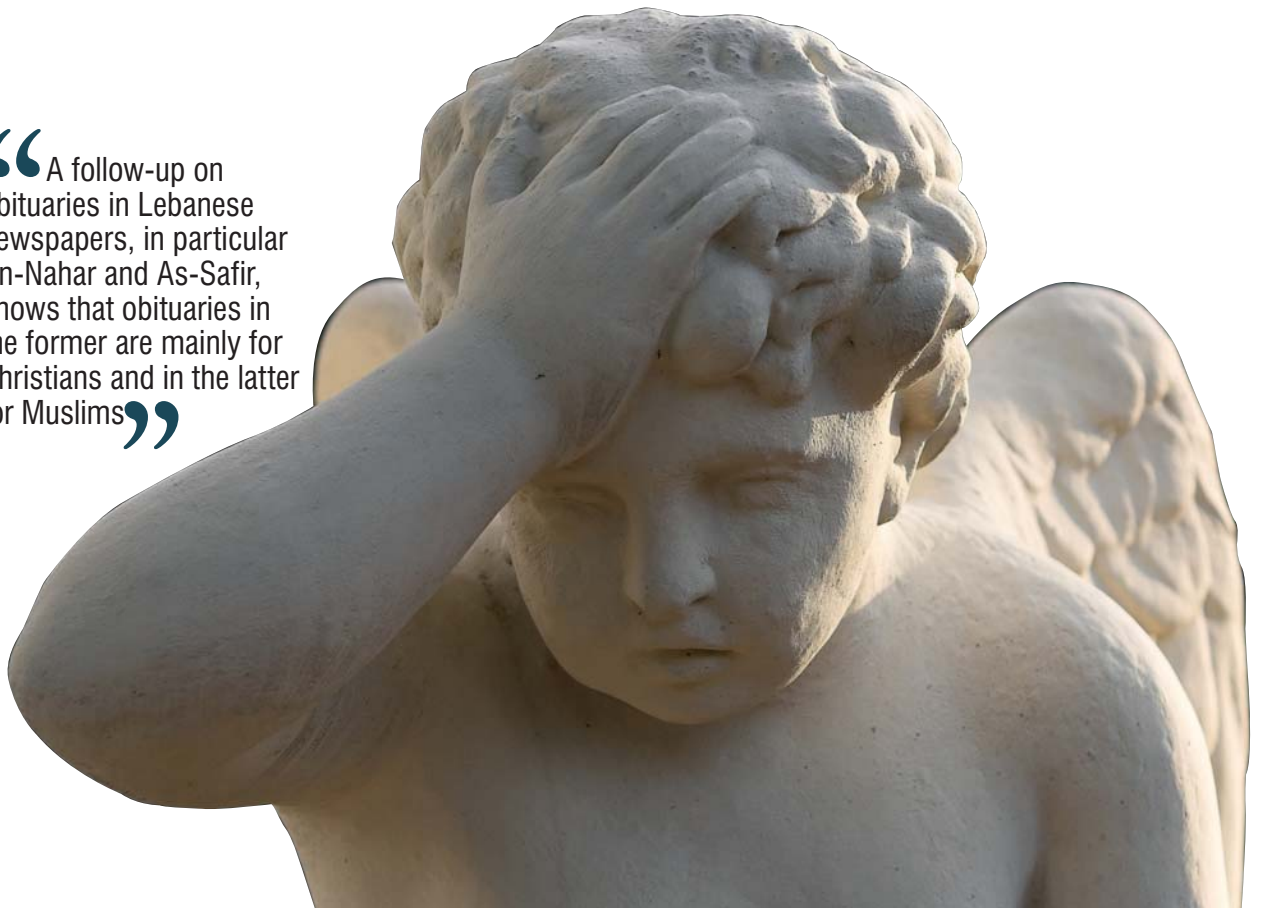
- ⊙ Announcing the death through speakers in religious sites (mosques and churches) or tolling bells in churches
- ⊙ Personal phone calls
- ⊙ Sending sms messages
- ⊙ Sending messages through the internet
- ⊙ Distributing obituaries in neighboring villages and towns or to the colleagues and relatives of the deceased
- ⊙ Broadcasting the news in radio stations and televisions
- ⊙ Publishing obituaries in newspapers

A follow-up on obituaries in Lebanese newspapers, in particular An-Nahar and As-Safir, shows that obituaries in the former are mainly for Christians and in the latter for Muslims; and since the cost of obituaries is the same in both newspapers (LBP55,000 for an obituary of 10 lines and LBP5,500 for each additional line), it seems that the reason behind this confessional division, even in death, is that the family of the deceased consider that their relatives and friends read the same newspaper.

This means that As-Safir readers are Muslims in their majority and the majority of An-Nahar readers are Christians. Table no.1 shows obituaries published in An-Nahar and As-Safir newspapers between April 15th and 30th 2008, by confession.

Note: A reiterated obituary was considered as one, and an announcement published for several days was put depending on the number of days. Announcement of the passing of one week, fourteen days and one year since the death were not included.

“A follow-up on obituaries in Lebanese newspapers, in particular An-Nahar and As-Safir, shows that obituaries in the former are mainly for Christians and in the latter for Muslims”



Obituaries published in An-Nahar and As-Safir newspapers between April 14th and 30th 2008, by confession **Table 1**

Day	# of obituaries	An-Nahar		# of obituaries	As-Safir	
		Muslims	Christians		Muslims	Christians
Monday 14	23	6	17	12	8	4
Wednesday 16	24	7	17	10	7	3
Thursday 17	22	7	15	14	10	4
Friday 18	25	5	20	9	7	2
Saturday 19	27	8	19	10	8	2
Monday 21	19	4	15	6	4	2
Tuesday 22	23	4	19	10	6	4
Wednesday 23	20	6	14	9	6	3
Thursday 24	15	4	11	5	4	1
Friday 25	19	8	11	10	6	4
Saturday 26	22	5	17	10	8	2
Tuesday 29	20	4	16	15	11	4
Wednesday 30	20	6	14	12	8	4
Total	279	74	205	132	93	39
Percentage		26.5%	73.5%		70.5%	29.5%

Source: An-Nahar and As-Safir newspapers- April 15th-30th 2008

National Council of Tourism

Tourism sector employs around 300,000 persons of Lebanon's labor force. Tourism, under the National Council of Tourism (NCT) - a semi-private institution⁽¹⁾ - was at its peak between the 1960s and 1982. The Council's main function was the promotion of tourism overseas. Today, NCT is not operational with no president and no members. The question is: should the NCT's activities be re-activated and what should its responsibilities entail?

Background

The National Council of Tourism (Conseil National du Tourisme) was created in 1962, as a private association charged with conducting all tasks related to tourism promotion and investment. The growth of tourism led to the creation of the Ministry of Tourism in 1966 under law no.21/66, issued on March 29th 1966. Both the NCT and the Ministry of Tourism complemented each other in their tasks to promote tourism in Lebanon. In general, there were ten to twelve members in the NCT and they worked on a portion of the budget allocated by the government. The maximum amount that the NCT received from the government was approximately \$1.3 million in 2001.

In 1982 a political decision was taken to widen the scope of NCT's activities to include economic development as well. Sami Maroun, a private sector businessman was appointed President and the name of the council changed to what is translated from Arabic as: National Council for Foreign Economic Relations. In 1985, Sami Maroun resigned from his post and the council re-instated its name and responsibilities but the war had already started and NCT's performance and concentration on tourism went down.

On October 10th 1992, decree no.2829 was issued to nullify the tasks entrusted to the National Council for Tourism and transfer them to the Ministry of Tourism.

According to Pierre Achkar, head of Hotel Owners' Syndicate and vice president of the NCT from 1998 till 2002, "the reason behind the decision is unclear but more because they [government] wanted to transfer its [NCT] responsibilities to the Ministry of Tourism."

In 1998, the decision came to reactivate the NCT. It remained operational until 2002 when it closed down again because of a clash between then president of NCT Fouad Fawwaz and the Minister of Tourism. This clash caused the de-activation of the NCT until today.

The Ministry of Tourism's tasks were defined under Decree no.7142, issued on April 20th 1967 that separated the responsibilities of the Ministry from that of the NCT. MoT's role included: promoting tourism; regulating, coordinating, and monitoring tourism professions, private companies and associations working in the tourism sector and developing archaeological and historical sites⁽²⁾ and museums for tourism purposes.

In turn, the role of the NCT was to promote Lebanon tourism overseas.

Achkar says "in 1998, the decision came to re-activate it [NCT]... We were called in for a meeting and were appointed to our posts as members... We did not understand what was happening."

The responsibilities of the NCT were not defined, and according to Achkar, "when we started operating, there was conflict of interest between NCT and the employees at the Ministry... When we asked about our role, they told us we were only consultants."

If the Council is to be re-established, Nada Sardouk, Director General of the Ministry of Tourism confirms that "NCT's board should be technocrat where its members are chosen based on their expertise in tourism."

Recommendations

There are several recommendations from tourism specialists today in both the public


and private sectors to re-establish the National Council of Tourism as a private sector entity separate from that of the Ministry of Tourism but with its support.

Paul Ariss, head of Restaurants Syndicate, says that in order to promote Lebanon properly NCT should be completely autonomous, it should not be politicized and this needs a political decision and proper support from influential people.

Achkar concludes "We have to separate NCT from the Ministry of Tourism. We can cooperate together, but we should be separate so we can be able to do our job properly. Being a public sector, we would have many restrictions. Tourism in Lebanon cannot tolerate this."

Said Abou Izzedine, Operation Director of Société des Grands Hôtels du Liban, in turn confirms that both the NCT and the Ministry of Tourism have something to offer "the MoT should be the one that sets the goals that are agreed upon by active meetings with the government and the private sectors related to tourism and it is up to the private sector to be an executive tool in promoting the mission statement of the ministry. I don't see another way."

Conclusion

Will a decision be made to re-activate the National Council of Tourism in order to help the Ministry in better promoting tourism? Who benefits from keeping NCT closed? Will the NCT really help the Ministry? These are questions that are yet to be answered. Until final decision is reached, the tourism sector, one of Lebanon's main sources of income, will remain locked in the continuing political wrangling that has already brought the country to a near standstill. 

⁽¹⁾ Private sector for the benefit of the public sector

⁽²⁾ Archaeological and historical sites were under the Ministry of Tourism but then became under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture in the year 2000

Gulf Cooperation Council Geography, Population, Wealth and Economy



For decades, the Gulf region has been a beacon for those seeking solid investment opportunities, attracting people the world over to its land rich in natural resources. The region has witnessed large waves of immigration from the Arab Orient, Egypt and Sudan, Eastern Asia, India and Pakistan. Today's unprecedented increase in oil prices reaching \$115 per barrel, when for years prices hovered around \$10 to 12 per barrel, the region is once again in the forefront of development and business endeavors.

The Creation of GCC

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established and its by-laws adopted in Abu Dhabi on May 25th, 1981. Its founding members are the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the United Arab Emirates, the State of Bahrain, and the State of Qatar. GCC's primary objective is the economic unification of the region achieved through multi-leveled and close coordination among countries of the Arabian Gulf, in view of shared ties, common governing and governance systems, and a rule based on Islam.

Ruling System

Gulf States are monarch-ruled.

Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been successively ruled by the sons of King Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud, the founder of the Kingdom (1902-1953). Successive Saudi Kings are: King Saud (1953-1964), King Faysal (1964-1975), King Khaled (1975-1982), King Fahd (1982-2005), and currently King Abdullah, who came into power in August 2005.

Kuwait

Kuwait is ruled by members of Al-Sabah family, in its two wings, Jaber and Salem. Sheikh Sabah bin Jaber Sabah I (1752-1776) was succeeded by Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah (1776-1814), and then Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah (1896-1915), Sheikh Jaber II Al-Sabah (1915-1917), Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah (1917-1921), Sheikh Ahmad Jaber Al-Sabah (1921-1950), Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah (1950-1965), Sheikh Sabah Salem Al-Sabah (1965-1977), Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (1977-2006) and Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (2006- present).

Bahrain

Bahrain is ruled by Al-Khalifah. Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifah (1942-1961) was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Issa bin Salman Al-Khalifah (1961-1999), who was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Hamad bin Issa Al-Khalifah (1999- present).

Qatar

Al-Thani family rules over Qatar. Sheikh Qassem bin Mohammed Al-Thani (1876-1913), the founder of the State, was succeeded by Sheikh Abdullah bin Qassem Al-Thani (1913-1949), and then Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah al-Thani (1949-1960), Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali Al-Thani (1960-1972), Sheikh Khalifah bin Hamad Al-Thani (1972-1995) and currently Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifah Al-Thani (1995- present).

United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates are ruled by Al-Nahyan family



in Abu Dhabi; while the vice-president and prime minister is always from Al-Maktoum family. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan (1966-2004) was succeeded by his son, Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (2004- present). In Dubai, Sheikh Rashed bin Said Al-Maktoum (1958-1991) was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashed Al-Maktoum (1990-2006) and then by his second son, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al-Maktoum (2006- present).

Sultanate of Oman

Al-Bou Saidi family rules over Oman since Imam Ahmad bin Said Al-Bou Saidi (1744-1783). He was followed by his sons and grandsons, including Turki bin Said (1871-1888), Faysal bin Turki (1888-1913), Taymoor bin Faysal (1913-1932), Said bin Taymoor (1932-1970) and Qaboos bin Said (1970- present).

Area

GCC states extend over a total area of 2.6 million km². Table no.1 shows each state's area, with Saudi Arabia being the largest (84.2% of the total area), followed by the Sultanate of Oman (11.6%).

Areas of GCC states **Table 1**

	Saudi Arabia	Kuwait	UAE	Qatar	Sultanate of Oman	Bahrain
Area (km ²)	2.250	17.8	83.6	11.5	309.5	0.728

Source: Information International

Population

The total number of people in GCC states is of 33.9 million, distributed by state as shown in Table no.2. Saudi Arabia's population is the largest (67%), followed by the UAE (12.7%).

Population size in GCC states **Table 2**

	Saudi Arabia	Kuwait	UAE	Qatar	Sultanate of Oman	Bahrain
2005	22,991,189 including 6,144,236 non-Saudis	2,991,189 including 1,998,972 non-Kuwaitis	4,320,000 including 3,369,600 non-UAE citizens	748,520 including 410,000 Qataris	2,415,576 including 612,645 non-Omanis	707,160 including 268,951 Bahrainis

Source: Statistics issued by statistic centers of the relevant countries and figures released by the GCC Secretariat General

“Noteworthy is the high percentage of foreign nationals in GCC states. Conservatively, foreign nationals account for 78% of the population of the UAE, 25.4% of Oman, 67% of Kuwait, 55% of Qatar, 32 % of Bahrain and 27% of Saudi Arabia.”

Noteworthy is the high percentage of foreign nationals in GCC states. Conservatively, foreign nationals account for 78% of the population of the UAE, 25.4% of Oman, 67% of Kuwait, 55% of Qatar, 32 % of Bahrain and 27% of Saudi Arabia.

It is also estimated that foreign nationals' percentages have increased over the past three years, due largely to the rise in oil prices and the massive influx of foreign workers brought in to implement mega construction projects sprouting out across the region.

Oil and Gas Reserves

GCC states have undisclosed but massive gas and oil reserves, estimated around 488 billion barrels of oil and 1,084 trillion ft³ of gas, distributed by state as shown in Table no.3.

Oil and gas reserves by GCC state **Table 3**

State	Oil reserves (billion of barrels)	Gas reserves (trillion of ft3)
Saudi Arabia	283	230
Kuwait	96.5	52.4
UAE	97.8	212
Qatar	4.5	557
Oman	5.8	30.3
Bahrain	130 million barrels	3.2

Source: Statistics released by the GCC Secretariat General

“Oil revenues reached \$103.6 billions in 2000 and increased to \$126.8 billion in 2004 and close to \$314 billion in 2007”

Oil Revenues and Monetary Surplus

High oil revenues have allowed GCC states to realize considerable monetary surplus. Oil revenues reached \$103.6 billions in 2000 and increased to \$126.8 billion in 2004 and close to \$314 billion in 2007. The states' budgets, which registered a total of \$4.2 billion in deficit in 2000, realized a net surplus of \$33.5 billion in 2007. Table no.4 shows oil revenues and budget surplus realized in each of the GCC states.

