

Interview with Danish Ambassador
Jan Top Christensen

Municipal and ikhtiariah elections in Beirut

Rise in bank deposits

End of Ta'ef



violations

pending

implemented

The end of Ta'ef

10	Monitoring the Monitors: EU EOM's report	38	"We are marching... but where to?" by Antoine Boutros
13	Monitoring the Monitors: SCEC	39	Health by Dr. Hanna Saadah
15	Rise in bank deposits	40	Phoenicia and the Phoenicians by Dr. Hassan Salamen Saadeh
16	Municipal and ikhtariah elections in Beirut	41	Between Yesterday and Today: Still waiting
18	Quarries continue to operate illegally	42	Must-Read: "Lebanon Wars, Why?" 
19	Hard labor	43	Must-read Children's Books: "Choosing" 
20	Cotton production	44	The Nasrallah families
21	Syndicate of Hotel Owners in Lebanon	45	Mar Mama
23	Results of official exams 2008-2009	46	Female Genital Mutilation in the Arab world
26	Broumana High School	47	Real Estate Index: September 2009
28	Haigazian University	48	Food Price Index September 2009
30	Interview with Danish Ambassador Jan Top Christensen	50	Did you know that? by Dr. Hanna Saadah
32	When Politicians Talk: Hizbollah's stances toward Aoun	50	Rafik Hariri International Airport traffic
33	Myth #27: Did the Phoenicians build castles in Lebanon?	51	Stats & Numbers
34	A'ain Al Rummaneh: The bus or the motorcycle?		
36	Iran nuclear file escalates ahead of key talks		

The Francophone Games: USD 125 million, no sports and Condi the savior



Citizen Zero was not surprised by the Lebanese public's indifference to the annual Francophone games, which were organized primarily to demonstrate the link between Francophone countries, including Lebanon, and, as always, between them and France.

The Lebanese played the perfect hosts on the opening day, with the attendance of most of their zu'ama and representatives, applauding Lebanese singer Majida Al Roumi as she sang "Beirut, Lady of the World", a poem actually written by Damascene poet Nizar Qabbani – an irony lost to the leaders of the 'Cedar Revolution'. They also failed to notice that the Beirut Sports City was built by Syrian laborers and that the chairs they sat on were cleaned by those same laborers.

The audience, of course, relished the fireworks that have always intoxicated the Lebanese, which, perhaps, serve as a good alternative to the bullets that we normally fire in jubilation or at funerals. They also ignore the fact that importers only declare USD 1 million worth of fireworks a year to avoid customs, even though the Lebanese go through that much in a few events. What is important is that the Lebanese are unconcerned with the Francophone Games, not because they oppose France, to whom Lebanon owes its birth, and not because they oppose Senegal, or the Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dou, who performed a duet with Majida Al Roumi, and whose countrymen fought Youssef Al A'azmi in Mayssaloun in 1920 under the command of General Gouraud. The cause of their apathy is threefold: money, food and spite. We participate in elections, festivals or celebrations for money, food or to spite a cousin, a neighbor or someone.

It seems that Sarkozy's France no longer recalls what Clemenceau's France did in Lebanon. First they gave us soldiers from the Senegal to 'liberate us', then they stood aside as we cursed them because they were Senegalese, then they sketched a Lebanese flag with the colors of the French flag and placed a cedar in the middle to spite Britain.

Indeed, if you wanted maximum attendance you should have declared that France was holding the Francophone Games out of spite for the Commonwealth Games, you should have distributed flags from both sides and then you would have had results!

We did not go to the squares of the Bourj or Riad Solh without being ushered by buses, sandwiches and money. So then why should we go to the Francophone Games for free? We did not cast our ballots for free, why attend the games for free?

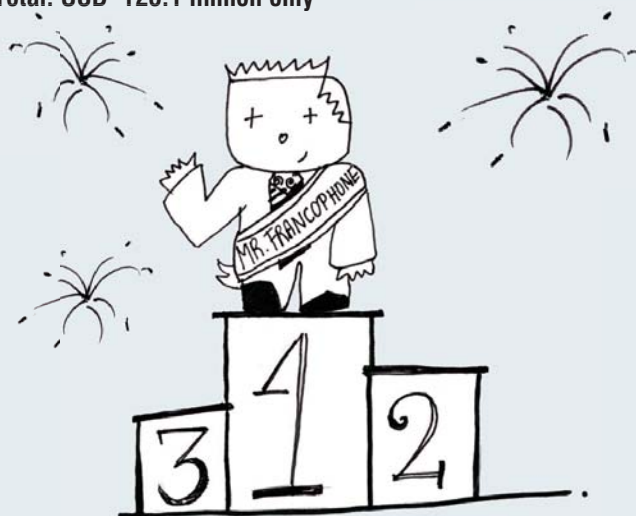
We do not have sports clubs. We have a Maronite basketball club and Shia'a and Sunni soccer clubs. How then can you expect us to attend games that do not have a confessional tilt? Tell us that they are Catholic and then see the results!

We are not with or against anyone. We are not against the Francophones or the Anglo-Saxons. Give us Haifa Wehbeh, Nancy Ajram and Star Academy any day, offer us a meal, money and fireworks, and then you will swim in an endless human sea.

As for the sports cities – on which we spent around USD 125 million to construct – they have fallen victim to dust and rats. Truth be told, we built them according to the confessional balance from Trablous, to Sour, to Ba'albeck, to the Matn coast:

Beirut :79.2, Saida: 16.7, Trablous:16.4, Matn-Ba'albeck (others):12.8

Total: USD 125.1 million only



The cost of maintenance, meanwhile, is LBP 500 million for the Camille Chamoun Sports City Stadium (Beirut) and LBP 375 million for each sports city in Saida and Trablous, in addition to annual salaries –estimated at LBP 810 million– for employees in Beirut. As such, the cost of maintaining these sports cities is estimated at USD1.3 million a year, excluding municipality expenditures.

The organizers of the Francophone Games should have known that our minds are preoccupied, that if they wanted a cheering audience they should have hosted games for the Saudi, Egyptian, Syrian and Iranian soccer teams. They should also have invited Walid Jumblat to tell us that "we are no longer alone" and that "Palestine is no more". They should have invited friends of the Syrian regime to thank Syria for the excellent performance of its intelligence officers planted around Lebanon. The interim prime minister and the organizers of the Francophone Games should have asked Condoleezza Rice to be a commentator –something she adores more than the kisses of Saniora on her cheeks; then you would have had hundreds of thousands of attendees.

As for France, she should be satisfied with the rituals of her annual mass in Bkirki!

Jawad N. Adra

The end of Ta'ef

20 years later, it is yet to be implemented

Twenty years ago, Lebanese MPs gathered in the Saudi city of Ta'ef and ratified the Document of National Accord, also known as the Ta'ef accord, putting an end to the Lebanese civil war. It established the second Lebanese republic on the ruins of the first, which was founded on the 1943 National Pact.

The domestic and regional events that dictated the terms of the agreement are not what our study will focus on. The article will instead evaluate what has been accomplished so far and offer a comparison of the powers of each of the three top state officials before and after the Ta'ef accord.

History

On September 29, 1989, 63 of the 76 surviving members of Lebanon's 1972 Parliament gathered in the city of Ta'ef to reach a settlement to end the civil war at the request of Lakhdar Ibrahim, envoy of the Arab Follow-Up Committee, set up by the Arab League. The meeting came against the backdrop of an escalating military situation and a power vacuum created by the expiration of Amine Gemayel's presidency without the election of a successor. The situation worsened after Gemayel appointed then army-commander Michel Aoun to head a military government considered illegal in West Beirut, especially after the resignation of Muslim ministers.

The deputies gathered in Ta'ef in defiance of Aoun, who had opposed a meeting, and, on October 22, they approved the framework of the accord. On November 4, Aoun issued a decree dissolving Parliament, but the National Assembly met the next day at the Qlaia'at air base in northern Lebanon and ratified the Ta'ef accord (58 votes and three abstentions), electing Rene Moa'awad as president. Some of the Ta'ef accord's stipulated reforms were integrated into the Constitution by the endorsement of the Constitutional Law on September 21, 1990.

General principles

On September 21, 1990, a preamble was added to the Lebanese Constitution, as part of constitutional amendments stipulated in the accord. It most significantly resolved an old debate on the identity of Lebanon stressing that "Lebanon is Arab in belonging and identity. It is an active and founding member of the Arab League and is committed to the league's charter. It is an active and founding member of the United Nations Organization and is committed to its charters..."

Section H of the preamble states, "...There shall be no fragmentation, no partition, and no repatriation [of Palestinians in Lebanon]." Section G stresses that the abolition of "political sectarianism is a fundamental national objective."

“Section G of the preamble stresses that the abolition of “political sectarianism is a fundamental national objective””

Presidential jurisdiction

The president's powers were modified several times and scaled down by Ta'ef in favor of the council of ministers and the prime minister, who became an essential part of the decision-making process. The prime minister's signature became a prerequisite on all decrees except those pertaining to his own designation to the premiership, his and the government's resignation. The Ta'ef also deprived the president from the power to dissolve Parliament and set a timeframe for the promulgation and signature of laws and decrees. Table 1 compares the president's powers before and after the Ta'ef accord.

The powers of the speaker of parliament

Ta'ef consolidated the speaker's position by increasing his term in office to four years from just one year, in one of the main modifications. Table 2 shows the speaker's powers before and after the Ta'ef accord.

The powers of the prime minister

The Ta'ef accord left the selection of prime minister to the members of parliament, no longer the president's choice, a fact that strengthened his position. The prime minister's signature also became required on all decrees except those pertaining to his designation or resignation. Table 3 shows the prime minister's powers before and after the Ta'ef accord.

A comparison of the president's powers before and after the Ta'ef accord**Table 1**

Before	After
Article 17 of the Constitution states, "Executive power is entrusted to the president of the republic who will exercise it with the assistance of ministers, according to conditions established by the present constitution."	"The executive power shall be vested in the cabinet to be exercised, in accordance with the constitution."
Article 18 stipulates, "Initiative for legislation belongs to the president of the republic and the Chamber of Deputies (Parliament)."	"The Chamber of Deputies and cabinet have the right to propose laws. No law shall be promulgated without Parliament's endorsement"
Article 33 stipulates, "... The president of the republic may convene the Chamber to emergency sessions ..."	"... The president of the republic in consultation with the prime minister may summon the Chamber to extraordinary sessions by a decree..."
Article 52 states, "The president of the republic negotiates and ratifies treaties. He brings them to the knowledge of the Chamber as soon as the interest and safety of the State permit."	"The president of the republic, in coordination with the prime minister, negotiates the conclusion and signing of international treaties. The treaties shall become valid only upon approval by the cabinet. The cabinet shall familiarize the Chamber with such treaties when the country's interest and state safety make such familiarization possible.
Article 53 states, "The president appoints and dismisses the ministers among whom he designates a president for the council of ministers; he nominates to all posts for which the mode of appointment is not otherwise determined by law..."	"The president names the prime minister-designate in consultation with the Chamber of Deputies speaker on the basis of binding parliamentary consultation, the outcome of which the president formally discloses to the speaker. The president issues, in agreement with the prime minister, the decree appointing the cabinet, decrees accepting the resignation of the ministers and those relieving them from their duties."
Article 54 states, "Each of the acts of the president of the republic must be countersigned by the minister or ministers concerned."	"The decisions of the president must be countersigned by the prime minister and the minister or ministers concerned."
Article 55 states, "The president of the republic may, by motivated decree taken on the favorable advice of the council of ministers, dissolve the Chamber of Deputies, before the expiry of its term of office..."	Article 55 states, "The president of the republic may, in accordance with the conditions stipulated in Articles 65 and 77 of this constitution, ask the council of ministers to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies before the expiration of its mandate." Article 65 stipulates the "dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies if it, for no compelling reasons, fails to meet during one of its regular periods and fails to meet throughout two successive extraordinary periods or if the Chamber returns an annual budget plan with the aim or paralyzing the government." Article 77 states "If the Chamber insists upon the necessity to amend the Constitution, the president of the republic has then either to accede to the Chamber's recommendation or to ask the council of ministers to dissolve the Chamber."

Speaker's powers before and after the Ta'ef accord**Table 2**

Before	...And after
Article 44 states, "At the first sitting which follows every renewal and on the opening of the October session, the Chamber meeting under the presidency of its senior member, the two youngest members acting as secretaries, elects separately a president (speaker) and a vice- president..."	"Each time a new Chamber is elected, the Chamber meets under the presidency of the most senior member and the secretariat or the two youngest. It will then elect separately, by a secret ballot and by an absolute majority of the votes cast, the speaker and the vice president of the Chamber to hold office for the length or the Chamber's term."

A comparison of the prime minister's powers before and after the Ta'ef accord**Table 3**

Before	...And After
Article 64 of the Constitution stipulates, "Ministers assume the higher management of all the state services pertaining to their respective departments. Each, within his competence, sees to the enforcement of the laws and regulations."	The prime minister enjoys the following jurisdictions: - "He heads the council of ministers and is ex officio deputy head of the Supreme Defense Council - He conducts the parliamentary consultations involved in forming a cabinet. He signs, with the president, the decree forming the cabinet - He signs, along with the president, all decrees, except the decree, which designates him the head of the government, and the decree accepting the cabinet's resignation or considering it resigned of managing affairs - He calls the council of ministers into session and sets its agenda and informs the president and the ministers beforehand of the subjects included on the agenda and of the urgent subjects that will be discussed - He supervises the activities of the public administrations and institutions, coordinates among the ministers and provides general guidance to ensure the proper progress of affairs."

Implementation of four marginal provisions

1-"Creation of a socioeconomic council for development:

A socioeconomic council shall be created to insure that representatives of the various sectors participate in drafting the state's socioeconomic policy and providing advice and proposals." Decree 389 of January 12, 1995 established the Economic and Social Council while Decree 1212 dated December 30, 1999 appointed its members. The Council has yet to fulfill its mission and remains suspended following the expiration of its term without the appointment of new members.

- 2- "Abolish the mention of sect and denomination on the identity card." In 1997, the government abolished the mention of sect and confession with the issue of new identity cards.
- 3- "To ensure the judiciary's independence, a certain number of the Supreme Judicial Council shall be elected by the judicial body." Implementation of this provision was delayed until 2002, when judges elected two members to the Supreme Judicial Council.
- 4- "A special law on the rules of trial [procedures] before the Supreme Council to try presidents and ministers shall be promulgated." Article 80 stipulates the establishment of the Supreme Council in order to try presidents and ministers. The Council "consists of seven deputies elected by the Chamber of Deputies and of eight of the highest ranking Lebanese judges. A special law is to be issued to determine the procedures to be followed by this Council." Although Article 80 was endorsed in 1927, the rules of procedures were stipulated by Trial Law 13, of August 18, 1990.

Non-implementation of seven essential provisions

- 1- "Efforts (will be made) to achieve comprehensive social justice through fiscal, economic, and social reform." However, the public treasury suffers from deficit and poverty that affects many Lebanese.
- 2- "The Chamber of Deputies which is elected on the basis of equality between Muslims and Christians takes the appropriate measures to realize the abolition of political sectarianism. A national committee is to be formed, headed by the president of the republic and includes the speaker, the prime minister and leading political, intellectual and social figures. The tasks of this committee are to study and propose the means to ensure the abolition of sectarianism propose them to the Chamber of Deputies and the council of ministers and supervise the execution of the transitional plan." In 1992, the first post-war Parliament elections were based on parity between Muslims and Christians, but the national committee is still pending formation and sectarianism still dominates all aspects of Lebanese life.
- 3- "Abolish the sectarian representation base ... excluding the top-level jobs and equivalent jobs which shall be shared equally by Christians and Muslims without allocating any particular job to any sect." To date, sectarianism remains the basis for appointments and public posts. Grades five, four, three, two and one positions are still exclusive to certain confessions. For example, the posts of army commander, the Central Bank governor, the president of the Supreme Judicial Council, director general of the Ministry of Finance, director general of the Ministry of Education

and the head of Central Inspection Department are all exclusive to Maronites. The posts of head of the Higher Council of Customs, director general of Ministry of Information, the president of the Council of the South, the director general of the Technical and Vocational Institute, public prosecutor of the treasury, head of the military tribunal, director general of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the director general of General Security are reserved for the Shia'a confession. Furthermore, the posts of head of the Council for Development and Reconstruction, the director general of Internal Security Forces, the general prosecutor, and the director general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are reserved for the Sunni confession.

A more dangerous occurrence is that some ministries are being 'given' to certain confessions. For example, the Ministry of Finance is reserved for the Sunni confession and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Shia'a.

- 4- "Culturally, socially and economically-balanced development is a mainstay of the state's unity and of the system's stability." This objective remains a mere slogan.
- 5- "Official, vocational, and technological education shall be reformed, strengthened, and developed. The conditions of the Lebanese University shall be reformed..." Since the promulgation of the Ta'ef accord, public schooling has been in constant regression while the Lebanese University has been reeling under the pressure of disorganization, a teacher surplus, an insufficient budget and an overcapacity in the literature and humanities departments.
- 6- "Adherence to the truce agreement concluded on 23 March 1949." Consecutive governments have included provisions to support the resistance in the ministerial communiqués, breaching the truce, which is also violated by Israel's repeated invasions and aggressions.
- 7- "With the election of the first Chamber of Deputies on a national, not sectarian, basis, a senate shall be formed and all the spiritual families shall be represented in it. The senate powers shall be confined to crucial issues." Parliament has yet to be elected on a "national basis"; consequently, the birth of the senate has been delayed indefinitely.



Violation of eight essential provisions

- 1- "The number of members of the Chamber of Deputies shall be increased to 108, shared equally between Christians and Muslims." Before Ta'ef, there were 99 deputies, 54 Christians and 45 Muslims. The number of MPs increased to 128, by 29 deputies instead of nine, as stipulated by Ta'ef.
- 2- "A constitutional council shall be created to interpret the constitution, observe the constitutionality of the laws and to settle disputes and contests emanating from presidential and parliamentary elections." The Constitutional Council was created by law 250 of July 14, 1997 but was stripped from its power to interpret the Constitution.
- 3- "The armed forces intelligence shall be reorganized to serve military objectives exclusively." However, as in the past, Army Intelligence is still involved in a number of cases and issues that are outside the military's jurisdiction.
- 4- "Disbanding of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias shall be declared. The militias' weapons are to be handed over to the state of Lebanon within a period of 6 months, once the National Accord Charter has been certified and the president elected..." Lebanese militias have been officially disbanded, yet only partially disarmed by the state. Furthermore, the state has yet to disarm Palestinian camps and organizations.
- 5- "The armed forces shall be unified, prepared, and trained in order that they may be able to shoulder their national responsibilities in confronting Israeli aggression." The army has been unified and trained but remains under-equipped and consequently incapable of confronting the Israeli danger. Some believe in the saying that "Lebanon's strength lies in its weakness" based on the fact that the army is incapable of fighting Israel in all cases.
- 6- "The problem of the Lebanese evacuees is to be solved, and the right of every Lebanese evicted since 1975 to return to the place from which he (she) was evicted shall be established. Legislations to guarantee this right and to insure the means of reconstruction shall be issued." Most of the displaced, despite receiving state funds for reparations, have not returned to their homes, especially in villages such as Kabreeh in the Chouf and Kfar Matta in A'aley. The state has approved substantial amounts for people who were not displaced to reward their loyalty to certain political groups. Lebanon has so far spent an estimated USD 2.5 billion on the displaced at a time when only a quarter of evacuees have returned to their homes.
- 7- "All the information media shall be reorganized under the canopy of the law and within the framework of responsible freedom [of expression]." A regulating law was enacted to regulate the issuance of licenses, but instead is serving as an authorizing body for television and radio stations affiliated with political parties and confessions.

- 8- Clause Two of Article 49 states, "The president may not be re-elected until six years after the expiration of his last mandate... It is also not possible to elect judges, Grade One civil servants, or their equivalents in all public institutions to the Presidency during their term or office or within two years following the date of their resignation or their leaving office for whatever reason." Since Ta'ef's enactment, Article 49 has been violated several times, starting with the extension of late President Elias Hraoui's mandate for three years; the amendment of the text to elect Emile Lahoud as president prior to his resignation from the post of army commander; the extension of Lahoud's term and finally the election of President Michel Suleiman without the necessary constitutional amendments.

“The Ta'ef accord has a number of texts and clauses that need clarification, amendment or a permanent arbitrator – a role Syria played for many years – to resolve conflicts.”

