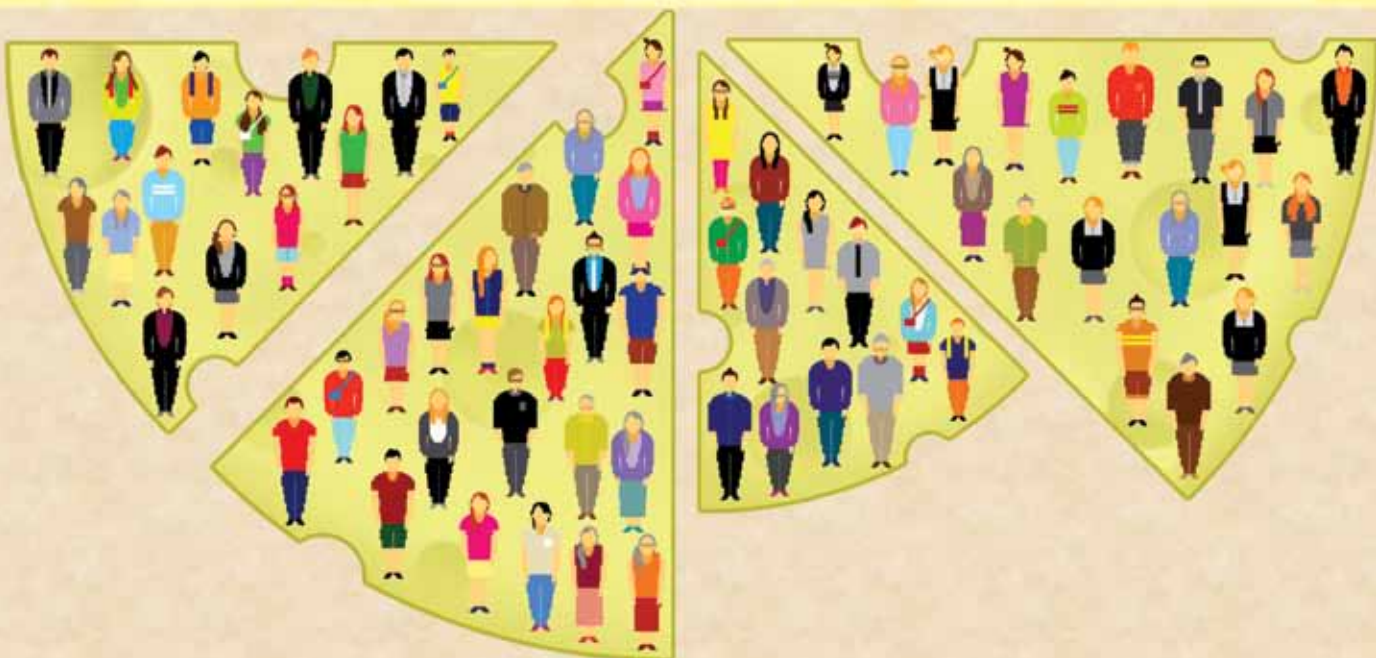


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REQUIEM FOR A COUNTRY!

They are passing away. They may have passed away a long time ago and some of us may have passed away with them. The manifestations of grief for their loss add nothing but further validity to the pathetic triviality of our regrets and sorrows.

Sabah, the queen of not only the *ataba* and *mijana* but of the hearts of thousands in the Arab World, passed away silently in a small room in a modest hotel without the fanfare and the buzz of her heydays; **Said Akl**, a poet who adapted Arabic language and knew how to caress the Arabic word and elevate it to heights of an eagle threw, after his demise, bereft souls into competition for who could grieve the hardest and praise the best; as if our grief machine goes into overdrive out of guilt for not acknowledging the deceased during their lifetime. Thus, we exalt them to unimaginable ranks and bestow godlike status on them in a spurious display of loyalty after they die. **Nassri Chamseddine** perished alone in his father's house in Joun lacking the warmth of both a loving hand and a heated room; **Zaki Nassif** used to sip coffee solitarily at the City Café before he and the Café after him retreated into the grave; **Wadeeh Safi** had to remind people that he existed; **George Jurdaq**, does even his name ring a bell? Does anyone know or recall him? Is there still room in the collective memory for **Philemon Wehbi** and **Shoushou**? The death of **Assi Rahbani** in 1986 marked the end of an era of cultural and artistic production and gloom pervaded the remaining bright spots with the passing of **Onsi Al-Haj** in 2014. 'He who does not deal with a corrupt society corruptly is seen by others as a carrier of plaque and by himself as a moron. Is adapting oneself to vice a talent? No, it is hereditary. Some brains were impaired; some deviated; some exploded and some suffocated from the scene,' said Al-Haj before he died. **Abou Salim** (Salah Tanzani) was not in the wrong when he said such days should be declared official days of mourning. He perhaps did not know that, in this land, only sectarian *zua'ama* are held in reverence. We are programmed to honor and lament our butchers.

The demise of Sabah has prompted the government to finally announce healthcare for artists but it remains to be seen whether the Lebanese citizens will ever be treated in the same manner. Why do we not remember or dignify them except posthumously? Why do we gab and blab about our love and longing for them but never, even once, condescend to visit them during their lifetime?

Hassan Ismail, a Communist who fought Israel, committed suicide in December 2014. Does his party truly commemorate his loss? Does anyone know him?

We are trivial souls. Pompous and verbose speakers untrained to recognize or appreciate the pillars of our art and thought and industry. We are a nation of non-readers and had it not been for Fairouz and Assi Rahbani, the works of Said Akl would have remained unknown. We

know not how to love each other. This is why they had isolated themselves and faded away silently. They had made their final exit from us long ago and after them, we can only bid adieu to the golden years of our once-beautiful country.

They outgrew this land. Graceful words, soft melodies, fine poetry and beautiful dreams have also outgrown this land.

Who among us does not remember Kahlil Hawi's verses:

*"They cross the bridge at dawn, light-footed
my ribs stretched out for them as a sturdy bridge,"*

Did he not also cross and commit suicide when Israel occupied Beirut? Do our children realize that this eminent poet killed himself for he could not stand the fall of his beloved city in the hands of Sharon.

"You closed your eyes to ashes, you closed your eyes to gloom"

Let this petty folklore of fake grief stop! We packed up and left this land long before Sabah was gone! This is a requiem for our country.

—Tawad N. Adra

Sabah (1927-2014), Lebanon's first and foremost singer and actress, died after sharing her life-long joy with generations of nations. In Arabic, Sabah means morning and she was, indeed, the Arab's Good-Morning who, like Tennyson's Ulysses, could not rest from travel and drank life to the lees.

When Morning Died

*When Morning rose to wake the Arab eyes
From long colonial sleep, tears turned to smiles
And country song-and-dance redeemed the skies
And dabki arms, entwined, stretched out for miles.*

*When with blithe voice, Sabah, our Morning, sang
The crescents flickered and the church bells rang
And music fluttered far with wings of light
Stretching the festive eves into the night.*

*When Morning died, the sunrise wore a shroud
And tears washed off the smiles in every crowd
And country music scurried home to mourn
Because its flapping wings of light were shorn.*

*Four score and more, the Arab's Morning shone
Now that she's gone, the sun is all alone.*

Hanna Saadah

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS

SLICING THE CAKE

The Ministry of Social Affairs was established pursuant to Law no. 212 dated April 2, 1993. Its functions are defined as follows:

- To devise a national social development plan and to monitor its implementation (unfulfilled to date).
- To carry out the social projects undertaken solely by the state (these projects are very limited and still far from achieving their goals).
- To care for the disabled and attend to the entities concerned with disabilities (partly fulfilled).
- To monitor population movements, understand their causes, organize the efforts of the state and coordinate with the civil society in this regard (unfulfilled).
- To care for family affairs (unfulfilled).

The Ministry is in charge of implementing matters that are herculean and involve the diverse functions of the Ministry, which seem beyond its capability. As a matter of fact, the centers of the Ministry and the non-governmental organizations it enters into contract with serve as its main operational arm. In many areas, these centers and NGOs often undertake the same duties performed by the Ministry, which results in excessive public spending by two different parties to the same end.

Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs

The social service centers work towards achieving the objectives set by the Ministry of Social Affairs. These centers are in total 87 and have 94 branches distributed by Qada'a as follows:

- **Beirut:** 4 medical service centers
- **Matn:** 5 medical service centers
- **Baabda:** 5 medical service centers, each including a kids' club and a nursery
- **Aley:** 3 medical service centers
- **El-Shouf:** 8 medical service centers, 2 of which host a kids' club and a nursery each
- **Kessrouan:** 4 medical service centers, 3 of which host a kids' club and a nursery each
- **Jbeil:** 3 medical service centers, 1 of which hosts a nursery

Centers in Mount Lebanon thus amount to 28 in total with 12 branches.

- **Zahle:** 1 medical service center
- **Baalbeck:** 7 medical service centers, 2 of which host a nursery each
- **Hermel:** 2 medical service centers
- **Western Beqa'a:** 2 medical service centers, 1 of them including a nursery
- **Rashaya:** 1 medical service center

Centers in Beqa'a thus amount to 13 in total with 13 branches.

- **Tripoli:** 3 medical service centers, each including a nursery
- **Akkar:** 5 medical service centers, 3 of which includes a nursery each
- **Zgharta:** 2 medical service centers, 1 of which includes a nursery
- **Batroun:** 2 medical service centers
- **Koura:** 1 medical service center
- **Bsharri:** 1 medical service center including a nursery
- **Mennieh-Dennieh:** 3 medical service centers, 1 of which includes a nursery

Centers in the North thus amount to 17 in total with 15 branches.

- **Saida:** 1 medical service center
- **Zahrani:** 3 medical service centers, 2 of which includes a nursery each
- **Jezzine:** 2 medical service centers
- **Tyre:** 5 medical service centers

Centers in the South thus amount to 11 in total with 27 branches.

- **Bint Jbeil:** 3 medical service centers, each including a nursery
- **Nabatieh:** 5 medical service centers, 4 of which includes a nursery each
- **Hasbaya:** 2 medical service centers, 2 of which includes a kids club
- **Marjeyoun:** 4 medical service centers, 1 of which includes a nursery

Centers in Nabatieh thus amount to 14 in total with 27 branches.

NGOs

The Ministry of Social Affairs enters into contracts with a significant number of non-governmental organizations for the purpose of executing joint projects in the fields of social development or healthcare (for example, establishing a dispensary, launching vaccination campaigns, etc.). These projects are partly funded by the Ministry.

The NGOs under contract with the Ministry are in total 250 and are distributed as illustrated in Table 1. However, the main problem is that most of these joint-projects are elusive and non-existent except on paper. While the Ministry undertakes the payment of salaries as well as part of the project's expenses, the contracted NGO assigns its staff other duties in separate independent projects that are often at the service of the political or religious authority to which it belongs (see Table 2). This shows the futility of the social and development ventures of such NGOs, not to mention that the projects are clearly lacking in remote and underprivileged areas such as Hermel, Akkar, Rashaya, Bsharri and Hasbayya.

NGOs engaged in joint projects with the Ministry of Social Affairs by Qada'a and project type										Table 1
Qada'a	# of NGOs	Social service center	Medical center, a nursery and a club for the elderly	Training and rehabilitation	Socio-medical center	Library/ Center for the visually impaired	Family planning center	Daycare center	Center for the disabled	Center for documentation and studies
Beirut	23	1	1	1	9	1	1	4	3	2
Matn	15	1	1	1	8	1	-	1	2	-
Baabda	21	3	1	1	12	-	-	4	-	-
Aley	15	1	-	-	11	-	-	2	1	-
El-Shouf	16	-	-	-	14	-	-	1	1	-
Kessrouan	13	-	1	-	11	-	-	1	-	-
Jbeil	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
Mount Lebanon	84	5	3	2	60	1	-	9	4	-
Zahle	8	-	-	-	6	-	-	2	-	-
Baalbeck	18	-	-	1	17	-	-	-	-	-
Hermel	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Western Beqa'a	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
Rashaya	4	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	1	-
Beqa'a	33	-	-	1	28	-	-	2	2	-

NGOs engaged in joint projects with the Ministry of Social Affairs by Qada'a and project type										Table 1
Qada'a	# of NGOs	Social service center	Medical center, a nursery and a club for the elderly	Training and rehabilitation	Socio-medical center	Library/ Center for the visually impaired	Family planning center	Daycare center	Center for the disabled	Center for documentation and studies
Tripoli	18	6	-	-	7	-	-	3	2	-
Akkar	7	1	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-
Zgharta	10	1	1	1	6	-	-	-	1	-
Batroun	6	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-
Koura	8	1	-	1	6	-	-	-	-	-
Bsharri	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mennieh-Dennieh	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
North	53	9	1	2	35	-	-	3	3	-
Saida	10	1	1	1	2	-	-	4	1	-
Zahrani	10	1	-	-	6	-	-	2	1	-
Jezzine	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Tyre	15	3	-	-	11	-	-	1	-	-
South	38	5	1	1	22	-	-	7	2	-
Nabatieh	10	2	2	-	3	1	-	2	-	-
Bint Jbeil	5	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
Marjeyoun	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Hasbaya	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Nabatieh	19	2	3	-	11	1	-	2	-	-
Total	250	22	9	7	165	3	1	27	14	2



Sectarian Distribution

At the sectarian level, these NGOs are distributed as shown in Table 2. Of these, the largest number belongs to the Maronite community, followed by the Shia'a.