Oil revenues and budget surplus realized in each of the GCC states **Table 4**

Year/ State	2000		2004		2007 (preliminary figures)	
	Oil revenues (billions of USD)	Surplus or deficit (millions of USD)	Oil revenues (billions of USD)	Surplus (billions of USD)	Oil revenues (billions of USD)	Surplus (billions of USD)
Saudi Arabia	51.2	-8	61.6	26.2	188	47.6
Kuwait	17.6	8.3	26.1	2.1	67	43
UAE	15.3	-6	20	100 million	42	5.2
Qatar	6.6	1.9	8.5	4.3	17	6.4
Oman	5	-833 million	8.2	598 million	11.5	2.2
Bahrain	2	393 million	2.5	520	-	-

Source: Statistics released by the GCC Secretariat General and reports of monetary and governmental institutions in 2007

With no anticipated drop of oil prices in the horizon, speculative financial opinions consider a large percentage of this rise to be nominal, a result of the drop of the value of USD against the Euro. In fact, financial experts estimate the actual price of a barrel of oil not to exceed \$30-40, viewing the surplus gain as the main contributor to the current monetary boom, accompanied by an increase in prices and inflation rates. Consequently, GCC states will be forced to find the means to compensation for this rise, by raising salaries and wages and employing this surplus in investment projects, in order to compensate for any potential decline in oil revenues. Kuwait is one such GCC state that has in fact started implementing such preemptive measures.

Norway's experience in this regard (see box) can be a good example to follow. Add to that, the vigilance among GCC states for the need to cover debts and loans and to face the ever-looming security and economic challenges in the region—the probability of a war between Iran and the United States, the future of Iraq and the adoption of a common currency, the Khaliji, by 2010. ●●

Norway is not a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), even though it ranks fourth in oil exports oil worldwide, following Saudi Arabia, Russia and Iran, pumping around 2.3 million barrels per day. It is also the third gas exporter behind Russia and Canada. In 1990, Norway established a pension petroleum fund, with investments reaching around \$400 billion. Through its oil reserves, Norway intends to cover any decrease in oil revenues, general revenues or any increase in living costs in order to achieve balance in the use of oil resources for this and future generations.

The Exploitation of Migrant Workers in Lebanon

Foreign and Arab workers in Lebanon coming from various walks of life fill the gap for unskilled workers or minimal-skill cheap laborers. They carry out all kinds of tasks found in secondary labor markets and can be categorized into three main groups: domestic helpers, no-skill jobs such as attendants, janitors, concierges, porters, sanitary workers, and minimal-skills jobs in construction, farming, car repair, and various maintenance activities.

Foreign laborers from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Ethiopia provide most domestic services; around 85% of non-Arab Afro-Asian migrant workers are females working as domestic helpers. Workers in the second category are mostly males from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Sudan, while Syrian males account for most of the jobs in the third category. Why such a huge wave of foreign labor? The following article delves at length into the multi-faceted aspects of the fate of foreign laborers in Lebanon.

Migrant workers represent a form of “cheap” labor, often agreeing to wages too low for Lebanese nationals. Furthermore, employers are relieved from the added burdens of paying social security and health care coverage on their behalf. Exploitation of foreign workers is thus much easier given their vulnerable state and underprivileged status.

Within Lebanese society, jobs traditionally held by migrant workers have been stigmatized, more often than not discouraging Lebanese citizens from performing such jobs themselves. Being a nation of emigrants, locals often opt to rely on financial support from family members working abroad

than pursue what they view as menial jobs.

Figures published by the Ministry of Labor reveal that there are 105,000 foreign and Arab workers in Lebanon. The number of illegal workers is estimated at about 50,000. There are also around 300,000 to 500,000 Syrian workers while some sources inflate the number of Syrian workers to be around 1 million. Hence, the size of the foreign and Arab labor force varies between 450,000 and 650,000 workers⁽¹⁾.

The first wave of non-Arab Afro-Asian migrant workers arriving to Lebanon was from the Philippines in 1973 and Sri Lanka between 1975 and 1990. Syrians have been a part of Lebanon's workforce since the 1960s, recently however their presence has caused resentment among some Lebanese due to political tensions between the two countries. Sri Lankans are the largest bulk of non-Arab workers followed by

the Ethiopian. Under Lebanese law, foreign workers need an entry visa to access into Lebanon and must have a Lebanese guarantor; this however, does not apply to Syrian nationals.

A work permit is usually provided by the Ministry of Labor. Employers are advised to inform the National Employment Agency of job opportunities to migrants in order to assess availability of Lebanese nationals to perform such jobs; this in theory, however the measure has hardly ever been implemented.

Table no.1 shows the number of foreign workers residing in Lebanese prisons in July 2007 according to the Lebanese's Internal Security Forces broken down by nationality. Syrians account for 31.5% of foreign workers residing in prisons, followed by the Palestinians by 17%, Iraqi's by 16.4% and Egyptians, 12.5%.

Foreign workers residing in prisons (according to their nationalities) throughout Beirut and the South Table 1

Nationality	Total Count	Crime
Ethiopian	15	theft, murder
Jordanian	10	-
Bangladeshi	42	Theft
Saudi	8	Drugs, Sexual Harassment
Syrian	666	Theft, drugs, prostitution, indirect murder, forgery
Pending	32	theft, prostitution
Iraqi	347	forgery, theft
Palestinian	358	theft, drugs, prostitution, murder, sexual harassment, underage
Filipino	10	theft
Egyptian	265	Drugs, theft, prostitution
Nigerian	12	drugs
Indian	19	theft
Sudanese	261	theft
Other	66	All of the above
Total	2,111	

Source: Internal Security Forces



Syrians account for 31% of foreign workers residing in prisons, followed by the Palestinians 17%, Iraqis 16.4%, and Egyptians 12.5%.

Table no. 2 shows estimates of the Foreign and Arab Labor Force (registered) by nationality (2006)

The foreign and Arab labor force (without Syrian nationals) (2006)
Table 2

Nationalities	Number
Sri Lankan	28,945
Ethiopian	12,924
Filipino	30,309
Egyptian	16,505
Indian	5,321
Bangladeshi	4,843
Sudanese	1,296
American	137
French	196
Other nationalities	7,085
Total	107,561

Source: Lebanese Ministry of Labor

Table no. 3 shows the distribution of Arab and foreign labor force (registered) by profession (2006).

Distribution of the Arab and foreign labor force according to professions
Table 3

Profession	Number
Servant (female)	80,845
Cleaning services	9,293
Agricultural worker	5,080
Gas station worker	1,427
Construction worker	1,494
Transport worker	5,855
Manager	714
Chef	565
Other professions	2,288

Source: Lebanese Ministry of Labor

“The exploitative treatment foreign workers in Lebanon are often subjected to, especially the abuse inflicted upon domestic laborers is rampant. The migrant workforce in Lebanon has been debarred from national labor laws and none of the International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions for migrant workers rights have been ratified by any Middle Eastern country”



The exploitative treatment foreign workers in Lebanon are often subjected to, especially the abuse inflicted upon domestic laborers is rampant. The migrant workforce in Lebanon has been debarred from national labor laws and none of the International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions for migrant workers rights have been ratified by any Middle Eastern country. At any rate, such conventions focus on ‘permanent immigrant’ or workers ‘regularly admitted into the territory of the member state’, overlooking the plight of temporary workers. Simply, no international or regional legislative measures have been taken in

order to secure the human rights of foreign migrant workers.

Syrian workers have recently been subject to numerous assaults from Lebanese nationals and security forces. In 2005, Damascus called for the compensation for the families of 36 Syrians killed and 250 injured from Lebanese authorities. Two buses carrying Syrians were stoned during the temporary closure of the Lebanese-Syrian border ⁽²⁾.

Foreign domestic workers in Lebanon face harsh conditions too, suffering from what has customarily been referred to as ‘contractual slavery’. Female helpers are often exposed to violence, threats, restrictions of physical movement, and economic exploitation ⁽³⁾. Workers are usually deceived into signing what seems to be legitimate employment contracts, but are in actuality purchase agreements of foreign workers by local recruitment agencies. Once the workers arrive to Lebanon, they remain under the sponsorship of their recruitment agency for a period of three months. They are often misled into signing a second contract, usually written in Arabic, stipulating a longer contract period at a lower salary than what they had originally signed in their country of origin. Employers pay agencies between \$1,000 to \$3,000 to engage a worker and current foreign worker salaries range from \$150 and \$300.

Domestic workers have zero say in contract negotiations. There are well documented cases where wages were withheld for up to six years as an unscrupulous tactic to prevent workers from returning to their home countries upon completion of their employment contract- a period that shouldn’t exceed 3 years. Should a worker leave before her contract has ended,

she is considered a “runaway” residing illegally on Lebanese soil. It is then legal for ISF to detain ‘a runaway’ who has to face the criminal charges brought upon her by her previous Lebanese employer. The charges are often made up, usually accusing the helper of theft. Workers recruited through employment agencies could be replaced within a three months if she is deemed unfit to perform her domestic duties. Some agencies have developed a habit of physical and mental abuse as a lesson learning method to thwart any shred of possibility that would compel a worker to claim her legal and human rights.

According to research conducted by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, a study on Migrant Workers and Xenophobia in the Middle East in 2003 exposed all kind of abuse physical, psychological, emotional, and sexual that foreign workers are regularly subjected to. Other forms of less lethal abuse include regular name calling and shouting, withholding food or feeding domestic workers leftovers. There were cases where refrigerators were fitted with locks or alarms to prevent domestic workers from eating in the absence of members of the household. Other individual cases of brutal assault reported include incidences of skin burns from boiling coffee, broken ribs, scars and beatings often requiring hospital stays and lengthy convalescence.

The rights of domestic migrant workers are also violated to a great extent through the confiscation of passports by agencies and employers, and the denial of freedom of movement. Withholding passports is illegal by all international standards, yet it seems completely justified in the case of domestic workers and often thought of as a form of ‘insurance’. Workers

are also warned not to leave the house; many are locked inside in the absence of their employers. Two reasons why employers resort to such practices is fear that “their” maids engage in intimate relationships or develop social relations with other maids who may ‘morally corrupt’ them.

With regards to their job description, domestic workers do not have defined tasks, and perform all kinds of domestic chores from cleaning to washing, serving meals and preparing food, to caring for children. Average workday is between 16 and 17 hours, in addition to being on-call 24/7⁽⁴⁾. Although domestic workers have an integral role in the running of a household, they suffer from extreme alienation. Employers often prefer that housemaids have their own bathrooms, considering it inappropriate for a helper to share the bathroom with family members. Few have their own private quarters, while most sleep on mattresses in the laundry room or the kitchen floor. According to the Ethiopian Consul General Adem Nurhussen two or three workers a day seek refuge in the consulate located in Badaro. This number was around 12 or 15 women prior to the formation of the Syndicate of Recruitment Agencies. Adem says that a total of 98 workers have died since the Consulate first opened six years ago, and all but ten were officially reported as cases of suicide, with no further investigation.

In 2006, the Ethiopian Consulate in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor have established a ‘blacklist of employers with violations’. They started tracking down employers for neglecting to pay salaries, and have so far maintained a 60% success rate of employers who rightfully compensated their employees through this intervention. There are currently 45

licensed Ethiopian placement agencies, according to Hicham al-Bourgi head of the Syndicate. The temporary ban on Ethiopian workers in 2005, according to al-Bourgi, was deliberate and meant to dismantle one placement agency monopoly on Ethiopian Domestic helpers⁽⁵⁾. According to the ILO there are 366 licensed placement agencies in Lebanon. The Ministry of Labor has begun to shut down unlicensed placement agencies operating illegally in the country.

With reference to *The Monthly’s* interview with the Sri Lankan Ambassador Mohamed Mohideen Amanul Farouq (issue no. 61, 2007), the number of mistreated Sri Lankan domestic workers in Lebanon is around 6,000.

Foreign migrant workers leave their impoverished countries in order to make a better living for their families back home. Their desperation, misinformation, and unsuspecting ways are taken advantage of. These workers fail to realize that they are entering a country with little respect for human rights; a country in which utterances such as “my Filipina” and “your Srilankiyeh” have become part of our everyday lexicon. Discrimination of migrant workers in Lebanon has not only infiltrated our everyday speech, but has unfortunately become a yardstick for socio-economic status. ●

⁽¹⁾ “*Cant Live With or Without Foreign Workers*” Issue no.50 *Ii monthly* (August 2006)

⁽²⁾ Hamideh, Ibrahim “*Damascus calls for <<hotline>> with Beirut and Compensation of 36 killed and 250 Injured*” *Al-Hayat Newspaper* (July 19, 2005)

⁽³⁾ Jureidini, Ray “*Migrant Workers and Xenophobia in the Middle East*” *United Nations Research Institute* (December 2003)

⁽⁴⁾ Jureidini, Ray “*Migrant Workers and Xenophobia in the Middle East*” *United Nations Research Institute* (December 2003)

⁽⁵⁾ Obrstrom, Lysandra “*Halting progress for Migrant Workers*” *The Daily Star* (Monday May 21, 2007)

President's Constitutional Powers delegated to the Government

The Lebanese Presidency has been vacant since November 24th 2007, after the end of President Emile Lahoud's term and Parliament's failure to elect a successor. The same case occurred in 1988, when the term of then President Amin al-Gemayel ended and no successor was elected. A decree was then issued stipulating the formation of an interim government headed by Army Commander General Michel Aoun. However, Lahoud was not able to form an interim government as his constitutional functions were amended after the adoption of the Ta'if Accord in 1990. Instead, Lahoud entrusted the Army with maintaining the security on the Lebanese territories, a step seen by both the government and the army (without official declaration) as useless.

Today, after six months from Lahoud's departure and as the President's powers were delegated to the government, controversies were raised over the extent to which constitutional powers can be exercised by the government, especially after the issuance of the two last decrees (removing the head of Airport Security from his post and dismantling Hizbullah's telecommunications network).

Delegation of Constitutional Powers

Article 62 of the Constitution

stipulates: "Should the Presidency become vacant for any reason whatsoever, the Council of Ministers exercises the powers of the President by delegation." Moreover, Article 74 states: "Should the Presidency become vacant through the death or resignation of the President or for any other cause, the Chamber meets immediately and by virtue of the law to elect a successor."

Based on the abovementioned articles, the government, headed by Prime Minister Fouad Sanioura, continued to assume its functions, despite the resignation of Shia'a ministers, as the constitutional reasons that force the government to resign stipulated in Article 69 were not present in this case (if the Prime Minister resigns, if it loses more than a third of the members specified in the Decree forming it, if the Prime Minister dies, at the beginning of the term of the President, at the beginning of the term of the Chamber of Deputies, when it loses the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies).

In 1987, Constitutional Expert Edmond Rbat submitted a study on this issue, upon the request of the Speaker of Parliament, saying that Article 62 of the Constitution deals with the vacancy of the presidential seat when the President is suspended from his functions when he is impeached

based on Article 61. Rbat added that Article 74 was the one dealing with the vacancy of the seat because either of the death of the President, resignation or the end of his term. He concluded by saying that the government executes the full executive authority should the presidency become vacant for any reason whatsoever, including the failure to elect a successor. (The study is issued in Volume 51 of the "Parliamentary Life" book, issued by Parliament in June 2004).

“After six months from Lahoud's departure and as the President's powers were delegated to the government, controversies were raised over the extent to which constitutional powers can be exercised by the government, especially after the issuance of the two last decrees”

The Extent of Powers

There are various positions on the extent of presidential powers delegated to the government, when the presidential seat becomes vacant. There is a group of constitutional experts who say that the government has the right to exercise all the powers of the President, while another group says that these powers are limited to basic and necessary functions to run the State affairs, arguing that this should be a temporary period of weeks or several months.

The president of the School of Law and Economic Sciences in Paris George Fidel issued a study in 1989 on the extent of Cabinet's powers when the presidential seat becomes vacant, particularly its power to dissolve Parliament (when General Aoun made such step in 1989 to prevent Parliament from ratifying the Ta'if Accord). Fidel said that the Cabinet cannot dissolve Parliament because this would eliminate, even if for a temporary period, the legislative authority, and extend the period of presidential seat vacancy. This would leave the government the sole constitutional body monopolizing the State authority. Fidel also said that the "use of the right to dissolve Parliament is unconstitutional, as it deprives the Lebanese State from its legislative authority and allows the government to monopolize the political authority."

He added: "The government, who is executing by delegation, based on Article 62 of the Constitution, the executive powers of the President, and in its status of delegate, cannot dissolve Parliament, because this would allow it to determine the term of delegation, a right that cannot be bestowed on a delegated authority."

“Fidel said that the Cabinet cannot dissolve Parliament because this would eliminate, even if for a temporary period, the legislative authority, and extend the period of presidential seat vacancy”

(The study is issued in Volume 61 of the "Parliamentary Life" book, issued by Parliament in December 2006.)

Fidel's study addresses a basic aspect of President's powers and points out to the fact the government cannot exercise all of them. This means that when the presidential seat becomes vacant, the government has limited powers that should be agreed upon, in particular if the vacancy period lasted for a long time, as is the case today.