Parliamentary electoral law: multiple interpretations

The parliamentary electoral law dominated extensive deliberations during the drafting of the Ta'ef especially in terms of the form voting should take. Following are some major points of contention: Should Lebanon vote along a majority criterion or a proportional? What should the size of an electoral district be and should Lebanon be a single electoral constituency? What about the sizes of the muhafaza (governorate), the qada'a (district) and individual districts? Under the political reforms section, Ta'ef stipulates, "The electoral district shall be the governorate." The text on electoral law stipulates, "Parliamentary elections shall be held in accordance with a new law on the basis of provinces and in the light of rules that guarantee common coexistence between the Lebanese, and that ensure the sound and efficient political representation of all the people's factions and generations. This shall be done after reviewing the administrative division within the context of unity of the people, the land, and the institutions."

Former Speaker Hussein al-Husseini, one of Ta'ef's cornerstones, stresses that "the governorate" includes five main governorates: Beirut, Northern Lebanon, Mount Lebanon,

the Beqa'a, and Southern Lebanon (excluding Nabatiyeh, which, in his opinion, is an administrative muhafaza).

The new administrative distribution, as cited in the accord, aims to create new administrative, not electoral, muhafazas. Meanwhile, other MPs who took part in the drafting process insist that “the governorate” cited in the Ta'ef consists of new muhafazas smaller than the present ones but larger than the qada'a. Drafters also discussed the creation of 12-15 muhafazas/electoral districts considering that the Ta'ef accord cites the administrative division in the clause on electoral law to emphasize the link between the two issues.

The state has adopted multiple electoral laws since the enactment of Ta'ef. In 1992, the governorate acted as an electoral district in all muhafazas except Mount Lebanon, where voting was based on the qada'a. In 2009, the qada'a criterion was adopted as stipulated by the 1960 electoral law after Beirut was divided into three constituencies.

Ambiguous provisions and clauses that require revision or reinterpretation

The Ta'ef accord has a number of texts and clauses that need clarification, amendment or a permanent arbitrator – a role Syria played for many years – to resolve conflicts. Some of the ambiguous texts in the pre-Ta'ef constitution were modified by the accord without being clarified. These include:

- **Article 58 (prior to modification by Ta'ef) states**, “... The president may render executable any project which has previously been declared urgent by the government by the decree of transmission taken on the favorable advice of the Council of Ministers, and on which the Chamber of Deputies has not adjudicated within the forty days following its communication to the Assembly.”

The Ta'ef Accord amended the article to read: “Every Bill deemed urgent by the Council of Ministers and in which this urgency is indicated in the decree of transmission to the Chamber of Deputies may be issued by the president within forty days following its communication to the Chamber, after including it on the agenda of a general meeting, reading it aloud before the Chamber and after the expiration of the time limit...”

The article fails to specify when the 40-day grace period goes into effect. As a result, if the speaker abstains from listing draft bills on Parliament's agenda, the 40-day grace period cannot officially start until he does. Such a loophole gives the speaker the chance to impede the work of the government by not discussing draft bills in Parliament and eventually vote on them. As long as Parliament has not endorsed these bills, neither the president nor the government can promulgate them pending the start of the grace period.

“In conclusion, four marginal issues were implemented, seven essential provisions are pending implementation and eight pivotal issues were violated”

- **Clause Six of Article 64 of the Constitution states**, “He [the prime minister] calls the Council of Ministers into session and sets its agenda, and he informs the president and the ministers beforehand of the subjects included on the agenda and of the urgent subjects that will be discussed.” Is this a mere formality on the part of the prime minister? Does the president have the right to object to the agenda's contents? If so, is the prime minister then required by law to cancel some of the items that the president opposed?

There are divergent interpretations to Clause Six with some considering the contents of agenda to require the president's approval. Others deem such approval unnecessary and, if the president objects to some of its contents, he can preside over the cabinet session in which these topics are to be discussed.

Twenty years after the Ta'ef accord, the state should allow the implementation of some of its essential provisions and reconsider some of stipulations that have been implemented, especially in relation to the president's jurisdiction. Meanwhile, the zua'ama of the Sunni confession are holding on to what has been achieved so far, since the Ta'ef transferred the powers of the president to the council of ministers, which is to encompass all confessions. At this point, it is worth asking a few questions about the constitutionality of the council of ministers: If a confession is not represented in cabinet, would the council of ministers remain legitimate? Would it still be entitled to the powers awarded to it by the Ta'ef? Or should it be considered defunct even if it consists of the two-thirds majority required to form a government? If so, how should the previous government under Prime Minister Fouad Saniora be defined after the resignation of the Shia'a ministers?

The Ta'ef accord will remain one of the most essential and debated topics in Lebanon, especially during tumultuous periods. However, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to amend it. In conclusion, what has been implemented so far does not exceed four marginal issues; what has yet to be implemented are seven essential provisions and what has been violated are eight pivotal issues. The de facto situation now is that Ta'ef consolidated the power of the speaker of parliament and the prime minister at the expense of the president's.

The 2008 Doha agreement is a confirmation that the zua'ama of Lebanon had no intention to implement Ta'ef. These leaders have violated the Constitution by reintroducing the 1960 parliamentary electoral law and putting Lebanon on a path of continuous crises and threats of civil wars.

The stubborn adherence of some politicians to the accord, practically indicates an insistence to preserve the power of the Sunni za'im without awarding a larger share to the Shia'a and Maronite zua'ama and without taking into account the other provisions under Ta'ef. Calls by others for the implementation of the Ta'ef accord are basically calls to amend it in order to recover the powers of the president and to give a larger share to the Shia'a zua'ama without implementing other stipulations. The 2009 parliamentary elections further confirmed that talk on state building is mere rhetoric. In the end each confession voted for its za'im and each za'im 'partitioned' a geographical area and stakes in both the private and public sectors. These leaders' competition for power is essentially, and sometimes structurally, linked to external forces and interests.

Therefore, one can argue that the Ta'ef accord has ended, and perhaps it was over long before it even started. 

Ta'ef and Syria

Syria played an essential role in the endorsement of the Ta'ef Accord while enjoying a large military presence in the country and strong political influence on Muslim parties and the zua'ama of Muslim confessions. Ta'ef included clauses pertaining to the Syrian military presence in Lebanon and on bilateral relations. However, Syria was unwilling to implement or unable to allow the implementation of these stipulations, and the text related to the Syrian presence was drafted in an ambiguous manner giving Syria a chance to be noncommittal.

Ta'ef stipulates, "Considering that the objective of the state of Lebanon is to spread its authority over all the Lebanese territories through its own forces, represented primarily by the internal security forces, and in view of the fraternal relations binding Syria to Lebanon, the Syrian forces shall thankfully assist the forces of the legitimate Lebanese government to spread the authority of the state of Lebanon within a set period of no more than two years, beginning with ratification of the national accord charter, election of the president of the republic, formation of the national accord cabinet, and approval of the political reforms constitutionally. At the end of this period, the two governments -- the Syrian Government and the Lebanese National Accord Government -- shall decide to redeploy the Syrian forces in Al-Beqa'a area from Dahr al-Baydar to the Hammana-al-Mudayrij-'Ayn Darah line, and if necessary, at other points to be determined by a joint Lebanese-Syrian military committee. An agreement shall also be concluded by the two governments to determine the strength and duration of the presence of Syrian forces in the above-mentioned area and to define these forces' relationship with the Lebanese state authorities where the forces exist. The Arab Tripartite Committee is prepared to assist the two states, if they so wish, to develop this agreement."

Syria took the stand that the two-year grace period will not take effect before the comprehensive constitutional endorsement of political reforms. However, after September 1990, when certain minor steps were taken in accordance with the accord, Syria failed to withdraw its forces in September 1992, reneging on its commitment under Ta'ef. It claimed that since not all the reforms have been ratified the grace period has not started.

Syria maintained its military presence in Lebanon until its complete withdrawal in 2005, due to international pressure and resolutions following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

MONITORING THE MONITORS

The EU Election Observation Mission to Lebanon and the Supervisory Commission of the Electoral Campaign

During the last week of September, the EU Election Observation Mission to Lebanon (EU EOM) handed Lebanese state officials its final report on the June 7 elections – an event that received wide media coverage. EU EOM had released its preliminary report during the first weeks following the conclusion of the polls.

A thorough reading of the report is almost guaranteed to frustrate readers and force them to rethink the current concept of electoral monitoring. The EU EOM's report merely dissects the Lebanese electoral law, with special focus to the media, expenditures, the Lebanese committee supervising voting and formal procedures adopted during the electoral process (voter registration and polling stations). It may serve as valuable reference for people unfamiliar with the Lebanese political landscape, but offers nothing new for Lebanese readers.

For its part, the Supervisory Commission of the Electoral Campaign, affiliated with the Lebanese Ministry of Interior, has also published some of its observations on the 2009 elections pending the publication of its final report.

The EU EOM mission

The EU EOM, formed at the request of the Lebanese state, started work on April 19 and operated for 65 days until June 22. Its chief observer, Jose Ignacio Salafranca, is a member of the European Parliament and headed a similar mission during the 2005 parliamentary elections. It assigned 100 observers to monitor voting, ballot counts and the announcement of results. Funded by the European Union, the mission's cost is estimated at 7.4 million Euros.

Contents of the report

The document consists of the following 15 chapters:

- ⦿ Executive summary
- ⦿ Introduction
- ⦿ Political background
- ⦿ Legal issues
- ⦿ Election administration
- ⦿ Voter registration
- ⦿ Registration of candidates and political parties
- ⦿ Election campaign and pre-election environment
- ⦿ Media and elections
- ⦿ Participation of women and minorities
- ⦿ Participation of civil society
- ⦿ Complaints and appeals
- ⦿ Election day
- ⦿ Results
- ⦿ Recommendations

These headlines suggest that the EU mission succeeded in uncovering major flaws in the electoral system, but a closer look at the content reveals that nothing new was found. Then

what was the purpose of this report? What major work did the observers on the ground do that couldn't have been done from Strasbourg? Furthermore, observation was limited to "the opening, voting, closing and counting processes in 501 [out of 5181] polling stations in the country's 26 electoral districts." Monitoring was therefore limited to less than 10% of polling stations nationwide.

Political background

The section offers an unbiased and objective summary of the political framework and environment of the country. It cites key events that have taken place over the past few years, such as the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, conflict between March 8 and March 14, the July 2006 war, the opposition's sit-in downtown Beirut, the Doha conference and most active parties and political figures.

These facts are not new, however, and are sometimes placed out of context, while some figures and percentages were incorrect. For example, the report states that "the Armenian electorate was mainly captured by Tashnag, which claimed 60% of its votes notably in Beirut II and Metn, despite the existence of the Ramgavar Democratic Liberal Party and the Hunchag Social Democratic party, which were both part of the majority." The report estimates the number of Armenian electors at 130,000 whereas the total number of Armenian Orthodox and Armenian Catholic voters was 106,502. In Beirut II the electoral process was more of a no-contest vote for Sunni and Shia's candidates, therefore the Armenian contender won

uncontested. In the Matn qada'a, 79% of Armenian electors voted Tashnag, and its backer, the Free Patriotic Movement.

Legal issues

The report reviewed a number of well-known legal issues in the electoral law. It faulted the law for its failure to introduce official pre-printed ballots in order to protect voters from intimidation. Voters are currently required to write the names of their candidates on their own ballots instead. Such a system, the report says, compromises the voters "right to a secret vote and to choose freely".

The report then praised the law for allowing Lebanese expatriates to vote from abroad and considered that the law's referral to the right of disabled voters to access polling stations a major success. However, the state needs a time to adequately equip polling stations across the country before the right of the disabled can fully be guaranteed. The report cited that the new law "maintained the prohibition" of members of the military and security forces to vote. What is new about that observation?

Some of the observations in the document are marginal, others nonpolitical. For example it wrote that "a decision to count blank ballots rather than qualify them as invalid allows for a valuable recognition of citizens who use their vote to express their dissatisfaction". While this is a significant matter, it does not affect the electoral process. The report pointed to the fact that Lebanese women neither have the right to pass on citizenship to a foreign husband, nor to their offspring. This is a much-debated issue in Lebanon. It also cited that there is no specific law for political parties other than the Association Law of 1909 that "regulates all associations, including political parties." Again, this topic often dominates debates on political parties and political work in Lebanon.

The report says the 2008 electoral law stipulates the distribution of parliamentary seats in parity between Muslims and Christians. They are currently distributed as follows: 27 for the Sunni confession, 27 for the Shia'a, eight for the Druze, two for the A'alawi, 34 for the Maronite, 14 for the Greek Orthodox, eight for the Greek Catholic, five for the Armenian Orthodox, one for the Armenian Catholic, one for the Evangelist and one for the minorities. This form of distribution was not introduced by the 2008 law; it has been followed since the first post-Ta'ef accord parliamentary elections in 1992.

The report then observes the following: "... as many as half of all constituencies are now 'mono-confessional'. In the context of the current confessional and majority-vote electoral system, this has reduced competition for many parliamentary seats. However, competition was even more intense in a few areas, especially in those with Christian majorities." This is an inaccurate statement because competition was also intense in Saida and in the Western Beqa'a, that both have Muslim

majorities and are 'mono-confessional'. The same can be said of Batroun (Maronite) and Koura (Greek Orthodox).

The report then lists the tasks of the Supervisory Commission of the Electoral Campaign, concluding; "Indications are, however, that spending on the elections far exceeded the nominal caps in theory imposed." How did the observers manage to obtain this information? If the statement was based on unreliable sources, it should not be included in a supposedly credible report. If they observed this, they should have documented it and identified violators, paving the way to contest their membership in parliament. What is the value of a legal text if it is not followed-up on?

Elections administration and voter registration

In this section, the report merely repeats legal texts and procedural steps followed in the electoral process. It cites:

- ⊙ The establishment of the Supervisory Commission of the Electoral Campaign. It fails to mention that the body was structured based on confessional and political 'partitioning' that impedes its mission.
- ⊙ "Key logistical and operational requirements were met. These included ensuring the selection and training of 11,500 polling staff members, as well as the sourcing and distribution of election materials for the other initiatives." It also pointed to the fact that women "continue to be significantly under-represented in the election administration". (Page 12)
- ⊙ "The Ministry [of Interior and Municipalities] ran a series of television advertisements to encourage citizens to verify their information." These steps are taken during all elections, not just to the June 7 elections.
- ⊙ Mechanism of forming voter lists, which is followed in all elections (Eligible voters, the date of the lists' preparation and their reviewers, the final deadline for registration).
- ⊙ "Voters are registered in their place of origin rather than their place of residence and procedures for changing registration location are excessively lengthy and cumbersome." This is certainly not a breakthrough.

The report mixes current issues in a non-scientific and non-methodological manner in many sections. On page 12, the report says that women are under-represented in the administration of the elections and then directly jumps to citing claims of the circulation of false IDs. On the following page, the report talks about the possibly removing confession from the register but



then moves to talk about the changing registration location and other issues.

Candidates and political parties registration

The report merely reaffirms that the Association Law is the same law that regulates political parties. It lists the number of candidates and withdrawals, all of which have been extensively covered by the press. On page 16 the report states, "...Payments for withdrawing have been alleged..." The report should have substantiated these claims before including them.

Election campaign and pre-election environment

On page 16, the report states, "The EU EOM did not receive any allegations or evidence of direct use of State resources for campaign purposes." Was the mission supposed to "receive" evidence? Isn't the observer's mission to investigate such claims and obtain evidence, especially after many candidates alleged that their competitors were using state resources for their campaigns? The report dedicated several pages on the media coverage of the elections. What is striking, however, is the report's failure to mention Maronite Patriarch Mar Nasrallah Sfeir's statement, on the eve of the elections, or the political impact it had. It seems observers were unaware of it.

Participation of women and minorities

As in the previous chapters, the section does not offer any groundbreaking information. According to the EU EOM, Lebanese laws discriminate against women. For example, a woman is required to transfer her registration after marriage and does not have the right to pass on her Lebanese citizenship to her foreign husband and their offspring. On page 20, the report also 'discovers' that "in 2005, six women were elected to Parliament, in 2009 only four women were elected."

Complaints and appeals

The report reviews the procedural mechanisms of the Constitutional Council when judging parliamentary appeals but does not offer evidence of violations that could form a case for appeal.

Political overview of the election results

The report is redundant, citing information covered by the press, such the distribution of parliamentary seats among political parties, between pro-government forces and the opposition. What is striking is that the report only mentioned "the unexpected failure of Elias Scaff..." (Page 27)

Recommendations

In its conclusion, the report offers 36 recommendations "for consideration and action by the Government of Lebanon, political parties, civil society and the international community."

It again repeats the same recommendations already discussed in studies, seminars and researches on the need to draft a new electoral law. Here is a sample of recommendations reaffirming the absence of new ideas and suggestions:

- ⊙ "All future electoral reforms should take the opportunity to consider the Constitutional aim of a non-confessional electoral system." This cannot be accomplished in the near future.
- ⊙ "So long as it is achieved through consensus, the electoral system should be reformed to introduce a degree of proportionality."
- ⊙ "As a matter of priority, the necessary reforms should be made to introduce the use of officially printed ballots."
- ⊙ "The disenfranchisement of military personnel should be rescinded."
- ⊙ "The process by which voters may transfer their location of voter registration to where they reside should be simplified, shortened..." This is difficult to accomplish.
- ⊙ "... practices which could be viewed as conducive to vote-buying should be limited ... and regulation should be introduced to mitigate the extent to which [charity] organizations can be used to achieve electoral support."
- ⊙ "Women's representation in the administration of elections could be improved."
- ⊙ "Action should be taken in good time prior to the next elections to ensure that physically disabled voters enjoy their right to access polling stations."
- ⊙ "The Constitutional Council should be required to determine appeals within one month of their submission, providing a record of the evidence considered."
- ⊙ "Publication of results should continue to be done in a timely fashion and should be issued to the press, on the internet and in a published gazette."

The report is a regurgitation of the electoral law and the procedural steps followed in the elections. Its recommendations are either old, unfeasible or require decades for implementation.

The Lebanese were anticipating a report that exposed violations in the electoral process, such as the use of the media as a tool for inciting sectarian strife, or substantiated proof of over-expenditures and vote buying. The mission failed to monitor electoral expenditures, particularly the flying in of 48,000 Lebanese expatriates to cast their votes, the cost of media campaigns and the outright flagrant vote buying (*See The Monthly issue # 84 of July 2009- '48,000 Lebanese flown in to participate in the parliamentary elections'*). The final report should have been based on the observation and in-depth investigation of the electoral process. Instead, the EU mission's outcome was nothing more than a research-based legal study.

Supervisory Commission of the Electoral Campaign (SCEC)

As for the Lebanese Supervisory Commission of the Electoral Campaign (SCEC), we can review its background and tasks, although it has yet to publish a final report on the elections.

Article 11 of Electoral Law 25 of October 8, 2008 calls for the establishment of the Supervisory Commission of the Electoral Campaign (SCEC) in order to oversee the parliamentary elections. The Monthly reviews the commission's tasks, outcomes and cost following the June 7 elections. Were the results worth the financial burden placed on the state?

Structure

The interior and municipalities minister oversees the work of the SCEC, which consists of ten members appointed by Decree 1044 dated December 23, 2008:

- ⦿ A retired judge, head of chamber at the Court, as president. (Ghassan Abou Alwan was appointed).
- ⦿ A retired judge, head of a chamber at the Shura (Consultative) Council, as vice president (Iskandar Fayyad was appointed).
- ⦿ A retired judge, head of a chamber at the Court of Audit (COA), as member (Hanifa Sabr was appointed but she declined).
- ⦿ A former head of the Beirut Lawyers Syndicate as a member (Salim al-Osta was appointed).
- ⦿ A former head of the Tripoli Lawyers Syndicate as a member (George Mourani was named).
- ⦿ Two media experts as members (Imad Bashir and Pierre Azar were appointed).
- ⦿ Three specialists in electoral processes (Atallah Ghanam, Arda Okomkji, and Khalil Jbara).

The ten members were handpicked based on political 'partitioning' and the principle of confessional representation. The end result was a Druze president, two members from each of the Shia'a, Sunni and Maronite confessions and a member from each of the Catholic, Orthodox and Armenian confessions.

Commission's mandate

The members' terms begin with the issue of their appointment decree and expire six months after the conclusion of the elections (in this case as of December 23, 2008 until December 8, 2009). However, the SCEC's mandate was extended until December 31, 2009.