Distribution of contracted NGOs by religious denomination		Table 2
Sect	# of NGOs	
Maronite	38	
Shia'a	32	
Sunni	9	
Druze	6	
Catholics	8	
Armenian	3	
Orthodox	5	

There remain 149 civil associations that are not fully affiliated with any religious and sectarian authorities despite the sectarian alignments of some of their members.

Institutions under Contract with the Ministry of Social Affairs

The Ministry of Social Affairs has agreements with 185 charities, almost all of which report to religious entities. These charities care for the orphans and the sick.

- Beirut: 23
- Mount Lebanon: 78
- North: 33
- Beqa'a: 23

- South: 18
- Nabatieh: 10

Cost

According to the 2012 draft budget law, the expenditures of the Ministry of Social Affairs stood at roughly LBP 200.3 billion, allocated as follows:

- LBP 145 billion for 185 charities contracted by the Ministry to teach and train orphans and children with special needs and to shelter and care for the elderly.
- LBP 9 billion for joint projects with 250 NGOs.
- LBP 19 billion for the Ministry's social service centers and their branches, which total 181.

Spending these substantial amounts of money is not translated into equally tangible improvements, which implies either a squandering or a mismanagement of funds. While the majority of allocations are being channeled to areas with no pressing needs, the underprivileged towns wallowing in abject poverty attract little, if any, attention, which attests, once again, that both the distribution of centers and contracting of NGOs are governed by political and sectarian considerations rather than by actual needs of the people.

N.B: This was the reality of the associations under contract with the Ministry and the joint projects in 2012. In what follows, we shed light on the contributions that the ministry allocated to NGOs in 2014. ●●

LBP 140 BILLION FROM THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS TO ASSOCIATIONS AT THE SERVICE OF SECTS

The deficit in Lebanon's public finances is getting higher by the year as public spending- most of which is futile in any case- continues to exceed public revenue. This critical financial situation is evidenced by the figures released by the Ministry of Finance, even in the absence of a public budget or a final account statement (no public budget has been approved since 2006 nor has a final account statement issued since 2004.) In 2013, the budget deficit stood at roughly LBP 6400 billion.

Despite this large deficit, which renders the state incapable of assuming its responsibilities and stops its realization of the projects and activities expected of it, the state continues to finance a large number of non-governmental organizations associated with certain sects and politicians to facilitate, in turn, their provision of healthcare and social services, which, in principle, are at the very core of the state's mission. Some of these NGOs substitute for the absence of the state in certain areas and offer useful assistance, appreciated both by their beneficiaries and followers. Others, usually constituting the larger portion, however, invest the public funds allocated to them in either personal or delusional projects in favor of persons within their close circles.

Spending on NGOs

The largest amount of government spending on NGOs is provided through the Ministry of Social Affairs, which uses two mechanisms for spending:

- Assigning allocations
- Signing joint agreements with NGOs, according to which the latter undertakes certain activities (for example, establishing a dispensary or a nursery, etc.). Theoretically, expenses are to be divided between the ministry and the association in question. But scratching beneath the surface shows that although primary spending is handled by the state, most of the beneficiaries pledge gratitude to the association or the sects or the authorities giving out the funding, mistaking one of the above as the primary provider of funds.

Most striking is that the substantial deficit in public budget did not prompt a reconsideration of the spending policy for NGOs. Ironically, spending is still in full swing and is unlikely to be frozen or scaled down amidst the current sectarian, regional and political quotas governing the state's policies, to the detriment of the general concept of the state itself.

According to the contracts signed between the Ministry of Social Affairs and NGOs, allocations worth roughly LBP 140 billion were assigned to 366 associations serving close to 40,000 citizens.

1- Agreements with associations caring for the disabled

The ministry has agreements with 94 associations concerned with the care, education and rehabilitation of people with disabilities. The beneficiaries from the services of these associations total 8340 and are distributed as follows:

- 5787 members in educational programs
- 2417 members in training programs
- 136 members in technical education programs

Over the course of 365 days, the Ministry covers each beneficiary by paying the association a daily allocation that varies depending on the disability of each member.

Disability	Ministry's daily allocation per member (Inpatient services)	Ministry's daily allocation per member (Outpatient services)
Deafness	36,000	19,500
Mild/moderate mental retardation	35,000	19,000
Severe mental retardation	37,500	20,250

Disability	Ministry's daily allocation per member (Inpatient services)	Ministry's daily allocation per member (Outpatient services)
Mild autism	35,000	19,000
Severe autism	-	24,500
Learning disabilities	-	18,000
Physical disabilities	33,000	17,500
Cerebral palsy	39,250	21,500
Multiple disabilities	37,500	20,250
Care and rehabilitation	46,440	
Blindness	36,250	20,250

It is noteworthy that 5 associations out of 94 caring for the disabled snatched up 36.8% of the total LBP 65 billion offered by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The share of each of them exceeded LBP 2 billion with the Kafaat topping the list at LBP 10 billion.

Associations for the disabled engaged in contracts with the Ministry of Social Affairs		Table 1
Association	Contribution of the Ministry of Social Affairs (LBP million)	
Al-Kafaat Foundation	10,131	
Al-Mabarrat Charity Association	4,103	
Intellectual development association	3,864	
Moujama'a Dawha	3,58	
Islamic Youth Association	2,526	
Az-Zawraq	1,724	
Shamlan Center	1,644	
Sesobel	1,584	
The Lebanese Society for the Blind and the Deaf	1,421	
First Step Together Association (FISTA)- Tripoli	1,187	
Orphan Welfare Society	1,177	
ICEC - Islamic Charity Emdad Committee- Baalbeck	1,053	
First Step Together Association (FISTA)- Beirut	1,007	
Lebanese Welfare Association for the Handicapped	1,002	
First Step Together Association (FISTA)	947	
Ray of Hope	944	
Father Roberts Institute for Deaf Youth	798	
ICEC - Islamic Charity Emdad Committee- Nabatieh	772	
Lebanese Association for Rural Development	764	
Caritas Liban- Zahle	739	
Welfare of Children with Special Needs	732	
Oasis of Joy	731	
Al-Mona Al-Takhassosiya	688	
Friends of the Disabled Association: FDA	688	
The Father Andeweg Institute for the Deaf	667	
Irap	625	
ICEC - Islamic Charity Emdad Committee- Zqaq Blat	585	
National Center for Development and Rehabilitation	572	
Days of Hope	560	
Tamkin Association	558	

Associations for the disabled engaged in contracts with the Ministry of Social Affairs		Table 1
Association	Contribution of the Ministry of Social Affairs (LBP million)	
Evangelical Association	548	
Bhannes medical center	546	
Eqlim Al-Kharroub Association	529	
Avance Association- Furn el-Chebbak	527	
Saint Luke Center	515	
Caritas Liban- Fghal	513	
l'Association du foyer de l'enfant libanais (AFEL)	511	
ACSAUVEL	493	
The Collège des Frères	478	
Friends when Needed	461	
Ras Nabe'e	460	
Lebanese Association for Special Education	443	
Akkar Complex for Care and Development	437	
Al-Hanan	430	
AIWM - Al Insan Wal Mostakbal	425	
Risalat Salam	418	
Al-Mabarrat Charity Association- Al-Imam al-Khawi	416	
Al-Inaya	412	
Baalbeck Complex for Care and Development	404	
Lana al Mostakbal Association	403	
Oum El Nour	396	
Wadi Zineh	389	
Al-Yonbou'	388	
Avance Association- Aley	383	
Imam Sadr Foundation	381	
Renaissance and Justice Association	374	
Mohammad Khaled Association	370	
Al-Karma	347	
Social Welfare Institutions (SWI)Dar Al-Aytam Al-Islamiya	332	
Arc en Ciel - Beirut	326	
Islamic Women's Association	282	
ICEC - Islamic Charity Emdad Committee- Hermel	279	
Lebanese Association for the Handicapped and the Sick	257	
Al-Mona Al-Takhassosiya, Bshamoun	255	
TA'HIL - Lebanese Association for Rehabilitation and Development	254	
Forum of the Handicapped, North Lebanon	248	
Solidarity and Development	244	
Home of Lady of Tenderness Association	243	
Arc en Ciel- Teenayel	238	
Education for the Deaf	231	
Al-Midan	187	
Haramoun Association for the Blind- Rashaya	183	
Armenian sect association	174	
La Verna	173	

Associations for the disabled engaged in contracts with the Ministry of Social Affairs**Table 1**

Association	Contribution of the Ministry of Social Affairs (LBP million)
Hasbaya Complex for Care and Development	167
Thimarouna Association (Qernayel)	162
Sisters of the Cross Association-	137
Al Foulouk	133
ICEC - Islamic Charity Emdad Committee- Bint Jbeil	132
Skill Development Association	125
Vision Association for Development, Rehabilitation and Care	121
Lebanese Autism Society	120
Dennieh Complex for Care and Development	111
Haramoun Association for the Blind- Zahle	111
Al-Mouroua Association	103
Baytouna al Jadid Association	99
Ciel	97
Koloob Min Noor Association	67
School of Cadmus	66
Al-Nibras Complex for Care and Development	62
Al-Amal Institute for the Disabled	56
Sayida Zeinab Welfare Association	53
Lebanese College for the Handicapped	41
Bishop Philippe Shebaya Foundation	35
Total	LBP 65.6 billion

Source: Cabinet session proceedings on March 27, 2014

2- Ministry's contribution to social welfare

The Ministry of Social Affairs has agreements with 165 social welfare associations concerned with sheltering, educating and caring for the poor and the downtrodden. These agreements are worth roughly LBP 63.5 billion and benefit 30,205 members distributed as follows:

- Education (inpatient programs): 13,259 members
- Vocational education (inpatient programs): 2,968 members
- Vocational training (inpatient programs): 1,220 members
- Vocational education (outpatient programs): 9,266 members
- Vocational training (outpatient programs): 1,794 members
- Infants: 797 members
- Elderly people: 901 members

The following are the daily allocations assigned per member over the course of 365 days:

- Regular social welfare: LBP 6,250
- Vocational education (inpatient services): LBP 5,750
- Vocational education (outpatient services): LBP 3,750
- Vocational training (inpatient services): LBP 4,750
- Vocational training (outpatient services): LBP 2,750
- Infants: LBP 16,000
- Elderly people: LBP 17,500

3- Joint agreements with NGOs

The Ministry of Social Affairs signs agreements with roughly 85 associations- both civil and religious- worth close to LBP 3.9 billion annually as illustrated in Table 2. The number of agreements varies from year to year but remains within this range, noting that the majority of such agreements are virtual contacts offering no tangible projects.

NGOs contracted with the Ministry			Table 2
NGO	Nature of activity	Place of activity	Ministry's contribution (LBP million)
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Koura	Social Health Centers	Koura	155
Women's Advancement Association	Daycare Nursery and Club for the Elderly	Nabatieh	152
Social Development Charity Association	Social Health Center and Daycare Nursery	Tripoli	150
The Social Medical Center Association	Social Health Center and Daycare Nursery	Wadi el-Arayesh, Zahle	140
Auditory and Articulation Training Foundation	Social Health Center and Daycare Nursery	Biaqout	130
Al Ru'ya Association for Development and Rehabilitation	Social Health Center and Services for the Disabled and the Elderly	Beirut, Aley, Dahr el-Ahmar- Ghazza- Hasbaya	112
Jabal Amel's Women Association	Social Health Center	Tair Filsay	99
The Social Solidarity Society	Social Services Center and Atelier	Tripoli	96
National Committee for Popular Action	Social and Health Services Center	Hay Selloum, Shmostar (Kham)	90
Al-She'ela Foundation	Social Health Center	Ain Kfarzabad	90
Young Women's Christian Association	Daycare Nursery	Hadath	87
Human Development Movement	Social Health Center	Halta, Shekka	84
Al-She'ela Foundation	Daycare Nursery	Burj Hamoud	80
The Social, Medical and Cultural Ettihad Club	Social Health Center and Daycare Nursery	Harat Al-Neemeh	78
Family Planning Foundation	Family Planning Center	Beirut	78
Women's Advancement Gathering	Daycare Nursery	Ouzai	74
Childhood and Motherhood Welfare Society	Daycare Nursery	Saida	70
Maronite Charity Foundation- Saint John Branch, Ashrafieh	Social Health Center	Ashrafieh	70
Social Aids Foundation	Daycare Nursery and Club for the Elderly	Zgharta Zawayeh	70
Al-Rabita Charity Foundation	Social Health Center	Ain Zhalta	69
Choeifat Women's League	Social Health Center	Choueifat	68
The Social Cooperation Society	Daycare Nursery	Tripoli	64
Jounieh's Maronite Archdiocese- Aramoun	Social Health Center	Aramoun	60
Lebanese Child Welfare Association- Niha	Social Health Center	Niha, El-Shouf	60
The Social and Cultural Association- Qmatiyyeh	Social Health Center and Daycare Nursery	Qmatiyyeh	60
The Club for Culture, Philanthropy and Sports	Social Health Center and Daycare Nursery	Harf Ardeh	60
Women's Committee for the Development of Kfarnabrakh	Social Health Center	Kfarnabrakh	57
Al Berr & Al Ihsan Association for the Development of Jba'a	Social Health Center and Daycare Nursery	Jba'a	50
The Lebanese Maronite Order- Machmouche	Social Health Center	Masmouche	49
Women's Charity Foundation- Semqanieh	Social Health Center	Semqanieh	46
The Association of the Children's Library -Saida	Daycare Nursery	Saida	45