The Current Government

The current government monopolized the presidential powers even when the President was still in Ba'abda. It held ministerial sessions in his absence and issued decrees and decisions, referred them to Lahoud, who was rejecting them as he considered the government illegitimate since the departure of the Shia'a ministers on November 11th 2006. In response, the government was issuing legally operative decrees after the end of the constitutional deadline, based on Article 56 of the Constitution, which stipulates: "The President issues decrees and requests their promulgation; he has the right to ask the Council of Ministers to review any Decision that the Chamber has taken within fifteen days of the decision's transmission to the Presidency. If the Council of Ministers insists on the Decision or if the time

limit passes without the Decree being issued or returned, the Decision or Decree is considered legally operative and must be promulgated."

The issuance of laws and decrees is a power bestowed on the President. However, the Prime Minister should inform the President beforehand of the content of these decrees. It is true that the presidential powers were amended by the Ta'if Accord, but the President remains the symbol of the country's unity, based on the same accord.

When and if the current crisis is resolved in the future and parliamentary and presidential elections are held, one of the priorities of the Lebanese should be the amendment and strengthening of presidential powers. ●

“In response, the government was issuing legally operative decrees after the end of the constitutional deadline, based on Article 56 of the Constitution”

Arab Investments

0.5% in Lebanon and 4.5% in the Middle East



Both rich and poor countries seek to attract foreign investments to boost their economic drive and create job opportunities. In Lebanon, attention is currently focused on attracting investors from the Arab Gulf region, considering the monetary surplus realized in Gulf states as a result of the increase in oil prices and exports.

Legal Framework

The Lebanese Government, in line with Decree no.5778 of October 11th 1994, established the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL), to boost investments in the country. Lebanon also adopted Law no.360 of August 16th 2001 (Investment Development Law) that determined Lebanon's investment zones and incentives granted to investors.

Investments via IDAL

Based on annual reports released by IDAL, the value of investments via the Authority amount to \$2,651.5 billion, distributed by year and sector as follows:

- ⦿ 2000: investments reached \$275 million and focused on the tourism sector.
- ⦿ 2001: investments reached \$150 million and focused on the tourism sector.
- ⦿ 2002: investments reached \$434.7 million; 98.7% in the tourism sector and 1.3% in the industrial sector.
- ⦿ 2003: investments reached \$850 million; 58% in the tourism sector, 18% in food industries, 18% in the industrial sector and 6% in Information Technology. These investments are supposed to provide 3,000 job opportunities.
- ⦿ 2004: investments reached \$37 million; 32.5% in technology and industry and 67.5% in tourism. They are supposed to provide 700 job opportunities.
- ⦿ 2005: investments reached \$510.1 million; 96.5% in tourism, 2.4% in industry and 1.1% in technology and communications. It is estimated that they provide 1,800 job opportunities.
- ⦿ 2006: investments reached \$267.7 million and focused on tourism and residence. They are supposed to provide around 320 job opportunities.
- ⦿ 2007: investments reached \$127 million; 32% in the tourism sector and 17% in each of the sectors of industry, agriculture, technology, communications and Information Technology. They are supposed to provide 700 job opportunities.

Investments are distributed as follows: 20% Lebanese investments; 37% Arab-Lebanese investments and 43% Arab investments.



Other Investments

Annual reports released by the Arab Agency for Investment Protection showed that Arab investments in Lebanon amounted to \$964 million in 2000 and increased to \$2,794 million in 2006, as shown in Table no.1.

Arab investments in Lebanon (2000-2006)								Table 1
Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Investment size (million USD)	964	1,451	1,338	2,860	1,993	2,751	2,794	3,000

Source: Arab Agency for Investment Protection website

Based on these figures, Lebanon ranked fourth among Arab countries attracting the largest size of investments in 2006 and 2007, after Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Tunisia. It ranked third in 2005 and first in 2001.

The difference in investment size reported by IDAL and that reported by the Arab Agency is due to the fact that investments in the financial and banking sectors and private real estate investments do not fall within IDAL's framework. This means that 4.2% of Arab investments in 2007 were focused on productive sectors, while the monetary and real estate sectors attracted 95.8% of investments. This decreases the financial influence of foreign investments on Lebanon's economic life. In fact, the high percentage of investments in the real estate sector increases the prices of real estate but does not have economic advantages such as creating job opportunities and achieving economic growth.

Lebanon's share from foreign Arab investments

GCC states realized high budgetary surpluses over the past years (2004-2007), amounting to \$360 billion. This led to the increase of Arab investments abroad, reaching \$550 billion in 2006, distributed among the following regions:

United States: \$300 billion

Europe: \$100 billion

Middle East and Africa: \$60 billion

Other areas: \$22 billion

This shows that Lebanon attracts around 0.5% of Arab foreign investments and around 4.5% of Arab investments in the Middle East and Africa. This highlights the need for more administrative and legal measures to attract investments. ●●

Lebanon's Airport Traffic 1974-2008

Airport traffic at Beirut International Airport (officially known as Rafiq Hariri International Airport ⁽¹⁾) is one of the main indexes of the country's economic and social life. The airport's activity, including air traffic, the number of passengers and the import and export of goods, reflect the situation in the country.

Considering the importance of this issue, *The Monthly* will publish a monthly detailed table on air traffic. The first article presents basic information on the airport, its development and activity over the past years.

Airport's establishment, development and activity over the past years

In 1943, Lebanon had a small airport in the area of Bir Hassan in Beirut. Then in 1947, it was decided to establish an airport in Beirut's southern suburbs, to contain the expansion of air traffic from and to Lebanon, especially after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and shifting air traffic to Lebanon. On the first of September 1950, the airport was inaugurated with two runways; the first having a total length of 1,800 meters and the second of 2,400 meters and a width of 61 meters. The aviation center was completed in April 1954. Before the beginning of the civil war in 1975, the airport was able to receive 2.7 million passengers in 1974.

In 1994, the government reconsidered the strategy to develop the airport so to contain six million passengers in the first phase and around 16 million passengers by the year 2035. The first phase development projects, which

started in 1994 and were completed in 2000, included the building of a terminal building, which encompasses 21 gates and a duty free zone, an air traffic control tower and two runways, the eastern runway with a total length of 3,800 meters and the western runway with a total length of 3,400 meters. The first phase also included other works in buildings and equipment. Works amounted to \$664 million and were implemented by the union of CCC/Hochtif and Fahmi Qarakollah Company, under the supervision of Dar al-Handasa.

Airport Activity

In 1974, Beirut International Airport received 2,748,293 passengers, including 1,096,830 arriving passengers, 1,117,158 departing passengers and 534,305 transit passengers. Aircraft movement declined in 1976 due to the civil war to 416,741 passengers, including 193,393 arriving passengers and 223,348 departing passengers. Airport activity remained affected by the situation, increasing in periods of stability and decreasing in states of chaos and war.

In 1991, the airport resumed its normal activity. Table no.1 shows air traffic at Beirut International Airport from 1974 until the end of 2007.

Air traffic at Beirut International Airport from 1974 until the end of 2007 Table 1

Year	# of arriving and departing airplanes	Arrivals	Departures	Transit passengers	Luggage (ton)
1974	48,029	1,096,830	1,117,158	534,305	-
1991	10,822	413,352	412,412	11,380	44,064
1992	14,943	514,442	529,120	49,083	48,859
1993	16,581	643,734	650,505	49,050	45,539
1994	19,045	717,040	721,258	51,131	54,007
1995	20,478	802,353	809,988	60,317	49,742
1996	21,004	818,416	827,063	69,955	46,505
1997	23,051	963,657	976,617	66,682	55,037
1998	25,010	1,002,117	993,794	64,109	54,300
1999	27,878	1,050,001	1,060,655	111,688	52,439
2000	29,707	1,120,164	1,124,624	98,599	59,243
2001	30,627	1,185,699	1,187,357	71,795	62,789
2002	32,952	1,255,107	1,258,325	93,429	65,836
2003	34,561	1,352,243	1,365,382	122,302	65,966
2004	39,023	1,598,726	1,601,226	134,758	62,081
2005	38,198	1,579,004	1,600,749	105,323	62,295
2006	32,980	1,464,487	1,275,119	85,532	56,759
2007	39,052	1,677,324	1,649,109	82,401	62,926

Source: Marketing and Development Department at Beirut International Airport

“A significant rise (20.3%) in the number of departures was registered in the first quarter of 2008, compared to 2007”

It was estimated that the airport would receive around six million passengers per year as of 2000. However, the airport only received 2.3 million passengers that year.

This means that the airport will not receive the expected number of passengers but two decades from now, if the situation in the country and the region remained stable. This leads us to ask whether Lebanon was in need of debts to develop the airport. On the other hand, if the situation in the country witnessed some improvement, expectations might come true and the airport would need new development projects to become again an important transit center, knowing that the number of transit passengers reached 534,305 in 1974 and decreased to 82,401 in 2007.

The first quarter of 2008

Airport activity in the first quarter of 2008 registered an increase compared to the same period of 2007, as shown in Table no.2.

Airport activity in the first quarter of 2008 compared to the first quarter of 2007						Table 2
	January 2008	February 2008	March 2008	Total of first quarter in 2008	Total of first quarter in 2007	Percentage of change
Aircraft movement	3,249	2,943	3,210	9,402	8,810	+6.7%
Arrivals	111,726	102,844	133,879	348,449	325,840	+6.9%
Departures	163,402	106,799	132,526	402,727	334,786	+20.3%
Transit passengers	5,150	4,202	3,783	13,135	23,411	-49.9%
Shipping (ton)	5,110	4,946	5,463	15,519	14,247	+8.9%

Source: Marketing and Development Department at Beirut International Airport

A significant rise (20.3%) in the number of departures was registered in the first quarter of 2008, compared to 2007, which indicates a rise in emigration levels.



⁽¹⁾ Decree no.15110 of September 9th 2005 changed the name of Beirut International Airport to Rafiq Hariri International Airport- Beirut. This decision was taken by the Prime Minister Najib Mikati's Cabinet during a session held on May 18th 2005.

Money Laundering in 2007

Bank secrecy law in Lebanon was passed on September 3rd 1956. This legal principle allows banks to open numbered accounts, deposit and withdraw money while protecting personal information about their customers. Since its issuance, the law has played an instrumental role in the Lebanese banking system as a safe haven for Lebanese emigrants, foreign and Arab investors. Lebanese banks were tax shelters and dependable financial institutions during numerous wars, military upheavals in this volatile region of the world.

The Special Investigation Commission

There has been a rise in money laundering worldwide, and banks are natural an integral ring in the laundering chain. In an effort to avoid international pressure, the Lebanese Parliament passed Law No. 318 of April 20th 2001, as a measure against money laundering. The law stipulated the establishment of a Special Investigation Commission, presided over by the Central Bank governor, to investigate purported money laundering operations, look into available evidence, and decide on the right to lift banking secrecy for judicial ends.

Money Laundering Cases in 2007

The number of money laundering cases reported to the SIC in 2007 was 234, including 152 cases from local sources and 82 from outside parties.

The Commission found 137 cases or 58.5% of total cases, that were not subject to Law 318 provisions, while 43 cases remain under investigation and 54 cases were referred to the public prosecutor or to the relevant local of foreign authorities in line with proper legal procedures.

In 2006, the number of cases reported to the SIC was 185, including 79 foreign cases and 106 local. This highlights progress in monitoring and supervision work.

“Lebanon was able to become among countries cooperating in fighting money laundering”

Reporting Sources

Most cases were reported by the Lebanese Customs with 79 cases reported, followed by the Financial Investigation Units reporting 67 cases, commercial banks (58 cases), police (11 cases), judicial authorities (6 cases) and other sources (13 cases).

Countries which reported money laundering cases were the following: Romania (9 cases), Belgium (8), France (7), USA (4), Russia (4) and other countries (44 cases).

Nature of Crime

Illegal money transfer via the borders ranked first among reported cases (79) followed by counterfeiting (34), terrorism and terrorist financing (13), drugs (8), embezzlement of private funds, (8) and other cases not mentioned above (92).

Lebanon is among a number of countries around the world cooperating to fight money laundering.



Deposits Segmentation

At the end of 2007, bank deposits amounted to LBP102,598 billion (equivalent to \$68.1 billion), compared to LBP93,073 billion (\$61.7 billion) at the end of 2006; which indicates an increase of \$6.4 billion and a rate of 10.3%.

Deposits are distributed as follows:

- LBP86,981 billion (\$57.8 billion) in resident private sector deposits, representing 84.8% of total deposits;
- LBP1,163 billion (\$722 million) in public sector deposits, representing 1.1% of total deposits;
- LBP14,454 billion (\$9.6 billion) in non-resident private sector deposits, representing 14.1% of total deposits.

Deposits are distributed among around 1.5 million bank accounts, with 2.1% of accounts (31,500 accounts) owning 64% of deposits. This means that the average of each account is LBP2.1 billion.

Electronic Signature

Yet to be legalized in Lebanon

Electronic trading is today widely spread and is protected by laws and regulations set in the majority of countries around the world. In Lebanon, no laws were adopted to protect electronic signature, which is essential in any type of electronic trading.

Definition

Signature is “any mark made on a document and intended to serve as an indication of the party’s execution or authentication of the document and intent to be bound by it.”⁽¹⁾

The need to speed up international transactions through information technology made it necessary to adopt the electronic signature as an authentication of any document or operation.

Electronic signature was adopted by the following Arab countries: Dubai (2002), Bahrain (2002), Jordan (2001) and Egypt (2004).

A law issued in Dubai in 2002, pertaining to electronic commerce and transactions, defines electronic signature as a “signature formed of letters, numbers, symbols, sound or an electronic code, attached or linked to an electronic message and sealed to authenticate this message.”

In Egypt, Law no.15 of 2004, which regulates electronic signature and stipulates the creation of a committee to develop Information Technology, defines electronic signature as “what is stamped on an electronic document and is formed of letters, numbers, symbols or others and which allows the identification of a person from others.”

Characteristics

An electronic signature is confidential and determines the date and time when the contract was signed in order to prevent forgery. International laws guarantee the confidentiality of electronic transactions, by forbidding access to information.

“Despite the spread of electronic transactions, and while electronic signature is approved in the majority of countries across the world, Lebanon is yet to enforce laws that would facilitate commercial exchange”

Electronic Signature in Lebanon

Article 363 of the Lebanese Contract Law stipulates that “a written contract cannot be fully enforced unless it is signed by the relevant parties.” Article 364 stipulates that if one of the parties does not know how to sign, they can stamp the document with their fingerprint.” The Lebanese Law did not deal with electronic signature. In 2000, the government referred to Parliament, by Decree no.3553, a draft-law pertaining to the amendment of some articles in the Civil Procedure Law, in particular Articles 142, 152 and 171. Article 142 stipulated that “electronic signature is considered

legal when reliable procedures and means are used to guarantee the identification of the signatory and confirm the link between the signature and the stamped document.”

On October 26th 2001, Deputy Yassin Jaber submitted a draft-law pertaining to the amendment of some articles of the Civil Procedure Law, in particular those related to electronic signatures and documents. Deputy Ghinwa Jalloul also submitted a similar law on October 29th 2001, based on the Model Law on Electronic Commerce of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law. Until today, none of these laws were passed by Parliament.

Electronic Transactions in the Lebanese Jurisprudence

The Lebanese courts made no decisions pertaining to electronic signature. However, the Cassation Court issued a sentence in 2001 in the case of Al-Ghazawi bankruptcy, in which it refused to look into electronic account records and consider them as account books. It also stipulated that rules that regulate the use of account records cannot be exchanged with practices based on electronic programs. The Court also stressed that electronic account books cannot be approved.

Despite the spread of electronic transactions, and while electronic signature is approved in the majority of countries across the world, Lebanon is yet to enforce laws that would facilitate commercial exchange. ●●

⁽¹⁾ Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary of Law



May 7th Developments: Return of Civil War? Hizbullah: Resistance or Militia?

The General Labor Confederation organized a general strike on May 7th 2008 to call for increasing minimum wages to LBP960,000 and raising salaries and wages in the public and private sectors.

Two days earlier, on Monday, the Lebanese government convened in a long session, during which it decided to increase salaries by LBP200,000 and the minimum wage to LBP500,000 (there are controversies over the legitimacy of this increase without being passed by Parliament). It also decided to remove the head of Airport Security, Wafiq Shukair, from his post, dismantle Hizbullah's private telecommunications network and inform the Arab League and the Security Council of "Hizbullah's violations of the Lebanese sovereignty."

These developments made May 7th an unusual day, and the general strike developed into violent security developments and armed clashes between pro-government parties, including the Future Movement and the Progressive Socialist Party and the opposition, including Hizbullah, Amal Movement and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. Beirut's roads were closed, in particular all roads and highways leading to the airport. Security developments lasted for the following days and spread to other areas across the country.