“The ten members were handpicked based on political 'partitioning' and the principle of confessional representation. The end result was a Druze president, two members from each of the Shia'a, Sunni and Maronite confessions and a member from each of the Catholic, Orthodox and Armenian confessions.”



Tasks

The law specified the Commission's work as:

- ⦿ To receive and review applications by media outlets wishing to broadcast or publish paid campaign ads
- ⦿ To ensure that candidates and media outlets abide by laws and regulations regulating electoral competition
- ⦿ To oversee electoral spending
- ⦿ To receive statements of account for campaigns and candidates
- ⦿ To draft a final report on its work and present it to the minister of the interior and municipalities

Accomplished goals

Although the SCEC was capable of performing its tasks to a certain extent, it failed to prevent media outlets from violating electoral law or even name some of the breaches. The commission certainly failed in its task to oversee electoral spending, since expenditures in some districts vastly exceeded the limit specified by the law.

The commission will issue a report detailing its activities, and perhaps will have the courage to admit some of its shortcomings caused by the financial, political and confessional interests all reflected in the SCEC's structure.

Cost

Article 18 of the Electoral Law states that the commission's president and members will each receive monthly lump sum payments to be determined by a decree. Decree 1771 of April 23, 2009, set the compensations at LBP 8 million a month for the president and LBP 6 million for each member with the start of their terms in office until end of July.

The decree allocated LBP 4 million for the president and LBP 3 million per member for the remaining period in office. However, the ruling was amended by decree 2466 of July 1, 2009 extending the first phase until end of September instead of end of July.

The second phase and the expiry of the commission's term were set for December 31, 2009 (instead of December 8, 2009

“Although the SCEC was capable of performing its tasks to a certain extent, it failed to prevent media outlets from violating electoral law or even name some of the breaches. The commission certainly failed in its task to oversee electoral spending, since expenditures in some districts vastly exceeded the limit specified by the law.”

as originally determined by law, since the elections ended on June 8 and the six month period expires on December 8, 2009). As such, the total amount of compensation will reach LBP 651 million. It is worth noting that several commission members are retired civil servants and therefore continue to receive their pensions from the state. Furthermore, other members, who are either state employees or are employed on a contractual basis, were on the state's payroll while working in the commission.

A comparison between the official cost of compensation received by SCEC members (other costs are unknown) and the body's results makes us more inclined to demand that one of two things happens: the abolishment of the commission altogether in the next elections or the creation of a new SCEC that doesn't take into account confessional and political considerations. The body should be equipped with a team of specialists who possess modern technologies that would aid their work (censorship and real oversight of advertisement and electoral spending). The reform of the commission would protect it from becoming a designated false witness to the state's treasury.

Despite having substantial funds at its disposal, the commission did not achieve anything of significance. International observers also received huge amounts of money from their donors, yet did not adequately perform their job, since according to them the elections were 'fair'. 🍷

Rise in bank deposits

First half of 2009 registered the highest percentage in 10 years

Since the beginning of 2009 bank deposits have risen at a higher rate compared to the same period in previous years, reaching unprecedented amounts. Deposits reached around USD 86.8 billion at the end of June 2009, marking an USD 8 billion rise since the start of the year.

Increase compared to previous years

The USD 8 billion rise during the first six months of 2009, estimated at a monthly average of USD 1,350 million, is considered an unprecedented development according to Table 1.

Progress of bank deposits movement during the first half of 2000-2009 (in LBP billion at the beginning of the specified month)										Table 1
Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
January	51,861	57,322	61,040	64,865	74,414	84,171	87,611	93,073	102,598	118,584
February	52,032	57,402	61,135	65,083	75,096	83,622	87,758	92,085	103,944	118,611
March	52,459	57,690	61,028	65,995	75,650	83,042	88,453	92,654	105,541	120,300
April	53,222	58,118	60,524	66,314	76,085	80,854	89,593	93,288	105,443	122,787
May	53,517	58,158	60,348	67,247	76,561	80,809	90,507	94,420	106,982	126,021
June	53,497	58,452	59,892	68,260	77,864	81,152	91,603	95,311	107,579	128,632
July	54,466	58,800	60,400	68,740	78,217	81,557	92,729	96,158	110,131	130,788
Rise/Decline 1st of January- 1st of July	2,605	1,478	-640	3,875	3,803	-2,614	5,118	3,085	7,533	12,204
% of growth	5.02	2.50	-1	5.90	5.10	-3.1	5.80	3.30	7.30	10.30

Note: The calculation of these deposits does not include those of banks not evaluated by other banks operating in Lebanon.

The above figures highlight several significant points:

- ⦿ The deposits registered a LBP 78,927 billion increase (152.2%), climbing from LBP 51,861 billion to LBP 130,788 billion from the beginning of 2000 and until the end of June 2009.
- ⦿ The average monthly growth rate of deposits during this period was: 0.83%, 0.43%, -0.17%, 1%, 0.85%, -0.5%, 0.97%, 0.55%, 1.2%, and 1.7% in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. The figures indicate that the highest growth rate was 1.7%, and was registered in the first six months of 2009.
- ⦿ Among the underlying causes for the unprecedented growth: a high interest rate on bank deposits, in addition to real estate investments. Interest rates in Lebanon range between 3% and 6% based on the currency and term of deposit, compared to 0.5%-1% in international banks. Furthermore, the Lebanese parliamentary elections in June were also an essential reason for the increase, due to external funding of the electoral process. (See *The Monthly August Issue #85, "USD 2 Billion Rise in Bank Deposits before 2009 Elections"*). 🍷

Municipal and ikhtariah¹ elections in Beirut: 24 members and 108 makhatir²

The municipal and ikhtariah elections, scheduled for April or the first week of May 2010 in Beirut, are expected to be highly competitive, reflecting the current political situation and the intensity of the June 7 parliamentary polls. The outcome is almost pre-determined since the list backed by Al Mustaqbal movement and its allies will most likely win a majority of municipal seats. The results of the ikhtariah elections, however, will be determined by each neighborhood's unique political and confessional structure. In the interim, The Monthly will be covering the municipal candidates and their confessions, in addition to the number of makhatir in Beirut's neighborhoods.

Beirut a single municipal district and multiple districts for makhatir

During the 2000, 2005 and 2009 parliamentary elections, Beirut was divided into multiple electoral districts (the distribution of districts in 2009 differed from that in 2000 and 2005). However, the city will remain a single constituency for the upcoming municipal elections. Registered voters can vote for 24 Municipal Council members, who will elect the Council's president.

In the case of ikhtariah elections, each of Beirut's 12 neighborhoods has a specified number of makhatir shown in Table 1.

Number of registered voters and electors who cast their ballots in 2009 and the number of makhatir in Beirut's neighborhoods				Table 1
Neighborhood	Confession	Number of registered voters in 2009	Number of votes in 2009	Number of makhatir
Achrafieh	Greek Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Maronite, Sunni, Greek Catholic, Shia'a, Latin, Armenian Orthodox, Syriac Catholic, Caldanian, Evangelist, Syriac Orthodox, Israeli, A'alawi, Druze and Assyrian	53,904	23,517	12
Rmeil	Maronite, Armenian Orthodox, Evangelist, Armenian Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Syriac Catholic, Sunni, Latin, Caldanian, other confessions	29,570	10,463	12
Saifi	Maronite, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Shia'a, Armenian Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, A'alawi, Israeli, Syriac Catholic, Caldanian Catholic, Evangelist, Sunni and Druze	9,411	3,230	4
Al Bashoura	Sunni, Maronite, Latin, Shia'a, Greek Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Armenian Catholic, Syriac Catholic and other confessions	49,972	19,114	10
Al Mdawwar	Maronite, Sunni, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Evangelist, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Syriac Catholic, Latin, Shia'a and other confessions	42,177	5,561	12
Al Marfa'	Sunni, Shia'a, Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Israeli, Armenian Orthodox and other confessions	9,601	3,010	4
Ra's Beirut	Greek Orthodox, Sunni, Armenian Orthodox, Maronite, Druze, Evangelist, Greek Catholic, Latin, Shia'a, other confessions	32,315	12,576	6
Mina' Al Hosn	Sunni, Shia'a, Maronite, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Evangelist, Latin, Israeli, other confessions	13,434	2,479	6
Dar Al Mraisseh	Shia'a, Latin, Druze, Maronite, Evangelist, Sunni, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, other confessions	11,106	4,400	4
Mazra'a	Sunni, Greek Orthodox, Shia'a, Maronite, Greek Catholic, Evangelist, Armenian Orthodox, Druze, Syriac Catholic, other confessions	80,490	38,225	15
Msaitbeh	Sunni, Greek Orthodox, Shia'a, Syriac Orthodox, Druze, Syriac Catholic, Greek Catholic, Maronite, Evangelist, Armenian Orthodox and other confessions	68,140	27,818	15
Zqaq Al Blat	Shia'a, Sunni, Armenian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Maronite, Caldanian Catholic and other confessions	46,655	17,399	8
Employees	various confessions	576	522	-
Total	-	447,351	168,314	108

1- Election of mukhtar or village mayor

2- Plural of mukhtar

Confessional structure

There is no legal text specifying the confessional distribution of Municipal Council seats or of the makhatir. However, there is an agreement that the main confessions should be represented and distributed equally among Christians and Muslims. The Council president is a Sunni – since that confession is shared by a majority of registered voters in Beirut (Table 3) – and the vice president is Greek Orthodox. Despite the agreement, the anticipated electoral battles might upset the confessional balance and lead to the absence of a number of confessions in the Council. Table 2 shows the distribution of Council members according to confession.

Municipal Council members according to confession Table 2	
Confession	Municipal Council members
Sunni	8
Shia'a	3
Druze	1
Greek Orthodox	4
Greek Catholic	1
Maronite	2
Armenian Orthodox	2
Protestant	1
Armenian Catholic	1
Syriac Orthodox	1

Distribution of registered voters according to confession Table 3		
Confession	Number of voters	% overall voters
Sunni	185,650	41.5
Shia'a	62,630	14
Armenian Orthodox	53,680	12
Greek Orthodox	46,970	10.5
Maronite	29,100	6.5
Greek Catholic	21,000	4.7
Armenian Catholic	10,740	2.4
Syriac Catholic	8,950	2
Protestant	7,160	1.6
Latin	5,820	1.3
Druze	4,920	1.1
Syriac Orthodox	4,920	1.1
Other Christian confessions and Jewish	5,811	1.3
Total	447,351	100

Source: Number of voters in the parliamentary elections of June 2009.

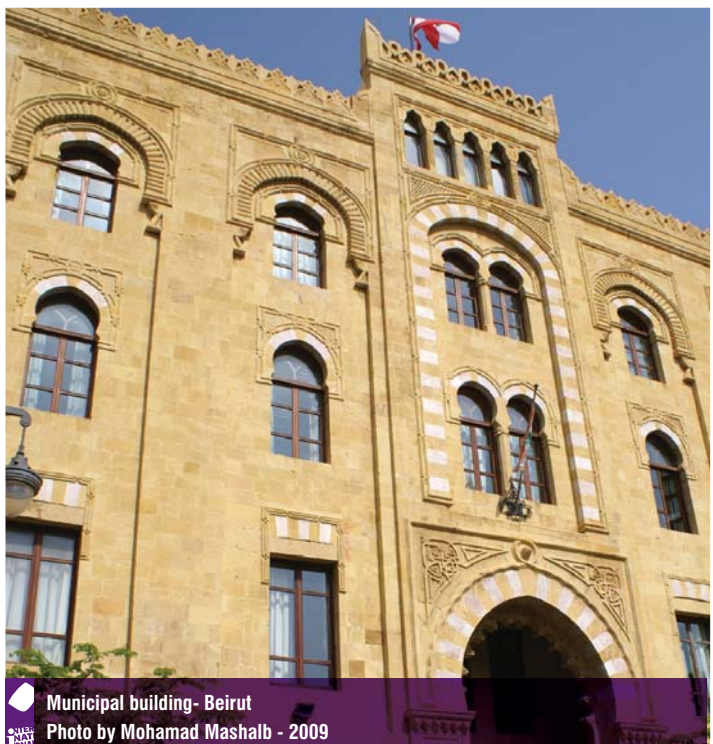
“Despite the agreement, the anticipated electoral battles might upset the confessional balance and lead to the absence of a number of confessions in the Council.”

Conflict between the muhafez (governor) and Council president

Article 67 of Law of Municipalities 118 issued by legislative decree on June 30, 1977 stipulates, “The executive power of the municipality is vested in the Municipal Council president, and that of the municipality of Beirut in the muhafez (governor).”

Some believe that by “depriving” the president (a Sunni) from his decision-making authority in favor of the muhafez (an Orthodox), the law created a state of conflict and enmity that, at some points, took on a confessional character.

In addition to granting Beirut’s municipality president executive powers to regulate and improve municipal work, city residents, irrespective of whether they were born in Beirut or not, should participate in the Council’s election as a first step toward reform and enhancing the Council’s efficiency. After all, they are taxpayers, deprived from the right to choose their representatives.



Quarries continue to operate illegally

Successive governments have made the preservation of the environment a top priority, creating the Ministry of the Environment under Law 216 of April 8, 1993. While the ministry enjoys wide powers, it lacks sufficient funding. From 1993 until 2004, the total sum of its budget reached around LBP 60 billion.

Despite the lack of funds, the ministry was able, after years of deliberation, to issue Decree 8803 of October 4, 2002, which regulates the work of quarries (gravel and sand). The decree consolidated previous resolutions adopted in 1997 authorizing the National Council for Quarries to license quarries operating in specified locations in Lebanon's eastern mountain range (A'arsal and Tfeil near the Syrian border). The area, measuring 172.365 square kilometers, is mainly state-owned or consists of public land.

The decree gave the cabinet the authority to authorize the work of quarries outside that region. It also shut down quarries after September 30, 2009 and allowed the duty-free import of sand and gravel. The decree covers 610 quarries and 348 sanders, most operating without a license or following deadlines set by the administration.

A 2001 study prepared by the Syndicate of Quarries Owners showed that the number of member quarries reached 59, only four of which are licensed and 55 that work on deadline. Licensed and unlicensed quarries produce around 18 million tons - 23 million tons a year of gravel and sand based on construction projects and infrastructure works.

The implementation of the decree was delayed due to political considerations. A former minister stresses, "the quarries file is extremely complicated and messy to the extent that we almost threw ashtrays at each other during some cabinet sessions when the matter was being discussed."

"They are treasure caves for top politicians and for their large entourage since the issue also includes rock stones and mosaic, and both are literally rocks of gold," he says.

"The owners of quarries reside at the heart of the authority and we have been incapable of implementing the master plan," he adds.

In June 2003, the government decided to implement Law 216 and close down the quarries. Some believe that the move was not linked to the preservation of the environment, but rather to pave the way for more imports benefitting the interests of influential figures.



The resolution led to a 200% hike in the prices of sand and gravel which in turn affected the cost of construction, apartments and public works and forced contractors out of business.

Several months later, many quarries resumed work - enjoying a political cover or taking advantage of the fact that security forces were turning a blind eye - but without reducing prices. They argue that the resumption of operations in violation of the law will be penalized and the money will go to the 'sponsor and protector'.

Laxity in the implementation of the law has burdened Lebanese taxpayers with an additional USD 70 million a year, without providing the state with additional income. On the contrary, such negligence deprived the state of resources it could have acquired had the law been properly implemented. The state should collect about LBP 9 billion annually but instead receives a mere LBP 200 million, in addition to revenues from leasing state-owned land in the eastern mountain range.

Hard labor:

A hypothetical verdict that should be abolished

Hard labor is a form of punishment added on to a prison sentence for a specified amount of time. Convicts sentenced to hard labor are forced to carry out strenuous physical work during their time in prison. The type of work depends on the inmate's gender and age. The penalty was abolished in some Arab countries whereas others, like the United Arab Emirates, did not include it in their penal codes.

Most western countries have also abolished hard labor from their penal codes and focused instead on rehabilitation as a solution to social crime by involving inmates in occupations not requiring strenuous physical effort.

Lebanon

Article 37 of the Lebanese Penal Code stipulates that ordinary criminal punishments include the death sentence, permanent hard labor, lifelong incarceration, temporary hard labor, and temporary imprisonment. Article 45 states, "Inmates sentenced to hard labor will be forced to perform strenuous works, within or outside prison walls, befitting their gender and age."

However, hard labor verdicts have never been carried out in Lebanon, and neither the criminal law nor the incarceration system provides details on the rules or types of hard labor. Article 59 of the Penal Code stipulates, "Inmates sentenced to hard labor or detention or imprisonment will live in bedrooms doubling as canteens, except during work hours or the break. They are to sweep, clean their rooms and work by shifts. Inmates with a good record can be promoted to chefs, nurses etc... depending on the prison warden's recommendation and the approval of the battalion commander of gendarmerie. A physician's approval is required for the employment of hospital employees."

Inmates are only allowed to perform community services outside prison walls and are divided into groups, guarded by an armed force. According to articles 46 and 51 of the Penal Code, prisoners remanded in custody or who are [temporarily] detained¹ cannot be forced to work outside the prison without their approval. Furthermore, those sentenced to prison without hard labor cannot be forced into performing this kind of work, but are given the choice. If they choose a certain task, they are to commit to it until the expiration of their sentences.

Jordan

Article 18 of the Jordanian Criminal Law stipulates, "Hard labor requires inmates to perform strenuous works befitting their health and age, either within or outside prison walls."

Article Eight of the Jordanian Prison Law states that inmates – excluding political prisoners and those on death row – are

allowed to perform 'community services' inside or outside the detention center. Inmates must be physically fit and the work must not be harmful to his/her health. Prisoners who refuse to perform their duties are forced to do so, but are not to be compelled to carry out housework outside of prison. Inmates are also allowed to carry out some paid work on behalf of Arab Army officers and members, following the approval of the minister of defense or his deputy. However, their wages would go to fund improvements to prison conditions. Prisoners are to work eight hours a day, not necessarily consecutive. Like Lebanon, hard labour punishments have never been carried out.

Arab states that abolished hard labor

The UAE Penal Code, promulgated in 1987, did not include provisions on hard labor while Tunisian Law 23 replaced the penalty with a prison sentence in 1989.

In Egypt, hard labor was gradually abolished, starting with having inmates break rocks in mountainous areas, up until its complete elimination with Law 95 in 2003.

France and Belgium

Under French code, dated 1854, prisoners were transferred to regions occupied by France to perform hard labor. In 1938, France banned the transfer of inmates, who began serving their sentences on French territories. In 1960, the penalty of hard labor was abolished altogether from the French legal system, and was replaced by temporary or lifelong prison sentences.

In Belgium, hard labor was substituted, in 1996, by 20 years to 30 years in prison, depending on the crime.

In 2000, the Arab Justice Ministers Council adopted a model law that provided guidelines to regulate Arab prison systems, not including the hard labor penalty. Article 36 of the law stipulates that each prison should be equipped with workshops, farms, etc... to help rehabilitate prisoners.

Lebanon has yet to adopt the Arab law, abolish the hard labor penalty, introduce crafts and professions and improve prison condition.

Cotton production

Lack of local markets and tough foreign competition

Production

Cotton products include underwear and pyjamas and are designed by skilled tailors and then tailored at a production factory. They are then packed in special boxes and classified according to the sizes and quantities requested before they are distributed in the local market.

Material such as cotton, satin, chiffon and velvet are used as raw materials to produce this type of clothing. In total, 70% of the materials are imported (mainly from Taiwan) due to competitive prices while less than 30% are bought from the local market.

The main markets

Today, almost 100% of cotton clothing is sold in the local market, particularly in Beirut, Trablous and the south. However, four years ago, prior to the 2005 assassination of Prime Minister Hariri and ensuing developments, a significant quantity (10 to 15%) was exported to Arab markets such as Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. At the time, the number of workers was higher, therefore the production greater and producers could afford to expand their markets.