NGOs contracted with the Ministry

Table 2

NGO	Nature of activity	Place of activity	Ministry's contribution (LBP million)
Al-Rawda Women's League	Social Health Center	Rawda	40
The Culture and Sports Association	Social Health Center	Rmeileh	40
Beirut's Archdiocese for the Greek Catholics	Social Health Centers	Kafr Aqab	40
The Social Cultural Club- Hafath	Social Health Center	Hadath	40
Basilian Salvatorian Order	Social Health Center	Salihya , Saida	40
Al Imam Al Hussein Islamic Medical Association	Social Health Center	Ouzai	38
Awareness and Philanthropy Association	Social Health Center	Mennieh	36
Armenian Catholic Charitable Association	Social Health Center	Burj Hamoud	35
The Druze Charity Association of Maaser El-Shouf	Social Health Center	Maaser El-Shouf	35
Imam As-Sadr Foundation	Daycare Nursery	Tyre	35
Imam As-Sadr Associations	Social Health Center	Seddiqin	35
Al-Kfour's Charity League	Social Health Center	Kfour	35
Jounieh's Maronite Archdiocese- Hrajel	Social Health Center	Hrajel	33
The South Lebanese Society for the Blind	Center for the Blind	Nabatieh	32.5
Beirut's Maronite Archdiocese- Shartoun	Social Health Center	Shartoun	32
Young Muslim Women's Association- Ouzai	Daycare Nursery	Ouzai	31.5
Popular Aid Committee	Social Health Center	Tlayl, Akkar	30
Artisanat du Liban Sud	Craftwork Center	Saida	30
Al-Mahabba Charity Foundation	Social Services Center	Mqaitaa, Akkar	30
Ras El-Matn Women's Association	Social Health Center	Ras Matn	29
Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Very Holy Sacrament	Social Health Center	Beit Hbaq	29
Lebanese Child Welfare Association- Barouk	Social Health Center	Barouk	29
The Lebanese Maronite Order- Baskinta	Social Health Center	Baskinta	29
Basma Medical Association	Social Health Center	Mejdlaya- Nemrin (Mennieh)	28
Jounieh's Maronite Archdiocese	Social Health Center	Ghosta	27
Al-Maysaa Charity	Social Health Center	Mesherfeh, Aley	25
Maronite Lebanese Nuns	Social Health Center	Jrebta	25
Student Club, Zgharta	Youth Club	Zgharta	23
Women's Charity Association	Social Health Center	Ain w Zain	22
Hram Club	Social Services Center	Hanaway	21
The Social and Cultural Charity Club	Social Health Center	Khraybe, El-Shouf	20
Ain Ounoub's Women's League	Social Health Center	Ain Onoub	19

NGOs contracted with the Ministry			Table 2
NGO	Nature of activity	Place of activity	Ministry's contribution (LBP million)
The Saint Georgios Waqf in Mahmerch-Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Jbeil and Batroun	Social Health Center	Mahmerch, Batroun	18.5
The Cooperation, Development and Health Association	Social Health Center	Tripoli	18
The Cultural, Social and Sport Club	Social Health Center	Jdaideh, Akkar	18
Dr. Taher's Charity Foundation	Social Health Center	Hula	17
Rehabilitation Foundation	Social Health Center and Club for the Elderly	Ain Horshe, Rashaya	17
Akkar's Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and its subsidies- Saint Paul's Center for Comprehensive Services.	Social Health Center	Sheikh Taba, Akkar	17
Dispensary of the Armenian Educational Charity	Social Health Center	Beirut	16.5
Social Awareness Movement	Social Health Center	Ardeh, Zgharta	16
Mar Mikhael Social Foundation	Health Center and Club for the Elderly	Shaileh	15
Tyre's Maronite Archdiocese	Social Health Center	Ain Ebel	13
Imam As-Sadr Associations- Derdghaya	Imam As-Sadr Association	Derdghaya	13
The Council of Lebanese Women	Research and Documentation Center on Women	Beirut	11
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese	Social Health Center	Qebbeh, Tripoli	10
The Cooperative for the Manufacturing and Packaging of Agricultural Products	Social Services Center- Manufacturing and Marketing of Agricultural Products	Kfardebian	10
Women's Cooperative for Food Processing in Wadi Al-Taym	Social Services Center	Rashaya al-Wadi	10
Cooperative for Agricultural Mechanization and Rural development	Social Services Center	Hadoun, Batroun	9
Catholic Diocese of Sarba	Club for the Elderly	Sarba	8
Aramoun's Youth Charity Association	Health and Social Services' Center	Furn el-Chebbak	8
Association for Motherhood & Childhood	Social Services Center	Haret Hreik	8
Women's Association for Social Solidarity	Social Services Center	Haret Hreik	8
Al-Boushra Charity Association	Social Services Center and Daycare Nursery	Hermel	8
Al-Moushama & Al-Ata'a	Social Services Center	Shmostar	8
The Call of Society Association	Daycare Nursery and Club for the Elderly	Kfardebian	-

Source: Cabinet session proceedings on March 27, 2014

4- Agreements with institutions caring for social hardship cases

The Ministry of Social Affairs is also committed to contracts with 11 institutions caring for difficult social cases among segments of population deemed at a risk of deviation. 567 people benefit from the services of these institutions and the Ministry's contribution goes up to LBP 1 billion as illustrated in Table 3.

Over the course of 365 days, the Ministry pays the following daily allocations per beneficiary:

- Outpatient drug addicts: LBP 12,000
- Inpatient drug addicts: LBP 23,000
- AIDS patients: LBP 9000
- Abused women and females at risk of delinquency (inpatient services): LBP 22,000
- Infants (inpatient services): LBP 13,000
- Juveniles at risk (inpatient services): LBP 22,000
- Elderly, adults and homeless persons (inpatient services): LBP 14,000

Institutions offering care for social hardship cases		Table 2
Name	Ministry's assistance (LBP million)	
Risalat Al-Miyah	517	
Oum El-Nour	469	
The Community of Maryam and Martha	342	
Sisters of the Good Shepherd- Ain Saadeh	304	
Nusroto Association	294	
Saadat al-Samaa	294	
Anwar al-Mahabba	267	
Jeunesse Contre la Drogue	252	
Elliyat Nour	187	
Al-Mabarrat Charity Association	160	
Adl wa Rahmah	113	
Total	LBP 3.2 billion	

Source: Cabinet session proceedings on March 27, 2014

5- Agreements with Juvenile Welfare Centers

The Ministry has signed agreements aimed at caring for juveniles deemed to be at risk with 11 associations assisting 634 juveniles. The worth of these agreements stood at LBP 2.6 billion as illustrated in Table 4, the Ministry's daily assistance being LBP 22,000 for inpatient care and LBP 6,384 for outpatient care.

Agreements with juvenile welfare associations			Table 3
Name	Address	No. of beneficiaries	Ministry's assistance
Nader Association for Special Social Services	Berbara	70	562
Evangelical association of Lebanon- Bayt al-Rajaa	Kehhaleh	70	562
Al-Mabarrat Charity Association	Doha Aramoun	50	402
Sisters of the Good Shepherd- Shayleh	Shaileh	35	281
Main dans la main pour l'homme de demain	Tripoli	94	187
Dar Al-Amal	Burj Hammoud	60	119
Friends of the Family Association	Sin el-Fil	60	119
Sisters of the Good Shepherd- Rouwaisat Jdeideh	Rouwaisat Jdeideh	60	119
Social Movement	Badaro	52	103
Father Afif Ousseiran's Foundation	Fanar	52	103
Reciprocal Faith Foundation- Nabee Al-Hayat Center	Burj Hammoud	31	61.6
Total	11	634	LBP 2.6 billion

Source: Cabinet session proceedings on March 23, 2014

While some, in particular the heads of these NGOs, may claim that the assistance delivered by the Ministry can only cover a minor portion of the costs they shoulder, their statement seems inaccurate especially that they're receiving uninterrupted aid over the course of 365 days for those beneficiaries who do not benefit from the services over this entire period. Also large numbers, particularly those in inpatient facilities, spend different periods of the year with their parents and families especially during holidays and vacations. Thus, the burden placed on NGOs is mitigated by putting them in a position where they can make profits rather than be in deficit, not forgetting the donations they obtain from the public sector. Why does the state not minimize these expenses or at least manage the distribution of funds properly so as to stop squandering and make its contribution commensurate with the services provided? ●●

EMIGRATION OF THE LEBANESE: PERPETUAL DRAIN

25% OF THE LEBANESE EMIGRATED

25% ARE AWAITING THEIR VISAS

174,000 LEFT THE COUNTRY OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS

From the First World War to Israel's wars on Lebanon to the assassination of PM Rafik Hariri and the 33 subsequent bombings between February 2005 and July 2014, Lebanon has suffered severe security and economic crises that have contributed to and even caused a rise in the emigration of its citizens. This has been exacerbated by never-ending perturbations and protests, let alone the drastic increase in public debt from USD 2.8 billion in 1993 to USD 65.6 billion in July 2014 and the absence of a public budget since 2005. Paradoxically, the profits of Lebanese banks increased from USD 150 million to USD 1.6 billion in 2013.

This begs the question of what the state of the Lebanese is in sectors such as health, education and the provision of services and directs attention towards major issues including job opportunities, unemployment rates and emigration, the subject of our study.

A higher rate of emigration was recorded during both the First World War in 1914 and the Civil War in 1975. The return of peace and stability, in particular starting in 1993, slowed down rates of emigration but there has been a marked increase in emigration during the past three years as we will demonstrate below.

Number of registered Lebanese: 5.2 million

Until the end of 2014, the number of the registered Lebanese i.e. the citizens holding the Lebanese nationality whether they lived in Lebanon or abroad, stood at 5,227,000. Over the past ten years, the Lebanese population has increased by an annual average of 73,000, equivalent to 1.4% yearly.

Number of residents: 3.9 million

Lebanon lacks accurate data on the number of the Lebanese nationals living in the country. Estimates suggest that there are roughly 3.9 million Lebanese residents, accounting for 74.6% of the holders of the Lebanese nationality.

Number of Lebanese residing abroad: 1.3 million

Based on the number of the Lebanese nationals and that of the Lebanese residents, we infer that the holders of Lebanese nationality living abroad total roughly 1.327

million, accounting for 25.4% of the registered Lebanese. More than one quarter of the Lebanese are staying overseas either as permanent or temporary residents. Thus, all talk about the tens of millions of emigrants dispersed abroad, particularly in South America, are therefore far from true. Those tens of millions may be of Lebanese origins but they have not acquired the Lebanese nationality because their ancestors emigrated from Lebanon hundreds of years ago and cut off contact with their home country.

Number of travelers

The passenger traffic recorded at the Rafic Hariri International Airport is the most accurate criterion in monitoring the travel activity and movements of the Lebanese, for travel via Syria is not reflective of the reality of departures and arrivals. According to the activity at the airport, the travel patterns of the Lebanese have seen a significant rise over the past three years as illustrated in Table 1. From 1992 to September 2014, the number of Lebanese who departed totaled 508,407, accounting for 38% of the Lebanese emigrants abroad. While a decline in emigration was evident between 1994 and 2010 compared to the post-war period (1992-1993), this phenomenon began to pick up momentum over the past three years (2011-2013) with 174,704 Lebanese leaving the country during this period, i.e. an annual average of 58,234 Lebanese, up from 14,560 between 1995 and 2010, meaning an alarming increase by 43,674 Lebanese or 300%.

Emigration/travel from Lebanon
between 1992 and September 2014

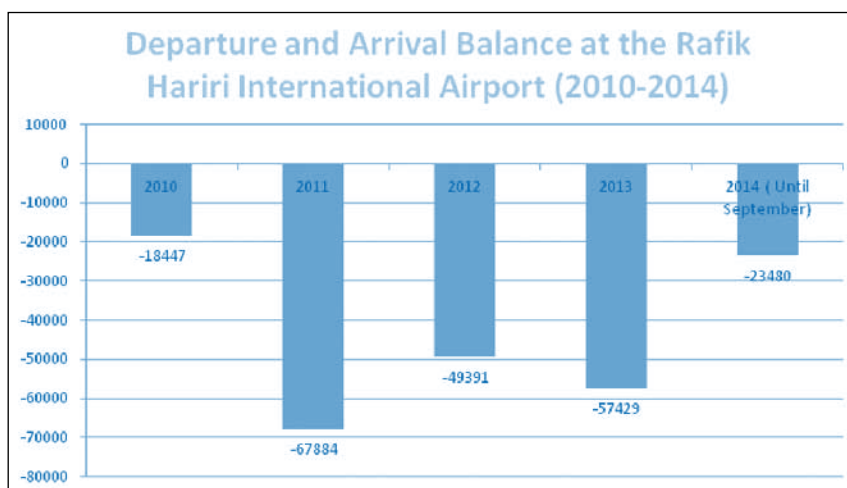
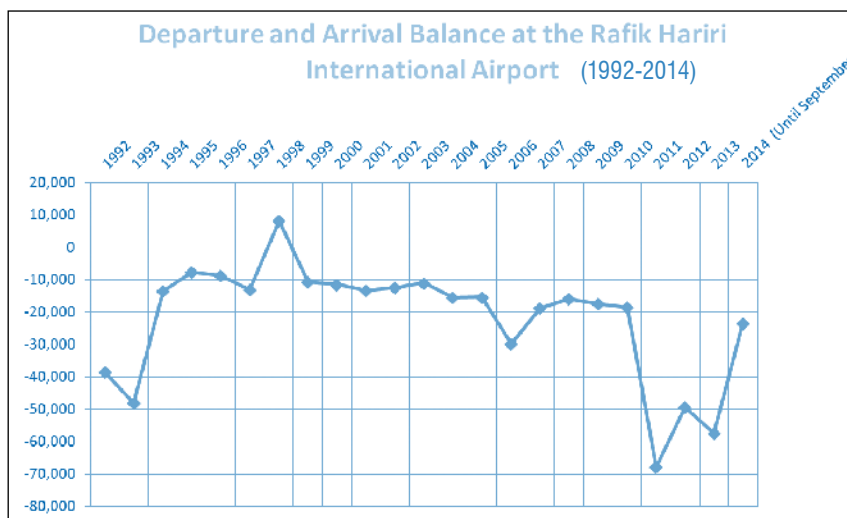
Table 1