Lebanese newspapers assessed the developments differently. An-Nahar newspaper regarded it as "a coup by Hizbullah", while As-Safir asked about the party responsible for it. Al-Akhbar highlighted the spread of clashes in the Chouf.

غير مخصص للبيع

الصراع العربي - الاسرائيلي الإلهي لا البشري
سليم نصار - لندن

مراجعة لكتاب: "السرية المصرفية..."
عباس الحلبي

"ذكرى السيف"
محمد السماك

الجمهورية اللبنانية - بيروت

السبت 10 أيار 2008 - السنة 75 - العدد 23544

24 صفحة 210006 ليرة

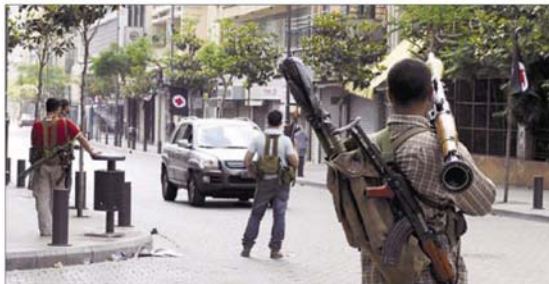
23544

نقسم بالله العظيم
مسلمين ومسيحيين
أن نبقي موحدين
إلى أيد الأبد
دفاعاً عن لبنان العظيم
جبران تويني

Samedi 10 Mai 2008 - 75^{ème} Année - No 23344

A N - N A H A R

14 قتيلاً وعشرات الجرحى واجتياح إعلام "المستقبل" في اليوم الثاني لسقوط بيروت وتدابيرها الحكومة والأكثرية تطرحان برنامجاً لمواجهة "انقلاب حزب الله" الجيش يتسلم الأمن بتمهّل في العاصمة ويتريث في الحلول الدستورية



لم يجد مصدر رسمي ما يصف به لـ"النهار" ما جرى في بيروت أمس سوى قوله "أن حزب الله نفذ في بيروت انقلاباً نوامياً مشابهاً لانقلاب حماس في غزة، وهو كمثل كل الانقلابيين سيكمل خطوته ورضياً به ولو ذبح كل شعبه".

والساف: "أصبحت السلطة من مسؤولية ميليشيا حزب الله باعتبار أنه يملك بزمام الأمور على الأرض، وكل العالم والشعب اللبناني ينتظرون كيف ستطبق ميليشيا حزب الله نظرية السيد حسن نصرالله التي قال فيها أن حزبه يتمسك بمنطق الدولة وليس بمنطق العصية، وكانت أبو بكر الأوسلي لهذا المنطق أمثالاً منازل النواب، وقتل الأمنيين في الطرقات، واستخف مسلحاً لا محالة".

An-Nahar Newspaper

An-Nahar headline stated: "14 killed and tens of injured, invasion of the Future media on the 2nd day of Beirut's fall. The government and the majority discuss a plan to face Hizbullah's coup." The newspaper quoted an official source as saying: "Hizbullah implemented a coup in Beirut similar to the coup of Hamas in Gaza. It will carry on its steps even if its entire people are slaughtered." The source added that the authority was now in the hands of Hizbullah militia which invaded the deputies' houses and killed civilians in the streets.



As-Safir Newspaper

As-Safir asked: "What is next following the use of opposition weapons in the street? What about the responsibility of Berri, Nasrallah, Hariri, Jumblat, Sanioura, the Army and the Arabs in resolving the situation?" Unlike other newspapers, As-Safir asked about the solutions and responsibilities of the disputing factions, avoiding bias.



Al-Mustaqbal Newspaper



Al-Mustaqbal newspaper was stopped on May 10th; its headline on May 8th said: "The sub-state spreads the death groups in the streets with the failure of the strike; Hizbullah's weapons kidnap the airport and burn Beirut."



Al-Akhbar Newspaper

Al-Akhbar said that the military clashes in Beirut were over and moved to the Mountain. It also accused the March 14 Forces of calling for foreign intervention and held them responsible for the clashes due to their insistence on Sanioura's government.

“Al-Akhbar said that the military clashes in Beirut were over and moved to the Mountain. It also accused the March 14 Forces of calling for foreign intervention”

Al-Mustaqbal Newspaper

Al-Mustaqbal newspaper was stopped on May 10th; its headline on May 8th said: "The sub-state spreads the death groups in the streets with the failure of the strike; Hizbullah's weapons kidnap the airport and burn Beirut."

Its headline on May 9th stated: "Hizbullah Secretary General announces the use of weapons internally, as if we were on the frontline; his militias escalate their attacks with all kinds of weapons; Hariri offers Nasrallah a compromise to save Lebanon, but he rejects it."

When they talk about Hizbullah's arms

Talks on disarming Hizbullah emerged in 2004 following the issuance of UN Security Council Resolution 1559. The resolution stipulated the “disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias.” This raised controversies on whether Hizbullah was a militia or a resistance.

The following article shows positions of some Lebanese politicians and clerics on Hizbullah's arms before and after the issuance of Resolutions 1559 and 1701.

Changing Positions

Walid Jumblat

“Hizbullah is a big party, formed of citizens of the South and the country; it did not come from the outside. If Israel decides to enter Lebanon again, then every house will hold a weapon of Hizbullah.” (May 5th 2003)

“We are stronger than the weapons that they own, the weapons of treason, and stronger than the weapons they call as weapons of liberation.” (January 14th 2006)

Michel Aoun

“Everyone knows that Syria provides Hizbullah with weapons and artillery, which defies everyday the State's authority and represents a form of foreign occupation...” (April 25th 1996)

“My support to the resistance was not a gamble but a decision; the resistance represents a large part of our people and we will live together in victory and defeat.” (February 6th 2006)

Sa'ad Hariri

“Hizbullah is not an armed militia; it is Lebanon's armed resistance force.” (April 23rd 2005)

“He, who raises his weapons to reject the international tribunal... bears the responsibility of people shifting their position on his arms, from resistance arms to illegal arms.” (April 18th 2007)

Mufti Mohammed Rashid Qabbani

“We are with protecting and preserving the resistance in facing the Israel enemy and its plans.” (March 19th 2005)

“A strong state is the only authority that has the right to own weapons to protect its citizens. The Lebanese Army alone bears arms to maintain order and defend the country.” (March 2nd 2007)

Boutros Harb

“...we agree on our natural right to resist any occupation of our land and to liberate this land.” (July 30th 2005)

“...the Lebanese agree on standing up to the enemy and government's strategy is clear in this regard; we do not need a particular party to assume the resistance.” (July 30th 2007)

Stable and Supporting Positions

Suleiman Franjeh

“I am against disarming Hizbullah before the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace and not another May 17th Agreement.” (March 23rd 2005)

“Were it not for Hizbullah's arms and the solidarity of the opposition, no one could prevent naturalization, as weapons cannot be faced but with weapons and not with Bkirki's prayers.” (June 9th 2007)

Stable and Opposing Positions

Amin al-Gemayel

“Syria could have put an immediate end to recent tensions in the South because it has full control over the Shia'a Hizbullah Organization. Damascus International Airport is the only means to transport weapons and Iranian militants to Hizbullah.” (June 2nd 1992)

“We are not saying that Hizbullah should disarm because no one can disarm Hizbullah.” (August 22nd 2006)

Samir Geagea

“Hizbullah is a totalitarian party that has its own social and ideological regulations. It wants to implement these regulations in the society and it is the antipode to the Christian presence.” (May 26th 1988)

“We will no longer accept weapons outside the authority of the Lebanese Army; the Army is the resistance; the government is the resistance; and the Lebanese people are the resistance.” (February 14th 2007)

Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir

“Hizbullah can disarm after the conflict over the occupied Sheba'a Farms is resolved.” (March 22nd 2005)

“When there is an armed group and an unarmed group, there is no room for equity. The party was informed of this. But in fact, it is difficult to disarm (Hizbullah) because Syria and Iran are manipulating it.” (June 2nd 2006)

Myth #12

Number of Students in Public Schools on the Rise

With the beginning of each scholarly year, talks arise on the increase in tuition fees, book prices, transportation fees, and families' failure to provide their children with private education. As a result, parents choose public schools as an alternative. This has raised the need to rehabilitate public schools to be able to contain this "large number" of students every year, as many claim.

These claims make people believe that the majority of Lebanese students are now enrolled in public schools, or that a significant increase in the number of students has been registered in state-owned schools. However, the number of public schools' students reached 302,666 in 1997-1998, which represents 34.5% of pre-university students, compared to 326,503 in 2006-2007, which represents 35.5% of students. This means that the number of students in public schools increased by 23,837 from 1997 to 2007, on an average of 2,383 students per year. On the other hand, number of students in free private schools⁽¹⁾ increased, during the same period, from 106,730 to 124,281, which means an increase of 17,551 and representing 13.5% of the total number of students, compared to 12.1% ten years ago. Meanwhile, the number of students in non-free private schools decreased from 468,334 students to 467,093, with a decrease of 1,241 students. Today, they represent 51% of the total number of students, compared to 53.3% ten years ago.

Fact

In comparison between the number of students in 1999-2000 and those in 2006-2007, we notice a decrease of 6,019 students in the number of students in public schools.

Table no.1 shows number of students in public, free/private, non-free/private schools from 1997 to 2007.

Number of students in public, free/private, non-free/private schools from 1997 to 2007							Table 1
Academic year	# of public schools students	% of total number of students	# of free/private schools students	% of total number of students	# of non-free/private schools students	% of total number of students	Total number of students
1997-1998	302,666	34.5%	106,730	12.1%	468,334	53.4%	877,730
1998-1999	320,936	36.8%	95,501	11%	455,144	52.2%	871,581
1999-2000	332,522	37.9%	101,317	11.6%	443,281	50.5%	877,120
2000-2001	347,498	39%	111,200	12.5%	432,822	48.5%	891,520
2001-2002	351,177	39%	113,658	12.7%	434,673	48.3%	899,508
2002-2003	348,304	38.5%	114,326	12.6%	442,815	48.9%	905,445
2003-2004	348,144	37.9%	114,935	12.5%	455,532	49.6%	918,611
2004-2005	337,622	36.8%	114,194	12.5%	465,130	50.7%	916,946
2005-2006	324,651	35.6%	115,254	12.7%	471,409	51.7%	911,314
2006-2007	326,503	35.5%	124,281	13.5%	467,093	51%	917,877

Source: Educational Center for Research and Development- Statistical reports of the relevant years

⁽¹⁾ Most of which are affiliated with religious institutions that receive a fee for each enrolled student.

Consumer Price Index: April 2008

Prices of around half of goods and food products in *Information International's* index remained stable during April 2008. The price of 41 products increased, while 45 products maintained the same price and 14 products decreased, as shown in Table no.1. Prices of oil, pasta, rice, lemons and tomatoes registered a significant increase that reached 80%.

Consumer Price Index- April 2008 (Prices in LBP) Table 1				
Item and brand		Prices beginning of April 2008	Prices beginning of May 2008	Percentage of price change
Oil				
Afia corn oil	(3.5 liters)	14,700	16,750	+13.9%
Mazola corn oil	(4 liters)	12,990	16,750	+28.9%
Mazola corn oil	(2 liters)	6,450	8,000	+24%
Slim corn oil	(2 liters)	8,990	9,200	+2.3%
Wesson corn oil	(2 liters)	8,600	8,600	0%
Gandour soya oil	(3.8 liters)	12,980	13,250	+2%
Alfa corn oil	(4 liters)	13,820	14,500	+4.9%
Al-Wadi olive oil	(1/2 liter)	6,350	6,600	+3.9%
Ketchup and Sauces				
Libby's Ketchup	(567g)	2,100	2,100	0%
Extra Ketchup	(340g)	980	980	0%
Extra Ketchup	(2.2kg)	4,500	4,500	0%
Dolly's Mayonnaise	(500 ml)	3,450	3,450	0%
Al-Wadi Mayonnaise	(500 ml)	3,250	3,250	0%
Al-Bsat Tahina	(900g)	7,890	8,150	+3.3%
Al-Bsat Tahina	(450g)	4,000	4,200	+5%
Taous tomato sauce	(70g)	550	550	0%
Taous tomato sauce	(425g)	2,540	2,540	0%
Tala tomato sauce	(675g)	2,145	2,200	+2.5%
Pasta				
Barilla spaghetti	(500g)	1,650	2,750	+66.6%
Antonio Amato spaghetti	(500g)	1,700	2,400	+41.1%
Monte spaghetti	(500g)	1,600	2,200	+37.5%

Consumer Price Index- April 2008 (Prices in LBP) Table 1				
Item and brand		Prices beginning of April 2008	Prices beginning of May 2008	Percentage of price change
Dairy Products				
Candia full cream milk	(1 liter)	2,000	2,000	0%
Nestle condensed milk	(90g)	980	1,000	+2%
Candia full cream yoghurt	(2kg)	3,990	3,890	-2.5%
Bonjus labneh	(1kg)	3,150	3,150	0%
Taanayel labneh	(500g)	3,985	3,985	0%
Candia labneh	(500g)	4,000	4,000	0%
Taanayel yoghurt	(1kg)	2,050	2,250	+9.7%
Smeds cheese	(360g)	2,250	2,250	0%
Picon cheese	(512g)	4,100	4,100	0%
Picon cheese	(170g)	1,600	1,600	0%
Double-crème cheese	(1kg)	7,500	7,500	0%
Fresh country cheese	(1kg)	7,500	7,500	0%
Khashkawan cheese	(1kg)	11,250	11,250	0%
Lurpak butter	(200g)	2,500	2,500	0%
Tatra butter	(200g)	2,250	2,250	0%
Al-Maalaqtain margarine	(2kg)	8,550	8,650	+1.16%
Al-Baqara al-Haloub margarine	(2kg)	22,250	24,100	+8.3%
Vegetaline margarine	(2kg)	13,350	13,500	+1.1%
Nido full cream milk (bag)	(2,250g)	22,600	22,600	0%
Nido full cream milk	(2,500g)	29,200	29,000	-0.68%
Tatra full cream milk	(2,500g)	23,400	23,250	-0.64%
Sugar and Salt				
Sugar	(1kg)	2,000	2,000	0%
Al-Ousra Sugar	(5kg)	5,500	5,500	0%
Salt	(700g)	385	385	0%
Box of salt	(738g)	1,010	1,010	0%

Consumer Price Index- April 2008 (Prices in LBP) Table 1

Item and brand		Prices beginning of April 2008	Prices beginning of May 2008	Percentage of price change
Cereals				
Khater white lentils	(1kg)	3,100	3,100	0%
Khater chick-peas fahli	(1kg)	3,100	3,100	0%
Khater beans	(1kg)	1,900	1,900	0%
Peeled wheat	(1kg)	1,350	1,350	0%
Pineal Lima Bean	(1kg)	2,980	3,500	+17.4%
Brown Fine Burgul	(1kg)	2,000	2,000	0%
Egyptian rice	(1kg)	1,600	2,000	+25%
American rice	(1kg)	1,100	2,000	+81.8%
Italian rice	(1kg)	1,620	2,100	+29.6%
Al-Wadi Hommos Tahina	(380g)	1,250	1,250	0%
Chtaura Hommos Tahina	(380g)	1,050	1,150	+9.5%
Californiagarden beans	(450g)	885	1,100	+24.3%
Al-Wadi beans	(450g)	935	950	+1.6%
Chtaura beans	(480g)	900	1,000	+11.1%
Libby's corn	(340g)	1,520	1,500	-1.3%
Fruits and Vegetables				
Oranges	(1kg)	1,250	1,250	0%
Tomatoes	(1kg)	1,000	1,500	+50%
Cucumbers	(1kg)	2,200	750	-66%
Bananas	(1kg)	1,250	1,250	0%
Lemons	(1kg)	750	1,000	+33.3%
Apples	(1kg)	2,250	2,250	0%
Potatoes	(1kg)	900	900	0%
Halvah and Jam				
Al-Wadi halvah	(454g)	4,860	4,345	-10.6%
Al-Bsat halvah	(450g)	3,490	3,490	0%
Chtaura apricot jam	(1kg)	4,500	3,750	-16.6%
Al-Wadi apricot jam	(1kg)	4,050	3,950	-2.4%

Consumer Price Index- April 2008 (Prices in LBP) Table 1

Item and brand		Prices beginning of April 2008	Prices beginning of May 2008	Percentage of price change
Meat, Fish and Eggs				
Luncheon meat beef	(198g)	1,000	1,100	+10%
Zwan chicken	(200g)	2,250	2,300	+2.2%
Zwan beef	(200g)	2,300	2,350	+2.1%
Al-Mona chicken	(200g)	1,800	1,850	+2.7%
Al-Taghzia beef	(200g)	1,550	1,600	+3.2%
Al-Taghzia chicken	(200g)	1,600	1,675	+4.6%
Geisha sardine	(125g)	1,485	1,450	-2.3%
Deli sardine	(125g)	1,000	1,000	0%
Milo sardine	(125g)	900	800	-11.1%
Geisha tuna	(200g)	2,300	2,300	0%
White Bell tuna	(200g)	1,850	1,700	-8.1%
White Diamond tuna	(200g)	2,050	2,000	-2.4%
Skipper tuna	(185g)	1,450	1,450	0%
Eggs	(30 eggs)	6,100	6,000	-1.6%
Beef	(1kg)	13,500	13,500	0%
Sheep	(1kg)	17,000	17,000	0%
Coffee and Tea				
Najjar coffee	(1kg)	10,500	12,000	+14.2%
Brazil coffee	(1kg)	10,000	11,000	+10%
Al-Hisan tea	(180g)	2,400	2,500	+4.1%
Tissues and detergents				
Mimosa tissues	(500g)	2,450	2,250	-8.1%
Fine tissues	(200 tissues)	1,400	1,400	0%
Primo tissues	(200 tissues)	1,100	1,150	+4.5%
Gipsy tissues	(300 tissues)	2,200	2,000	-9%
Mimosa toilet papers	(4 rolls)	1,990	1,990	0%
Yes detergent	(900g)	1,875	1,850	+25%
Clorox	(1 liter)	1,350	1,350	0%
Persil	(4kg)	15,600	16,500	+5.7%
Ariel	(4kg)	15,300	15,500	+1.3%

Source: Information International – April 2008

The Real Estate Index

April 2008

Despite the unstable security and political situation, the Lebanese real estate market remains very active. Prices of land and constructions witnessed a significant increase due to the limited number of plots of land for sale, in particular in Beirut, and the rise in the prices of construction material, which leads to an increase in the prices of apartments and buildings. If no security developments occurred, it is expected that the real estate market will witness a big progress in the summer, whether in selling operations or in prices. Experts in the real estate sector estimated the rise of prices between April 2007 and April 2008 to be at around 15-25%, while prices of apartments, especially in Beirut, increased by 35-70%, depending on the area and the real estate.