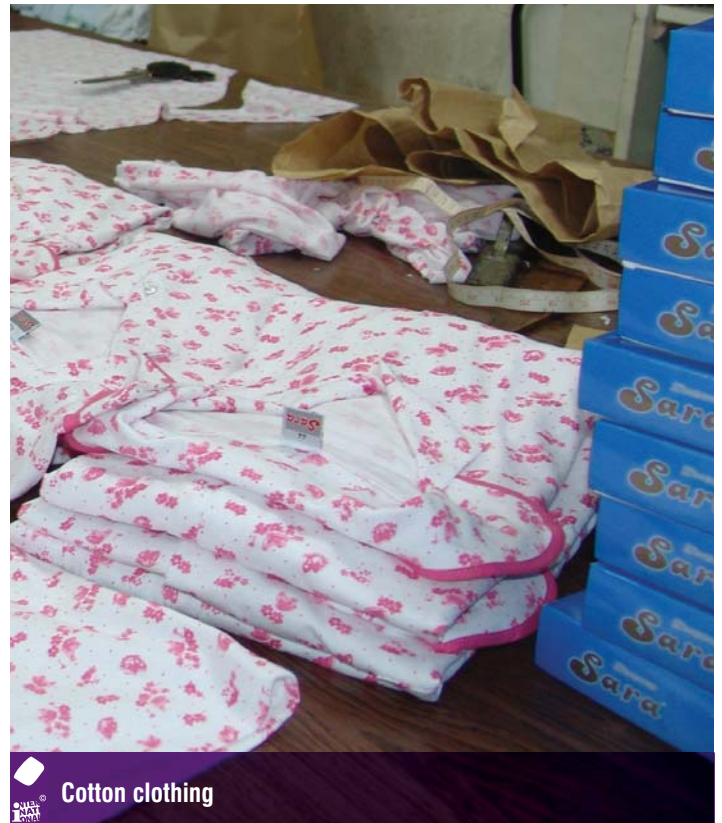
Challenges

Today, the cotton industry suffers many difficulties, such as:

- ⦿ Lack of local and foreign markets
- ⦿ Small consumer market, especially since such products are mainly purchased by the middle and low classes and are not deemed as essentials. Hence, sales increase only during wedding seasons, particularly during the summer.
- ⦿ Like many other sectors in Lebanon, the cotton industry faces foreign competition, most particularly from Syria and China.

Cotton wear protects against allergies

Cotton-made clothes rarely cause allergies, contrary to clothes made out of industrial fabrics. Moreover, companies that produce other types of clothing sometimes add skin irritating chemicals. Therefore, it is recommended to wash new clothes before wearing them. 🍀



Cotton clothing



Cotton production

Syndicate of Hotel Owners in Lebanon

The Syndicate of Hotel Owners in Lebanon was established by Decree 3797 on March 21, 1947, promulgated by the national economy and social affairs minister. Its aims are to study and implement measures that will help the hotel industry to flourish; prevent unhealthy competition between hotel owners; mediate between hotel owners and their employees and help authorities improve hotels and the tourism sector.

Decree 15598, issued on September 21, 1970, set general rules for establishing oneself and investing in the tourism industry. Hotels are considered tourism institutions that provide rooms and/or suites for clients on a daily, weekly or monthly basis but are not permanent residences. Their services include food and beverages, ballrooms, leisure spaces, conference rooms, business services, shops and amusement activities. Tourism hotels are usually open all year round but could be classified as seasonal hotels if they are out of service for most of the year.

Hotels categories

Tourism hotels are divided into five categories as defined in Table 1. Decree 15598 stated that hotels shall be classified according to their specializations. Each hotel will be rated on a five star scale depending on the quality of services. Infrastructure is another factor in the classification process. As shown in Table 1, a hotel must have at least 135 points to be classified as a five-star hotel, while it only needs 80 points to be classified as a two-star hotel...etc.

Hotel categories and required number of points for each category			Table 1
Category	Minimum points	Gross possible number of points	
5 stars	135	158	
4 stars	115	162	
3 stars	100	166	
2 stars	80	171	
1 star	55	173	
Source: Decree 15598			

Affiliation to the syndicate

The applicant must be Lebanese, owns a hotel, enjoys full civil rights and an investment license issued by the Ministry of Tourism. Membership and annual subscription fees are fixed according to the hotel's classification and are approved by the Ministry of Tourism. The first annual subscription is also the membership fee.

Table 2 shows the subscription fees for each category.

Subscription fees for each category		Table 2
Category	Subscription fees (USD)	
5 stars	1,000	
4 stars	700	
3 stars	400	
2 stars	200	
1 star	100	
Source: Syndicate of Hotel Owners in Lebanon		

Syndicate structure

The syndicate consists of a general assembly, a board and a president:

☉ The general assembly

The general assembly, chaired by the syndicate's president, includes the affiliated members who have paid their subscriptions. It receives updates on the activities of the executive committee, ratifies the decisions by the board, amends syndicate bylaws, audits previous year's accounts and approves the annual budget. There are 318 registered hotels with the syndicate out of the 550 licensed by the Ministry of Tourism.

☉ The syndicate's board

The syndicate's board consists of 12 members elected by the general assembly for a four-year term, half of who withdraw by ballot every two years. By the end of their terms in office, the members are allowed to run again for the board's membership. The board's tasks include: drafting the budget and an annual report, nominating workers, fixing salary scales, employing and dismissing workers and hiring technicians and lawyers on a contractual basis. The board's president and vice president are Pierre Al Achkar and Chakib Abu Dergham. Other members include Wadih Kanaan, Georges Akiki, Imad Edris, Nizar Kalouf, Ibrahim Makari, Georges Sfeir, Samir Kheirallah, Hussein Badir, Antoine Oueiss and Samir Khater.

☉ The president of the syndicate

The president is elected by the general assembly for four years and acts as head of syndicate and board. He signs all the letters, decisions and money withdrawal bonds, supervises the board's activities and follows up on the implementation of resolutions. Since its establishment, the syndicate has been headed by eight different presidents. Table 3 shows their names and their terms in office.

Presidents and terms in office		Table 3
President	Term in Office	
Youssef Rahme	1937-1938	
Sabeh Chahine	1938-1939	
Rizkallah Zaarour	1939-1946	
Georges Reyyes	1947-1948	
Habib Keyrouz	1948-1984	
Nicolas Medawwar	1984-1991	
Khaled Suleiman	1992-1995	
Pierre Al Achkar	1995- Date	

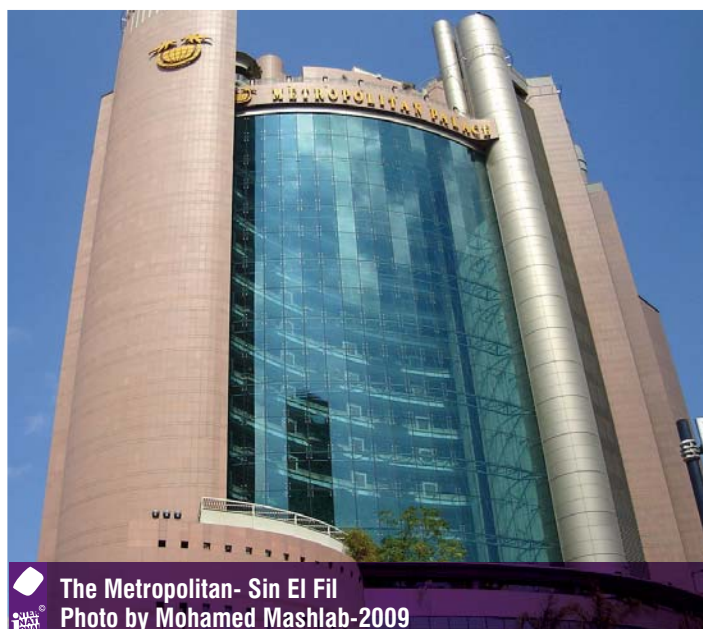
Source: Syndicate of Hotel Owners in Lebanon

The syndicate's activities:

- ⦿ Securing loans for the restoration of hotels.
- ⦿ Issuing visas for tourists entering Lebanon via Beirut's Rafik Hariri International Airport or by land.
- ⦿ Obliging taxi drivers at the airport to install counters and commit to the approved fare.
- ⦿ Contributing to promoting the annual shopping month with the ministries of the economy and tourism.
- ⦿ Exempting seasonal employees from registration, paying their fees to the National Security Fund, and reducing the cost of subscriptions and obligations.
- ⦿ Settling employment issues for foreign workers in coordination with the General Directorate of Public Security.
- ⦿ Coordinating with officials in the Ministry of Finance to settle the files of income tax payers.
- ⦿ Protecting the rights of hotel owners outside Beirut and collect on their behalf proceeds from the Casino du Liban's revenues.
- ⦿ Exempting night clubs in hotels from the 5% tax.
- ⦿ Exempting hotels from all forms of municipality and finance taxes for a minimum of five years.

The syndicate and the political crisis

The hotel sector is one of the worst hit industries by the political crisis that has prevailed in Lebanon since the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The deterioration of the political situation has had negative repercussions on the industry, which largely depends on the influx of foreigners. Hotels are currently suffering from a recession due to the ambiguous political situation and the implied Israeli threat of a renewed war in Lebanon. 🇱🇧



Results of official exams 2008-2009

The majority of students in Lebanon take two official Lebanese exams during their school years: the Brevet and the Baccalaureate. At grade 9, students must pass the Brevet exam to qualify for the secondary level. In their senior year, students take the Baccalaureate exams in either Life Sciences, General Sciences, Literature and Humanities and Socioeconomics. Passing students obtain the Lebanese Baccalaureate Certificate of Secondary Education, which is a prerequisite for admission to Lebanese universities usually require. On the other hand, credit-based universities may admit students who do not hold the Certificate on the condition that they spend one year as Freshman students. By passing the program, they can start a bachelor's program of their choice.

The official Lebanese Baccalaureate examinations of 2008-2009 took place on the 18th of July 2009 for the General Science and Life Sciences sections, and on the 25th of June for the Socioeconomics and Literature & Humanities sections. They lasted 5 days.

General baccalaureate exams

According to table 1, although 43,693 candidates registered for the Lebanese Baccalaureate official exam of 2008 - 2009 in its four sections, 2,150 candidates did not attend the examinations. Out of the 41,543 participants who actually sat for the examination, 27,976 passed this regular session while consequently 13,567 participants failed. The average passing rate this year reached 70.3 %

Table 1 below reflects the distribution of candidates, participants and passing students in the General baccalaureate in its four sections by Mohafaza.

List of the results by section and Mohafaza- 2009								Table 1
Socioeconomics				Life Sciences				
	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)
Beirut	2,866	2,592	1,849	71	1,584	1,427	1,091	76
Mount Lebanon	8,334	7,950	4,636	58	2,585	2,472	1,675	68
South Lebanon	2,560	2,468	1,708	69	1,809	1,773	1,401	79
Nabatieh	1,287	1,238	728	59	935	925	724	78
North Lebanon	3,269	3,147	1,955	62	5,636	5,411	3,898	72
Beqa'a	2,172	2,063	1,045	51	2,164	2,078	1,482	71
Total	20,488	19,458	11,921	62	14,713	14,086	10,271	74

List of the results by section and Mohafaza- 2009								Table 1
General Science				Literature & Humanities				
	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)
Beirut	693	603	447	74	376	309	207	67
Mount Lebanon	2,312	2,209	1,713	78	908	870	579	67
South Lebanon	308	305	264	87	300	283	241	85
Nabatieh	395	385	291	57	186	177	137	77
North Lebanon	1,383	1,324	887	67	779	721	512	71
Beqa'a	389	376	285	76	463	437	293	67
Total	5,480	5,202	3,887	73	3,012	2,797	1,969	72

According to Table 1, the following can be deducted:

- Life Sciences students slightly outperformed the other sections by achieving the highest success rate (74.1%). On the other hand, the lowest success rate was for the Socioeconomic section (61.7%).
- Among all the Mohafazat, the Mohafaza of Beirut had the highest success rate in Socioeconomics (71.3%) while the Mohafaza of South Lebanon performed the best in the remaining sections achieving the rates of 79% in Life Sciences, 86.6% in General Sciences and 85.2% in Literature and Humanities.

- By subtracting the number of candidates from the number of participants, it can be concluded that the Socioeconomic section achieved the highest rate of absenteeism in all of the six Mohafaza; a total of 1,030 candidates did not attend the examinations of the Socioeconomic section. In contrast, the Literature and Humanities section achieved the lowest rate of absenteeism (only 207 candidates did not attend the examinations).
- In all four sections, the Mohafaza of Mount Lebanon achieved the highest rate of absenteeism, while the Mohafaza of Nabatieh achieved the lowest rate of absenteeism.
- Although the Socioeconomic section achieved the highest number of absenteeism, it also ironically achieved the highest rate of failure among all the Mohafazat.
- Mount Lebanon had the highest number of candidates but yet, it had the highest number of absenteeism. On the other hand, Nabatieh had the lowest number of candidates but the lowest number of absenteeism. It seems that there is a correlation between the number of candidates and the number of participants. The higher the number of candidates, the lower the number of participants (therefore, a higher number of absenteeism) and vice versa.

Tables 2 & 3 illustrate the distribution of candidates, participants and passing students in the General baccalaureate in its four sections by Mohafaza for the years 2008 and 2007 consecutively.

List of the results by section and Mohafaza- 2008

Table 2

Socioeconomics					Life Sciences			
	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)
Beirut	2,832	2,565	1,851	72	1,709	1,534	1,282	84
Mount Lebanon	8,591	8,172	5,705	70	5,549	5,349	4,224	79
South Lebanon	2,561	2,472	1,822	74	1,634	1,620	1,414	87
Nabatieh	1,335	1,282	985	77	932	908	778	86
North Lebanon	3,106	2,982	1,990	67	2,598	2,483	1,835	74
Bqa'a	2,338	2,230	1,482	66	2,016	1,961	1,492	76
Total	20,763	19,703	13,835	71	14,438	13,855	11,025	81

List of the results by section and Mohafaza- 2008

Table 2

General Science					Literature & Humanities			
	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)
Beirut	666	570	478	84	455	366	239	65
Mount Lebanon	2,159	2,064	1,769	86	943	875	654	75
South Lebanon	328	325	298	92	324	306	284	93
Nabatieh	418	405	341	84	242	225	180	80
North Lebanon	1,257	1,218	862	71	949	885	679	77
Bqa'a	406	396	309	78	496	482	374	78
Total	5,234	4,978	4,057	82	3,409	3,139	2,410	78

List of the results by section and Mohafaza- 2007

Table 3

Socioeconomics					Life Sciences			
	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)
Beirut	2,843	2,599	1,816	70	1,746	1,621	1,340	83
Mount Lebanon	7,719	7,473	5,165	69	5,356	5,184	4,436	86
South Lebanon	2,289	2,229	1,718	77	1,527	1,512	1,377	91
Nabatieh	1,152	1,120	748	67	811	798	680	85
North Lebanon	2,819	2,704	1,786	66	2,400	2,325	1,872	81
Bqa'a	2,288	2,194	1,398	64	1,888	1,846	1,521	82
Total	19,110	18,319	12,631	69	13,728	13,286	11,226	85

List of the results by section and Mohafaza- 2007**Table 3**

	General Science				Literature & Humanities			
	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	Rate (%)
Beirut	750	656	537	82	538	460	345	75
Mount Lebanon	2,178	2,085	1,847	89	1,247	1,185	971	82
South Lebanon	313	310	281	91	385	372	321	86
Nabatieh	397	387	326	84	275	251	202	80
North Lebanon	1,308	1,261	948	75	986	920	734	80
Bega'a	408	398	341	86	503	473	356	75
Total	5,354	5,097	4,280	84	3,934	3,661	2,929	80

Source: Results of official exams 2007-2008. The Monthly issue # 74

By comparing both Tables 2 and 3 to Table 1, it can be concluded that:

- The passing rate of 70.3% for the year 2009 is lower than the previous years. The passing rate in 2008 and 2007 were consecutively 75.1 % and 77%. These rates reveal that the rate of success in all sections in the six Mohafazat has been decreasing with each year.
- Similarly to the year 2009, the Mohafaza of South Lebanon registered in 2008 and 2007 the highest success rate among other Mohafazat in the following sections: Literature & humanities, Life Sciences and General Sciences.
- As in 2009, Nabatieh had the lowest number of absenteeism in 2007 and the Mohafaza of Mount Lebanon achieved the highest rate of absenteeism in 2009, 2008 and 2007.
- Also, as in 2009, 2008 and 2007 registered the highest number of absenteeism in the Socioeconomic section and the lowest rate of absenteeism in the Literature and Humanities section. Similarly to the year 2009, the Socioeconomic section in 2008 and 2007 also marked the lowest rate of success among all the Mohafazat.

In the special round of exams, the results were as follows in Table 4:

Results in special round exams				Table 4
Section	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	
Socioeconomics	6,899	6,197	2,194	
Literature and Humanities	686	591	269	
General Sciences	1,281	1,152	525	
Life Sciences	3,704	3,356	493	

As such the total sum of candidates and passing students in the regular and special rounds according to section is as follows in Table 5:

Total sum of candidates and passing students			Table 5
Section	Candidates	Passing students	
Socioeconomics	20,488	14,115	
Literature and Humanities	3,012	2,238	
General Sciences	5,480	4,412	
Life Sciences	14,713	10,764	
Total	43,693	31,529	

Brevet exams

37,831 students passed the official Brevet exams across all muhafazas, marking 64.77% of students who sat for the examinations (58,407 participants out of 60,177 candidates). Beirut topped the list of pass rate at 71.2%, followed by the muhafaza of Nabatieh at 68 %. In comparison, the number of candidates in 2008 reached 61,361, including 59,679 students, of who 39,483 passed the exams (66.1 %). 17,747 students applied for the special round of Brevet exams, including 15,363 participants, of who 2,898 passed the tests (18.8 %). In conclusion, the total sum of passing students for the Brevet certificate is 40,729 out of 60,177 candidates at 67.68 %.

Table 6 shows the number of candidates, participants and passing students in the first round according to muhafazat.

number of candidates, participants and passing students in the first round according to muhafazat					Table 6
Muhafaza	Candidates	Participants	Passing students	% of passing students/ participants	
Beirut	5,846	5,649	4,022	71.20	
Mount Lebanon	22,396	21,706	14,333	66	
South	7,579	7,441	4,672	62.80	
Nabatieh	4,153	4,026	2,741	68	
Bega'a	7,957	7,669	4,420	57.60%	
North	12,246	11,916	7,643	64.10	
Total	60,177	58,407	37,831	64.77	

Source: 2008-2009 official exams results.

Finally, 103,878 students applied for the official exams, of who 72,258 who passed (69.5 %). Of the 72,258 students, 31,529 are preparing for a higher education and 40,729 are preparing for secondary school. 

Schools in Lebanon

Broumana High School-“I Serve”

The Monthly interviews Dr. Walid El Khoury, President of Broumana High School (BHS) as a part of a look into the Lebanese educational system. In this issue, The Monthly covers the BHS' history, its curriculum and educational system, extracurricular activities, defining aspects and more.

History of the school

BHS is a non-profit school founded in 1873 by the Society of Friends (also known as “Quakers”, a religious movement that began in England in the 17th Century). Only two schools in the Middle East are supported by Quakers: Ramallah and BHS. Around 1888, the Quakers decided that the British Quakers would support BHS and American Quakers will support Ramallah.

The school was officially founded by British Quakers. They appoint its board of trustees, who currently consist of British nationals, coupled with some Arabs and Lebanese. The trustees also appoint a local board of governors.

BHS's motto is “I serve”. As Quakers, we believe that there is the light of God in each one of us.

Curriculum and educational system

Dr. El Khoury says: “when we talk about the curriculum, we talk about the overall educational system of the child. We feel strongly that if we look at any two schools in Lebanon for example, we find that they offer the same Lebanese curriculum. What distinguish one school from another are the character development, leadership skills, sense of responsibility, raising people who believe in democracy, people who care about the community and commit to it.”



On the educational level, as a school operating in Lebanon, BHS offers both the standard Lebanese curriculum and an international program catering to both American universities and British ones. BHS is a Cambridge Center and as such it develops, trains, offers courses preparing for the GCE examination. At the same time, many alumni attend the American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanese American University (LAU) and other universities. Many of them are American systems requiring the SAT and other exams. As such, BHS also offers preparation for American exams. It prepares its students to continue in either American or British secondary education systems.

BHS is known as the British school of the Middle East.

Dr. El Khoury says “Students coming from other countries offering British systems, when researching potential schools in Lebanon suitable for their education, after advice from the British Council, come to BHS to continue their education.”

Extracurricular activities

Students engage in a wide variety of extracurricular activities, many of them optional. A student requirement is community service. Students have to do 80 hours of community service during their high school years (last 3 years of school) in order to graduate from school. This includes on- and off-campus activities, (welfare) and creative activities and campaigns. We have a yearly 10-kilometer “Walkathon” which started at BHS long before the marathon was introduced in the country. They also help the elderly, children with cancer, handicapped persons, and other people with disabilities.