Year	Departure and Arrival Balance at the Rafik Hariri International Airport
1992	-38,445
1993	-48,050
1994	-13,440
1995	-7,636
1996	-8,647
1997	-12,960
1998	+8,323
1999	-10,654
2000	-11,384
2001	-13,320
2002	-12,433
2003	-10,955

Emigration/travel from Lebanon
between 1992 and September 2014

Table 1

Year	Departure and Arrival Balance at the Rafik Hariri International Airport
2004	-15,410
2005	-15,300
2006	-29,718
2007	-18,622
2008	-15,804
2009	-17,321
2010	-18,447
2011	-67,884
2012	-49,391
2013	-57,429
2014 (until September)	-23,480
Total	508,407



Characteristics of Lebanese emigrants

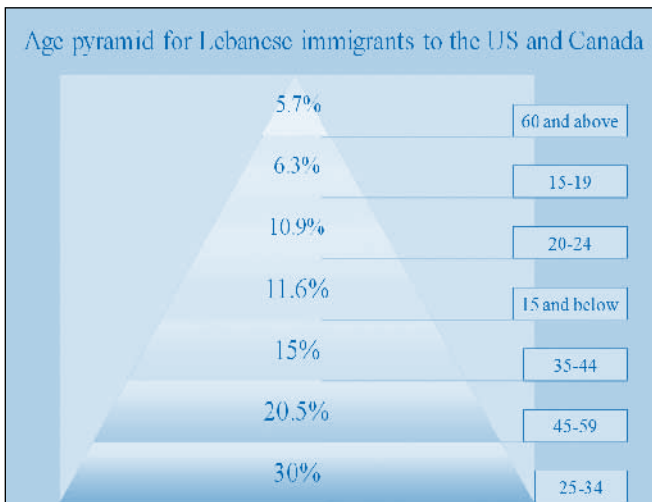
Lebanese emigrants are distributed across different social, economic and sectarian classes rendering the Lebanese diasporas a faithful depiction of the reality and makeup of the residents. Emigrants are distributed as follows:

Lebanese emigrants by age group

Emigrants are distributed across all age groups, foremost of which the age range of 25 to 29 at 32% followed by the range of 30 to 34 at 28%.

The age pyramid as prepared by the Central Statistics Administration in 2007 is posted below:

Age group	%
0-9	15.2
10-14	9.4
15-19	9.7
20-24	9.8
25-29	8.1
30-34	7.4
35-39	6.6
40-44	6.2
45-49	5.6



Age group	%
50-59	8.6
Over 60	13.4

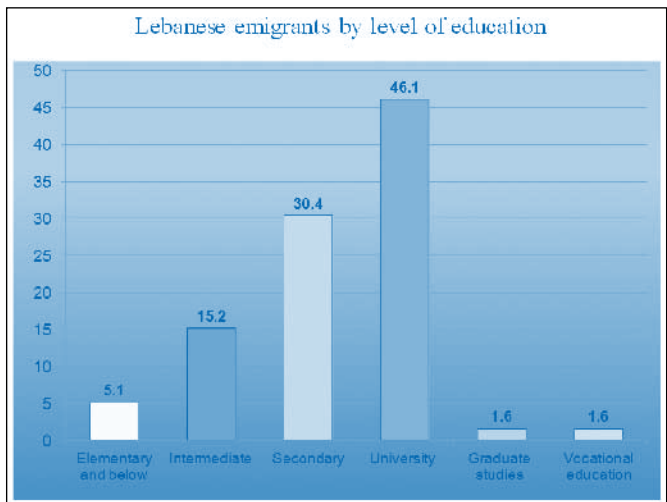
One may note that the young age group between the ages 20 and 44 accounts for 39.1% of the Lebanese population. However, this segment makes up 82.6% of emigrants, a percentage carrying disturbing undertones and heralding a potential decline in the young age structure among residents.

Statistics in the United States and Canada show that the Lebanese immigrants in those age ranges make up 53.8% and 58% respectively.

Lebanese emigrants by level of education

University graduates constitute the largest portion of emigrants at 46.3%. This percentage plummets to 1.6% for vocational education graduates. The following graph illustrates the distribution of emigrants by the level of their education.

A study conducted in 2007 on the living conditions of Lebanese families revealed that university students account for 15.8% of the people aged 20 and above. However, the percentage rises to 46.3% among emigrants in the same age group, which points clearly to the presence of brain drain as well as the material losses incurred as a result of this drain.



Emigrants by profession

Emigrants work in different occupations as illustrated below:

Profession	%
Trader	19
Administrative assistant/employee	12.8
Marketing officer	8
Physician/pharmacist	2.7
Craftsman	0.9
Specialist/ Self-employed	20.2
Student	3.1
Housewife	8.8
Teacher	1.8
Engineer	11.2
Programmer	5.3
Lawyer	1.3
Business owner	4.9

According to Canadian and American statistics, specialists, the self-employed and technicians rank first among immigrants followed by executive and administrative officers, attesting yet again to the loss of competent human capital.

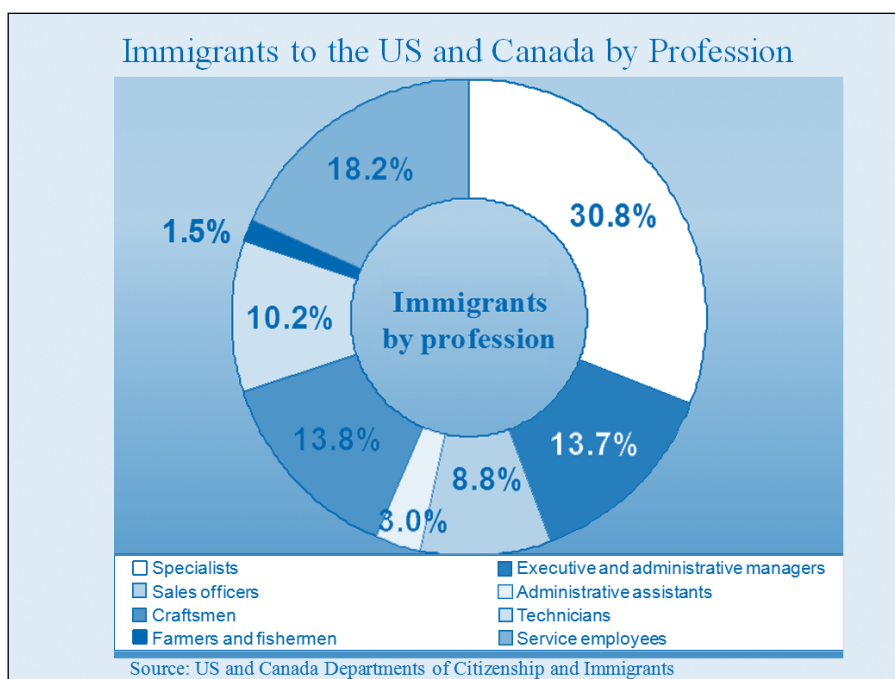
The Lebanese determined to emigrate

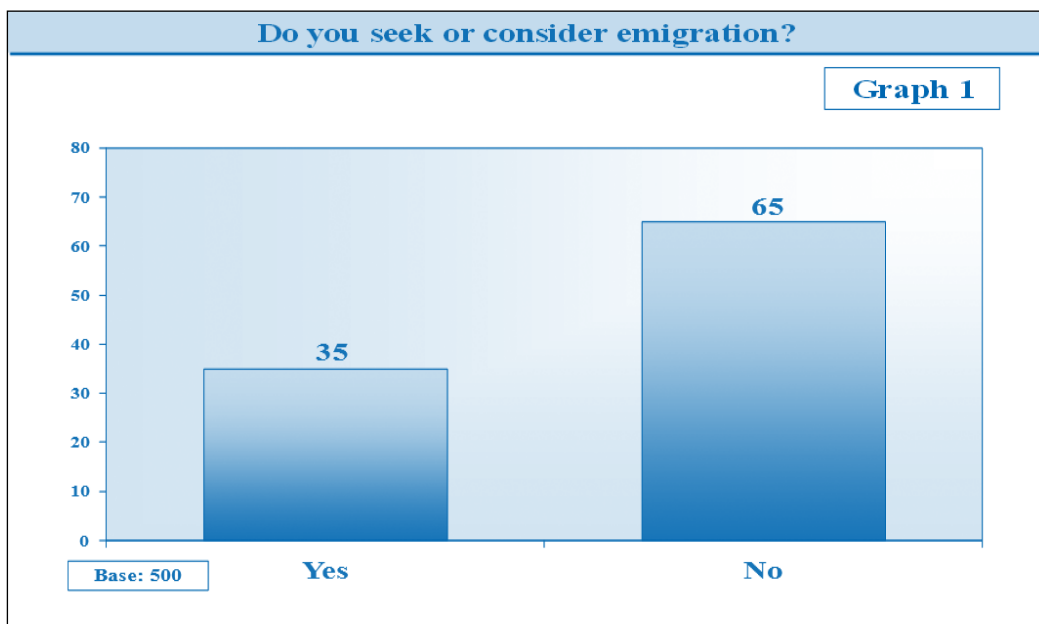
Information International conducted between November 20 and November 24 a public opinion poll on emigration. The poll, which was administered by telephone, included a sample of 500 respondents distributed across all Lebanese regions, depending on the size of each sectarian community.

People considering emigration

35% of the respondents expressed their desire to emigrate from Lebanon, compared to 65% who did not consider leaving (Graph 1).

The wish to leave the country is not peculiar to a single sect; rather, it is widespread among all sectarian groups. However, contrary to previous trends, this inclination seems relatively higher among Muslims, in particular the Sunni and Alawites, when compared to Christians. This could be attributed to the large waves of Christian emigration in the past, which may have depleted the numbers of Christians willing to leave and also resulted in an increase in older Christian population in addition to decrease in birth rates among those who chose to stay (Table 2).





Desire to emigrate by sect (%)									Table 2
Do you seek or consider emigration from Lebanon?	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Armenian and Christian minorities	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze	Alawite	Total
Yes	24	31	23	48	43	37	36	50	35
No	76	69	77	52	57	63	64	50	65

Close to half of the people seeking or contemplating emigration from Lebanon (45%) have already taken steps to realize their wish:

- 7% have obtained their visas and are in a process of packing up
- 16% have applied for visas and are awaiting results
- 22% are preparing the required documentation for visa application

Conversely, slightly over half of the respondents, 55%, have made no discernible moves towards emigration. They are distributed as follows:

- 27% have made no arrangements for leaving the country
- 28% are waiting until their financial situation improves so they can begin the application process

Destination countries: Canada on top

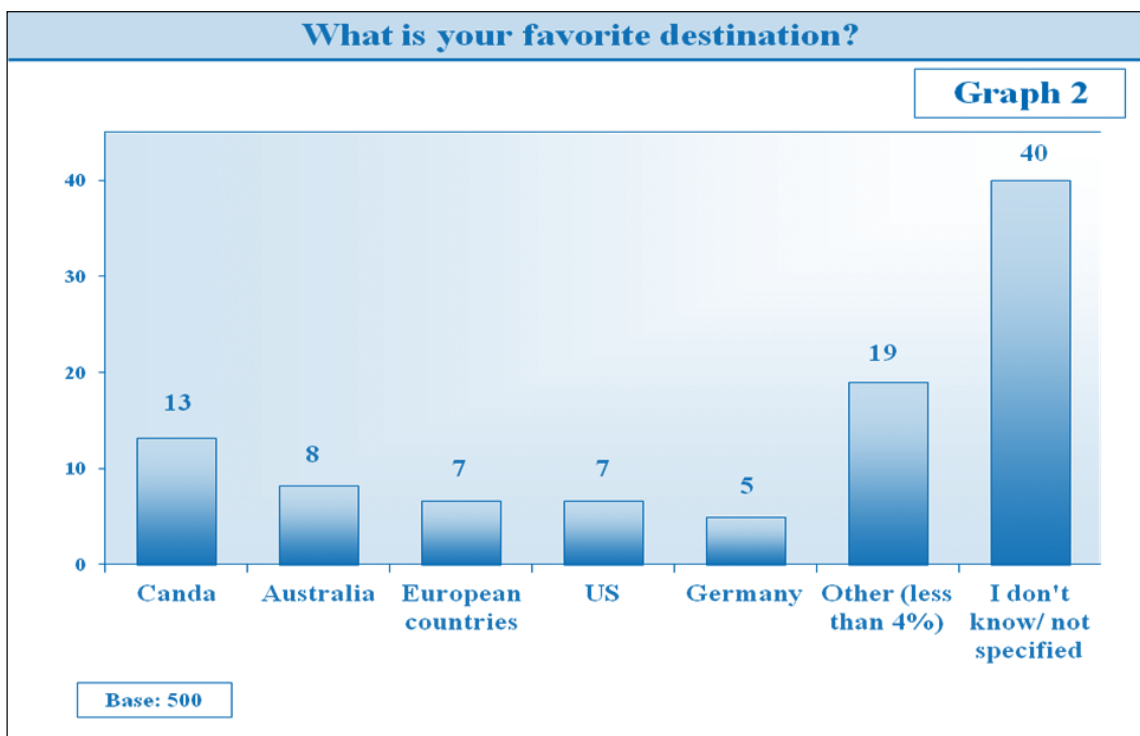
Canada ranked first among the countries where the respondents wish to live permanently at 13%, followed by Australia at 8%. European countries were selected as the most popular destination by 7% of the sample, the

US by 7%, Germany by 5% and France and Sweden by 4% and 3% respectively. Respondents reported another 13 destinations, each standing at less than 3%. No destination country was reported by the remaining 40% (Graph 2).