Tables no.1 and 2 show the price of land and constructions in selected areas in April 2008.

Average prices of land in April 2008 (selected areas) Table 1

Location	Area (m ²)	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Tariq al-Jdideh	500	975,000	1,950
Spiers	310	1,395,000	4,500
Adlieh	650	1,397,500	2,150
Ain al-Tineh	650	3,445,000	5,300
Mdawar	720	1,512,000	2,100
Qoreitem	500	2,350,000	4,700
Ba'abda			
Mar Taqla	830	830,000	1,000
Hazmieh	1,000	600,000	600
Hadath	3,300	2,541,000	770
Yarzeh	1,200	864,000	720
Betshai	1,400	175,000	125
Ba'abda	950	522,500	550
A'aley			
Qabr Shmoun	2,150	77,400	36
Ainab	830	91,300	110
Shemlan (villas)	1,100	165,000	150
Dawhet al-Hoss	2,100	567,000	270
Bshamoun	11,000	374,000	34
Khaldeh	1,150	575,000	500
Matn			
Bouchrieh	850	280,500	330
Ba'abdat	1,950	175,500	90
Bikfaya	1,720	137,600	80
Ain Sa'adeh	1,130	285,500	250
Antelias	2,300	2,231,000	970
Awkar	980	245,000	250
Naccash	1,340	147,400	110
Keserouan			
Ajaltoun	1,500	187,500	125
Ballouneh	1,300	156,000	120
Qolei'at	1,200	100,800	84
Sheileh	1,100	159,500	145
Adma	1,000	400,000	400
Zouk Mikael	550	132,000	240

Source: Information International – April 2008

Average prices of constructions in April 2008 Table 2

Location	Area (m ²)	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Ain al-Mreisseh	300	620,000	2,066
Verdun	300	730,000	2,433
Ain al-Tineh	240	800,000	3,333
Mar Elias	280	365,000	1,303
Talet al-Khayat	220	400,000	1,818
Jnah	225	450,000	2,000
A'isha Bakar	150	150,000	1,000
Achrafieh (Sassine)	330	515,000	1,560
Achrafieh (Jeitaoui)	250	260,000	1,040
Mazra'a	160	232,000	1,450
Hamra	320	630,000	1,968
Al-Malla	130	169,000	1,300
Al-Mathaf	450	736,200	1,636
Ba'abda			
Ras al-Matn	750	700,000	933
Mar Taqla	400	480,000	1,200
Ba'abda- Brazilia	300	340,000	1,133
Al-Mraijeh	142	90,000	634
Ain al-Remmaneh	140	80,000	571
Ghobeiri	100	85,000	850
Matn			
Ba'abdat	500	420,000	840
Awkar	100	63,000	630
Qornet Shehwan	185	310,000	1,675
Mansourieh	420	350,000	833
Fanar	165	115,000	697
Ain Sa'adeh	200	200,000	1,000
Sin al-Fil	190	235,000	1,237
Zalqa	210	135,000	643
A'aley			
Shoueifat	280	100,000	357
Dawhet al-Hoss	200	170,000	850
Dawhet Aramoun	110	55,000	500
Bshamoun	130	70,000	538
Keserouan			
Adma	200	270,000	1,350
Adonis	170	100,000	588
Zouk Mosbeh	120	60,000	500
Jeita	350	170,000	485
Ajaltoun	200	105,000	525
Sheileh	150	103,000	686
Feytroun	200	83,000	415
Zouk Mikael	180	90,000	500

Source: Information International – April 2008

Families from Lebanon Khoury Families The largest in number

Origins

Khoury took its name from Arabic appellation of the Christian priest. It is said that people used to call the children of a priest Khoury's children.

Numbers

The number of Lebanese, who belong to Khoury families and who are above 21 years-old, reaches 31,597, including 25,810 whose surname is Al-Khoury (or El-Khoury) and 5,787 whose surname is Khoury.

Khoury families by region

Based on the civil status records, Khoury families are mainly present in the following Lebanese regions:

Koura: Bdebbba (121 people of Greek Orthodox confession); Qalhat; Kfarhazir

Qornet al-Hamra (23 people of Maronite confession)

Chouf: Ain Zhalta (46 people), Kfarnis; Al-Bireh; Kfarnabrakh; Mazmoura

West Beqa'a: Saghbin (404 people); Al-Mansoura A'aley; A'aley; Ramhala

Bint Jbeil: Ain Ebel

Northern Matn: Zouk al-Khrab; Dbayah; Baskinta A'akkar: Al-Tlil; Shadra; Beit Mallat; Menjez; Indaqt

Zahleh: Riyaq; Hawsh al-Umara; Ta'alabaya

Jbeil: Fidar; Kfoun; Tertej; Fghal; Jbeil; Jaj

Marja'youn: Borj al-Mlouk; Qlai'a

Minieh-Dinnieh: Mrah al-Sfira

Ba'abda: Shweet

Batroun: Kifan; Halta; Hamat; Hardin; Nabha; Chekka

Zgharta: Kfaryasheet; Meziara

Beirut: Rmeil

Matn: Antelias; Nabey

Bsharreh: Blawza; Bqarqasha

Keserouan: Ghadir

Saida: Maghdousheh

Ba'albek: Shlifa; Deir al-Ahmar; al-Jeideh

Jezzine: Jezzine; Jernaya

Deputies

There were 18 deputies of Khoury families in Parliament, namely:

- ⦿ Beshara Khalil al-Khoury, who became President in 1943 and his tenure witnessed Lebanon's Independence. He also served as Prime Minister (from 5-5-1927 until 5-1-1928), a Minister of both Interior and Judiciary. He was elected deputy in 1927-1929-1934-1937-1943.
- ⦿ Anis al-Khoury: elected deputy in 1929
- ⦿ Salim Khalil al-Khoury: elected in 1945-1951
- ⦿ Boutros Salim al-Khoury: elected in 1943
- ⦿ Elias Francis al-Khoury: elected in 1947-1951-1960-1964
- ⦿ Chahid Youssef al-Khoury: Maronite-Jbeil district; elected in 1947-1964
- ⦿ Fouad Gerges al-Khoury: Greek Orthodox-Ba'abda district- Matn; elected in 1951
- ⦿ Khalil Beshara al-Khoury: Maronite- A'aley district; elected in 1960-1964-1968
- ⦿ Najib Youssef al-Khoury: Maronite- Jbeil district; elected in 1966 (by-elections) and 1968
- ⦿ Rashed Sa'ad al-Khoury: Greek Catholic-Zahrani district; elected in 1964 and 1972
- ⦿ Michel Younis al-Khoury: Maronite- Jbeil district; elected in 1992
- ⦿ Maha al-Khoury: Maronite- Jbeil district; elected in 1992
- ⦿ Nazem Chahid al-Khoury: Maronite- Jbeil and Keserouan district; elected in 2000
- ⦿ Ghattas Sema'an al-Khoury: Maronite- Beirut first district; elected in 2000
- ⦿ Walid Najib al-Khoury: Maronite- Jbeil and Keserouan district; elected in 2005
- ⦿ Kamil Mansour al-Khoury: Maronite; elected in Matn by-elections in 2007
- ⦿ Antoine al-Khoury: Greek Catholic- South Lebanon district; elected in 2000-2005
- ⦿ Qabalan Issa al-Khoury: Maronite- Bsharreh district; elected in 1951- 1957- 1964- 1968- 1991- 1992- 1996- 2000)
- 10-1949 till 14-2-1951). Minister of Interior (1-10-1949 till 6-10-1949). Minister of Public Health (1-8-1960 till 6-5-1961)
- ⦿ Pierre al-Khoury: Minister of Public Works and Transport (7-10-1982 till 3-4-1984). Minister of Agriculture (7-10-1982 till 3-4-1984)
- ⦿ Khalil Beshara al-Khoury: Minister of Works and Social Affairs (22-1-1969 till 25-11-1969)
- ⦿ Fouad Gerges al-Khoury: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice (11-2-1952 till 9-9-1952)
- ⦿ Issam Khoury: Minister of National Education and Fine Arts and Minister of National Defense (7-10-1982 till 30-4-1984); he was also president of the Bar Association.
- ⦿ Victor Khoury: Minister of National Defense (20-12-1978 till 16-7-1979); he was also Army Commander (28-3-1977 till 7-12-1982)
- ⦿ Kamal Khoury: Minister of Public Works (6-10-1971 till 27-5-1972). Minister of Planning (18-3-1972 till 27-5-1972)
- ⦿ Qabalan Issa al-Khoury: Minister of State (25-5-1995 till 7-11-1996)
- ⦿ Michel Beshara al-Khoury: Minister of Guidance and Information; Minister of National Defense; Minister of Tourism (21-12-1965 till 4-9-1966). Minister of Tourism and Minister of Planning (6-12-1966 till 2-8-1968)
- ⦿ Nicolas al-Khoury: Minister of State (24-12-1990 till 16-5-1992)


Lawyers

Based on the Beirut Bar Association directory, there are 110 lawyers of Khoury families registered in the Association, including former Minister Issam al-Khoury, who also served as president of the association (1981-1983) and former Minister and Deputy Fouad Gerges al-Khoury.

Doctors

There are 108 doctors of Khoury families registered in the Order of Physicians, including former president of the Order and former Deputy Ghattas al-Khoury.

Engineers

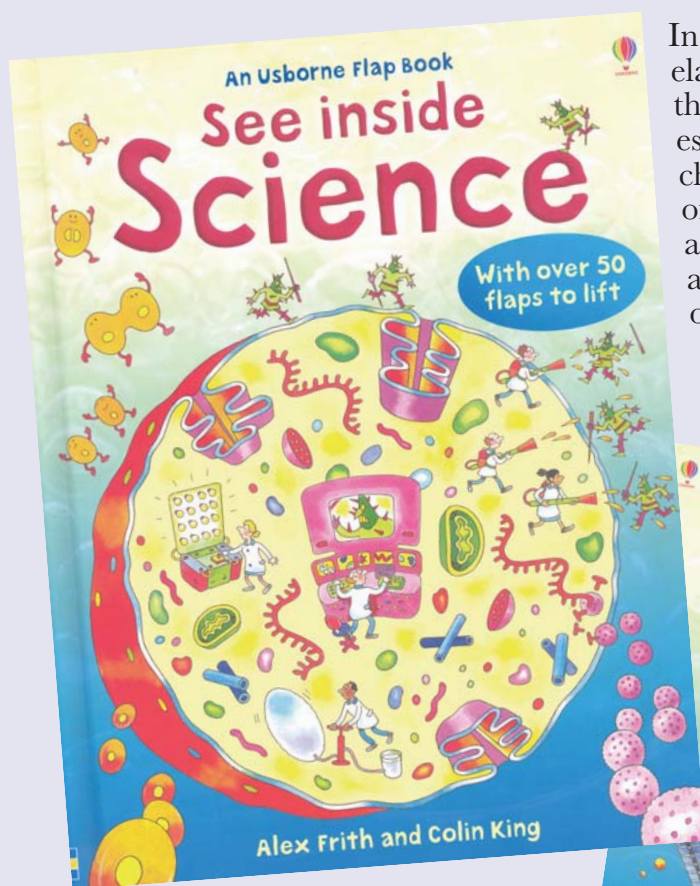
There are 252 engineers in the syndicate in the various fields of engineering and architecture. 

An Usborne Flap Book See inside Science

“See inside Science” contains nine different subjects, each dealing with a different aspect of the world we live in, from the smallest being to the biggest, seen or unseen. First chapter, called “In the Beginning,” talks about the initial use of Science to understand the elements of Earth and life. It is followed by a chapter entitled “Heavenly Bodies”, which informs children on the solar system. Information is presented in an interesting and simplified form that makes it more appealing to children.

The next chapter, “Life as we know it,” shifts from the unseen to concentrate on planet Earth, and all the beings that create it from plants, animals, to humans. The chapter aims at informing the child on the issue of evolution, the composition of living things (DNA), and the food chain. “The Smallest things” further elaborates on the microscopic elements, from molecules to cells and atoms.

In “The Secret behind Everything,” the authors elaborate on the different types of energy through the use of pictures and flaps. Since everything is essentially formed of atoms, “Mixed Reactions” chapter displays a table of elements, and the function of each relative to objects on earth. Other chapters aim at putting the larger objects of life together so as to create a simplified, but better understanding of one’s surrounding nature.



Dalil Loubnan

A guide to Lebanon in the Mutasarifia period

book also lists the number of confessions in each village, its crops and cattle.

Then, the book moves on to totally different subjects, such as how to distinguish fake oil and industrial musk and how to prevent the effects of a snake bite or a bee sting. In the world of nutrition, the books reminds us of the benefits of vegetables and fruits, as well as the means to prevent some diseases with natural recipes, in addition to how to prepare a nice dinner.

“Dalil Loubnan” (guide to Lebanon) is a book by Ibrahim Bek Al-Aswad, issued in 1906. The book contains names of the Sultans of Al-Othman and letters to official figures. It also presents information on the Mount Lebanon Mutasarifia, its system, the names of governors and judiciary departments, as well as the numbers of soldiers, doctors and officers in the Mutasarifia. In the book, you can take a look on the names of regions and their governors, in addition to attached villages. The guide specifies the centers of the Sunni government, its departments and its post offices, in addition to telegraph centers and villages which contained Ottoman post offices. It also lists Lebanese newspapers and printing houses (Tables no.1 and 2), hospitals and schools.

Dalil Loubnan dedicates a section to religious men, and lists the names of clerics, monastic orders, and bishops, in addition to monasteries of the Franciscan, Cappucin, Armenian, Lazarist and Carmelite Orders. The book says that the Druze had two Sheikhs Aql (spiritual leaders), one for the Yazbakis, Sheikh Mohammed Hamadeh, and the other for the Jumblatis, Sheikh Mohammed Tlai'a.

Dalil Loubnan talks about the plains of Lebanon, with their area and borders, in addition to the quality of soil, air, fauna and flora, minerals and rivers.

It also touches on laws regulating constructions and roads, maritime and land fishing, lawyers and their salaries, and other judicial issues. The

Names of newspapers in Lebanon during the Mutasarifia period Table 1

Newspaper	Owner
Loubnan	Ibrahim Bek Al-Aswad
Al-Rawda	Khalil Bek Bakhos
Al-Arz	Philippe Al-Khazen
Al-Nseir	Abboud Afandi Abu Rashed

Source: Dalil Loubnan

Names of printing houses in Lebanon during the Mutasarifia period Table 2

Printing House	Owner
The Ottoman Printery	Ibrahim Bek Al-Aswad
The Lebanese Printery	Khalil Afandi Bakhos
Al-Arz Printing House	Philippe Al-Khazen
The Oriental Printing House	Abboud Afandi Abu Rashed

The Commercial Printing House	Salim Afandi Lutfi
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Source: Dalil Loubnan

Statistics from the Book

Table no.1, 2 and 3 show some figures retrieved from the book.