Dr. El Khoury continues “We have however several limitations to our community service requirement. One of them is the location of the school being far away from the city. Almost nothing is within walking distance from BHS. Busing the students is a must, which also has many complications like interrupting daytime classes. But we still do it. The school through out its history has always been well known for its extra-curricular activities. We were the first school to have a swimming pool in the Middle East; the first tennis courts and tennis tournaments in the Middle East were held

here way back in the 1950's. Historically, Lebanon's inter-school tennis championships have always been held at BHS. Theater is also emphasized at school. We have an outdoor amphitheater as well as indoor. Clubs are also emphasized like science club, math club, chess club and others."

Tuition

The school's tuition fees range from 3,000 to 4,200 USD. Around 50,000 LBP per term is added to students' tuition fees per activity. Bus fees and book fees are also charged separately.

Students and faculty

There are currently around 830 students at BHS and around 120 teachers. Support staff members total to around 60 including the cleaning crews, janitors etc.

Boarding school

Boarding school is one of the most important aspects of BHS that distinguishes it from other schools in Lebanon. Historically, before the civil war, BHS had around 400 boarders. They created cultural integration because of their diverse background and nationalities; they learned to accept each other. It allowed the creation of sports and activities and cultural events because they resided at school. BHS was the cultural center for the entire region.

"Today," Dr. El Khoury says "we have around 100 boarders from 44 different nationalities. During the July 2006 against Lebanon, the number went down and then back up again after the Doha agreement of last year in 2008. We are expecting a further increase this coming year.

Our boarding students come mainly from the Gulf region, from countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Jordan, UAE and a few from Europe. Of those Europeans, some are Lebanese in origin and others are students spending a year abroad. One of BHS's advantages for those students is its boarding facility and service. Last year we had a student from Germany who wanted a school outside Germany and was interested in Roman history. She had one of two options: either BHS or King's Academy in Amman and she chose BHS.

Though some of the old boarding facilities have been converted to classrooms, we still can accommodate a good number of boarders in upgraded facilities housing two to a room."

Defining aspects of BHS

According to Dr. El Khoury, the Quaker element is what sets BHS apart from other schools. "We emphasize people relations with one another. We start with the "I Serve" motto, to

simplicity in life. We are probably the only school in Lebanon offering a course in Peace and another in Conflict Resolution. We teach our students how to respect each other and to solve problems logically. We also teach them non-violence and how to not be biased in their views."

Teacher training

Professional development is self-motivated at BHS faculty. They do training sessions on campus by experts recruited from outside. Also, BHS staff members make use of many resources online where the teachers can sign up for them. This gets reinforced by attending conventions, trainings etc outside the school and sometime outside the country like mini NESA in ACS and others in IC.

"The best training to me," says Dr. El Khoury "is to ask teachers in the department to prepare their own workshops. Professional development is also part of the teacher evaluation we are committed to within our criteria. We financially support staff members who wish to attend a certain course to develop their skills."

Scholarships and financial aid

The amount of students who get financial aid from BHS is roughly 25% of day students excluding children of staff. Around 100 students benefit from full aid. This includes children of staff and faculty, since the law requires one to grant free tuition to children of teachers. The School also grants a 50% discount for children of non-teaching staff, which is not required by law.

BHS also has around 5 scholarships offered to students meeting specific criteria.

There are awards given to the graduating class for academic achievements and character and distinguished service award in community service. This is in addition to the Math Award, Science Award, prizes named after founders usually given to the student that embodies the school's character, discipline and academic ideals.

Students talk

- "BHS under 'I serve' motto helps me become a leader and improves my ability to communicate and resolve conflicts."
- "We are one big family here and I feel safe here. My teachers are like parents and the school helps us become better people."
- "... I was not allowed to disagree with teachers, but this school helped me so much and allowed me to break free of taboos." ●●

Haigazian University

Founded by the Armenian Church in 1955; enjoys a diversified faculty and student body

As part of a study of Lebanese institutions of higher education, The Monthly sheds light on Haigazian University.

History

In 1955, the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) founded a training institute for pastors and teachers in Lebanon in coordination with the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA). The Institute was named The Haigazian Institute, after Dr. Armenag Haigazian, director of the Conia Papal Institute in Turkey. His sons funded the project.

The institute was recognized as an educational institution by decree 3/3991 dated March 25, 1966. Another decree, 70/1152 dated May 17, 1971, equated the institute's bachelor degrees to the Lebanese diploma.

Decree 2165 issued on January 25, 1992 stipulated that the institute's name is to be changed to 'Haigazian University Faculty.' Decree 9657 dated December 28, 1996 allowed 'Haigazian University Faculty' to change its name to 'Haigazian University' and recognized its post-graduate programs.

Today, the university comprises of 4 faculties; the Faculty of Management and Economics, the Faculty of Practical Sciences, the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, and the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Location and curriculum

The Haigazian University is located in Al Kantari in Beirut. It is credit-based and the academic year is divided into three trimesters (fall, spring and summer). All courses are in English.

The University has no other Lebanese branches. Its premises in Beirut include three buildings with a cafeteria, a gymnasium, two libraries (English and Armenian), four computer laboratories with Internet access, equipped science laboratories and a TV room. There are no dormitories on campus.

Student body

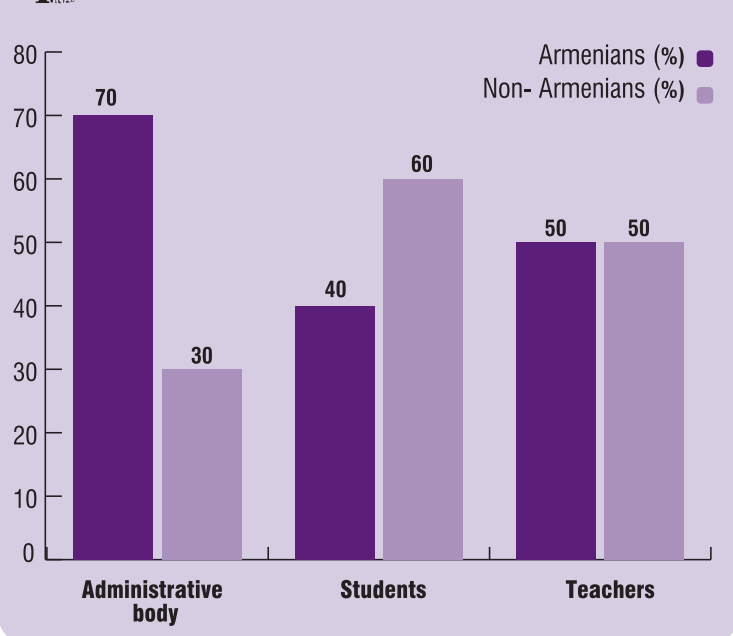
In the 2006-2007 academic year, the university had 743 students, compared to 630 in 2004-2005 and 367 in 2000-2001, registering a 376 or 102% increase in the number of students in six years. The educational and administrative bodies include 132 members (85 teachers and 47 administrative employees).

Some falsely assume that the institution is intended only for Armenian students, but the institution is open to all who wish to enroll. Graph 1 shows the distribution of students, teachers and administrative employees for the academic year 2005-2006.

Tuition fees

Tuition is considered high in comparison with other private universities, but is reasonable and affordable when compared to the quality of education. Table 1 shows the tuition fees the degrees offered by University according to the number of credits.

[Graph 1] Distribution of administrative body, students and teachers at Haigazian University between Armenians and non-Armenians (2005-2006) %



Tuition fees for degrees offered by the University according to the number of credits**Table 1**

	Average number of credits required for the level	Time required for the level	Cost per credit (in LBP)	Average cost of the level (in LBP)
Freshman Arts	33	1 year	320,000	10,560,000
Freshman Sciences	44	1 year	320,000	14,080,000
Bachelor degree	105	3 to 4 years	320,000	33,600,000
Masters	30	2 years	400,000	12,000,000

Source: Information International based on information provided by the Haigazian University administration.

Distinctive features

The university has some aspects that distinguish it from other higher education institutions, such as:

- It offers financial aid worth 5% to 10%. In addition, the university has financial aid funds such as the orphans' fund, the Armenians fund, and other funds where anyone can donate money for students. This allows students to be granted more financial aid that can reach up to 40% of the tuition. The University also offers scholarships that could reach 85% of the tuition for outstanding students.
- The ratio of teachers to students is relatively high, at one teacher per 9 students.
- The university provides majors according to market needs.
- It is a member in the Union of World American Universities and Faculties that includes only two other universities from Lebanon, the American University of Beirut, the Lebanese American University.
- It is signatory to multiple cooperation and exchange agreements with higher education institutes, such as the American Institute of Greece, the American University of Beirut, the Lebanese American University, the American University in Cairo, Franklin Institute of Switzerland, the American Universities Institute of France, Richmond College of London, the American University of Bulgaria, the American University of Paris, and the John Cabot University in Italy.
- The Haigazian University is the only institution of higher education that offers a diploma in Armenian studies.

Student testimonies

A number of students at Haigazian University shared their opinions about the university and offered some suggestions to improve and further develop the institution.

The main concern was the lack of space since the campus is not large enough to take in the increasing number of students. Students also expressed a desire to have more green spaces and sports halls. They complained about the small parking lots, which have forced them to park on the basketball courts.

They are unsatisfied with the quality of cafeteria services and would like to have it managed by a private catering company.

Students stated on multiple occasions that they chose the Haigazian University because it remains "far from fanaticism and politics." The university's internal statute forbids any political and religious activities on campus as such there are no politically-aligned elections for student councils.

Students enjoy on-campus activities, including more than 26 clubs and sports teams, most known are Al Turath Club (1958), the Press Club (1958), which publishes the university magazine, the Actors Club (1966), the Chess Club (1982), the Computer Science Club (1984), the Environment Club (1980), the Dance Club (1966) and the Cinema Club (1996).

The university also organizes competitions, such as pageants for the most dynamic student, the most perseverant student, the most helping student and student of the year.

What students like most about their university was that "all students and teachers know each other. The small space and limited number of students made the relationships very special."

The students considered that employment opportunities for Haigazian graduates are still greater than other university students, despite current economic hardships.

They also paid tribute to the administration and teachers who together constitute "one big family".

The Haigazian University administration is also aware of the importance to expand its campus and build wider classrooms and conference rooms. For this reason, two new complexes have been purchased in the area to accommodate student needs. 🌟

The Monthly – Interview with Danish Ambassador Jan Top Christensen

When did the Danish Embassy first open its doors in Lebanon? What were the phases it went through during the Lebanese war?

If you want to go back in history when we first had a representation in this area, it was already from 1816, during the Ottoman period. A general consulate was set up in Beirut to serve the interests of the Danish Kingdom in the area. Trade interests were dominant. Almost 250 years ago the King of Denmark also sent out a scientific expedition to the Arab world.

From the independence of Lebanon in 1943, we started covering the new-born country from our embassy in Cairo. In 1967, we established an embassy in Lebanon. But, because of the civil war, it was closed in 1985, and the ambassador moved to Damascus and was dealing with matters from there. When the civil war was over, we reopened an embassy office in the early 1990's under the supervision of our ambassador in Damascus. It was this office that people tried to burn down in Tabaris in 2006. In September 2007, I came to Lebanon as ambassador and reopened the Danish Embassy. One year ago, we moved to this permanent location, right in the heart of the city. It is an excellent location because we have easy access to many institutions and people.

Is it very expensive?

Yes and no. It has to be related to what we get. It is not as expensive as you would expect. But of course it is not a charity action by Solidere, owner of the Embassy complex.

How many staff members do you have at the Embassy?

We have 5 people from Denmark and 5 locals working at the embassy. We also have permanent external support staff, such as the security people. They are not formally embassy personnel; they are provided by a security company.

What are the Embassy's most significant tasks?

One main focus would be of course to deal with political relations between Denmark and Lebanon. And as Lebanon is an important part in the general Middle East peace process, it is very important that we understand the thinking in the political environment here. And also try to explain the Danish views and how we would like to see things move forward.

The Danish foreign minister was one of the architects of Security Council Resolution 1701 in 2006 following the war with Israel. At that time, Denmark was member of the Security Council in New York. Therefore, we are very much involved in the follow up and implementation of the resolution. We are actively involved in the Northern Border Pilot Project, with a handful of other donors, to assist the Lebanese authorities in organizing how better to control the border traffic. I also expect Denmark to be part of the assistance to the Eastern border. A sovereign state should be able to control its borders.



I also want to mention that Denmark has just a few weeks ago contributed to The Special Tribunal for Lebanon. We do believe that the work of the STL is very important and that perpetrators have to be brought to justice. The STL has been set up. It cannot be stopped.

Second there are the economic/commercial relations. And here I see a great potential for expansion. We are starting up a trade commission at the Danish Embassy to take care, on a full time basis, of trade relations. Last year we had an export of some USD 100 million from Denmark to Lebanon and I can see the rich potential for this to be increased significantly. If we as an embassy are able to link up Danish capacity with Lebanese interests, I would expect a substantial increase in commercial relations in the coming years. In May, the "Danish-Lebanese Businessmen Association" was formally approved.

A third and important part of our activities are the consular matters. We have figures telling us that this summer we had some 10,000 people coming to Lebanon from Denmark. Having so many Danes coming will unavoidably create some cases that require assistance from the embassy. We are here to assist those who have Danish citizenship or a Danish permanent residency card.

A broader area of relations would be cultural and interpersonal activities. We don't have a huge budget for cultural activities nor do we have a cultural center. But we are trying at the best of our capabilities to create activities with the funds available.

On the interpersonal level, for the 5th year now, we are financing a twinning project between young Lebanese politicians and young Danish politicians. They meet twice a year to discuss political issues like the position of women in society, corruption, the Middle East peace process and how to make political systems more representative.

On another level of cooperation, within a small program of human rights, democracy and good governance activities, Denmark was part of the assistance to the elections through UNDP and LADE. We will continue this support up to the municipal elections to ensure that there will be efficient preparation and execution of the polls. We also provide assistance for the Palestinian Human Rights Organization. I also want to mention that since 2006 we have been very actively involved in cluster bomb removal in the south.

How do you plan to enhance ties between Denmark and Lebanon?

Through my presence I can widen the relations in all aspects and get into closer dialogue in a number of specific areas, political, commercial and cultural. As soon as the new government is formed, I will make my own priority list for which ministers I should go and see as the first ones, where we could favor further Danish cooperation. One area of course is on the energy and environment side, the climate issue, since we will host the UN climate summit in Copenhagen in December and of course I hope the new government will take an active part in that.

There are also interesting plans to help starting up an Arab Film Institute in Beirut. and I have also discussed the idea of establishing a Danish/Scandinavian design center.

What positions did you occupy during your diplomatic career before coming to Lebanon?

To mention a couple, most recently, I was the head of the department in Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealing with humanitarian crises globally. As such I was involved in humanitarian crises for example in Afghanistan, Iraq and Darfur. As part of my function there, I was the chairman of an inter-ministerial committee ensuring coordination of civil and military activities. I was also deputy director of the Middle East Department for a number of years. Earlier, in New York, I was dealing with Security Council political matters at our mission to the United Nations headquarters. Over the last 15 years I have been dealing with the Middle East and been travelling extensively in the region.

What are the reasons and justifications for Denmark's participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)?

The government was asked by the United Nations some months back whether we would replace the Polish logistical unit and the government said yes. UN has just informed us about the final decision choosing the Danish offer. The decision is now waiting for Parliament approval. In October, when Parliament starts again a clear majority of parties will give the final yes. Therefore, I expect by December to see Danish soldiers as part of UNIFIL. We will have Danes in the south carrying out logistical functions.

How do you describe ties between Denmark and the Muslim world following the publication of cartoons deemed offensive to the Prophet Mohammed?

No doubt the cartoon case became a very serious diplomatic crisis for Denmark. It was the most serious crisis since World War II. The former prime minister condemned all attempts to demonize others based on ethnicity and religion. This helped calming down the spirits. But in 2008 there was

a republication of one of the cartoons in reaction to an attempt to kill the cartoonist and that created a new crisis, albeit not on the same level of the previous one. The government could not prohibit the publication because freedom of expression is guaranteed by our constitution. At the same time it understood that feelings were hurt and tried to put things in their right place. There are still remnants of the crisis because it is obvious that some political forces are trying to use the case as a vehicle to mobilize more supporters of their views. But the general relations between Denmark and the Muslim world are very positive. Before and after the cartoon case, we have had excellent cooperation. For more than 250 years, there has been this cultural interest in the Muslim world. Now an increasing number of young Danes are interested in the Arab world. We see more Danish students spending time at Arab universities. This is a very positive trend. I see this cartoon crisis as a parenthesis in the long history of relations between Denmark and the Arab world.

How large are the Lebanese and Palestinian communities in Denmark?

The Lebanese community is rather small. But Palestinians from Lebanon number around 25,000. And many of them are visiting Lebanon.

Is Denmark prepared to take in more Palestinians from Lebanon to solve the issue of Palestinian refugees?

Who knows what will be the outcome of the peace process, but the settlement of the Palestinian refugees file is an important issue. Denmark is very much in favor of finding a solution to the Palestinian cause and the establishment of a viable Palestinian state.

How large is the Danish community in Lebanon?

We have some 400 registered Danes and some have lived here for many years, and are well established. However, we do believe that not all Danes choose to register at the embassy.

What do you like most about Lebanon?

Life is very good. The job is interesting here and I hope to be here for a long period. People are very hospitable. I have with my family been visiting towns and villages on our own. People don't know who we are but they invite us in and offer us coffee. If I could mention one thing that is striking it would be the hospitality.

What do you dislike the most about Lebanon?

I want to mention two things also often discussed in the local press. I don't like the sectarian system. It is destroying the country and preventing it from developing into a true democratic and modern and efficient state. Many Lebanese politicians say they want to get rid of the sectarian system. I hope they will soon start walking the talking.

The second thing is racism or discrimination against foreign workers. This problem should be efficiently dealt with by the authorities, by the schools, by the religious leaders and all responsible people. It is a stain on the Lebanese society. 

Hezbollah's stances toward Aoun: From a "confrontational Israeli phenomenon" to "an honest and descent human being"

Lebanese groups have gone through multiple policy shifts that have swiftly changed relations between parties, movements and political figures from a state of animosity to reconciliation and alliance, and vice versa. In all cases, the people are inclined to follow their leaders, the *zua'ama*, because the public "follows the religion of its kings", as the saying goes.

A change in relations between the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and Hezbollah marked a significant and essential change in the Lebanese political scene. Relations between the two sides shifted from a state of enmity to an alliance consolidated by a memorandum of understanding signed on February 6, 2006.

In the August 2009 issue, *The Monthly* published past and present positions by Michel Aoun toward Hezbollah. It will review in this issue Hezbollah's stances toward Aoun.

Before...

"Michel Aoun is a problem because he represents an Israeli confrontational and destructive phenomenon and only sees his personal interests and the interests of his confession. He embodies the racist Maronite approach in east Beirut." (*Excerpts from a speech by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah on behalf of the Islamic resistance at a commemoration ceremony. He was not yet Hezbollah secretary general. An Nahar daily November 6, 1989.*)

"The elimination of the state of rebellion that Michel Aoun represents is a priority and a necessity to put an end to the Israeli phenomenon in Lebanon." (*A Hezbollah statement on April 12, 1989*)

After...