Reading into numbers

As illustrated above, emigration hit great highs in the years following the Civil War with 86,495 people leaving the country between 1992 and 1993. Sympathizing with the Lebanese fleeing their war-torn past, at the time destination countries facilitated the issuance of visas for them.

However, emigration rates saw a gradual decrease after 1993 until 1998, which was marked by the return of a significant number of emigrants. Emigration patterns fluctuated afterwards, reaching a considerable high during the July War of 2006, then trending gradually downward only to register a drastic increase between 2011 and 2014.



The emigration of 174,704 Lebanese or roughly 13% of the total emigrant population in just three years should sound alarm bells for its annual average rate (58,235) is more than triple the annual average rate recorded between 1992 and 2010 at 16,327.

The phenomenon becomes yet more critical upon realizing that close to 46% of the emigrants are university graduates and close to 83% are of young age. This study shows that the Lebanese are all unified under the common wish of seeking permanent residence outside their own country.

The drain that Lebanon has been suffering in its public finances and other sectors, foremost of which are infrastructure, education and public health, has transformed to a brain drain resulting in the flight of qualified human capital.

This cross-sectarian brain drain is nothing less than shocking for researchers. It includes youths, families, university graduates and experts. The number of graduates who left the country over the past three years, for example, is nearly equal to the student community that graduated during the same period. It is as if all newly graduated packed up and left.

The Central Administration for Statistics revealed that close to 23% of both public and private employees are top cadre personnel, managers and experts amounting to roughly 300,000 people of the total labor force in both sectors. Thus, it seems that close to half of this number left Lebanon in the past three years. The Central Administration for Statistics reported that 54% of the economically active population is university graduates, a percentage that runs near the 46% of university graduate emigrants.

Finally, since 83% of emigrants are youths, then close to 25% of the entire Lebanese population emigrated.

Notes:

- 1- Annual births in Lebanon stand at 90,000 and a significant number of the births occurring abroad are being registered in Lebanon.
- 2- Emigration and travel movements need to be addressed based on countries of destination. Emigrants in the Gulf countries and Africa, for instance, are more connected to their homeland than those in the US and Australia.
- 3- The Lebanese who left the country recently must have headed to the Gulf countries and Africa because European countries, Australia, Canada and the US determine the number of visas to be issued annually. Australia, for instance, issues a few thousands of visas to the Lebanese every year. ●●

DECREES REINFORCE URBAN CHAOS

Lebanese towns are suffering from blatant disarray, complicating their existence and rendering every day life close to impossible. This chaos results in disputes and social crises, making the need for planning and organization an urgent must rather than a mere luxury, in order to avoid total collapse. The state of chaos is chiefly attributed to the absence of cadastral mapping and boundary delineation affecting more than half of the country, which paves way for corruption and loss of property. A second factor is the lack of comprehensive master-plans for all the Lebanese regions. Even when such plans are available, they are often ignored due to corruption, bribery, favoritism and sometimes, government decrees.

Geographical Nature

Lebanon covers 10,452 km² of surface area and stretches along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, with an approximate length of 220 km. Inhabitable mountainous regions account for 20% of Lebanon's total area and built-upon areas make up 7% (730 km²) of it. The remaining areas are distributed over forests (11%), agricultural lands (32%), and barren areas and pastures and rivers (50%). Lebanon's population density is estimated at 354 people per sq. km.

Land surveying in the past

The surveying system in Lebanon is as old as the hills. Under the Ottomans, the rules of the surveying system used to provide approximate and imprecise boundary markers that gave rise to several conflicts. These rules were based on the "Defter Khane", which stipulated that the Mukhtars count the plots and determine their four boundaries. This system was designed specifically for fiscal purposes and aimed at collecting property taxes. Parcel areas were estimated based on the agricultural crops spanning across the land and there were not any accurate maps to indicate the exact location, form and the size of the area of each parcel.

The French surveyor Camille Durrafourd established a new system in 1926, under the French Mandate of Lebanon. In an effort to introduce cadastral reform, Durrafourd sought the help of French, Russian and Swiss experts and drew on their experience. Thus, until 1945, around 50% of the Lebanese land had been surveyed, granting each covered plot a precise cadastral identity that determined its condition and the subsequent adjustments thereto. Since then, however, there has not been any more undertaking of land surveys except for 4% of the Lebanese areas.

Land surveying today

As mentioned earlier, only 54% of Lebanon's land areas have undergone final cadastral surveys and obtained authenticated maps and records. However, these areas were surveyed with primitive techniques that often left room for error, unlike modern surveying, which relies on instruments for precise measuring and could thus result in changes in the existing cadastral maps if they were to be used. As to be expected, this option is greeted with staunch opposition by surveying services in those areas that have already been surveyed. As for the areas that have not been surveyed yet, they are distributed as follows:

- Defined and measured areas with records of measurement and a visual delineation. These areas are still awaiting final maps and make up roughly 15% of the Lebanese territory.
- Defined, but unmeasured areas with a visual delineation only. These areas make up roughly 5% of the Lebanese territory. They have been delineated more than 30 or 40 years ago, which explains the loss of the large part of the surveying markers.
- Areas that have not been freed of obligations or subjected to measurement and that have no visual delineation. These land parcels account for roughly 25% of the Lebanese territory and make up the majority of the area in the Qada's of the Mount Lebanon Mohafaza- Baaba, Matn, Shouf, Aley and Kessrouan. These plots of land hold a significant real estate value and are often listed in booklets and records administered by Mukhtars and containing estimates of the real area of the plots and the relevant selling and transfer transactions, which causes many real estate disputes as evidenced by overcrowded court rooms.

In 2000, the government launched a comprehensive plan to carry out the works of delineation, liberation, measurement and surveying and develop final mapping of all those Lebanese regions lacking planning. To this end, Article 22 of the 2002 Public Budget Law allocated LBP 25 billion, distributed over five years, to enable the government to initiate implementation. This process is expected to be completed between 2015 and 2020.

Build-up areas

Only 20% of the Lebanese territory is graced with detailed guidelines and master plans decreed between 1960 and 2012. Against the backdrop of expanding urbanization, the authorized built-up area increased from 254 km² in 1963 to roughly 600 km² in 1998, i.e. by an average of 100 km² every ten years. At this rate, the authorized built-up area would hit 800 km² by 2020, not to mention that the annual population growth averaging 1.5% to 1.7% foretells that close to 5.6 million people would be living in Lebanon by 2020. These two factors—expanding built-up area and growing population—rank first among the indicators that the authorities need to address to meet the demand, either by reducing growth rates or by reclaiming land from the sea.

Over the past decades, decrees were issued to endorse the master plan for several Lebanese regions, determining for each plot of land the following:

- Easement zone
- Ground exploitation coefficient
- Total exploitation coefficient
- Maximum height
- Number of parking lots
- Number of floors

Encroachments

These decreed plans require years of study and planning to make the best use of the land and preserve the environment and the aesthetic appearance of the area while preventing congestion and providing public services to the residents. However, the pressure dictated by certain political agendas and the interest of influential powers make governments amend and sometimes violate previously decreed plans by authorizing increases in exploitation factors, thus increasing built-up areas and exacerbating overcrowding problems. Below are some of the examples:

- Increasing the TEC (total exploitation coefficient) factor of a hotel built on a plot of land in Mazra'a in Beirut from 2.5 to 5.

- Excluding two plots of land in Msaytbeh in Beirut from construction regulations by doubling the GEC (ground exploitation coefficient) from 20% to 40% and the TEC factor from 1.25 to 2.5.
- Excluding two plots of land in the Bsateen area in Tripoli from construction regulations by increasing the TEC from 1.2 to 2.4 and the maximum height authorized from 18 meters to 30 meters as well as exempting the site from setbacks and from the obligation of providing parking lots.
- Excluding a plot of land in the Marfa'a area of Beirut from the downtown general requirements by authorizing the construction of an additional 642 m² above the existing building and exceeding the TEC set to 5.
- Excluding two plots of land in Sawfar real estate zone from construction regulations by increasing the GEC from 20% to 30% and the TEC from 0.4 to 0.6.
- Increasing the TEC factor of a hotel building in Sawfar from 1.2 to 2.4.
- Increasing the GEC of a hotel building in Sahel Alma in Kessrouan from 40% to 47% and the TEC factor from 2 to 4.
- Increasing the TEC in a plot of land in the Bsateen area in Tripoli from 0.9 to 1.4.
- Excluding a plot of land in Shanay in Aley from construction regulations for unplanned areas by authorizing the construction of a mosque with the GEC set at 72% and the TEC at 2.1, without any setbacks from the boundaries of the plot. The number of floors allowed will be 5, the maximum height 30 meters and the height of the minaret 50 meters.
- Increasing the GEC of a hotel built on a plot of land in Ain Mrysseh in Beirut from 40% to 47% and the TEC (total exploitation coefficient) from 2.5 to 5.
- Exempting two plots of land in Ain Saadeh in Matn from the construction regulations set for the area and allowing the continuity of works at the farm existing on the plots.
- Excluding the tourist project planned in Msaytbeh in Beirut from the height requirements set at 5.5 meters.

The absence of planning and the chaos and infringements marking such planning when present have transformed the majority of Lebanon's regions into an unrestrained wilderness riddled with urban challenges and crises. ●●

DECISIONS TO EXEMPT FROM PENALTIES DEPRIVES STATE LBP 25 BILLION

Fines are imposed by the competent departments of the Ministry of Finance on the individuals and companies that commit tax declaration offences or fail to settle their due tax liabilities on time. However, the Ministry of Finance or the Cabinet issues decisions approving reductions on the said penalties thus sparing taxpayers amounts that could be worth hundreds of millions and even billions of Lebanese pounds in the case of the largest taxpayers.

Basis for fines

Some companies breach their tax obligations by either failing to submit their due tax declarations- income tax particularly- or defaulting on their tax payments (amended return penalty, delayed tax declaration penalty, penalty for delayed submission of auditing report, etc). When such offences are detected, competent authorities at the Ministry of Finance respond by fining the offender. Fines vary depending on the size of due amounts (starting at 5%) and a penal interest of 1% is added for every month of delay.

Basis for exemption from the penalty

Law no. 662 dated February 4, 2005 established the essentials for penalty adjustments according to taxation laws and authorized the Minister of Finance to renew these essentials and approve penalty reductions, except for those exceeding LBP 1 billion, in which case the approval of the Cabinet is mandatory. The law stipulated the percentage of reductions as illustrated in Table 1.

Fine reduction percentages		Table 1
Type of fine	Reduction (%)	
Relative penalty	85	
Flat penalty	60	
Late payment penalty	75	

Source: Law no. 622

The law on taxation and fining forces the Minister of Finance to reduce the penalty. And since the real beneficiaries from this measure are major, not small taxpayers, the state loses out on huge revenues during the reduction process as shown in Table 2, which illustrates a sample of companies that benefitted from

the law and had their penalties reduced from LBP 30 billion to just LBP 5 billion.

The following sample includes only seven companies, let alone the hundreds of other violators which deprive the state of hundreds of billions of pounds.

A sample of the 7 beneficiaries from penalty reductions		Table 1
Company	Fines	Penalty for delayed payment of fines
Large bank	LBP 1.116 billion for 2010	LBP 342 million on May 31, 2013
Large bank	LBP 1.553 billion for 2008	LBP 478 million on April 30, 2014
Tourist company partly owned by the state	LBP 1.850 billion for 2008	LBP 4.778 billion on June 30, 2013
Food product company	LBP 5.682 billion for 2008 and 2009	LBP 2.880 billion on June 30, 2013
Insurance and reinsurance company	LBP 3.522 billion for 2009	LBP 1.539 billion on June 30, 2013
Real estate company	LBP 2.045 billion for 2009, 2010 and 2011	LBP 1.3 billion on June 30, 2013
Food trading company	LBP 1.700 billion for 2012	LBP 59.5 million on June 30, 2013
Total	LBP 18.459 billion	LBP 11.405 billion

Source: Cabinet Session Proceedings on May 21, 2014

INDONESIAN PARLIAMENT

THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Home to the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia is an ethnically-rich archipelago with a wealth of natural resources and a fast-growing economy. Despite 30 years of authoritarian rule, Indonesia has made a graceful and admirable transition to democracy, lending itself as a regional role model. The economic boom witnessed in Indonesia in recent years was ascribed, inter alia, to a combination of domestic consumption, growth in productivity and political stability. Although growth has slowed, is still strong. Yet, in order for Indonesia to reach its full potential, the newly elected president and legislature should be prepared to address the challenges that hinder further growth such as corruption, bureaucracy, poor infrastructure and low-skilled labor.



Indonesian Parliament

The People's Consultative Assembly

Legislative authority in Indonesia is vested in the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), a bicameral Parliament that consists of two chambers:

- The House of Representatives (DPR) - composed of representatives of political parties
- The Regional Representatives Council (DPD) - composed of representatives from each province in Indonesia. Four delegates that are elected by the people in the respective region represent each province.