Figures retrieved from the book Table 3

Description	Number
General	
Villages	980
Sheikhs	401
Mukhtars	528
Municipalities	51
Municipal members	457
Male residents	197,746
Female residents	The same as male
Confessions	
Muslims	3,788
Maronites	120,913
Druze	19,292
Greek Orthodox	27,892
Greek Catholic	18,689
Matawla	5,524
Latins	411
Protestants	630
Armenians	19
Syriac	2
Jews	39
Clerics and Monasteries	
Patriarchs	3
Bishops	19
Druze Sheikhs Aql	2
Monasteries	118
Monks	1,451
Professions	
Doctors	36
Lawyers	118
Judiciary	
Qa'imaqamiyat	8
Courts	8
Directorates	41
Sectors	
Hospitals	8
Silk factories	147
Vehicles	351
Cocoon crops	2,071,703 oka
Oil	25,688 quintals

Source: Dalil Loubnan

(1) “Dalil Loubnan”, by Ibrahim Bek Al-Aswad, third edition 1906, the Ottoman Printery, Ba'abda, Lebanon

The Lebanese Order of Nurses

One of the newest syndicates

The Lebanese Order of Nurses was established by Law No.479 issued on December 12th 2002. Its objectives include “preserving the rights of nurses and promoting the profession.” In 1949, the Association of Nurses was established to defend the profession’s rights. In 1962, a law was issued for the creation of the first compulsory syndicate for nurses. This law was soon cancelled and replaced by a preparatory committee to pave the way for the creation of the syndicate. Lebanon became a member of the International Council of Nurses in 1969. This measure was shortly followed by the issuance of Decree No.1655 of January 17th 1979, which regulated the nursing profession but stopped short of creating a syndicate. Finally, efforts deployed by a group of nurses led to the establishment of the Order of Lebanese Nurses in 2002.

Registration Conditions

Decree no. 1655/79 regulated the profession of nursing before the creation of the order. Permit to practice had to be granted by any person entering the profession by the Ministry of Public Health.

Today, a person wishing to register with the order, as stipulated in Law 479, must hold a degree in Nursing Studies from a licensed institution in Lebanon and must submit an application before the Order’s Secretariat, enclosed with relevant official documents. Non-Lebanese nurses can also register with the Order when they meet the necessary legal and academic qualifications. An application fee of LBP150,000, in addition to an annual registration fee of LBP100,000 are required. These fees are relatively low compared to other syndicates. This is perhaps due to the fact that nurses are not self-employed, but employees in large hospitals and medical centers. There are however a number of practicing nurses not registered with the syndicate. Such cases are cases of nurses employed prior to the issuance of the law with the medical center employing them not imposing their adherence to the Order.

Organization

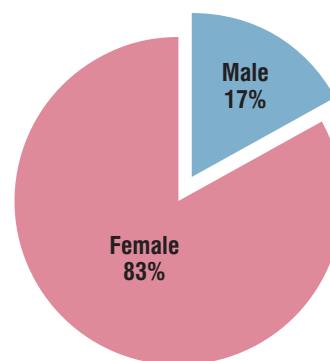
1- General Assembly

The General Assembly includes all nurses registered in the Order’s lists. The General Assembly submits recommendations for syndical activities, elects the syndical board and the president, ratifies decisions submitted by the syndical board, discusses the financial report and passes the annual budget. All effective decisions are applicable across the board.

The General Assembly is headed by the president, who is represented, in case of absence, by the vice-president, the secretary and the senior member, respectively.

Members of the General Assembly reached 6,797 in November 7th, 2007, 88% practicing, 11% not practicing it and 1% not declared. It is noteworthy that females represent 83% of members, or 5,641 registered female nurse (Graph no.1).

[Graph 1] Distribution of nurses by gender
Base: 6,797 nurses



“The General Assembly submits recommendations for syndical activities, elects the syndical board and the president, ratifies decisions submitted by the syndical board, discusses the financial report and passes the annual budget”

2- Syndical Board

The 12-member Syndical Board is elected by the General Assembly during the general annual meeting. Nine must hold a university degree in nursing sciences and three a technical degrees (BT and TS).

Members of the syndical board are elected for a three year term, with the term ending for a quarter of the members each year. Any nurse who has been registered with the Order for more than five years is eligible. Members can be re-elected for one additional term concurrently and can be re-elected again after forfeiting a term or more.

The syndical board sets and amends the Order's by-laws with the approval of the Ministry of Public Health. It also implements decisions and recommendations submitted by the General Assembly, decides on applications, manages the funds, and collects registration and annual fees.

The current Syndical Board is formed of Ursula Rizk (President), Salwa A'alawiya (Vice-president), Gisele Chemaly Hajal (Secretary), Sana'a Sobh (Treasurer), and members George Azar, Fatmeh Zahwi, Sister Nohad Nasr, Rita Dagher, Mazen al-Ghaziri, Aida Biazeid, Zeinab Shami and Mohammed Reqa.

3- President

The president represents the Order in Lebanon and defends its rights. He/she implements the decisions of the General Assembly and the Syndical Board. The president is elected for a three year term and is eligible for re-election after the passing of one term. The first president to the Order was Elie Al-A'araj, who was elected in March 2003; his term ended in March 2006 and he was succeeded by Ursula Rizk.

4- Disciplinary Council

The Disciplinary Council investigates cases of professional misconduct. Disciplinary actions against perpetrators range from written warnings, temporary or permanent revoking of practice privileges to expulsion from the Order. Sentences can be appealed within 15 days period.

Disciplinary sentences can also be accompanied by a court trial, if the member's conduct involves a crime mentioned in the Penal Code; members have no professional immunity.

Challenging the Syndical Board's Decisions

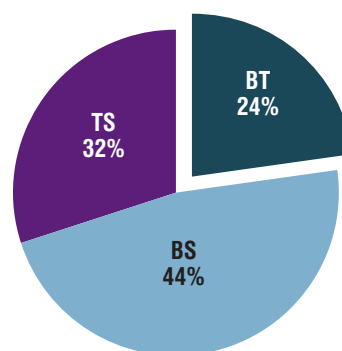
The decisions of the syndical board can be challenged by a person or the Appeal Public Prosecutor within a ten-days period.

Activities

Recently, the order has moved into its new state of the art headquarters. The Order organized the registration system and set its by-laws in 2004. A retirement and social aid fund was established and a draft-law to modernize the laws that govern the nursing body was set in motion with in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health. The Order maintains a website a publication, Sada an-Naqaba, since May 2005.

Graph no.2 shows the distribution of members by type of degree.

[Graph 2] **Type of degree by members**
Base: 6,797 nurses



“The president is elected for a three year term and cannot be reelected but after the passing of one term since his/her election. The first president was Elie Al-A'araj, who was elected in March 2003. His term ended in March 2006 and was succeeded by Ursula Rizk”

Non-Governmental Organizations in the Beqa'a

After discussing in the previous issue the law that regulates Lebanon's associations and presented briefly the NGOs in North Lebanon, *The Monthly* presents in the following article NGOs in the Beqa'a.

There are 363 associations registered in the Beqa'a, while the number of active NGOs does not exceed 188, which represents 51% of the total number, as shown in Table no.1.

Qada'a	# of registered NGOs	# of active NGOs	% of total NGOs
Western Beqa'a	42	17	40%
Rashaya	28	16	57%
Ba'albek	147	86	58%
Hermel	13	5	38%
Zahleh	133	64	48%
Total	363	188	51%

Source: Information International

Below is a description of selected NGOs:

Hermel Youth Gathering for Environment Protection – Hermel:

Established in 2002, the gathering seeks to preserve forests and trees and raise citizens' awareness on the means to protect the environment and preserve springs and rivers, mainly Al-Assi River.

Children Care Association in Dahr al-Ahmar- Rashaya:

Established in 1997, it takes care of underprivileged children and orphans by opening daycares and guidance centers.

Haramoun Charitable Association in Rashaya al-Wadi- Rashaya:

Founded in 1995, it provides drug addicts and disabled with rehabilitation programs and takes care of elderly and orphans.

Ayam al-Raja'a Association- Zahleh:

Founded in 1986 and granted the title of public interest association in 1995; it establishes special centers for the disabled.

Al-Jreisati League in Lebanon and Abroad- Zahleh:

Established in 2002, it aims at strengthening ties between the Jreisati family.

Dar as-Sadaqa Association- Zahleh:

Founded in 1980 and was granted the public interest title in 1995. It takes care of underprivileged children.

Mawasem Saghbine Association- Saghbine:

Established in 1995, it works on promoting the heritage of Saghbine and holding exhibitions and festivities.


The Cultural and Social Center of Martyr Basel Hafez al-Assad- Ba'albek:

Founded in 1996, it seeks to promote the area's cultural, social and health situation.

Ba'albek Association for Environment and Folklore- Ba'albek:

Established in 1998, it seeks to raise social awareness, promote common work and preserve the area's environment and folklore.

Al-Imam al-Khomeini Islamic Charitable Association- Ba'albek:

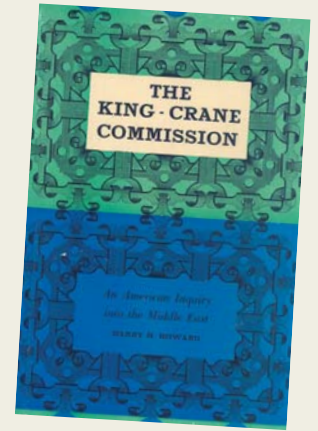
Established in 1994, the association builds medical centers, hospitals and orphanages. 

“History Repeats Itself” The Post-World War I Era and the Arab Revolution Paving the way towards “Greater Lebanon”

The four great powers – France, Britain, Italy and the United States – agreed in March 1919 to send a commission to the Arab countries to assess the situation and propose recommendations over the future of the region. France and Italy did not participate in the commission, which was formed of Henry King and Charles Crane representing the United States, and two representatives from Britain. The following are some of the commission’s recommendations on Syria and Palestine.

The Recommendation Concerning Palestine

Let us take first the recommendations concerning Palestine. It is well to recall that, while the Commissioners rejected the extreme Zionist program, they proposed to maintain the unity of Syria-Palestine, under a British or American mandate, with provision for a limited Jewish National Home. They did not act on the basis of so-called anti-Jewish prejudices. They made their recommendations simply on the basis of the facts as they found them in Palestine at the time, when only about ten per cent of the population appeared to be Jewish. Developments within Palestine since 1919 would seem, in part at least, to justify the recommendations of the Commission, since Palestine became a battleground among the forces of Zionism and Arab nationalism and British imperialism, centering on the control of the Suez Canal and the eastern Mediterranean sea. Zionism, evidently, was not to consider the limited size and poverty of Palestine, and was to flower at the very time that a genuine and vigorous Arab nationalism was coming into bloom. Hans Kohn has well stated the problem:



“In the case of Syria, the Commission proposed a united country under the constitutional rule of Prince Feisal, with either the United States or Great Britain as the mandatory”

In the midst of their startling successes, some Zionists—not always well informed—have come to regard the Palestinian Arabs and their problems as of only secondary importance and Palestine as exclusively the country of the “manifest destiny” of the Jewish people. Some Jewish and non-Jewish observers, fascinated by the historical appeal of the land and by the desire for a large scale solution of the “Jewish problem”, have not always taken into full account two factors inherent in the situation: the limited absorptive capacity of the country, which is very small, with only few fertile districts and no important natural resources, and the existence of a relatively very large Arab population, which since the beginning of the World War has become strongly conscious of its national aspirations.

These difficulties continued throughout the inter-war period, into the Second World War and afterward and ultimately eventuated in the struggle which led to the partition of Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel during 1947-1949.

The Recommendations Concerning Syria

In the case of Syria, the Commission proposed a united country under the constitutional rule of Prince Feisal, with either the United States or Great Britain as the mandatory. It overestimated the force of Arab nationalism at the time, and underestimated the strength of religious identification. It was pointed out that any attempt to force a French mandate on the unwilling Arabs would lead to difficulties, might produce an Anglo-French quarrel, a Franco-Arab struggle, and force “a dangerous alternative” upon Great Britain. The Commission was aware of the long-established French connections with Syria, but it feared the consequences of a French mandate. Again, it rejected the Syrian claim to the region of Cilicia. Much in the history of Syria since 1919 would appear to justify many of the suggestions of the King-Crane Commission. There were constant troubles of an administrative, economic, political and social nature in the years after 1919, with armed uprisings in 1920, when Feisal was dethroned, 1925 and 1936. Altogether there were no less than eighteen revolts in Syria between 1919 and 1941. A Franco-Syrian treaty of September 8, 1936 promised Syria independence within three years, but consummation was frustrated, French politics aside, by the coming of the war in 1939. While independence was promised after the conquest of Syria by British Imperial and Free French Forces in September 1941, it was not until the end of the war, in 1945, that independence was really achieved. ●●

* Harry N. Howard, *The King-Crane Commission, Beirut 1963*

Hôtel Dieu Hospital

Receives more than 20,000 patients per year

Hôtel Dieu de France ranks among the leading university affiliated hospitals in Lebanon and the Middle East, offering comprehensive teaching and medical services.

History

Jesuit missionary presence in Lebanon dates back as far as 1635, establishing several health and educational institutions. In 1843, Saint Joseph University was founded, and in 1883, following an agreement between the Jesuit fathers and the French Government, the university medical school was established. In 1911, plans were initiated to build Hôtel Dieu de France Hospital, which opened its doors in November 1923.

Administration

The French government holds ownership of the hospital and has until 1984 been under its administration. Administrative control was subsequently transferred to Saint Joseph University, namely the university 21-member administrative board currently headed by Mr. Joseph Atiq.

Hospital Staff

Hôtel Dieu employs 140 doctors of different specialties, 365 nurses, and 674 support staff in different departments (administration, maintenance, kitchen and cleaning). They enjoy a variety of benefits and services, including full health insurance coverage, education assistance, paid annual leaves, and a 2.75% annual salary increment.

Beds

There are 390 beds at the hospital, including 356 beds for more than 24 hours of stay and 34 beds for a stay of less than 24 hours.

Equipment and Departments

The hospital includes 12 departments: cardiology, dermatology, gastroenterology, cancer center, infectious diseases, internal diseases, and reanimation, pediatrics, neurology, rheumatism, and kidney diseases. All departments are equipped with modern facilities and state of the art equipments. Private clinics, launched in 2005, comprise 56 clinics serving more than a hundred multi-specialty doctors. The facility also includes two minor surgery operating rooms.

Patients

In 2006, the number of patients admitted to the hospital reached 22,932, including 16,310 in-patients and 6,622 out-patients. In 2007, the number rose to 24,608 patients, broken down into 17,042 patients who stayed for more than one day and 7,566 who stayed for one day only. Computed average stay for both years is 5.1 and 5.7 days respectively.

Partnership

Hôtel Dieu signed a partnership agreement with Al-Muwasat Hospital in Kuwait in 2007. It also has a partnership agreement with the civil hospital in Lyon, France.

The 7th Day Program

Following the 2006 Israeli war, the hospital launched the 7th Day program. Specialized medical teams visited villages in South Lebanon and offered free medical services, including consultations, laboratory tests, heart, cancer, and other diagnostic tests, prevention awareness, and children consultations. The program has so far covered eight villages, starting October 7th 2006 until the end of 2007. Aita ash-Sha'ab, Qawzah, Rmeish, Debel, Yaroun, Maroun al-Ras, Ain Ebel and Beit Leef have already been visited. In 2008, the program is expected to cover the Qada'a of A'akkar, in addition to Bint Jbeil, Marja'youn and Hasbaya. 🍀



The Journey of Truth From Myth to Science

by Dr. Hanna Saadah



Our minds are seas, easy to pollute but difficult to clean.

In science, truth travels slowly. Before the advent of science, man-made myths evolved to explain the mysteries of our universe. As science advanced, traditional beliefs were challenged and great battles were fought against scientific truths. When Galileo

proclaimed that Copernicus was correct in that earth rotated around the sun, his proclamation offended the Roman Catholic Church, which held to the Aristotelian view that the universe was geocentric. In 1632, Pope Urban VIII referred Galileo's case to the Roman Inquisition, which forced Galileo to recant, banned his book, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, and placed him under house arrest until he died in 1641. This verdict was not ratified until 1822, 181 years after that scientific truth was first promulgated. The battle between science and myth is the ever-present battle between truth and tradition, whose battlefields continue to be the polluted minds of humanity.