"Hezbollah will never allow attempts to weaken or break General Aoun." (*A statement by Hezbollah MP Hussein al-Moussawi on August 8, 2009*)

"This visit (to Syria) was an important event and showed the level of leadership qualities that General Aoun enjoys because he is not seeking electoral gains but the country's best interest." (*A statement by Hezbollah MP Mohammed Fneish on December 12, 2008*)

"He is an honest and descent human being." (*A speech by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah describing Aoun in May 2009*)

"General Michel Aoun can never be broken because he is supported by a vast section of Christians and Muslims. He cannot be treated with disrespect because this contradicts the consensus formula." (*A statement by Hezbollah MP Nawwaf al-Moussawi on August 24, 2009*)

"... According to figures, General Michel Aoun still has the support of the Christian majority, and Hezbollah and Amal Movement that of the Shia'a majority." (*A statement by Hezbollah MP Hassan Fadlallah on July 8, 2009*)

Highlights from the memo of understanding

Here are some of the most important points in the memorandum of understanding that will help emphasize the change in their relation:

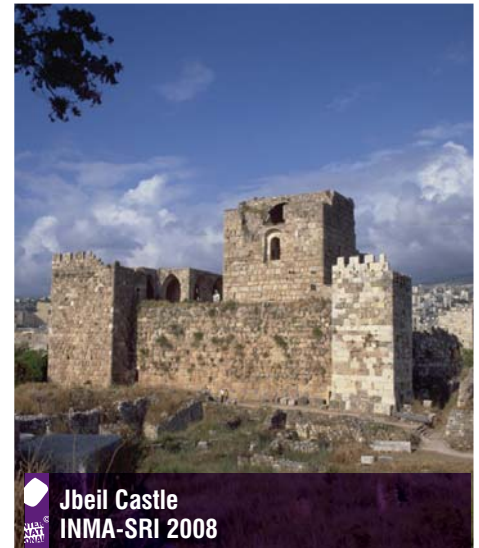
- ⦿ A solution to the case of Lebanese nationals in Israeli custody requires perseverance to achieve their return, taking into consideration politics, security and livelihood.
- ⦿ Consensus-based democracy remains the basis of governance in Lebanon
- ⦿ The reformation of political life in Lebanon requires the adoption of a modern electoral law with proportional representation
- ⦿ The establishment of correct Lebanese-Syrian relations requires a review of the political experience and the deduction of lessons in order to avoid mistakes, flaws and loopholes
- ⦿ The Lebanese government must take the necessary steps and legal measures to establish that the Sheba'a Farms are Lebanese, and present the evidence to the United Nations
- ⦿ Demarcation of the Lebanese-Syrian borders
- ⦿ Full Syrian cooperation with the Lebanese state to uncover the fate of Lebanese prisoners in Syrian jails
- ⦿ The Palestinians right to return to their homeland is an essential matter and the possibility of their naturalization is rejected
- ⦿ Armament is not a goal in itself but an honest and sacred means practiced by any group to fight the occupation of their land. 🌍

Myth #27

Did the Phoenicians build castles in Lebanon?

Many Lebanese believe their ancestors to be the Phoenicians, whose civilization was centered in the coastal region of modern day Lebanon. They were renowned for their trade activities across the Mediterranean region as well as the colonies they built.

Myth: The remaining ancient castles today were constructed under the Phoenician civilization that flourished in what is today modern Lebanon.



Fact: There is no evidence that the Phoenicians built castles in Lebanon. Instead, the Phoenicians were most renowned for building cities, ports and colonies along the Mediterranean region.

The Phoenicians (1150–300 BCE) were also distinguished for trade and commerce engagements across the Mediterranean during the first millennium B.C.E. The Phoenician cultural and trade activities peaked around 1200 – 800 B.C.E. They are known to have made many significant contributions to human civilizations, yet there is no evidence indicating the construction of any castles, especially in modern-day Lebanon.

The Phoenicians established commercial posts throughout the Mediterranean, with the most strategic ones being Carthage in North Africa and Sicily in the south of modern day Italy. These outposts were carefully selected in order to monopolize trade along the Mediterranean and beyond and to keep competitors from passing through. Other colonies were also established in Cyprus, Corsica, Sardinia, and the Iberian Peninsula.

Clearly, the Phoenician civilization had a cultural impact on the region, yet this influence is not reflected in any of the ancient castles in Lebanon. In fact, most ancient castles were built afterwards, during the Mamluk, Crusader and Roman epochs.

Saida's famous Sea Castle was built by the Crusaders in the 13th century and remains one of the most prominent archaeological sites in the city.

Jbeil Castle was built by the Crusaders in the 12th century from using local limestone and the remains of Roman structures.

Little is known about the site of the Beaufort Castle prior to its capture by the Crusaders in 1139 AD. Historians however assume that the castle's position atop a 700 meter (2,100 ft) hill made it a strategic position even in Biblical and Roman times.

The Castle of Mussaylha is an ancient castle that was built during the reign of Emir Fakhreddine II (1572–1635) in the 16th century or perhaps later.

Trablous Castle, also known as The Fortress of St. Gilles is mistakenly believed to have been built by the Phoenicians in the 12th century BC. However, the origins of the castle are not clear since it has been renovated many times during its history. The castle's main features are the Ottoman's main gate, an octagonal Fatimid construction converted to a church by the Crusaders, a number of structures built by the Crusaders in the 12th–13th centuries, several 14th century Mamluk additions, as well as additions made by the Ottomans in the 16th century. 🌟

A'ain Al Rummaneh and Shiyah are the names of two neighboring areas of Beirut's southern suburbs and are infamous for the 'incident of the A'ain Al Rummaneh bus' on April 13, 1975 that ignited the Lebanese civil war. All throughout the war, the battles on the frontline between those two areas were an indicator of the ferocity or calm of the war as a whole. Two decades after the end of the civil war, some Lebanese still fear a renewal of the fighting whenever an incident, no matter how small, takes place in the two areas due to their 'reputation' and their 'diverse' confessional structure (the Shia'a of Amal and Hezbollah in Shiyah and the Maronites and Catholics of the Lebanese Forces, the Phalanges and the Free Patriotic Movement in A'ain Al Rummaneh).

Most Lebanese newspapers on October 7 contextualized the incident as nothing more than a brawl. Only An-Nahar gave the incident a political implication and made it a top news item.

The wording of the question and headline details indicate that An-Nahar considers that the fight had a political message. It inserted the answer in the question: "Is it a message conveyed to the political process in order for Lebanon to come out of its government crisis? Or is it a message to the positions of a number of March 14 leaders, most recently those of Samir Geagea? Or is it a message for the Saudi-Syrian summit that is being held in critical circumstances?"

It also highlighted a statement by MP Sami Gemayel on the A'ain Al Rummaneh accident: "The absence of security measures and the army in the area where such incidents are taking place is surprising."

[illegible]

As-Safir: An ordinary accident, full stop

The newspaper briefly mentioned the incident on Page 16 as part of the continuation of a front page article. It reported that a “scuffle” broke out that led to the death of George Abu Madi and the wounding of four people. It also wrote that “the army and security forces worked to stop the fighting, pursue the instigators and prevent angry residents from blocking the roads.”



خادم الحرمين يبدأ اليوم زيارة رسمية لسوريا

بدأ خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك سلمان بن عبدالعزيز آل سعود، اليوم، زيارة رسمية لسوريا، وذلك في إطار سياسته الداعمة للسلام والوحدة في المنطقة العربية. وتأتي هذه الزيارة في أعقاب سلسلة من اللقاءات الدبلوماسية التي أجراها الملك في الأيام الأخيرة.

غنيو يؤكد التزام باريس باستقرار لبنان ويشدد على قيام الحكومة.. وجميع مع استئناف الجهود لانتزاع «كتلة المستقبل» تدعو إلى المرونة وتؤمّن باستقرار العلاقات العربية

أكد وزير الخارجية اللبناني غنيو، في بيان صحفي، التزام باريس باستقرار لبنان، مشدداً على أهمية قيام حكومة جديدة قادرة على إدارة الشؤون العامة. وأضاف أن الجهود مستمرة لانتزاع «كتلة المستقبل» من أيدي القوى الخارجية، مع الدعوة إلى المرونة في العلاقات العربية.

مسيرة حاشدة في القدس دفاعاً عن الأقصى رغم التعزيزات الإسرائيلية

شرطة الاحتلال تعتقل الشيخ راشد صلاح

القدس المحتلة - من جهاد

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

في القدس المحتلة، شهدت مدينة القدس المحتلة، اليوم، مسيرة حاشدة شارك فيها آلاف الفلسطينيين، دفاعاً عن الأقصى المبارك.

Al-Mustaqbal: An isolated fight

Although the news item appeared on the front page, the paper described the fight as “an isolated incident” and said that “the army and security forces intervened immediately and took control.”

Al-Akhbar: A ‘bingo’ victim

The daily reported the fight on one of the inside pages opting not to give it prominent coverage. Al-Akhbar was, however, the only newspaper to mention the following: “... information from inside A’ain Al Rummaneh says that the fight was provoked by a game of ‘Bingo’” It indicated that the victim George Abu Madi had absolutely nothing to do with the fight.

A Lebanese citizen gets stabbed – not shot – by motorbike riders. It was an accident that made some politicians and media outlets rush into far-fetched provocations and analysis, recalling the A’ain Al Rummaneh bus. However, some were disappointed, and retracted their statements describing the incident as an isolated fight. That is how the A’ain Al Rummaneh motorbike did not turn into the A’ain Al Rummaneh bus.



Iran nuclear file escalates ahead of key talks:

Tehran admits to having a secret nuclear plant, test-fires missiles; West contemplates next move

Crucial nuclear talks give Iran 'last chance' to dodge harsh sanctions

Yossi Melman, September 29, 2009, Haaretz

"Two days before the opening of talks between Iranian and U.S. officials, the Islamic Republic went ahead with a test launch of long-range missiles capable of reaching Israel. The talks, described by analysts as 'a last chance' before the application of harsh sanctions against Iran, will open in Geneva on Thursday."

"Iran test-fired its Shahab-3 missile, which puts Israel within reach along with Saudi Arabia and U.S. Army bases in the Gulf. Defense Minister Ehud Barak is scheduled to meet Tuesday with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to discuss the Iranian nuclear issue..."

"The Foreign Ministry denied any link between the missile tests and the October 1 nuclear talks in Geneva. The war games had been scheduled many months ago, but were seen in the West as an act of defiance, especially in light of the recent exposure by the United

States of a facility for the enrichment of uranium which the Iranians are said to have set up in Qom. "Iran's construction of the underground facility at Qom may prompt additional economic sanctions, including restrictions on banking and oil-and-gas technology, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates told CNN Monday. The UN's International Atomic Energy Agency said it was informed by Iran on September 21 that a new pilot fuel-enrichment plant was under construction." Supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, ignored bitter divisions at home and deep dismay abroad to publicly endorse Ahmadinejad as a "brave, hard-working and wise man".



Ahmadinejad rejects Obama's nuclear warning

Massimo Calabresi and Bobby Ghosh, September 25, 2009, Time Magazine

"Iran's President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has warned U.S. President Barack Obama against pressing Tehran about new revelations that Iran has been constructing a secret uranium-enrichment plant."

"If I were Obama's adviser, I would definitely advise him to refrain making this statement because it is definitely a mistake," Ahmadinejad told TIME in New York City on Friday. "It would definitely be a mistake."

"... Obama warned that Iran would be held accountable if it failed to live up to its international obligations. Fearing imminent disclosure of the plant — which is being built into a mountain near the seminary city of Qum — the Iranians earlier this week wrote to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to confirm its existence."

"But in an exclusive interview with the editors of TIME that coincided with Obama's announcement, Ahmadinejad insisted that Iran was not keeping anything from the IAEA. "We have no secrecy; we work within the framework of the IAEA," he said. "This does not mean we must inform Mr. Obama's Administration of every facility that we have," he said, warning that if Obama brings up the uranium facility, it "simply adds to the list of issues to which the United States owes the Iranian nation an apology over."

"At a news conference later in the day, Ahmadinejad confirmed that the site won't be operational for 18 months and said Iran's work on the facility was not a violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty."



Iran test-fires long-range missiles

Show of defiance follows tests of short and medium-range weapons days before key talks on nuclear program

Julian Borger September 28, 2009 *The Guardian*

“Revolutionary Guard fires long, medium and short-range weapons days before crucial international talks on country’s nuclear program Link to this video. Iran today test-fired missiles capable of hitting targets across the Middle East, state television reported.”

“The test of the Shahab-3 missiles – which followed trials of short-range missiles yesterday and medium-range missiles overnight – is likely to raise tensions across the region. Announcing today’s tests, state-funded Press TV said ‘the projectiles accurately hit their designated targets.’”

“The White House has reacted with caution: ‘Of course, this is just a test, and obviously there is much work to be done before it can be built and deployed. But I see it as a significant step forward in terms of Iran’s capacity to deliver weapons,’ CNN quoted Gary Samore, special assistant to the president on nonproliferation, as saying.”

“The tests, carried out by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, come only days before a critical Geneva encounter between Iranian officials and senior diplomats from the US, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China. The stakes have been raised further by the revelation last week that Iran is secretly building an enrichment plant under a mountain near the holy city of Qom.”

“Tehran insisted today there was no link between the missile tests and Iran’s nuclear activities. Hassan Qashqavi, a foreign ministry spokesman, told a news conference broadcast on Press TV: ‘This is a military drill which is deterrent in nature. There is no connection whatsoever with the nuclear program.’”

“Nuclear analysts say it would have been almost impossible for Iran to divert uranium fuel to the Qom enrichment facility from its conversion plant in Isfahan without being seen by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).”



Iran defiant over secret nuclear facility

While Britain looks for a diplomatic solution, the US is threatening sanctions and won't rule out military action

David Randall and David Usborne, September 27, 2009, *The Independent*

“In an atmosphere beginning to seem increasingly like a brinkmanship contest, Iran and the rest of the world exchanged pugnacious messages yesterday over the nation’s burgeoning nuclear capability, and the threat it poses to non-proliferation.”

“Following the revelation in the past 48 hours that Iran has a second, underground and hitherto secret uranium enrichment plant, the US President, Barack Obama, added yesterday to his warning that Tehran risked ‘sanctions that bite’. In his weekly radio and internet address, he said evidence that shows Iran is building an underground plant to enrich uranium which could be used for an atomic bomb ‘continues a disturbing pattern of Iranian evasion’ that jeopardizes global non-proliferation.”

“The chief option is tougher economic sanctions, but on Friday Mr Obama and administration officials did not rule out military action. ‘My offer of a serious, meaningful dialogue to resolve this issue remains open,’ the president said. ‘But Iran must now co-operate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and take action to demonstrate its peaceful intentions.’”

“Iran immediately responded, voicing defiance. A senior official in the office of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the facility would soon be operational and would make ‘enemies blind’. However, Iran insisted that there had been no attempt to hide the facility, and its nuclear chief said his country will allow the UN nuclear agency to inspect the still-unfinished plant...”

“Meanwhile, Israel’s response to the crisis was characteristically implacable. The Foreign Minister, Avigdor Lieberman, said ... the second nuclear facility was proof that the Islamic Republic was seeking nuclear weapons, and called on the world for an ‘unequivocal’ response.”

“... Britain’s Foreign Secretary was trying to cool things down. While David Miliband declined to say that military action was ‘inconceivable’, he told the BBC that Britain was ‘100 per cent committed’ to finding a diplomatic solution.”





“We are marching... but where to?” by Antoine Boutros

We are now living in an era worthy of multiple names. Some have dubbed it the age of information, some the age of telecommunications and others that of knowledge. In reality, it is a combination of all these with the common trait being its mechanism. As such it can be accurate to call this era one of networking.

Civilization has crossed the era of agriculture into that of industrialization. Over the past decade, we entered the phase of post-industrial society and right into the age of information technology. The fact of the matter is that humanity, including its industrial and scientific elite as well as its wide unspecialized population, has entered a more advanced age, that of high networking-based Internet.

Over the past decade, millions joined the bandwagon of Internet users turning our age into one of the speediest ages in scientific advancement known to humanity. In comparison, the full implementation of electricity in the industrial world took around half a century.

One of globalization's most known traits is the fact that it forces societies to keep up with the progress achieved in other countries. What is important, however, is for the transition not to be marginal and an investment market only. It should be in the form of integrated involvement and participation. At this point, it is important to identify the direction of civilization: where is technology headed and what are its characteristics at least for the coming decade?

History will mark that the central event of the 20th century was the overthrowing of matter off its seat, which it had occupied uncontested for so long. In technology, as in economy, and even in international politics, wealth and power are no longer limited to natural resources. With its gradual withdrawal from the spotlight of events, traditional resources start to lose their place for a new kind of wealth, that of knowledge and its points of strengths.

Civilization moved from the atomic measurement (weight, size, mass etc...) to the “flow” measurement which actually measures the amount of bits communicated. The size of data flowing through satellites or fiber optics and flooding international telecommunication networks, night to day, melted geographical boundaries and turned the world into one bloc of speedy communications crossing through continents quite contrary to the standards of previous centuries, when heavy material industries ruled.

The standards have overturned and gave birth to a new unit of transaction: the “bit” ushering a new age.

Over the past centuries, the pattern of wealth-making was restricted to controlling lands and resources, owning slaves

and mobilizing soldiers. The industrial revolution could not have succeeded had it not been for the human (workforce) and financial factors, natural resources, crude energy sources and vast transmission and transportation lines. Wealth and power have always been in the hands of those who possess financial or military capabilities that enable them to take over means of production such as lands, businesses and capitals.

Electronics, like the industry sector, is one of the fastest in terms of growth and advancement in the world. Computer programs are merely the product of the human mind and have nothing to do with any materialistic factor. They have become one of the most valuable resources to be added to the global economy. The global telecommunication network can now transfer more valuable merchandises than all the world's greatest carriers. A few kilograms of optic fibers made of the same ingredients as sand (but much purer) can transfer an amount of information equal to what a ton of copper can carry.

On the other hand, the world today possesses an unprecedented reserve of knowledge, or more accurately of information. We now have within our grasp, even if in theory, access to sciences and knowledge that not even the greatest of philosophers and thinkers thought possible in previous eras. Knowledge is no longer privy to selected elite as it has been over long epochs of history and it is no longer possible to monopolize access to information in an age of instant proliferation of information.

It is clear that civilization is headed towards more information technology with its deep implications raising serious questions and looking for answers. Questions such as will corporations eventually disappear paving the way for work to become in the form of home-based clusters? Will universities and schools disappear and will education then become instant via online courses? Will published books and newspapers disappear? Will theatres and cinemas close down and in the face of home based surround systems comforts? How will societies develop in a low rate contact? Will there still be a meaning to neighborhood? Is this a dream yet to come of a universal laboratory of future's human beings communicating like machines? Will reproduction be controlled by artificial intelligence? 

Chronic Backache

by Dr. Hanna Saadah



Unlike acute backache, Chronic Backache is not self-limited, does not have an easy treatment and persists for prolonged periods (months-to-years). Being an end-stage disease, it is much harder to treat and its treatments are as varied as its causes. It is much more prevalent than acute backache because it is far less reversible and accrues more and more victims over the lifespan. It results from complex physical disruptions that compromise the lumbar spine unit—its discs, joints, vertebrae, curvatures, muscles, and nerves.

Repeated bouts of acute backache often end in the Chronic Backache Syndrome. Other common causes include back trauma, back arthritis, failed back surgeries, spine deformities, frailty, weak muscles, poor posture, osteoporosis, obesity, smoking, heavy drinking, depression, lack of exercise, and arthritic bone growths that choke the spinal nerves. The Chronic Backache Syndrome may be divided into two general groups—surgical and non-surgical. A detailed clinical examination by an experienced neurosurgeon—coupled with an MRI—can usually stratify patients into surgical or non-surgical groups. This article will focus on the non-surgical group.

Over the years Non-surgical Chronic Back Ache Syndrome has had many treatments and, like fashion, they seem to cycle in and out of favor with time. What has remained consistent, however, is the fact that none of the treatments has been more successful than the other leading to an endless proliferation of purported cures. While each claimed success, there has not been any published scientific evidence to support such claims.

Among the purported treatments for the Chronic Backache Syndrome are—massages, physical therapy, acupuncture, various local injections, epidural steroid injections, chiropractic manipulations, back braces, anti-inflammatory and muscle relaxant medications, common analgesics, narcotic analgesics, and sham operations such as cutting a certain foot nerve etc. Usually, patients favor the easiest treatments because they entail the least personal effort. Short-term successes are common but long-term outcomes are invariably similar and do not seem to be treatment dependant. The prognosis is seldom good unless physical fitness is reclaimed through a personal, dedicated and long-term commitment to exercise.

Exercise, the cornerstone of fitness, is also the cornerstone of treatment. It is the cheapest antidote for the Chronic Backache Syndrome and gives better results than all of the other more expensive treatments combined. Its only unappealing side is that it is effort dependent rather than operator dependent. In multiple studies over the years, whenever popular backache treatments were compared, a daily one-hour walk consistently gave the best results. Other helpful exercises include such as swimming, aerobics, stretching, yoga, Pilates, working out with a trainer, etc.