The House of Representatives

The DPR- Lower House- consists currently of 560 members elected for a five-year term by proportional representation in multi-member constituencies. It is chaired by a speaker and four deputy speakers elected from the membership.

Voting Age

Indonesia has set the voting age at 17. However, married citizens under the voting age can also register to vote.

Voting system

The seats at the House of Representatives are divided into 77 multi-member constituencies, each allocated between three and ten seats depending on its population size. These elections are conducted with open-list proportional representation, which allows individual voters to choose among the candidates selected by a party. Each party must surpass a 3.5 percent threshold (recently increased from 2.5 percent) in order to win a seat and must open party chapters 1) in all provinces, 2) in no less than 75 percent of all regencies/municipalities in each of the provinces and 3) in no less than 50 percent of all districts in each of the regencies/municipalities. ●

<http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/10/24/how-indonesia-s-2014-elections-will-work>
http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/_research/2004-05/D_P/Sherlock_Indonesian_Election04.pdf

HENRY EDDÉ

IF MONEY WERE TO RULE

Former minister and architect Henry Eddé died at the end of January 2010, aged 87. On the fifth anniversary of his death, *The Monthly* recalls his political and professional biography, a track record rich with various experiences and accomplishments.

Birth

Henry Eddé was born in Cairo on January 10, 1923. His father, Kamil Eddé, is the cousin of President of the Republic Emille Eddé. His mother is named Isabelle.

Education

Henry Eddé pursued his studies in Cairo and later in Beirut where he enrolled at the Saint Joseph School before it was graced with the title of ‘university’. He majored in architecture at the university’s Higher Institute for Engineering and graduated as architect in 1946.

Professional life

Henry Eddé made a go at running architectural works. His successes and growing fame enabled him to expand and grow in both Lebanon and the region. He was elected Head of the Order of Engineers and Architects in Beirut in 1961 and was later elected Secretary General of the International Union of Architects in 1967 during a conference held in Argentina.

Government and political work

His accomplishments, coupled with his descent from a political family and his friendship with his kinsman Raymond Eddé, Head of the Lebanese National Bloc, facilitated his engagement in politics and his assumption of ministerial posts. In October 1970, he was appointed Minister of Public Works and Transport in the youth government which was formed of non-politicians and non-parliamentarians by Saeb Salam under the presidential term of Suleiman Frangieh.

Eddé recounts that he was initially assigned to the Ministry of Water and Electrical Resources and that Minister Jaafar Sharafeddine (Shia’a) was in charge of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, but the two agreed to switch portfolios, knowing that the portfolio entrusted to each of them was within the specialty of the other. His



Henry Eddé

works at the Ministry were centered on improving road maintenance, keeping closer watch over the executive council responsible for major projects, approving a new construction law, establishing a new administration for civil aviation and expanding the airport.

His resignation from his post came during the draft budget deliberations in the Cabinet, when he quarreled with Minister of Finance Elias Saba over the reduction of his ministry’s budget, which crippled the possibility of him carrying out his agenda. He returned to the government as acting Minister of Education and Fine Arts representing the Lebanese National Bloc, following the resignation of Education Minister Edward Hnein. Again, his stay at the ministry was a short one, lasting only two months from August to October 1972. This time, Eddé was dismissed from his position for locking horns with the government over the general education

policy that should have been put in place. He was the first-ever minister to be dismissed in the history of Lebanon. Years later, Frangieh stated that he regretted having discharged Henry Eddé.

If Money were to Rule

Architect Henry Eddé was the first to devise preliminary plans for the reconstruction of Downtown, Beirut, based on a modern architectural vision combining heritage character to urban modernity. However, Eddé abandoned his project when he realized that the decision-makers wanted the reconstruction to be a personal enrichment venture at the expense of public interest. All Prints Distributors and Publishers published the book he wrote, *If Money were to Rule*, in 1997 after it was translated from French. In his book, Eddé reveals that a few weeks before the referral of the city center's master plan to the Cabinet, which convened its session prior to the elections of October 1992, Rafik Hariri who would later rise to premiership, interfered several times, which led to raising the exploitation coefficient to 20%. Eddé had estimated the worth of the state's reclaimed area at roughly USD 400 million while Hariri, as reported by Eddé, did not want it to exceed USD 60 million.

“Ever since money has become the main driver, if not the sole driver, of political life, the great and the powerful have been looking forward to get their share of it. Experience, everywhere, even in the most civilized countries, has shown that concessions are subject to pressures of every kind and are a source of flagrant scandals. How can we fail to point here to the lack of transparency, which has become an absolute rule to exercising power and signing official deals? How many projects of substantial cost were carried to the Cabinet without being on its agenda, and even without the knowledge of the minister in question? Neither rotations were organized, nor consultations sought nor information disclosed. All the decisions concerned with large-scale works were made in narrow private circles

surrounded by the Prime Minister in person,” he wrote. Eddé challenged the foreign acquisition of land in Lebanon and made that clear in his book saying:

“For quite some time now, the government has been divulging its intention to authorize foreign acquisition of real estate properties, particularly for Arabs from the Gulf. Betting on both the profits that the landowners willing to sell their properties would make and a flow of buyers free from any obstacle or obligation, the government believes it can easily obtain from Parliament an amendment of the law in force and cancel all the limitations on the acquisition of agricultural lands and those ready for construction. Despite the current legislation, the real estate deals signed by the Arab buyers, directly or indirectly (when they exceed the authorized area), are still increasing at alarming rates. Thus, the Prime Minister who has ensured himself a huge bequest under favorable conditions may reckon that the time has come to increase the value of his investments. He, influenced by models seen in Monaco, Hong Kong and Riyadh, probably believes that a real estate speculation would contribute, along with the personal profit it would bring him, to a parallel economic development. But the geography of Lebanon as well as its distinctive features and the traditions of its people are unsuited for such models. The prices are already high and cannot afford extra increases not to mention that Beirut is in too critical a financial decision to attract further mafias and become a venue for their money laundering. Citizens, however depleted their resources become, should be able to acquire land and social and cultural equipment and agricultural investments as well as their offices, shops and factories at prices matching their means. Ignorance of these self-evident facts usurps the future irrevocably.”

Family

Henry Eddé married Miss Roseline Maqsoud in 1946 and had three children with her. ●●

Clarification and correction

It has come to the attention of *The Monthly* magazine that a minor statement in the article featuring the biography of Antoun Saad, Head of the Deuxième Bureau, in the issue of June 2014, is false.

Mr. Hanna Saad contacted us by email, notifying us that Antoun Saad had 6 children not 4 as reported in the article. His children were Bassam, Hanna, Elias, Noha, Rita and Fouad.

Assuming that Mr. Hanna Saad is the son of Antoun Saad, we have trusted his input and corrected this error accordingly. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience caused.



Dr. Hanna Saadah

OF AGING AND ENLIGHTENMENT

*Each time we bid our loves adieu
Love, other loves will find
One page is turned, one page is new
We grow nor look behind...*

*Each day we say goodbye, the sun
Un-saddened by the night
Returns to cheer a different sky
Vouchsafing us new light...*

*Lives that go down the river time
With memories revive
And journey back from age to prime
To keep those gone alive...*

The longer we live, the more age aware we become because aging defines our lives. Our slow journey, starting from youth accelerates its pace the older we grow, making the impact of each subsequent year more eventful. In youth we are taught about life and death, but never about growing old. Old age seems to creep on us unprepared, taking us by surprise. How do we prepare for the ageing process?

Although chronological age is implacable and inexorable, biological age is readily modifiable. Good health postpones aging and bad health accelerates it. It is, therefore, our duty to aim for good health by avoiding smoking and other harmful drugs, abstaining from supplements and treatments that have not been sanctioned by controlled scientific studies, avoid becoming overweight, exercising regularly, consuming alcohol sensibly, eating healthily, managing personal stresses and utilizing preventive medical care.

Preventive medicine treats disorders before they cause disease: a) screening for breast, lung, prostate, colon and cervical cancers, b) taking the recommended vaccines, c) lowering cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood sugar, d) treating osteoporosis before bones begin to fracture, looking after teeth, before they begin to undermine health, and taking measures to prevent skin cancers, such as using a high-factor sunscreen, and e) having regular checkups, all the above help dilute the effects of aging.

But, good physical health on its own is never enough. To cope with aging, we also need mental fortitude.

Such fortitude comes from living an intellectual life, which is enhanced by learning wisdom from those who have preceded us in age and death: **Mohandas K Gandhi (1869-1948)** It is nonsense for you to talk of old age as long as you outrun young men in the race for service and in the midst of anxious times fill rooms with your laughter and inspire youth with hope when they are on the brink of despair.

Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old by deserting their ideals. Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up interest wrinkles the soul... You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair.

Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) There is only one solution if old age is not to be an absurd parody of our former life, and that is to go on pursuing ends that give our existence a meaning---devotion to individuals, to groups or to causes, social, political, intellectual, or to creative work.

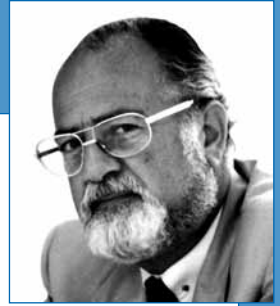
Everyone who is aging needs a personal credo. My credo is enlightenment, because enlightened minds can cope with anything:

*To excitedly float the river time.
To turn one page only to be enthralled
by yet another and all the chapters
and books that follow. To toss aloft the
blazing torch for youth to catch the flame and
with it rise. To flow with life's currents, nor
struggle against its implacable sweeps.
To know when to stop and where next to go.
To embrace life's bounty with gratitude
and life's verdicts with gleeful attitude
nor beg nor grovel for more when the oil
in the lamp runs dry. To feel ennobled
by having had the chance to do our best.
To make room for the future by bowing
out. To cheer on change and progress and watch
them skyrocket beyond our eyes and minds.
To view our destined recyclement as
a glorious reunion with earth and heaven.
Blithe are the graces of enlightenment.*

THE FLEXIBLE EMPIRE (2/3)

THE GHAZI THEORY AND THE POLICY OF EXPANSIONISM

Antoine Boutros



We concluded our previous part by discussing how interactions between Ottomans and Christians grew to the point of forging an alliance and sometimes even coexisting under a single state, thus driving modern historians to view these two elements as partners in a single historical adventure. The question was ‘how were the Balkans’ Orthodox and Anatolian Muslims united in a single state?’

History teems with pages on Christian Byzantine leader Koze Mihal, the Beardless, who used to accompany Othman Ghazi in his invasions. Can that not be considered a proof on Byzantine-Muslim assimilation? Although Turkish historians, such as Inalcik, found no documentation proving that Koze Mihal professed Islam prior to Sultan Othman’s era (1299-1324), the official history of Ottomans holds that he was a Muslim convert. What were then the factors that led the Bithynians- a Greek Christian people- who had established a frontier empire that spanned for 50 years north of the Black Sea to contribute to the formation of a unified Christian-Muslim state?

In 1982, Inalcik published an article acknowledging the importance of the mass migrations of Turkmen tribes to Anatolia and highlighting the significance of the Holy War doctrine as the unifying force ‘that has lead mercenary gazis to dominate and enslave primitive human groups.’ He thus endorses the premise that it was gaza which provided the *raison d’être* for Ottoman expansion. It is believed that the poems of Tajeddine Ahmedi, one of the greatest poets of the 14th century, set the beat of that stage.

However, how does Inalcik justify the conversion of Mihal to Islam at a time when the Ottomans were a frontier empire famed for its treatment of all creeds and races as one? Inalcik suggests that Mihal was both a gazi and a Christian and that the Holy War and settlement were the two dynamic elements in Ottoman conquests, arguing that the administrative systems adopted in the new conquered territories were inspired from the Seljuk model. This assumption lead eventually to divorcing the doyen of Ottoman

studies from the works of Gibbons which endorse the non-Turkish origins of the Ottoman Empire’s cornerstones.

Another critique of Gibbons appeared in a 1947 lengthy study by Greek scholar George Arnakis. Gibbons addressed the major weaknesses of Wittek’s thesis by emphasizing that the connotation of the title gazi in that context did not mean that the early Ottomans were motivated by the goal of converting the Bithynian Christians, but rather by amassing plunder, slaves, and booty. Arnakis viewed that the growth of the early Ottoman state can be attributed to a large extent to its absorption of the Greek population of Bithyniya.

On the other side, a Marxist-oriented book discussing the beginnings of the Ottoman history was published. Written by Ernst Werner, the book first appeared in 1966 and was republished in two revised editions in 1972 and 1985 respectively. The book critiqued historiography in Turkey but its exaggeration of Marxism-Leninism has prevented it from having the intended impact. The third exception is the American Byzantinist, Speros Vryonis whose book, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism* is considered a landmark in the Ottoman issue. Vryonis set out to analyze a variety of Byzantine and Turco-Islamic cultural traditions. He underlined the fact that by the time of the emergence of the Ottomans, the process of Islamization followed by Turkification had been in progress for over two hundred years. He added that the semi-nomadic Turkic life was ideally suited both to conduct gaza and raiding and that it was this fact rather than any zeal for Islam which motivated the early Ottoman conquests.

THE MONTHLY INTERVIEWS

DIMAS SAMODRA RUM

INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON

Could you provide insight into your personal and professional background?