Scientific truths evolve from hypotheses based on observations. These hypotheses are then subjected to the scrutiny of experimentation where they are either proved or disproved. During this tedious process, which may take a very long time, opinions multiply and beliefs are deeply held despite the lack of evidence. However, when enough evidence accrues to constitute solid proof, all the other hypotheses and beliefs are discarded in favor of the new truth. Hence, the ever-poignant aphorism of Thomas Huxley (1825-95), "The great tragedy of science—the slaying of a beautiful hypothesis by an ugly fact."


Medicine is a discipline whose feet rest on tradition but whose eyes look to science for guidance. Medical experiments avoid bias by using controls, whereby a treatment is given under double-blind conditions. To achieve that, a cohort of patients is randomly split into two similar groups. Then, unknown to the doctors and their patients, one group receives a placebo while the other receives the real treatment. At the appointed time, the code is broken and the data analyzed by statisticians to see if the treatment had made a difference. When a significant difference is found, and when the experiment is replicated and its results confirmed by other observers, then its findings will be held as true. Such prospective, double blind, controlled studies are the gold standards that guide medical therapies.

Many of our current treatments are based on prospective, double blind, controlled studies. However, when such studies are not available, then our treatments tend to be based on extrapolations from non-prospective

data. Here, opinions vary, treatments differ, and believed truths continue to change and evolve until that time when the matter is settled by definitive studies. In situations such as these, patients may become confused and disillusioned by the many and often conflicting opinions they receive. Indeed, as stated by Oscar Wild (1854-1900), "The truth is rarely pure and never simple."

In this rapidly changing medical world, patients need to become proactive. Ask your doctor about the data upon which his opinion is based. Ask if there are prospective, double blind, controlled studies that support his proposed treatment. If there are no studies, get second opinions from doctors who have had the greatest experience with your disease. Ask them how many cases have they treated and what was their success rate. Insist on evidence-based medical care whenever possible.

The practice of medicine is an art and a science. Whereas the art grows fat on experience, the science grows robust only with truth, and that truth can only be discovered with experimentation. Just as it is the duty of the scientist to prove what he believes, it is also the duty of the doctor to resist belief when there is no proof. John Keats, the famous English poet, was also a careful physician who cautioned us against belief without evidence: "The only means of strengthening one's intelligence is to make up one's mind about nothing—to let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thoughts."

A medical mind must not only be satisfied with making observations; it has an obligation to test them. Some of our most important medical discoveries began as incidental observations that were noticed and developed by eager minds. The words of Louis Pasteur (1822-95), one of the greatest benefactors of humanity, are as poignant today as they were when he discovered the germ theory, "In the fields of observation, coincidence favors naught but the prepared minds." 

Medical News

Vitamin D deficiency is widespread, regardless of geographic location. It is particularly prevalent in the elderly and has far-reaching health consequences including: osteoporosis, falls, increased risk of cancers, diabetes, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, and a significant increase in the incidence of many other chronic diseases. Vitamin D3, 2000 units/day should be given to all the elderly plus a gram of calcium supplement to protect them from these chronic illnesses. People who avoid the sun, use sunscreens, or wear protective clothing are at increased risk of Vitamin D deficiency even if they are still young and should be screened with blood tests and treated appropriately.

Geriatrics, April 2008, Volume 63, Number 4, Page 24-30.

The Lebanese-American University

6,294 students in 2006-2007

Establishment

In 1835, the American Protestant Mission in Lebanon established the “American School for Girls”. In 1927, the school started to expand and adopted new programs that enabled it to establish a separate higher institution, named the “American Women College,” which took the area of Ras Beirut as its headquarters.

Between 1948 and 1949, the Faculty added new programs and changed its name to “Beirut College for Women”. The Board of Regents of the State University of New York State (which funded the establishment of LAU) granted the college a provisional charter, and in 1955 it granted it an absolute charter with all its rights and privileges, with the authority to hand out Bachelor degrees.

The College opened its doors to male students as of 1970, and became the “Beirut University College” (BUC) in 1973. Then it started to open new faculties and a branch in the city of Byblos in 1987. Decree no.9278 of October 5th 1996, which granted a number of higher institutions the right to open new faculties, gave the college the license to become the “Lebanese American University” and to establish an Architecture and Engineering Faculty (in five departments) and a faculty of Pharmacy. The decree also allowed it to organize its specializations and distribute them in four main faculties: the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, the School of Engineering and Architecture and the School of Pharmacy. The university’s headquarters in Jbeil in the town of Amsheet was moved to real estate no.3588 in the town of Blat.

Decree no.1947, issued on December 21st 1999, granted the university to open a School of Nursing. It also established a School of Medicine, in line with Decree no.3103 of May 31st 2000.

Location and Educational System

LAU’s main premises are located in the area of Qoreitem in Ras Beirut. It includes the Schools of Arts and Sciences and Business. The premises extend over an area of 42,400 square meters after adding a new building that encompasses the School of Business and Riad Nassar Library.

The premises are formed of nine buildings, including the administration offices, a cafeteria, students’ dorms, conference rooms, theater stages, seminar rooms, libraries (containing 224,563 books) and fully-equipped workshops and laboratories for the hotel management. There are also two tennis courts, a basketball court, a body building area, a gymnasium and a covered pool.

The university has another headquarters in the area of Blat in Jbeil that extends over 165,000 square meters, where are located the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Pharmacy, Engineering and Architecture, Business, Medicine and Nursing. It also contains dorms, sport courts, laboratories, wide green areas, Gibran Khalil Gibran Library which contains around 116,051 books.

The university adopted the American system, which is based on credits and divides the academic year into four terms (spring, fall, summer 1 and summer 2). English is the main language used in communication and teaching in all faculties. LAU offers B.A. and Master’s Degrees in all its specializations and a PhD Degree in Pharmacy.

Number of Students and Graduates

The number of students in 2005-2006 reached 6,294. The number remained the same in 2006-2007, despite the difficult situation in the country, knowing that around 1,000 students are non-Lebanese, mainly Kuwaitis, Saudis and Syrians.

There were 2,270 students in 1991-1992; the number increased to 4,360 in 2000-2001. 72% of students are enrolled in the main headquarters in Beirut and 45% are enrolled in the School of Business and Hotel Management.

The number of graduates reached 742 in 1991-1992 and increased to 926 in 2000-2001 and to 1,219 in 2004-2005.

Administrative Staff and Professors

The number of the administrative staff and professors reached 574 in 2005-2006, including 176 professors. The Public Relations officer at LAU said that in 2006-2007, the number of full-time professors reached 168. He added that the university is seeking to increase the number by 33% in the coming years.

As for nationalities, 55% of professors are Lebanese, 4% Americans, 21% holding both the Lebanese and U.S. passports and 20% holding foreign passports or Lebanese and foreign passports. The number of the administrative staff reached 260 in 1991-1992 and increased to 316 in 2000-2001.

“The College opened its doors to male students as of 1970, and became the “Beirut University College” (BUC) in 1973”



LAU - Jbeil Campus
Jbeil - 2007

Tuition Fees

LAU is among universities with high tuition fees compared to other institutions. Table no.1 shows the price of a credit per specialization in 2006-2007.

Based on Table no.1, a student in the Business School must complete an average of 96 credits at \$40,704 to receive a B.A. degree, while in other universities the cost would be around the quarter of this amount.

Officials at LAU say that the high tuition fees are intended to cover the university expenses, including salaries of the “best professors in Lebanon”, and to provide the students with the latest techniques and modern equipment, in addition to educational, sports and cultural activities.

The university offers financial aid to some students. It could gather donations worth \$13 million that are put in the financial aid fund for bright students and those who are facing financial difficulties.

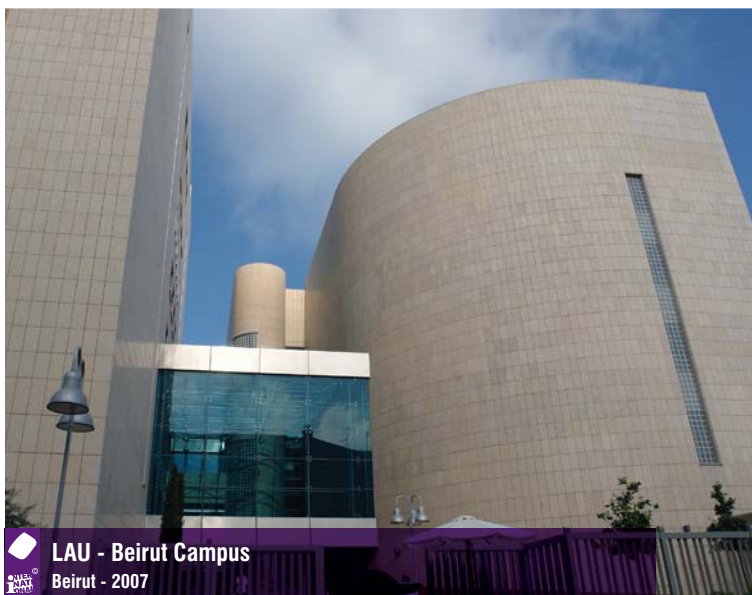
Students apply for financial aid by submitting a document to the relevant office, where applications are discussed. Financial aid ranges between 25-70% of the value of the tuition. LAU can also request students benefiting from scholarships to work at the university.

LAU also grants financial loans that are returned by the student once he graduates and starts working. The number of students who submitted financial aid applications in 2005-2006 reached 1,600 or around 25% of the total number of students.

The price of a credit per specialization in 2006-2007 Table 1

Specialization/ class	Price of a credit (in USD)
Theoretical classes	342
Lab and Business classes	424
Computer Science, Engineering and Pharmacy	440
Higher Studies	519
MBA	515

Source: Information International based on LAU administration



LAU - Beirut Campus
Beirut - 2007

The Monthly meets Mexican Ambassador Jorge Alvarez Fuentes

The Lebanese started to immigrate to Mexico in the late 19th Century and integrated easily into the Mexican society. Nowadays, the Lebanese community in Mexico is one of the most influential in the country and includes numerous successful businessmen. The Monthly met with the Mexican Ambassador Jorge Alvarez Fuentes in a briefing on the Mexican-Lebanese historical ties, economic relations and the current situation in Lebanon.

When did you arrive to Lebanon?

I arrived to Lebanon at the end of August 2007. I was lucky because I was able to present my credentials in September to President Emile Lahoud. Prior to my arrival to this country, I knew my mission would be a challenge. I have indeed the high honor and privilege to serve in a country to which I have arrived at a very tough moment of its political life. I am a strong proponent of new diplomacy, given that old diplomacy has failed to lay a new and secure basis for peace.

What are the major posts that you occupied before coming here?

I was an advisor of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in Mexico between 2004 and 2007. Prior to that, I served as ambassador of Mexico to New Zealand and a non-resident ambassador to the Marshall Islands. Today, I am non-resident Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates and to the State of Qatar. We are in the process of opening a Consulate General in Dubai. My career as a Foreign Service officer started 25 years ago. I used to be an official of the National Archives in Mexico, who got transferred from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I have had different other responsibilities. Prior to New Zealand, I also served as Cultural Attaché in Canada and directed Mexico's assistance program to Central America. I was the youngest director of the Diplomatic Academy in Mexico City. I believe that one of the main reasons for being appointed as Ambassador to Lebanon was the challenge, and to provide Mexico with a unique opportunity to both participate and make a positive contribution to the welfare of the Lebanese people.

What about the Lebanese community in Mexico and the Mexican community in Lebanon?

The community of Mexicans of Lebanese origin is a very important community which is very well organized. This community has been able to achieve its potential and easily integrate into the Mexican society, economy, business community, politics, media and communications.



There are probably around 700,000 Mexicans of Lebanese origin in Mexico. Migration towards Mexico started in the late 1880s. The Lebanese quickly assimilated into Mexico for several reasons; first because they are hard working, and second, because they found in the country an amazing and favorable environment that led to their success. Most of Lebanese migrants came from Mount Lebanon and were Christians; and they came to a country which was around 97% Catholics. The Lebanese also contributed to the transformation of the country after the Mexican Revolution. Many of the Mexicans of Lebanese origin are considered among the wealthiest people in the world, including Carlos Slim.

The Mexican community in Lebanon is composed of either Mexicans who have married Lebanese or Lebanese whose family or relatives are Mexicans. There is a larger number of Lebanese whose parents or grandparents were born in Mexico and they hold the Mexican passport. The overall Mexican community in Lebanon is about 600 people. However, there are thousands of Lebanese who have links with Mexico. We also have had several governors of Lebanese origin for numerous States of the Mexican Republic.

What is your opinion on the current situation in Lebanon?

My government is committed to the independence, liberty, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We have a very well defined foreign policy based on constitutional principles. We do not interfere with a country's internal affairs. However, we fully endorse what Lebanese people decide. Nowadays, we are studying the means to conduct projects with assistance from Mexico to work with small communities in Lebanon, especially in the

North. One of the areas where I have identified opportunities to collaborate and support Lebanon, which is under pressure at this very difficult time of its history, is electoral reform. Mexico has a long experience in this field. The 71-year dominance of the PRI party made it the second longest-ruling political party worldwide. It took Mexico 16 years to change the electoral system throughout a major electoral reform and process. It is not incumbent upon us to decide which electoral law suits the Lebanese system best, but what matters is to support Lebanon in this regard, including secrecy of vote, electoral age, electoral register, media monitoring and balloting in order to guarantee transparency and fairness of the elections. The commission headed by Former Minister Fouad Boutros achieved important purposes in this respect, tackling the basic and most important issues. The Lebanese might be willing to go back to the 1960 law, and the Qada'a-based electoral law. However, it is worth underlining that any change in the electoral system will have an impact on

the political organization. I think that the focus should not be on the ruling parties but on what the citizens want. The citizens want to be able to give a mandate to the members of Parliament. I think that the political culture in Lebanon needs to be changed.

The world cares about Lebanon because Lebanon has a pivotal role in the Middle East. I think that there is a possibility to reach consensus. Lebanon is a country in process of reinventing itself, and Mexico does not limit itself to being a spectator.

What about the economic relations between Lebanon and Mexico?


Trade is important to us, but not a priority, provided that Lebanon is a small country with a small market. It is very costly for Mexico to import national products to Lebanon, although we have roughly \$7 million of bilateral trade. I indeed do not rule out the possibility of exploring means with a view to increase the trade and market the products of many important industries

in Lebanon such as olive oil, foodstuffs and construction materials. We can also work with Lebanese people to promote our merchandises to the Gulf. We can learn a lot from the Lebanese expertise. Another sector that we can focus on is the banking sector. We should further enhance bilateral exchange in the banking sector.

What is your opinion on the rise in prices of food and goods internationally?

The world is experiencing a very difficult period, because food prices and various basic commodities and raw materials are hiking in an impressive way. What is happening to the Millennium Goals? One of the millennium goals was to reduce poverty by half and this is far from being achieved now.

What do you like the most about Lebanon?

I appreciate most the hospitality of the Lebanese people and the intensity of life, as well as their honesty of mind and sincerity of spirit. 

“I think that the focus should not be on the ruling parties but on what the citizens want. The citizens want to be able to give a mandate to the members of Parliament”

Summary of Consular Activities - 2007

Item	Issued per year
Visas	416
Passports	193
Birth Certificates	24
Migratory form "FM3" for foreigners wishing to perform lucrative activity in Mexico	6
Migratory form "FM3" for foreigners wishing to perform non lucrative activity in Mexico	41

Source: Embassy of Mexico, 2008

Trade Balance Mexico-Lebanon (Millions of dollars)

Year	Total Trade	D%	Exports	D%	Imports	D%	Balance
1994	0.6	-79.7	0.5	-81.7	0.1	-42.9	0.4
1995	8.0	1349.1	7.9	1576.6	0.1	12.5	7.8
1996	8.6	8.4	8.6	9.1	0.0	n.a.	8.6
1997	7.7	-11.5	7.6	-11.6	0.1	25.0	7.6
1998	4.5	-40.9	4.4	-41.7	0.1	80.0	4.3
1999	4.5	-1.1	4.4	-0.7	0.1	-22.2	4.3
2000	5.7	26.4	5.5	24.5	0.2	142.9	5.3
2001	5.4	-5.3	5.1	-6.2	0.2	23.5	4.9
2002	3.6	-33.3	3.4	-34.2	0.2	-9.5	3.2
2003	5.8	63.3	5.7	68.0	0.2	-21.1	5.5
2004	5.4	-7.2	5.1	-9.5	0.3	80.0	4.9
2005	4.0	-26.6	3.8	-26.7	0.2	-25.9	3.6
2006	6.7	13.6	6.2	65.0	0.5	135.0	5.8
2006*	6.2	-	5.7	-	0.5	-	5.3
2007*	6.2	0.8	4.3	-24.6	1.9	n.a.	2.4

* Preliminary data January – November period.
Source: Ministry of Economy of Mexico and Central Bank of Mexico.