Fear plays a major role in sustaining the vicious cycle of backache. Since movement hurts, patients become fearful and prefer to spend much of their time resting in pain-free positions. Rest leads to de-conditioning, which weakens the muscles and bones of the spine and increases the backache. The increased backache leads to increased disability, which causes further decline in back health.

To overcome this fear, physicians must educate their patients about the difference between hurt and harm. Movement and walking hurt initially but help in the long run.

Depression, a common component of chronic pain, must also be treated because it exaggerates backache and inhibits personal efforts necessary to overcome it.

De-conditioning may reach a point of no return. If backache disability is allowed to continue beyond two years, the chances of re-conditioning become very poor. If re-conditioning is to be successful, it must begin as early as possible after the backache becomes unmanageable.

The best antidotes for the Chronic Backache Syndrome are physical and mental fitness. Fitness implies losing weight, stopping smoking, refraining from heavy drinking, treating osteoporosis and depression, avoiding narcotic medications, maintaining an actively healthy lifestyle, observing back hygiene, and walking at least one hour a day. Patients who are willing and able to achieve such fitness will either totally recover from backache or have a normal life in spite of it.

Narcotic analgesics and pain management schemes, though initially appealing, are actually detrimental because—unlike fitness— they promote dependence, inactivity, obesity, and further mental and physical disability. 🍇



Phoenicia and the Phoenicians

by Dr. Hassan Salameh Sarkis



Phoenicia, as a geographic entity, is confined to the middle part of the central eastern mediterranean region situated between Ra's Al Bassit in Syria, to the north, Mount Carmel in Palestine, to the south and the chain of Lebanon's mountains to the east. The name seems to have always carried a pure geographical implication as the land of the Phoenicians. It took on an administrative implication starting with the hellenistic era (i.e. the era of the successors of Alexander the Great: the Seleucids of Syria and the Ptolemies of Egypt) up to the Byzantine era. Historians and chroniclers, as much Arabs as Crusaders, continued to use the term Phoenicia in its administrative sense until the middle age. Administrative Phoenicia, in this meaning, was divided into two parts: Phoenicia Prima (First) or Maritima (Coastal) with its capital or metropolis Tyre or Beirut, depending on the historic circumstances. The second part was known as Phoenicia Secunda (Second, Internal or Lebanese Phoenicia), with its capital Damascus or Homs.

It is worth mentioning that these terminologies are still being used, especially in the clerical sphere. The Greek Orthodox or Greek Catholic bishops of Beirut, Tyre, Sidon and Tripoli, still carry the title of The most dignified and the primate of all coastal Phoenicia. Meanwhile, the bishops of Ba'albeck, Homs and Hama carry the title of The most dignified and the primate of all Lebanese or second Phoenicia.

The term Phoenicians was used by the Greeks to describe the peoples of that region during the first millennium BC but the reasons behind the use of this specific terminology are still unknown. Scholars argue that the term Phoenician derives from a Greek word for redness or palm trees. However, such arguments are absolutely unconvincing because the skin of region's natives was not redder than that of others in the Mediterranean nor was their land richer in date trees than that of the Nile Valley and Mesopotamia. Furthermore, the fact that some of the inhabitants were purple dyers does not justify why a whole population should be named after a trade practiced by only a few.

Furthermore, the Phoenicians have no links to the Phoenix bird, cited in some mythological sources. This bird belongs to the wader or long-legged species. It was considered by the Egyptians as a symbol of the Sun, which they worshipped in Heliopolis - City of the Sun near Cairo. The Phoenix did not become part of the Lebanese historic folklore until the Hellenistic era (i.e. the era of the successors of Alexander the Great), when the local populace adopted the customs, language and terms used by the Greeks and replaced the name Ba'albeck with Heliopolis after they gave its gods solar traits.

While the word (pu-ni-ki-ja) used in the mycenaean language in the 14th century BC means the color red or one of the red-colored plants, or some kind of carriage, this does not provide sufficient justification for a people to be called after a carriage or a plant even if its color was red! Furthermore,

the ancient language of the Egyptians included a word that is phonetically close to Phoenicians: Fenkhu meaning the woodcutters. Such a term is worthy of attention, but with carefulness.

We believe that it is futile to delve into an explanation of this term, because no people have accepted or will ever accept to be called after a group of its craftsmen, the color of the skin or one of its plants. This explains why the Phoenicians themselves rejected being called as such. The Phoenician did not name his/her land Phoenicia but belonged to his metropolis or mother city. He/she was either Sidonian (from Sidon), Tyrian (from Tyre), Gblite (from Jbeil/Byblos), Aradian (from Arwad/Arados) and so forth. Should the people of this region identify their land, they would have called it the Land of Canaan or Canaan. The natives' negative reaction to be named Phoenician is caused by the term's hidden pejorative meaning.

Phoenician seems to have been derived from a Greek word for bloody, blood-soaked and even murderous or criminal. This is evident in some Greek texts that described the Phoenicians as being deceitful, harmful, thieves and accused them of kidnapping people on the shores, especially children, to sell them as slaves across the Mediterranean.

It is perhaps understandable why the Phoenicians did not use this derogative term, which came from Greeks and Romans, in their texts. This further explains why Beirut carved Beirut, metropolis in Canaan, which means capital or mother city in the land of Canaan on its currencies during the Seleucid era. This term remained vivid in the memories of the people, especially in the regions that were colonized by the Phoenicians in north Africa, until relatively later eras. Saint Augustine (354-430) explained in one of his letters to the people of Rome that the farmers of his city the episcopal seat of Annaba, located in modern day Algeria, would answer in the punice language that they were Canaanites, when asked of their identity. 🌟

Between Yesterday and Today

The Monthly publishes one of Ze'ini's poems on elections

Still waiting

We are still waiting, waiting
Why are we waiting?
All the people are waiting
They just wait

But each one is waiting for something:
All the people are waiting:
The fiancé awaits his fiancée
We wait with them

The groom his bride
The lover his beloved
The student his allowance

And we each carry our own secret

The child awaits his Eid allowance
And is expecting what he has in mind

And the companion and the friend their IDs

One is in puzzlement

The employee awaits his wage
Another still patient with his bitter life

But tonight all the people are waiting
People standing, others sitting

One thing: the result of the elections

And everybody is waiting
The khawajah and the waiter
The landlord and the concierge
The partisans and the loved ones
The chef and the bellhop

They are all standing at the gates
Gathered here and there
The electors and the deputies

Mesmerized in front of the television

Holding an account notebook

They stayed up all night
Gathered around the radio
All the people are waiting
And everybody is waiting ...

They do not know who has won
They do not understand who has
been defeated

They are waiting for something
serious to emerge, as some said
it would

But they have always been waiting

They are waiting for the universe
to turn

Waiting for a savvy to emerge

Waiting for the bright light

Waiting for him to solve the
unsolvable

Waiting for Moses to return from
the Mountain

But who is he?

When will he be here?

They are waiting for Noah in his
ark,

All the people are waiting for him
to sail us to safety

To save us all

Merciful God, Amen

We are waiting



“Lebanon Wars, Why?”

Lebanon and War: two words that go hand in hand. As soon as one war ends, another one always seems to be around the corner. The 1840 war, the 1860 war, and then on to World War I, then there was the 1958 strife, until the major war of 1975 that lasted until 1990 during which there were Israeli wars on Lebanon including the 1978 and 1982 invasions, after that the Israeli aggressions of 1993, 1996, and finally in 2006.

The history of these wars has yet to be written in a scientific manner, away from exploitation and bias, with an identification of the reasons, the real motives, the results, and the aftermath these wars left in their paths. For that reason, the history of Lebanon became just points of view from the different groups (political or sectarian). Each group had their own favorable history, a history that works towards their goals and legitimizes their past deeds and future plans or aspirations.

“**Lebanon Wars, Why?**” is a book published by INMA (Social and Cultural Development Association in cooperation with Information International) as part of its Bee Series. This book aims to chronicle the events that preceded the war in 1975, the stages that the war underwent, and the results it ended with: starting with the Ain El Rummaneh bus incident on Sunday, April 13th 1975, on to the traveling massacres across the nation and mainly Black Saturday, through the mountain wars, reaching the Ta’ef accord which represented the formal end of this war.

This book is a trial to re-write the history of Lebanon clearly and transparently in order to understand the past and to open a window into the future, leaving all the wars and miseries behind and looking into a promising Lebanon that overcomes all obstacles to become “A Nation of Peace and Love.”

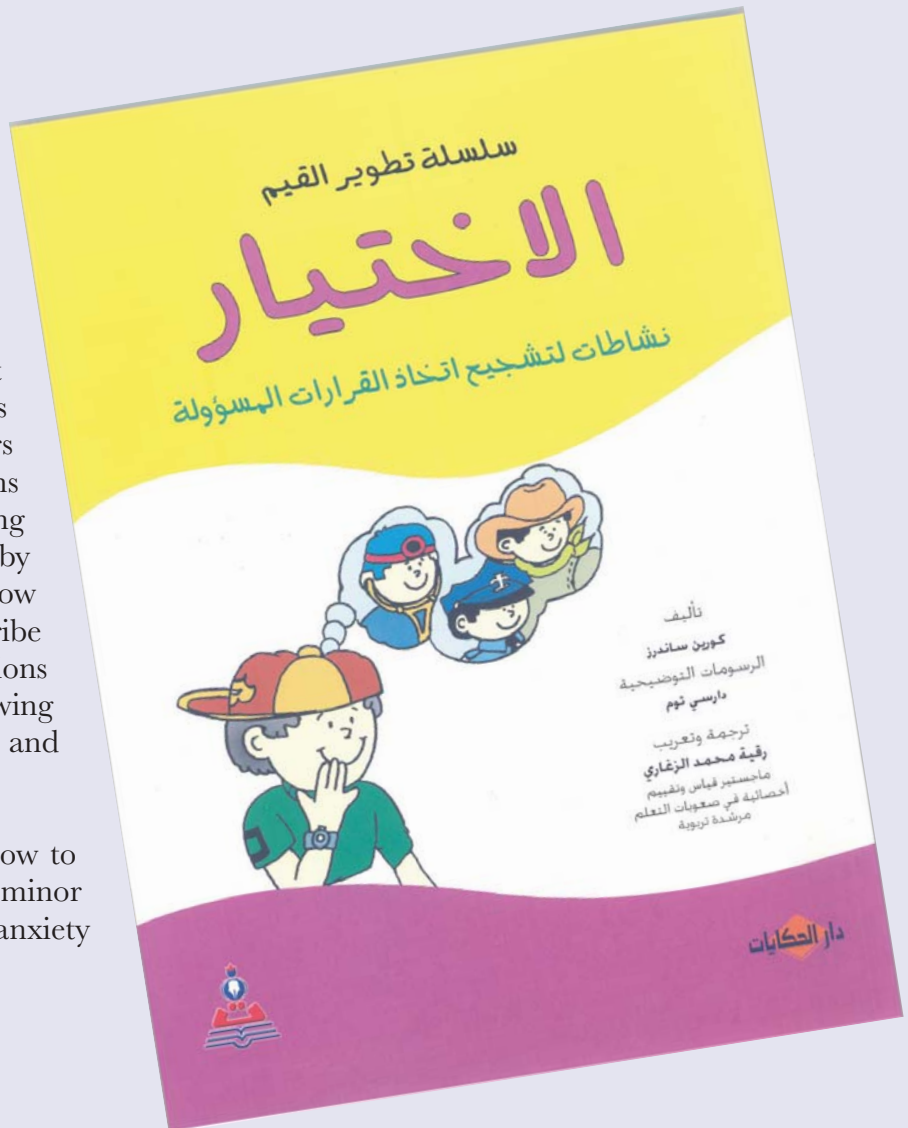


"Choosing."

The book is part of a series to develop a system of values among the youth. It includes activities that help enhance responsible decision-making among the young generation.

It encourages youths to develop a system of values that reflects their self-respect and their respect of others. The activities are designed in a manner to help readers foresee the consequences of their decisions and become more capable of making responsible decisions. The book begins by guiding young men and women on how to define their personal traits, describe themselves and then to test their emotions and emotional changes. The following section provides self-knowledge, mind and body relaxation tests.

The book also provides guidelines on how to set daily and weekly goals, how to resolve minor and major problems, how to deal with anxiety and how to outline future plans.



"Choosing", by Corrine Sanders, is part of a collection of books that encourage responsible decision-making. It is being published in Arabic in Lebanon by Dar Al Hikayat and in Jordan by Dar Al Thaqafa. 🌟

Families from Lebanon

The Nasrallah families

Muslim in origin; members Muslim and Christian

The Nasrallahs are one of Lebanon's widely spread families. They belong to more than one confession in both the Muslim and Christian religions.

Origins

The Nasrallah families cannot be traced to a single origin. Some go back to Sayyed Nasrallah bin Nassereddine bin Younis, a direct descendant of Imam Ali Moussa al-Kadhem. A part of the family descends from Imam Ali's grandchildren and are therefore dubbed 'Siyyad' (plural of sayyed, which means a direct descendant of the Prophet Mohammad). Their ancestor in Lebanon is Qotobeddine Ali Soul, who lived in the town of Taybeh in the qada'a (district of) Marjeyoun. Taybeh is considered the birthplace of the Nasrallah family, which branched out to many Lebanese regions, especially in the south and the Beqa'a. The other part of the Nasrallah families descends from Nasrallah bin Mohammad, and are not considered 'Siyyad'.

Around the year 1200, a section of the family migrated to Al Kadhemiya in Iraq, where they became known as Al A'mili family in relation to Jabal A'mel (the historic name of the south of Lebanon).



Number of members and registries

There are around 7,200 family members that are distributed according to registries and confessions in a number of Lebanese towns and villages, including:

☉ Maronites

A'qoura-Jbeil, 153
Damour-Chouf, 60
Rmeish-Bint Jbeil, 50
Hamana-Ba'abda, 15
A'abreen-Batroun, 40
Al Kfour-Nabatiyeh, 30
Deir Al Qamar- Chouf, 22

☉ Greek Catholics

R'as Ba'albeck-Ba'albeck, 230
Al Qa'a-Ba'albeck, 350
Qbe'i-Ba'abda, 60
Rashmaya-A'aley, 14
Al Ferzil-Zahle, 170
Darb Al Seem-Saida, 16
Zouq Mkayel-Kesserouan, 10
Al Salhiyah-Saida, 18

☉ Shia'a

Taybeh-Marjeyoun, 110
Beit Leef- Bint Jbeil, 43
A'ainata-Bint Jbeil, 300
Houla-Marjeyoun, 323
Qana-Sour, 90
Al Bazouriya-Sour, 150
Hariss-Bint Jbeil, 25
Kfarkila-Marjeyoun, 50
Shaqra-Bint Jbeil, 90
Borj Rahhal-Sour, 63
Al Bassateen-Sour, 30
Al Labwa-Ba'albeck, 60
Al Sakssakiah-Saida, 140
Sarafand-Saida, 20
Kfarhatta-Saida, 30
Nabi Na'am-Ba'albeck 180
Sour-Sour, 35
Abassiah-Sour, 30
Mayss Al Jabal-Marjeyoun, 110
Khiam-Marjeyoun, 97
Shmesstar-Ba'albeck, 150
Qlaileh-Sour, 50
Yohmor-Nabatiyeh, 20
Bashoura-Beirut, 120

☉ Druze

Beqa'ata-Chouf, 60
Jdeidet Al Chouf-Chouf, 40

☉ Greek Orthodox

Kelhatt-Koura, 40
Deir Qoubel-A'aley, 56
Kfarmeshki-Rashaya, 410
Halat-Jbeil, 10
Souq Al Gharb-A'aley, 20
Mhattet Bhamdoun-A'aley, 20
Sebneeh-Ba'abda, 50
Al-Minnieh-Minnieh-Dinniyeh, 220
Wadi Shahrou-Ba'abda, 35
Bhamdoun-A'aley, 40
Tbl Al Saqi-Marjeyoun, 15
Achrafieh-Beirut, 90
Sin El Fil-Matn, 35

☉ Sunni

Sheba'a-Hasbaya, 30
Dalhamiyeh-Zahle, 30

Professions

Doctors: Twelve doctors of the Nasrallah family are members in the Beirut Doctors' Syndicate.

Lawyers: Nine members of the Nasrallah family are registered in the Syndicate of Lebanese Lawyers in Beirut.

Engineers: 47 members are registered in the Beirut Syndicate of Engineers. 🌟

Mar Mama

One of Lebanon's smallest villages

Etymology

Researchers, including Dr. Anis Freiha in his book "Names of Lebanese Cities and Villages", believe the name Mar Mama comes from Mama, a Babylonian and Assyrian goddess. Mama is also known by the ancient names of Nin-Khar-Sag - which translates into Lady of the Mountain - Nintu and Mama Aruru. Others believe the village was named after a priest or a saint, who lived in the region and owned an ancient church.

Location

The village of Mar Mama is located in qada'a Al Batroun in the muhafaza (province) of the north and situated at 890 meters above sea level and 70 kilometers away from the capital. It is also located at a 48-kilometer distance from the muhafaza's headquarters in Tripoli, covering an area of 114 hectares. It can be reached via Batroun - A'abreen - Kfaifan - Mar Mama.

Population

The number of people registered in the Civil Status Records of the town is estimated at around 91, all Maronite. The town has around 23 houses.

Voters

The number of registered voters in 2000 was 121, of whom 60 electors cast their ballots in the parliamentary elections compared to 85 in 2005. In 2009, the number of registered voters reached 136, of whom 99 electors cast their ballots. The voters are of the following families:

Awwad: 30 voters
 Saadeh: 22 voters
 Tohmeh: 17 voters
 Khalifeh 12 voters
 Saad: 10 voters
 Makhoulouf: 10 voters
 Hanna: 9 voters
 Abou Gebrayel: 8 voters
 Daou: 7 voters
 Al Khouri: 5 voters
 Boutros: 3 voters
 Gebrayel: 3 voters

Local authorities

Mar Mama does not have a Municipal Council while the local authority is represented by the village's mukhtar (village mayor) Joseph Saad and a single-member ikhtiariah body.



Educational institutions

Mar Mama does not have any schools.

Economic activities

Town residents rely on employment in the public and private sectors as the main source of income in addition to the cultivation of olive groves.

Archeological sites

One of its sites is an ancient church built on the ruins of a pagan temple with mosaic remnants. The church's altar is the same altar once used by the pagans and the site also contains a number of tombs.

Problems

A majority of the populace have taken residence outside Mar Mama with only 30 villagers left there on a permanent basis. The town does not have a school, a clinic and suffers from a 20-year old water shortage, daily hours-long power cuts and lack of employment opportunities.

Female Genital Mutilation in the Arab World

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is an inhumane and devastating procedure that violates basic human rights. It is mainly performed on prepubescent girls, without informed consent of any kind. Between 100 and 140 million girls and women in the world are estimated to have undergone FGM while “3 million girls are estimated to be at risk of undergoing the procedures every year”, according to a World Health Organization 2008 report “Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation”.

While wrongly associated with religious rituals, FGM is a cultural practice predating Islam and originating in Africa. It remains mainly an African custom.

The WHO defines FGM as any procedure that intentionally alters or injures female genital organs for non-medical purposes. Genital female mutilation generally involves excising the clitoris, and can sometimes include other parts of female genitalia.

The 2009 Arab Human Development Report described FGM as “an illegitimate operation which ... is classified as a crime under international law. Specifically, the performance of this operation entails at least three types of crime: (1) causing physical harm; (2) violation of a woman’s honour; and (3) the unauthorized practice of medicine.” It criticized Arab legal systems for failing to ratify laws completely prohibiting the practice.

In addition to causing psychological trauma, the brutality of the procedure leads to hemorrhaging, problems urinating and is designed to cause sexual dysfunction. It can also lead to potential childbirth complications and newborn deaths. Death is not uncommon.

FGM in the Arab World

Both WHO and the Arab Human Development report singled six Arab countries, where the practice is widespread: Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Djibouti, Somalia and Mauritania. According to WHO and the United Nations Population Funds, FGM also occurs in Iraq, Oman and the United Arab Emirates but there are no national estimates.

Table 1 shows FGM prevalence in the six countries.