I was born in Bandung, the capital of West Java Province, Indonesia, in 1955. I completed both my elementary and higher education in the same city and graduated from the University of Padjadjaran in 1982 with a degree in International Relations. Soon after my graduation, I joined the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1983 after a long selection process. This is my 31st year in service. I spent half of these years abroad serving as a diplomat assigned to the Indonesian embassies in the United Kingdom, Japan, France and lastly Lebanon. Before I was posted in Lebanon as Ambassador in November 2010, I was Consul General of Indonesia in Marseille between 2004 and 2007.

How does Indonesia assess the role of the UNFIL through its contingent in South Lebanon?

Firstly, I would like to note that Indonesia is a nation that desires to participate in international efforts to create peace and justice, a principle that is best reflected in the preamble of our 1945 constitution. As a former colonial state, Indonesia strongly despises colonialism and therefore, it is only natural for us to participate in creating world peace and social justice through peaceful means, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO) has always been an important instrument for the involvement of Indonesia in the effort to maintain world peace. Following Israel's assault on Lebanon in 2006, the United Nations sent a peace keeping operation under the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL), in which Indonesia also took part to help the Lebanese Armed Forces protect Lebanon's border from further Israeli encroachments.

Currently, our contingent consists of roughly 1,264 troops operating under the UNIFIL's umbrella and is considered the largest among all Indonesian contingents. Indonesia sees its role in the UNIFIL as important to maintain peace in Lebanon and stop Israel from advancing into its territories. We do not have diplomatic relations with Israel, for the Indonesian people is in the view that Israel is a rogue country with policies challenging the principle of peace and social justice that we hold so dearly. Israel was built on an occupied land belonging to the Palestinians and as long as the conflict between Palestine and Israel is not resolved peacefully, the Indonesian government will never form diplomatic ties with Israel or with any other country that violates the right of the people to have a free and peaceful nation.



Dimas Samodra Rum

Indonesia, as an active player in the promotion of international and regional peace and security, is well recognized by the International community. Much of its successes have been attributed to the skill of Indonesian contingents in engaging with the local people in the areas where they are assigned, whether they are under UNPKO or outside the United Nations. This has been also the case with Indonesia's troops in the UNIFIL. Our troops have always tried to engage with local communities and are seen by the locals not only as a protector but also as friends.

How large is the Indonesian community in Lebanon?

Unlike our community in the Gulf countries, in Lebanon we don't have a large number of Indonesians. Here, our community is limited to around 130 Indonesian nationals, including our diplomats and the embassy's staff and their families. The number would be higher if we were to count the UNIFIL troops. Some of the Indonesian nationals work as skilled labor in spa or massage services and most of them come from Bali. Small numbers work as domestic workers for Lebanese families that have resided or worked in Middle Eastern countries for years. There are also some Indonesian-Lebanese families living mostly in Beirut, Saida and Tripoli. Their cross-cultural marriages have survived for years and ended up with children and Indonesian women often take their Lebanese spouses and children to attend gathering events held at the embassy.

How many visas does the embassy issue annually?

The embassy issues various kinds of visas, but mostly we issue tourist visas for Lebanese wishing to spend their holidays in Indonesia. Based on our consular data, the embassy issued 1,349 tourist visas in 2013; for this year, the record shows that 743 visas have been issued until September. The Lebanese stay in Indonesia between two to three weeks during the summer holiday, and mostly visit Bali, Lombok, Jakarta the

capital city and other places. We are also pleased to know that some of them are honeymooners who choose Indonesia as a destination.

How have you developed the ties between Indonesia and Lebanon during your term in office and what obstacles have you faced in the process, if any?

Historically, Lebanon has had a special place in the heart of our people because it was the third country in the world, after Egypt and Syria, to recognize Indonesia's independence in 1945 under President Becharah El-Khoury. With respect to the political and security context, Indonesia is always in strong support of Lebanon's territorial integrity and sovereignty through its participation in UNIFIL. Not only do we deploy land forces but we also assign an Indonesian naval vessel to the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force to assist the Lebanese Navy in safeguarding the territorial waters.

Many activities have been done to bring us closer in terms of economic relations. We regularly inform the Lebanese business community about the opportunities of having investment and trade with Indonesia through business meetings and international trade events in Indonesia. We bring the Lebanese businessmen to see and meet their potential trade partners in Indonesia and vice versa. The increasing trend of positive trade balance between Indonesia and Lebanon is a good sign of this relationship and there is still plenty of room to be explored and expanded in the future. Based on data, the 2013 trade value between both countries was US\$ 99 million, up from US\$ 86 million in 2012.

At the socio-cultural level, we are keen to promote Indonesian culture in Lebanon through our Embassy's activities, with the cooperation of local partners. The Embassy has so far performed more than 25 cultural events across Lebanon, including culinary promotions.

In terms of education, we have relations with several Islamic universities which, through their scholarship programs, have become a destination for our students wishing to study Islamic Sharia, namely Ma'had Da'wah Islamiyah/Daawa University Institute for Islamic Studies, Dar el Fatwa University and University of Tripoli.

What have you loved the most about Lebanon?

Well, what I loved the most since my arrival in 2010 is Lebanon's tourist sites and historical legacy. Despite the ongoing conflict in neighboring country, Lebanon remains a popular destination for Arab tourists and has some of the best tourist and historical landmarks in the Middle East. This country has archaeological remnants dating back to the era of the Phoenicians, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Crusaders, the Ottomans, all the way down to the French mandate era. These historical epochs, each with its own cultural and religious stamp, have wielded enormous influence on Lebanon's identity making it a venue of uniqueness in music, art, literature, culinary and a religiously diverse society with 18 officially recognized sects.

I am impressed by this diversity because it stands unparalleled across the entire Arab world. Since the end of the Civil War, Lebanon has succeeded in maintaining peace and harmony among its many religious sects, providing a good example for those facing similar conflicts on how to reach a peaceful resolution between conflicting parties.

The Lebanese are full of strength and energy. They have the capability to survive rough times and crises motivate them to regain what had been lost. I read somewhere that the Lebanese youth have developed resilience as a result of long years of war. Wherever you go, you can see Lebanese success stories and bright businessmen using their resources to build their country.

Does Lebanon bear any similarities to Indonesia? What are they? And what are the major differences?

Indeed, we have some similarities and some differences. Although it does not have as many recognized sects as Lebanon, Indonesia is also a religiously heterogeneous society characterized by religious diversity. While the majority of Indonesians embrace Islam, Indonesia also recognizes Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism.

However, Indonesia is richer in terms of ethnical diversity for it has more than 300 ethnic groups living across our five main islands (Sumatera, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua) and other 14,000 islands. More than 350 different languages are spoken in Indonesia and each ethnic group has its own traditions, folklores, art and culinary customs which are still largely practiced and treasured. In terms of political structure, both Indonesia and Lebanon exercise a multi-party system. But while political parties are mostly formed in Lebanon based on sectarian interest with foreign affiliations, Indonesia balances between the political parties based on religious ideology and those on secular basis, none of which with foreign affiliations. All the parties have equal opportunities to participate either in parliament or in the government.

In Indonesia, unlike Lebanon, we no longer perform the presidential election through parliament. Since we started the reformation era we finally succeed to have a direct presidential election by the people since 2004, and recently, in July 2014, the Indonesian people succeed in having presidential election on last July 2014. The election's result put Mr. Joko Widodo as the new Indonesian President for period of 2014 - 2019.

Any final words?

I wish to take this opportunity to praise the Lebanese people for their strong will and resilience to progress toward peace, stability and prosperity. I also wish to convey our utmost gratitude and appreciation to the Lebanese government, especially the Directorate General of Security General for their assistance in the evacuation process of Indonesian nationals from Syria to Indonesia through Lebanon by giving them transit visa and easy access to enter Lebanon. 🇱🇧

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY LEBANON

Nobody emerges from war victorious. Not only do wars exact a huge toll on property and human life, they also leave indelible scars on the psyche of the people. In Lebanon, a country weighed down by a war-ridden past and a present tinged with serious threats to security, millions of people have been displaced, wounded or killed in conflict. Houses and infrastructure have also borne the brunt of war and thousands of Lebanese have been left without a shelter or in inadequate or overcrowded housing with no access to proper sanitation, clean water or electricity. Habitat for Humanity Lebanon was established to help people in Lebanon, particularly those in great need, build both their homes and their community.

Establishment

Anchored by the conviction that all men have the right to a decent and an independent dwelling to shelter them and protect their families from the evils of the outside world, Bishop Salim Ghazal, along with David Haskell and Dani El Tayar, took up the initiative to start Habitat for Humanity Lebanon in 2001. The organization, which officially began its work in 2003, operates under the umbrella of Habitat for Humanity International, a non-profit non-sectarian housing charity with more than 70 branches around the world. It aims to provide adequate shelter to those in need and create a spirit of solidarity and cooperation in the process of rebuilding and renovating houses.

HFHL's initial groundwork suggested forming a committee for each three or four towns that was well-acquainted with the downtrodden families in the area and could guarantee their repayment of the housing loan they would be given in cooperation with the "Circle of Dialogue and Development" within a three-year period, thus allowing other towns and families an equal opportunity to benefit from HFHL's programs. The villages and towns of Eastern Saida were targeted first as the organization facilitated the return of the displaced Christians to their towns and houses. Work expanded and ramified gradually reaching most of Lebanon's regions and covering to

date 798 towns and 5499 families with a budget of roughly USD 8,326,000.

Accomplishments

During Israel's attack on Lebanon in 2006, otherwise known as the July War, HFHL was one of four organizations selected to devise a work mechanism for what could be done once the conflict had ended. Indeed, the day after the cessation of hostilities, the organizations headed to South Lebanon and returned with a working paper that they filed to the Prime Minister's office. This paper was later adopted by donors as their action plan.

HFHL reached out to several southern villages and towns where it implemented its "core house program", providing families with funds to build their own core house, a permanent structure of one room, a kitchen and a toilet, built on the site of the destroyed home. It also handed each family a map of the constructed site signed by professional architects along with the amounts of the material used in construction, which allows families to expand their home according to their specifications over time. 1663 families were served under this program. In the Southern Suburbs of Beirut, 12 buildings were insulated to prevent water from leaking inside them.



By the end of 2008, HFHL launched the Orphans and Vulnerable Group Program to address the housing problems of the poor and the most marginalized families. SOS Children's Village teamed up with HFHL to finance the repairs, renovation, expansion and refurbishing of houses of those families headed by widows or single parents or having members with special needs. House repairs varied and the beneficiaries served have so far totaled 177 families in 86 towns. It is noteworthy that families repay up to one third of the loan over three years with repayment schedules adjusted to their financial circumstances. The organization has conducted several sessions on saving, debt management and other topics geared towards improving the above families' financial literacy and ability to manage their daily living. 531 participants so far have attended the sessions.

Responding to the much-needed yet unmet demand of low-income families for facilitated housing loans, HFHL launched its Housing Microfinance program in partnership with Al-Majmoua to offer the underprivileged the chance to invest their earnings into life-changing improvements to their homes. The program has so far served close to 2620 families across 644 towns and non-defaulting families have increased their chance of qualifying to yet bigger loans in the future.

Future plans

The influx of Syrian refugees in Lebanon resulted in the deterioration of economic conditions, especially in the Palestinian camps that suffer from overpopulation and inadequate housing conditions. HFHL therefore launched a new program targeting those Palestinian families living in poor housing. The project's budget will allow housing support over the next two years. In the first year, the program will target 120 families all over the country. Work has already started in refugee camps in Burj Al-Barajne, Shatila, Tyre and Ein El-Helwe. Next year, the program will continue serving 15 Palestinian families on average each month. The organization also hopes to get involved in preventing injustice against former or current tenants, particularly tenants who are not aware of their legal

rights. HFHL wishes to promote the use of solar energy, for example to heat water so as to minimize inflated electricity bills. Expanding its circle of activities to reach as many families as possible is one of the goals that HFHL hopes to achieve.

Challenges

HFHL's officials reported that one of the major obstacles currently is to maintain a sufficient level of fund-raising and to achieve financial self-sufficiency through local fundraising so that projects can be expanded and new ones can be initiated. They noted that local institutions are inconsistent in their donations, and are struggling to respond adequately to the refugee crisis. On top of this, donors are allocating aid to other sectors in need, such as health, education and women's rights. All these obstacles make the expansion of the base of beneficiaries a challenging task. ●●



AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Mr. Simpson's house is spacious. It is made of thick logs and rests on a hillside covered with cypress and juniper trees. Near the two-story house runs a stream of crystalline water. We arrived close to noon. Nancy's sister bid us welcome. Her mother was dead and her older sister helped the father keep house and feed the cowboys. She offered us a beer and said that the lunch was ready. We entered the dining room and found a roasted leg of lamb weighing at least 15 kilograms, along with potatoes and a bowl of salad waiting for us at the table. That was all the food there was. After lunch, a servant came in with two trays of hot cakes topped with cream. Cream coffee was served afterwards. There were no fruits.

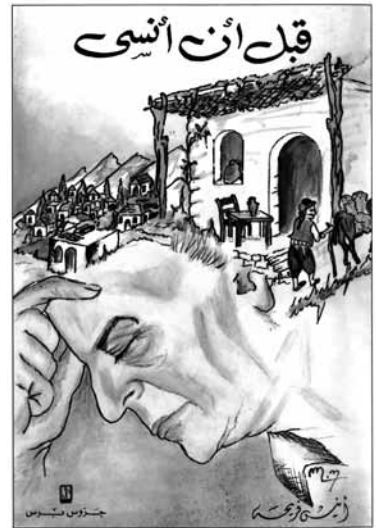
I sat up with Mr. Simpson and explained to him the difference between Lebanon and Assyria. He apologized for his ignorance of history. "Why bother with history in this beautiful world of yours?" I said.