By Joseph El Khoury

“Why is there something rather than Nothing?”

Founded by Architect/Designer Joseph El-Khoury in 2003, ex nihilo is a design house that acquired its name from the Latin term meaning “out of nothing.”

El Khoury treats the object as space, following an architect’s thought process.

Passionate about beauty and the theories of aesthetics he studied for a time, El Khoury draws his creativity from the void, his love of the object, matter, space, the lived and the living.

El Khoury has made design his religion, fighting to make quality object available to the greater number.

ex nihilo offers studies, custom-made products and corporate gifts tailored to reflect the identity of the corporation. Clients range from individual customers to major companies in Lebanon and the region, including banks and other private institutions.

ex nihilo participates in annual exhibitions in Lebanon, as well as international fairs held in New York, San Francisco, France, Montreal, Dubai and other countries. ex-nihilo products are sold in Lebanon (Galerie Vanlian, Farra Design Center, Woodstock...), as well as in Canada, Kuwait, Jordan, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.

“In the making of an object, be it industrial or in limited edition, different aspects must coexist: practical, technical, economic and advertising - and where it is necessary to know which has priority...and to reconcile beauty and usefulness”

The product

According to El Khoury, “design is born out of a confrontation with materials, the emotion that a product generates is as important as its form.” He adds that “the form is not a preconceived idea which exists before the object, as in an artistic work. Form is not an end in itself, except if it has been defined as the priority.”

The products are intended to please the senses and inspire thought on top of fulfilling their basic functions. Each item has its own character and significance.

El Khoury says that “an object’s function cannot be defined a priori; it is, however, the first criteria to be established.” He explains that “in the making of an object, be it industrial or in limited edition, different aspects must coexist: practical, technical, economic and advertising - and where it is necessary to know which has priority...and to reconcile beauty and usefulness.”



Corporate Gifts

© Nadine Achkar



1



2



3



4 5



6

- 1- Saturne, colored shakers
- 2- Twister, candle holders
- 3- Cocci, tea box
- 4- Bar Code, set of one low table and two side tables
- 5- Bubble, tissue holder
- 6- Narguile, prototype conceived for a contemporary Lebanese restaurant



Kouakh

Qada'a of Hermel



Etymology

Kouakh is the plural of Koukh, the Arabic word for cave. The village was called as such due to the presence of small houses that look like caves.

Location

Kouakh is located in the Qada'a of Hermel in Beqa'a Mohafaza, at an altitude of 970 meters above sea level. It is 155 kilometers away from Beirut and 105 kilometers from the Mohafaza center in Zahleh. It extends over one hectare and can be reached via two different roads: Hermel-Bouaida- Kouakh or Sahlat al-Ma'a- Kouakh.

Population

The number of registered residents in the village's civil status records is estimated at 2,200 people who belong to the Shia'a confession. There are around 500 permanent residents who live in 100 houses. There are no shops or commercial institutions in the town.

Voters

The number of voters reached 1,462 in 2008 compared to 1,355 in 2004 and 1,244 in 2000. Voters are distributed among the following families:

Al-Haq	667 voters	Noun	215 voters
Jlous	175 voters	Halani	71 voters
Amhaz	70 voters	Kheireddine	57 voters
Harmouch	38 voters	Diqah	36 voters
Qtayah	32 voters	Dreis	30 voters
A'alwi	22 voters	Ja'afar	20 voters
Masri	13 voters	Nassereddine	10 voters
Msheik	6 voters		

Local Authorities

A municipality was formed in line with Decision no. 267 of March 10th 2004 issued by the Minister of Interior and Municipalities. The municipality is formed of 12 members and currently presided over by Nasri al-Haq. There is also a Mukhtar and a mayoral council. The municipality's share from the Independent Municipal Fund reached LBP99.9 million for 2005, compared to LBP76 million for the year 2004 and LBP125 million for 2003.

Educational Institutions

There is only one school in the town- Kouakh Public Elementary School- with 44 students in the academic year of 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. The number of teachers is 10.

Economic Activities

Agriculture is the main source of living for residents, in particular the cultivation of wheat, cereals, olive and almond trees, in addition to cattle breeding. In 1994, an agricultural cooperative was established to help farmers and promote agriculture.

Archeological Sites

Grottoes and natural wells were discovered in the village, as well as remains of ancient buildings and sarcophagi.

Problems facing residents

Alike residents of other distant towns, residents of Kouakh suffer from lack of basic services and job opportunities, which forces them to move to cities. ●●

Sinai

Agriculture and emigration main source of living

Etymology

Historians give various definitions of the word Sinai. Some say it derives from Syriac and means the “moon”, adding that the village used to be a location to worship the moon. Others say that it derives from the Syriac word SENAYYA, the plural of SANYA, which means “castaway” or the “abandoned”. Other historians argue that the word has its roots in the word “Sana”, the Arabic word for “light”. In his book, “Names of Lebanese Towns and Villages”, Writer Anis Freiha says Snaii either derives from “Zebina”, which means “bought” or “owned”, or from “Bania” which means “he who built.”

Location

Sinai is located in the Qada'a of Nabatieh in the Mohafaza of Nabatieh, at an altitude of 250 meters above sea level. It is 77 kilometers away from Beirut and 14 kilometers from the Mohafaza center in Nabatieh. It extends over an area of 10 hectares, but its real estate borders extend to Shel Ba'al (around three hectares) and Damoul (around 4 hectares).

The village can be reached via two different following roads: Nabatieh-Doueir- Snaii or Insar- Snaii.

Population

The number of registered residents is estimated at around 850 people, who belong to the Shia'a confession. There are around 600 permanent residents, 50 houses and six commercial institutions.

Voters

The number of voters reached 613 in 2008, compared to 553 in 2004 and 500 in 2000. They are distributed among the following families:

Zreiq	234 voters
Qobeissi	91 voters
Ismail	52 voters
Bnout	53 voters
Hamzeh	45 voters
Koujak	37 voters
Aqil	34 voters
Wehbeh	31 voters
Zein	18 voters
Zbeib	12 voters
Rizk	6 voters

Local Authorities

The village has a municipal council that was created in 2004 by Decision no.70 of January 27th 2004, issued by the Minister of Interior and Municipalities. The council is currently headed by Sleiman Zreiq. There is also a Mukhtar- Youssef Hussein Ismail- and a mayoral council of three members.

The town's returns from the Independent Municipal Fund amounted to LBP32.7 million for the year 2005, compared to LBP28.4 million for 2004 and LBP47.9 million for 2003.

Educational Institutions

The town has a public school – Sinai Ansar Public Elementary School- which contained 85 students in 2005-2006. The number decreased to 77 students in 2006-2007. There are 11 professors, including 10 contracted professors.

There is also a public secondary school for students of Sinai and Ansar. In addition, there is the Snaii Development Association and a football team. A basketball court was recently opened.

Economic Activities

Agriculture is the main source of living, in particular the cultivation of lentils, wheat, and barley, corn, sesame and olive trees. Residents also depend on cattle breeding, trade and artisanal works, such as the manufacture of doors and windows. There is also a cement factory, a big stone quarry and factory, an asphalt factory, an aluminum shop and a gas station. Some residents also depend on money sent by their relatives living abroad, mainly in Africa, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Archeological Sites

Residents say that there are remains of ancient tombs, engravings in the rocks and grottos, in addition to ancient buildings. There is also a famous wellspring where visitors and residents gather to spend the day.

Problems facing residents

Residents suffer from lack of water in particular during summer, in addition to frequent power cuts and absence of enough street lights.



Museums in Lebanon

Uncovering the country's archeological and traditional treasures

Known today as Lebanon, the land resting on the Mediterranean Coast witnessed the apogee and decline of various civilizations. Phoenician, Roman, Greek, Mamluk, Crusader, Islamic and Ottoman ruins were uncovered and are now displayed in museums across the country.

There are 36 museums in Lebanon, distributed among archeological, traditional, artistic and natural museums.

I- Museums displaying archeological collections

There are seven museums displaying archeological items, among them:

Beirut National Museum

In 1919, French Officer Raymond Weill collected a small number of ancient artifacts and displayed them in one of the rooms of a German monastery in Beirut. In 1923, a founding committee was created to choose a permanent location (Damascus Road) and raise funds to build the museum. Architects were inspired by Egyptian temples. The museum was inaugurated in May 1942 and soon became a central museum where ancient artifacts uncovered across the country, are displayed. The museum was closed during the 1975-1990 civil war, as it was located on a demarcation line, and was reopened in 1997.

The museum holds around 1,300 artifacts that go back to different ages, including the Bronze Age, the Roman Age, the Arab Conquest and the Mamluk Period. Among the famous artifacts are the Mosaic of the Seven Wise Men, which was found in Ba'albek and a statue of Emperor Hadrian, sarcophagi that go back to the 2nd Century A.D. and the Sarcophagus of Ahiaram, the King of Sour, engraved with the Phoenician alphabet, in addition to ancient jewelry, ivory, bronze and limestone statues, pottery and glass items.

The American University of Beirut Museum

The American University of Beirut Museum was established in 1868. It began with a donation of Cypriot items by the American Consul in Cyprus, General Cesnola. The museum has since grown steadily, with donations and purchase of collections from Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and Iran. In 1999 projects were launched to develop and extend the museum, which was reopened in 2006. Archeologists at the museum conduct excavations in Tal al-Ghassil in the Beqa'a, Tal Kazal in Syria and in downtown Beirut. The museum exhibits statues made of pottery, purple-dyed items and statues from Palmyra that date back to the period between the 1st and 3rd Century A.D.

Robert Mouawad Museum

Robert Mouawad Museum is originally the palace of Henry Pharaon's father, built in 1889. Robert Mouawad bought it in 1990 and transformed it into a museum which exhibits collections that belonged to Pharaon, from ancient pottery to mosaics, icons, statues and weapons, in addition to collections acquired by Mouawad.

Byblos Archaeological Museum, Jbeil

The museum was established in 1984 and displays ancient artifacts discovered in Jbeil.

“The American University of Beirut Museum was established in 1868. It began with a donation of Cypriot items by the American Consul in Cyprus, General Cesnola”

II- Museums displaying traditional collections

There are 12 museums exhibiting traditional items, including:

Amin al-Rihani Museum

The museum was built by Rihani's brother, Albert, in 1953 in his hometown in Fraikeh, Matn. The museum displays the author's writings and belongings.

Gibran Khalil Gibran Museum

Built in 1932, the museum is located in Bsharreh, North Lebanon. It gathers items that belonged to the writer, his books and paintings.

Lebanese Heritage Museum

The museum was established in 2003 due to the efforts of Semaan Khazen Al-Ehdeny Foundation.

The Foundation has worked on collecting items that reflect Lebanon's heritage from the different areas and eras. The museum includes, among other, a section dedicated to Youssef Bey Karam, displaying 210 manuscripts on the leader's life, 65 pieces of artillery and 18 pieces of clothes.

Silk Museum

Established in the town of Basbous in A'aley in 2001, the museum exhibits tools and equipment used in sericulture, which was one of the most flourishing industries in Lebanon.

III- Museums of Arts

There are nine museums displaying art works, mainly:

Hall of Fame

The Hall of Fame was founded in 2002 by six brothers from Ma'alouf Family. It houses around 55 silicon statues of the world's famous people, some of which talk, move and sing. Statues include those of Van Gogh, Um Kalthoum, Thomas Edison, Saddam Hussein, Jacques Chirac and Gamal Abdel-Nasser.

Nicolas Sursock Museum

Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock built the palace in Achrafieh in 1912. Before his death in 1952, he granted it to the Municipality of Beirut, asking them to transform it into a museum. The museum was inaugurated in 1961 and is dedicated to modern art. It also exhibits icons and silverware.

Wax Museum

The Wax Museum is located in Jbeil. It was established in 1970 and houses statues made of wax, including a statue of Cadmus and his sister Europe, Gibran Khalil Gibran and the figures of the 1943 Independence.

It also displays life scenes on the purple dye industry during the Phoenician times and other scenes.

Marie Baz Museum

The museum is located in one of the palaces of Deir al-Qamar. It was founded in 1997 and displays wax statues of Lebanese figures in the fields of politics, literature and arts.

IV- Museums of Science and Natural Life

There are eight museums of science and natural life, including:

Byblos Fossil Museum

The Fossil Museum is located in the old souks of Jbeil.

Treasures of the Sea

Inaugurated in 1996 in Jdeideh by Janine Yazbek, the museum is located in an ancient house and houses a collection from the sea world. 

Newspapers in the World

- ⊙ **The 1st** newspapers appeared in Venice, Italy, in the 16th Century. They were called the gazettes and were published on a weekly basis.
- ⊙ **In 1621**, England printed its first newspaper, and a newspaper was published in France in 1631. The Sun ranks first among British newspapers with 2.4 million copies distributed daily.
- ⊙ **439 million** people buy a newspaper daily; the number of newspaper readers reaches one billion, according to 2005 statistics.
- ⊙ **In 2000**, about 1,500 daily newspapers printed a total of 56 million copies in the United States, and on average, each copy was read by at least two people. USA Today ranks first (2.2 million copies per day), followed by The Wall Street Journal (2 million copies per day).
- ⊙ **12** daily newspapers are published in Lebanon, with less than 100,000 copies distributed daily. Weekly and monthly newspapers and magazines amount to 56.
- ⊙ **The 1st** newspaper published in Arabic is the Egyptian “Al-Waqa’ea” in 1828. Its editors include Rafa’a Tahtawi, Ahmad Fares ash-Chidiac and Mohammed Abdo.
- ⊙ **1.2 million** copies are issued daily by Al-Ahram newspaper, which was first published on August 5th 1876.
- ⊙ **In 2043**, the world might witness the last newspaper in the United States, to be replaced by electronic newspapers, according to Writer Philip Meier.
- ⊙ **14 million** copies are issued daily by the Japanese Yomiuri newspaper, which is the first in the world by number of copies distributed.
- ⊙ **1,453** is the number of national newspapers in the world.



Stats & Numbers

LBP191 billion is taxes paid by Lebanese banks for their 2006 profits which amounted to LBP992 billion, representing a rate of 19.2%.

80,896 is the number of Lebanese who were born in 2007, compared to 21,092 Lebanese who passed away. This means that there was an increase of 59,804 Lebanese in 2007 compared to 54,003 in 2006.

\$1 billion is the value of Euro Bonds that must be paid by the Lebanese government during the second half of 2008; \$1,119 million was paid as dues in the first half of the year.

1,182,864 is the number of passengers of Beirut International Airport who travelled with Middle East Airlines in 2007.

1,337 cars have been stolen in Lebanon in 2007 compared to 1,042 cars in 2006. Cars that were returned to their owners amounted to 659 compared to 444 in 2006. This means that 678 cars have been stolen and not returned in 2007 compared to 598 in 2006.

18,730 people have been arrested for different crimes and felonies in Lebanon in 2007, compared to 18,421 people arrested in 2006.



Photo by Waddah Joma'a - Saida - 2008

Other publications by Information International and INMA (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- "I am Responsible, All of Us are Responsible"
- 8- "Our Environment is Our Home"
- 9- "My Society is My Responsibility"
- 10- "My Society is My Responsibility" Workbook
- 11- "I am a Student, I am a Citizen: Ways Towards State Building"
- 12- "I am a Student, I am a Citizen: Ways Towards State Building" Workbook
- 13- "Lebanon Wars, why?"
- 14- Discrimination in Lebanon

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Joint Project between INMA and Save the Children - Sweden

Due to the difficult situation facing Iraqis in several areas of their country, many families are leaving toward neighboring states, in particular Iran, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, seeking safe shelter. Long time ago, Lebanon received a large number of Iraqis who were opposed to the former regime. After the collapse of the regime and the resulting security situation, a new wave of Iraqis came to Lebanon, many of whom had returned previously to their country.

Iraqis living in Lebanon are facing difficult living conditions, especially those living in distant villages.

The Social and Cultural Development Association (INMA) with the support and cooperation of Save the Children - Sweden organized a series of workshops for 21 Iraqi children between 12-15 years-old. During the five-day workshop, students were given the opportunity to express their situation and hopes, rights and duties, through drawings, essays and other entertainment activities. Students' drawings were used in the production of an animated movie that deals with discrimination and children's right for care and protection from war. 🍿



Animation Movie Making
Saïda - 2008

Iraqi Children
Saïda - 2008