FGM prevalence in the six countries.		Table 1
Country		Estimated prevalence of female genital mutilation in girls and women 15 – 49 years (%)
Djibouti	2006	93.1
Egypt	2005	95.8
Mauritania	2001	71.3
Somalia	2005	97.9
Sudan, northern (approximately 80% of total population in survey)	2000	90
Yemen	1997	22.6
Source: WHO statistics 2008		

Egypt

Female genital mutilation affects both Muslim and Christian females in Egypt. The government outlawed the practice in 1997, yet studies show it remains widespread. In 2008, Egypt amended the Law on the Child banning and penalizing FGM, according to the 2009 Arab Human Development Report. An Egyptian Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 2005 shows that over 75% of girls aged between age 15 and 17 have been subject to female genital cutting. It also showed that FGM is most widespread among poor families in rural areas of the Nile valley in southern Egypt.

Sudan

In 2008, WHO estimated the prevalence of FGM at up to 90%. In February 2009, the government dropped Article (13) in the draft Child Act, which bans the practice of female circumcision. However, it decided to prohibit the more severe form of FGM.

Djibouti

The overall prevalence of FGM goes reportedly up to 93.1%. The practice is widespread among the population as a whole and it does not depend on ethnic group, tribe, class or social standing. According to the Ministry of Health, the most common form is infibulation, which accounts for 86% of all mutilations practiced, followed by excision, which accounts for 15%.

Yemen

The Yemeni government claims FGM is not practiced, yet according to WHO statistics show FGM prevalence went up to 23% in 1997.

Mauritania

WHO estimates that the prevalence of FGM in Mauritanian women at 71%.

Somalia

WHO estimates the prevalence of FGM at 97.7% in girls aged between 4–8 years. 

Real Estate Index: September 2009

The real estate sector remained stable in September 2009, as in August, especially considering the end of the summer season and the departure of expatriates and tourists.

This is expected to continue until next summer after the municipal and ikhtiarah elections. Prices did not drop, however, and even went through limited increases in Beirut due to the scarcity of land for sale. Meanwhile, prices of residential apartments have slightly increased due to a rise in the cost of construction material, especially sand, gravel and rocks, after some unlicensed quarries were shut down. Another explanation for this increase is the high exchange rate of the Euro to the USD, increasing the prices of imported material from European countries.

However, sales of small and medium-size apartments are expected to grow since more Lebanese banks have started giving out housing loans at competitive terms, including low interest rates ranging from 4.5 %-5 %, an extension of the grace period to 30 years and exemption from registration and filing fees.

Tables 1&2 show the prices of land and property that were sold in September 2009.

Land sold in September 2009			Table1
Location	Area (m2)	Price (USD)	USD/m2
Beirut			
Achrafieh	490	1,004,500	2,050
Achrafieh	730	1,460,000	2,000
Achrafieh (Sioufi)	550	1,650,000	3,000
Achrafieh (Hotel Alexander)	350	941,500	2,690
A'ain Mraisseh	655	6,288,000	9,600
Bourj Abi Haidar	450	2,520,000	5,600
Ramlet Al Bayda	720	7,020,000	9,750
Zouqaq Al Blat	830	2,365,500	2,850
Ba'abda			
Al Hadath	1,900	855,000	450
Ba'abda	540	1,188,000	2,200
Hazmiyeh	680	1,394,000	2,050
Matn			
Broumana	810	356,400	440
Saquiet Al Misk	1,600	440,000	275
Dbayeh	1,450	580,000	400
A'ain Sa'adeh	900	382,500	425
Rabiyeh	2,500	4,250,000	1,700
A'aley			
A'aley	700	245,000	350
Bchmoun	1,100	220,000	200
Kesserwan			
'Adma	950	361,000	380
A'ajaltoun	800	288,000	360
Qlaia'at	920	257,600	280

Property sold in September 2009			Table 2
Location	Area (m2)	Price (USD)	USD/m2
Beirut			
Qoreitem	210	630,000	3,000
Qoreitem	270	634,500	2,350
Al Barbir	175	315,000	1,800
A'ain Al Tineh	400	1,800,000	4,500
Ra's Al Naba'a (Mohammed Al Hout)	135	270,000	2,000
Al Jama'a Al A'arabiya	180	300,000	1,666
Sodeco	210	493,500	2,350
Ba'abda			
Mar Taqla	270	421,200	1,560
Mar Taqla	310	666,500	2,150
A'ain Al Roumaneh	120	120,000	1,000
Matn			
Rabiyeh	250	352,500	1,410
Mansouriyeh	280	336,000	1,200
A'ain Sa'adeh	230	322,000	1,400
A'aley			
Dawhat A'aramoun	150	145,500	970
Khaldeh	230	230,000	1,000
Khaldeh	190	142,500	750
Kesserwan			
Kasslik	230	391,000	1,700
Adma	200	280,000	1,400
Adonis	175	134,750	770

Toward a Lebanese Consumer Price Index

Food Price Index September 2009

In September 2009, half of the prices of the 100 listed food and consumer products remained stable. The prices of 28 products dropped slightly, and those of 22 products increased. Prices are expected to decrease incrementally in the coming months when the continuous decline in spending is taken into account, especially with the start of the school year. Table 1 shows the prices of 100 products during September 2009.

The price of goods and food products during September 2009 Table 1				
Item and brand		Prices beginning of September 2009	Prices beginning of October 2009	% of price change
Oil				
Afia corn oil	(3.5 liters)	13,500	13,450	-0.37
Mazola corn oil	(3.5 liters)	13,100	13,100	0
Mazola corn oil	(2 liters)	6,950	6,950	0
Slim corn oil	(2 liters)	6,800	6,800	0
Wesson corn oil	(2 liters)	8,350	8,500	+1.7
Ghandour soya oil	(3.8 liters)	9,600	9,600	0
Alfa corn oil	(4 liters)	13,000	12,750	-1.9
Al-Wadi olive oil	(1/2 liter)	8,700	9,200	+5.7
Ketchup and Sauces				
Libby's Ketchup	(567 g)	1,700	1,700	0
Extra Ketchup	(340 g)	1,350	1,500	+11.1
Extra Ketchup	(2.2 kg)	5,400	5,550	+2.7
Dolly's Mayonnaise	(500 ml)	3,650	3,650	0
Al-Wadi Mayonnaise	(500 ml)	3,450	4,250	23.1
Al-Bsat Tahina	(900 g)	6,750	6,500	-3.7
Al-Bsat Tahina	(450 g)	3,800	3,800	0
Taous tomato sauce	(70 g)	550	600	+9
Taous tomato sauce	(425 g)	2,800	2,850	+1.7
Tala tomato sauce	(675 g)	2,500	2,500	0
Tissues and Detergents				
Mimosa tissues	(500 g)	2,375	2,450	+3.1
Fine tissues	(200 tissues)	1,250	1,200	-4
Primo tissues	(200 tissues)	1,200	1,200	0
Gipsy tissues	(300 tissues)	2,300	2,400	+4.3
Mimosa toilet papers	(4 rolls)	2,200	2,200	0
Yes detergent	(900 g)	2,000	1,950	-2.5
Clorox	(1 liter)	1,400	1,400	0
Persil	(4 kg)	18,150	18,150	0
Ariel	(4 kg)	17,860	17,860	0

The price of goods and food products during September 2009 Table 1				
Item and brand		Prices beginning of September 2009	Prices beginning of October 2009	% of price change
Dairy Products				
Candia full cream milk	(1 liter)	2,450	2,450	0
Candia full cream yoghurt	(2 kg)	5,000	5,000	0
Bonjus labneh	(1 kg)	3,750	3,750	0
Taanayel labneh	(500 g)	4,750	4,950	+4.2
Candia labneh	(500 g)	4,500	5,000	+11.1
Taanayel yoghurt	(1 kg)	3,000	3,000	0
Smeds cheese	(400 g)	3,620	3,450	-4.7
Picon cheese	(360 g)	3,400	3,400	0
Picon cheese	(160 g)	1,700	1,700	0
Double-crème cheese	(1 kg)	5,000	6,000	+20
Fresh country cheese	(1 kg)	6,950	7,600	+9.3
Khashkawan cheese	(1 kg)	12,750	12,450	-2.3
Lurpak butter	(200 g)	2,000	2,000	0
Tatra butter	(200 g)	1,625	1,625	0
Al-Maalaqtain margarine	(2 kg)	9,150	9,600	+4.9
Al-Baqara al-Haloub margarine	(2kg)	20,150	20,000	-0.74
Vegetaline margarine	(2 kg)	13,250	12,750	-3.7
Nido full cream milk (bag)	(2,250 g)	19,000	19,000	0
Nido full cream milk	(2,500 g)	22,000	20,750	-5.6
Tatra full cream milk	(1,800 g)	15,250	15,250	0
Fruits and Vegetables				
Orange	(1 kg)	1,000	1,000	0
Tomatoes	(1 kg)	950	800	-15.7
Cucumbers	(1 kg)	1,000	1,000	0
Bananas	(1 kg)	1,200	1,300	+8.3
Lemons	(1 kg)	1,100	850	-22.7
Apples	(1 kg)	2,000	1,750	-12.5
Potatoes	(1 kg)	980	750	-23.4

The price of goods and food products during September 2009 Table 1

Item and brand		Prices beginning of September 2009	Prices beginning of October 2009	% of price change
Cereals				
Khater white lentils	(1 kg)	2,750	2,700	- 1,8
Khater chick-peas fahli	(1 kg)	3,250	3,150	- 3
Khater beans	(1 kg)	1,920	1,830	- 4.7
Peeled wheat	(1 kg)	1,650	1,500	- 9
Pineal Lima Bean	(1 kg)	3,300	3,300	0
Brown Fine Burgul	(1 kg)	1,550	1,100	- 29
Egyptian rice	(1 kg)	1,770	1,680	-5
American rice	(1 kg)	2,200	2,200	0
Italian rice	(1 kg)	2,390	2,200	- 7.9
Al-Wadi Hommos Tahina	(380 g)	1,000	1,000	0
Chtaura Hommos Tahina	(380 g)	950	950	0
California Gardens beans	(450 g)	1,000	1,000	0
Al-Wadi beans	(450 g)	900	900	0
Chtaura beans	(480 g)	1,000	1,000	0
Libby's corn	(340 g)	1,550	1,250	-19.3
Meat, Fish and Eggs				
Luncheon meat beef	(198 g)	1,450	1,750	+20.6
Zwan chicken	(200 g)	2,200	2,250	+2.2
Zwan beef	(200 g)	2,200	2,200	0
Al-Mona chicken	(200 g)	1,850	1,850	0
Al-Taghzia beef	(200 g)	1,800	1,800	0
Al-Taghzia chicken	(200 g)	1,900	1,900	0
Geisha sardine	(125 g)	1,000	1,050	+5
Deli sardine	(125 g)	1,000	1,025	+2.5
Milo sardine	(125 g)	1,000	1,100	+10
Geisha tuna	(200 g)	2,250	2,250	0
White Bell tuna	(200 g)	2,000	2,100	+5
White Diamond tuna	(200 g)	1,450	1,650	+13.7
Skipper tuna	(185 g)	1,850	1,775	-4
Eggs	(30 eggs)	5,600	5,600	0
Beef	(1 kg)	21,000	19,000	-9.5
Sheep	(1 kg)	27,000	24,000	-11.1

The price of goods and food products during September 2009 Table 1

Item and brand		Prices beginning of September 2009	Prices beginning of October 2009	% of price change
Pasta				
Barilla spaghetti	(500 g)	2,000	2,000	0
Antonio Amato spaghetti	(500 g)	2,450	2,450	0
Monte spaghetti	(500 g)	2,150	2,150	0
Sugar and Salt				
Sugar	(2 kg)	1,650	1,650	0
Al-Ousra Sugar	(5 kg)	5,500	5,500	0
Salt	(700 g)	560	560	0
Box of salt	(738 g)	1,750	1,690	-3.4
Coffee and Tea				
Najjar coffee	(1kg)	11,800	11,800	0
Brazil coffee	(1 kg)	9,750	9,750	0
Al-Hisan tea	(180 g)	2,450	2,450	0
Nestle	(250g)	1,700	1,700	0
Halvah and Jam				
Al-Wadi halvah	(454 g)	4,100	4,100	0
Al-Bsat halvah	(450 g)	4,250	4,250	0
Chtaura apricot jam	(1 kg)	6,000	5,800	-3.3
Al-Wadi apricot jam	(1 kg)	5,250	5,120	-2.4

Source: Information International



Did you know that?

by Dr Hanna Saadah

Prevention of stroke in patients with Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation is a cardiac rhythm disturbance that increases with age especially in those with high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, and overweight. The blood clots in the atria of the heart then travels to the brain and causes bad strokes. To prevent such strokes, the blood thinners Aspirin, Plavix, and Coumadin have vied for the leading role. After much debate, the weight of the scientific evidence has finally favored Coumadin as the blood thinner of choice.

(*The Medical Letter*, Vol. 51, Issue 1313, June 1, 2009)

Blood clots after knee replacements

For a long time, surgeons have injected Heparin to try to prevent blood clots after knee replacements. In spite of Heparin, blood clots still form in the leg, travel to the lungs, and cause life-threatening pulmonary embolisms. Finally, a new and much needed oral blood thinner called Rivaroxaban has been shown to be superior to Heparin in preventing these post-surgical clots.

(*The Lancet*, Vol. 373, Page 1673, May 16, 2009)

Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport

A 24% drop in traffic in September 2009

Airport traffic significantly dropped during September 2009 compared to in August. The total number of passengers (arrivals, departures and transit) was 466,018 in September, compared to 612,956 in August, marking a 24% drop of 146,938 passengers. A comparison between September 2008 and August 2008 shows a 33.1% drop due to the end of the tourist season and the start of Ramadan. From the beginning of 2009 until the end of September, the number of passengers reached 3,788,132, which, when compared to the 3,015,840 passengers during the same period in 2008, registers a 25.6% increase of 772,292 passengers. Table 1 compares airport traffic in September 2009 to August 2009 and September 2008.

Airport traffic in the month of September 2009 compared to August 2009 and to September 2008.

Table 1

Traffic	August 2009	September 2009	% of change in August/September 2009	September 2008	% of change September 2008/2009
Arriving airplanes	2,996	2,560	-14.5	1,987	+28.8
Departing airplanes	3,009	2,548	-15.3	1,983	+28.5
Total # of airplanes	6,005	5,108	-14.9	3,970	+28.6
Arriving crews	23,994	20,386	-15	16,045	+27
Departing crews	24,027	20,285	-15.5	15,959	+27.1
Total # of crews	48,021	40,671	-15.3	32,004	+27
Arriving passengers	221,113	217,577	-1.6	162,733	+33.7
Departing passengers	389,736	245,902	-36.9	200,152	+22.8
Transit passengers	2,107	2,539	+20.5	2,920	-13
Total # of passengers	612,956	466,018	-23.9	365,805	+27.3
Imported goods (per ton)	3,262	3,180	-2.5	3,381	-5.9
Exported goods (per ton)	2,822	2,624	-7	3,171	-17.2
Total amount of goods (per ton)	6,084	5,804	-4.6	6,552	-11.4

Source: Directorate General of Civil Aviation - September 2009

Stats & Numbers

⊙ **7 special pardons** were issued by President Michel Suleiman on September 11, 2009. Article 53 of the Constitution gives the president the power to issue pardons in special cases. Some former presidents either abstained from granting pardons or issued a limited number (such as former President Emile Lahoud). Others exercised the power to its fullest, like former President Elias Hraoui, who granted more than 160 pardons during his term in office.

⊙ **LBP 1,861 billion** were earmarked for Electricite du Liban in the 2009 budget. By the end of July 2009, some LBP 1,658 billion had been paid out for EDL. This leads to the estimation that total expenditures on electricity should reach LBP 2,700 billion by year's end, exceeding the allocated funds by LBP 839 billion.

⊙ **LBP 1,300 billion** were given to service reparation funds and pensions for state employees in 2009, compared to LBP 1,040 billion in 2008. Retired military personnel receive LBP 660 billion worth of reparations, marking 50.7% of total pensions and end of service compensations.

⊙ **LBP 6,040 billion** was the cost of servicing public debt in 2009 compared to LBP 4,650 billion in 2008.

⊙ **21,880 new cars** were sold in Lebanon from January to July 2009. Nissan topped the list of sales at 4,976 cars. The overall number of both new and used cars imported annually is estimated at 90,000.



Photo by Waddah Joma'a - 2009

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- Lebanon in Figures 2005-2006
- 8- "I am Responsible, All of Us are Responsible"
- 9- "Our Environment is Our Home"
- 10- "My Society is My Responsibility"
- 11- "My Society is My Responsibility" Workbook
- 12- "I am a Student, I am a Citizen: Ways Towards State Building"
- 13- "I am a Student, I am a Citizen: Ways Towards State Building" Workbook
- 14- "Lebanon Wars, why?"
- 15- Discrimination in Lebanon
- 16- Lebanon's MPs and Lebanese Parliamentary Elections 1960 - 2009
- 17- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-North District
- 18- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Beirut District
- 19- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Mount Lebanon District
- 20- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Beqa'a District
- 21- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-South and Nabatiyeh District

INTERNATIONAL

INFORMATION
INTERNATIONAL sal
المعلومات الدولية



To subscribe:

Al-Borj Building, 4th Floor, Martyrs Square
Beirut Central District
Telephone: 961-1-983008/9 961-3-262376
Fax: 961-1-980630
info@iimonthly.com
www.iimonthly.com
www.information-international.com
© Information International SAL All rights reserved
License No. 180/2003
Responsible Director: Hala Saghbini



What Booz Allen's reports on An-Nahar and LBC failed to mention

"Al-Akhbar" was right to cover the layoffs at An-Nahar. At least some of the dismissed employees were right to complain about the way they were treated, An-Nahar was right to respond as Ghassan Hajjar did and so were both LBC and its employees. However, if all are right, then what is wrong? And where is the injustice?

To be frank; we live in a society where corruption is a way of life and breaking the law is justified. This is how it is with MPs, voters, mass media owners, journalists and throughout the private and public sectors.

What kind of media do we have in Lebanon? Television channels are owned by political figures -zua'ama of confessions- and newspapers reflect the viewpoints of their backers. The scoop for them is 'he arrived, he met, he welcomed and he left.' and 'freedom of speech' is directly related to the source of funding. Education, health, roads, environment and electricity are in peril and we are engulfed in sewage. But the media does not care. The media is prospering through the tabloids, the talk shows and the mediocre and obscene programs. Has a media outlet ever dared to criticize a bank, or a banking regulatory agency? Will media outlets ever be able to survive without internal or external political funding?

The problem is that the so-called opinion-makers are themselves the product of power and money. Media outlets (television, radio and press) do not declare their budgets, as stated by the law, and when they do, one needs a savant to read and understand them. In any case, these outlets have been declaring losses for decades, which makes one wonder how they sustain themselves. Are they self-financed? If yes, then how? Are they financed by Arab and foreign countries? If yes, then by how much, by which countries, and what does the law say about that?

This is a society of bribery, where free thought and justice have no place. Where were the men and women of the media when their former editor-in-chief Onssi Al Hajj was dismissed? And why did some of them 'gang up' against him? Where were they the day the assets and rights of Channel 11 (Television du Liban et de l'Orient) in Hazmiyeh were seized by the militia of LBC's founders when they wanted it to become the voice of 'the Christian community'?

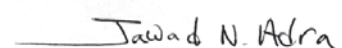
In principle, they then support such an approach, and should have known that 'what goes around comes around'. Prominent journalists, drowning in their own narcissism, failed to remember their lesser-known coworkers, who do not have a byline.

Those who wish to discuss the media in Lebanon must first start with stating the source of funding of their own media outlets. If you are ashamed of the identity of the funders and the ways of funding, or if you are incapable of being financially solvent, then why don't you just remain silent?

Prophet Mohammad said: "Let the seat of he who intentionally lies to me burst into flames." If we are to apply the law, then all newspapers and televisions will be shut down.

This issue is not about civil liberties or individual rights nor is it about being a rightist, a leftist, a Lebanese, an Iranian or an Arab. It is about doing one's job with quality and about being objective and professional instead of spreading banalities and hatred. This cannot be attained if you are totally dependant on political funding. The financier of a media outlet's owner knows he is bribing both the outlet and the publisher. For his part, the publisher considers that the salaries he pays as bribes while journalists know that their salaries are paid in the sweat of the deprived, the blood of the innocent and the humiliation of having a master. "If you have no shame, then do whatever you please." What's important is that millions were paid before the parliamentary elections, and the payers are suffering from withdrawal. The corrupt is not an opinion-maker and definitely not a nation-builder.

This is what Booz Allen's reports failed to mention about An-Nahar and LBC let alone the media as a whole in Lebanon.

Jawad N. Adra