The next morning, he asked me to accompany him to collect eggs, for the basket was empty. We roamed around the farm, at the foot of the hill and behind jutting rocks and picked up more than a hundred eggs. "Enough for now," he said. "We will return tomorrow!"

"Do you collect all the eggs?" I inquired. "We collect anything we can lay hands on and the rest returns to us as small chicks in early summer days," he explained.

Breakfast by the standards of Mr. Simpson was simple: fried eggs and bacon, oatmeal gruel, fresh bread, a variety of jam and honey and huge pots of milk and coffee. No mercy on my stomach!

We spent three lovely days there. Mr. Simpson asked me if I could ride horses but I couldn't. He wanted me to escort the cowboys and see for myself how they kept cows there. "I will watch from a distance," I said. Later that night, we played chess. He fancied the game but always lamented the lack of opponents. He invited me to stay over the entire summer vacation. Chess players were always welcome. ♣♦



SCHIZOPHRENIA

Myth

Schizophrenia is a mental disorder where patients manifest symptoms of multiple or split personalities. Patients of schizophrenia tend to lose control over their behavior, often making them dangerous to other people around them.

Fact

A lot of mystery surrounds this disorder that needs to be recognized for what it is; a mental condition characterized by a difficulty in organizing thoughts, focusing attention, and activating memory. It may trigger hallucinations, paranoia, and delusions keeping the patient somewhat distant from his or her surroundings. It develops in slow stages, where the early stages constitute the best time for intervention. Yet among many, conventional wisdom has made its name equivalent with other symptoms. A survey conducted in 2008 by the National Alliance on Mental Illness found that 85% of Americans can recognize schizophrenia as a disorder, but as much as 64% believe it stands for split personalities or cannot recognize the symptoms (7). Other misconceptions are that it is not curable, that all patients have the same symptoms and that patients can only occupy low-level jobs (Harding, and Zahniser 143).

Misconceptions such as these remain intact because not many people have been in continuous contact with patients for a considerable period of time. Moreover, stereotypes, especially when projected by the media, increase the stigmatization of patients, and make viewers less sympathetic to their suffering (Tartakovsky). Patients are often depicted in a negative image, and associated with attributes such as violence and dangerousness. This is paralleled with very few stories that picture people coping positively, or are on the road to recovery. A study that showed a documentary revealing the different stages and circumstances of the disorder to a number of people was able to positively alter their attitudes towards patients. Viewers expressed a greater intent to interact with patients, and were able to identify the disorder as less dangerous (Penn, Chamberlain and Mueser).

In reality, this disorder is characterized by a lot of heterogeneity, in that it affects people differently and to different degrees. It is not something that is chronic. Though it cannot be fully cured, it is treatable and manageable. Harding and Zahniser suggest that not only can patients perform at all professional levels, but that the work environment can have a therapeutic effect on patients (143). In fact, a study of 130 patients over the course of 10 years has found that 62.7% of patients are able to regain control over symptoms, 56.8% are able to live independently, and 41.4% can be competitively employed (464 Drake, and McHugo).

Psychiatric stigmatization still forms a big threat to patients. It not only affects peoples' perceptions, but also damages the patients' self-esteem, and can keep them from seeking treatment (Tartakovsky). Instead of contributing to an intensification of symptoms, the media and public sphere can start looking at how they can effectively bridge the gap between patients and their surroundings. ●

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IF SAID AKL WERE TO SPEAK

HENRY ZOUGHEIB

It is more than evident that poet and author Henry Zougheib has a profligate curiosity about literature. Driven by his passion and relish for unearthing the mysteries and memories that shape the life and career of many Lebanese intellectuals and pioneers of art and literature, Zougheib embarks on documenting their biographies as if to lift the veil on landmarks that sculpted their path and cast light on their creative activity, thus paying homage to the literary and cultural legacy they have left behind.

To the Series of the Lebanese Memory, Zougheib has added yet another referential book that was the fruit of lengthy conversations he held with the late poet Said Akl over fifty hours. Zougheib harnessed this opportunity to sneak into the intimate space of his friend and quench his thirst and curiosity for his boundless wisdom, inspiring the name of his biography from a book for Said Akl, *If Lebanon were to Speak*. Zougheib's book was issued first in 2010 and a third edition in 2013.

The chapters of the book are tinged with highlights on Akl's childhood in the Beqa'a city of Zahle, his graduation in the realm of literature and his arrival in Beirut where he revolutionized the prevailing literary scene and crafted a new roadmap for poetry. Akl was generous like his father and from his mother he inherited an immense love for beauty and culture. He loved mathematics and wanted to become an engineer but coincidence shuffled him from science to literature. Having read the world's greatest classics, which he stumbled upon in the library of a French officer, he invaded the realm of literature unfazed.

The author touches on Akl's heightened religious awareness since his tender age. Having realized the presence of God in everything and everywhere, Akl grew up cognizant of the importance of the Bible and the Quran and viewed faith and theology through his own lens. *If Said Akl were to Speak* attends to some of the episodes that stirred controversy throughout Akl's life such as his demanding remuneration for his lectures and poetry readings. His poems were published in *Al-Makshouf*, one of Beirut's largest literature magazines, as well as in *Al-Sayyad*, *Lisan al-Hal* and *Al-Jarida* to name but a few. Paradoxically, Akl maintained a special relationship with numbers and used



to enrich his articles with statistics and facts. "Said Akl is a poet that outmatches historians when it comes to facts and politicians when it comes to evidence. He shocks with numbers," said Ghassan Tuweini.

Special attention is accorded to Said Akl's early works from *Bint Yifta'*, a shocking success within Beirut's cultural circles, which was awarded the first prize at the literary league for the rarity and lucidity of its language to *Qadmos*, a masterpiece that was sold out one week after it was published in a luxury edition worth 50 Lebanese pounds, and also *Rindala*, the first Arabic courting (ghazal) piece in the Middle East. Space is dedicated to Akl's friendship with the Rahbani brothers and the mark he left on their perception and understanding of art and life.

Henry Zougheib describes the fifty hours he spent with Said Akl as being 'the richest and most valuable to his mind and his awareness of Lebanon in his entire life.' These words come as no surprise from someone who has interviewed, befriended and lived in the epoch of a giant that sat on the throne of poetry and carried the Lebanese identity in both his spirit and his verses. ●●

I DISLIKE

I Dislike is a children's book depicting the story of little Noura who is of school age yet still dislikes to do the simplest little things asked from her. She never misses a chance to whine over minor stuff such as having to wake up, wash her face and comb her hair or any other daily routines she finds annoying.

How will Noura behave and interact with what she sees and who she meets in school? The answer lies between the lines of the book. *I Dislike* is part of the series *Every Day* issued by Dar Al-Hadaek. A second edition of it was published in 2008. In the book, the author, Dr. Hind Khalife, hopes to persuade children aged 3 to 8 to let go of negativity and complaints and train themselves to see the good side of all the events they encounter. The book is graced with colorful illustrations that are sure to drive home the message and entertain the reader. ♦



AL-BAZAL

SHIA'A IN BEQA'A AND SUNNI IN THE NORTH

The Al-Bazals (sometimes Bazals) are a Lebanese family present mainly in Beqa'a and north Lebanon.

Etymology

In Arabic, Bazal means the corkscrew, which is used to perforate caps and open bottles. Chances are this family has been given its name because their ancestors used to make the tool bazal.

Members

The Al-Bzal (Bazal) family consists of approximately 2550 members. They are distributed in Beqa'a which has a predominantly Shia'a majority and in north Lebanon where a Sunni minority resides. The Bazals are Sunni and the Al-Bazals are Shia'a.

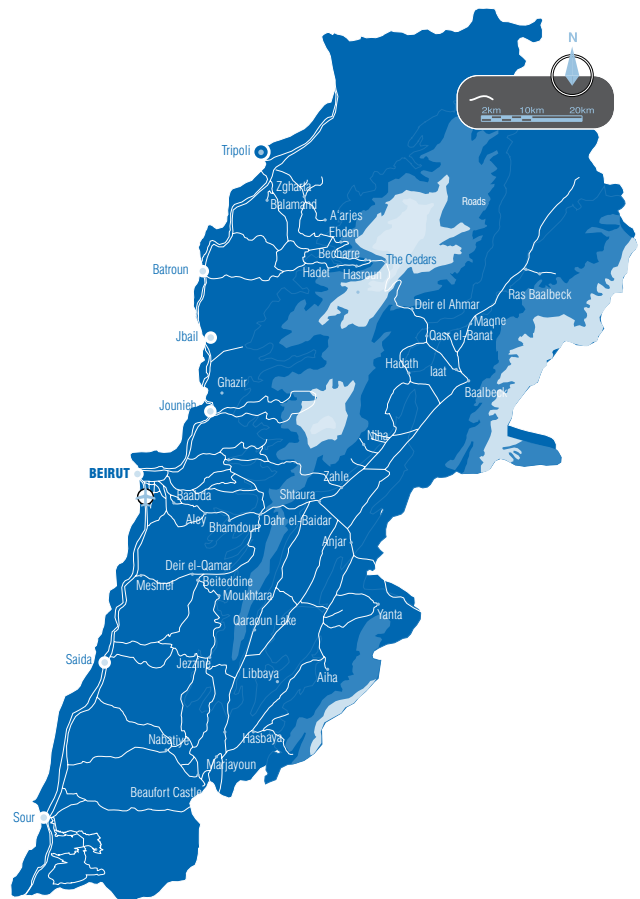
The Al-Bazals

The Al-Bazals make up a majority of 2470 members, more than 2280 of whom are present in the town of Al-Bazalieh in Baalbeck. Meqraq (Baalbeck) has 120 members of the family, Hawsh Sayyed Ali (Hermel) 30 and Hrabta (Baalbeck) 40.

The Bzals

The Bazals do not exceed more than 80 members. They are distributed in the north in the following places:

- Bzal (Akkar): 10
- Nouri (Tripoli): 20
- Haddadine (Tripoli): 35
- Tebbaneh (Tripoli): 15 ●



BZAL

FAMILY DISPUTES

Bzal is one of the remotest towns in Akkar. Like the majority of other Akkarian towns, Bzal is known for its inhabitants' enrollment in the Lebanese Army and the Internal Security Forces.

Etymology

In his book on the origins and interpretation of the names of Lebanese towns and villages, author Anis Fraiha mentions three possible origins for the name Bzal:

- The name is a variation of the Syriac root 'psal', which means sculpture and digging, a fact evidenced by the presence of sculptures in the town
- The name may be derived from the word 'bet zalia', meaning a 'house of bamboo'
- The name may have descended from the root 'bazah', meaning 'to scorn and disdain'

Location

The town of Bzal is located in the Qada'a of Akkar at an altitude of 500 meters above the sea level. It spreads across 800 hectares and is 120 kilometers from Beirut and 30 kilometers from Tripoli. It may be reached via Tripoli, Mennieh, El-Abdeh and Berqayel.

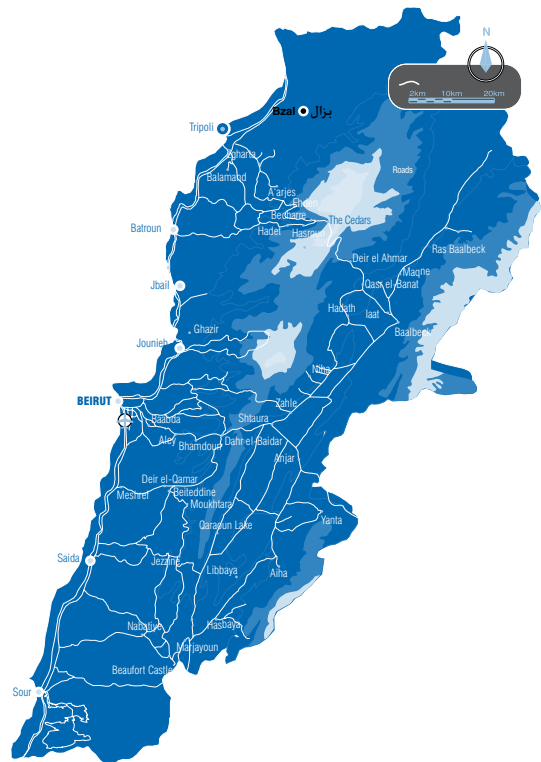
Population and houses

The registered population in the personal status records of the town is estimated at roughly 2500. The residents are distributed in 480 houses and belong to the Sunni community.

Voters

Registered voters amounted to 2032 in 2000, 602 of whom exercised their voting right. In 2009, the number of voters increased to 1456 with 984 casting their ballots. Currently, the electorate consists of 1710 voters. They are distributed among the following families:

- Moussa: 560
- Abdallah: 196
- Othman: 190
- Mohammad: 180
- Taleb: 169
- Hassan: 57
- Deeb: 51
- Mahmoud: 47
- Nassif: 47
- Khodr: 43



Local authorities

The town has a municipal council consisting of 12 members, a 3-member Ikhtiyariah body and a Mukhtar. Its share of revenues from the Independent Municipal Fund stood in 2011 at LBP 162 million, rising to LBP 186 million in 2012.

Educational institutions

Bzal is home to a public middle school. In the scholarly year 2012-2013, the school accommodated 254 students and 28 teachers and staff.

Economic life

In addition to serving in the military, the residents of Bzal rely on agriculture to earn a living. They grow olive trees, fig trees and grapes and keep cows and bees. Some make their living in the town's stone factories.

Problems

The lack of a sewage network in the town leaves its neighborhoods exposed to flows of wastewater. Yet, Bzal's main problem remains the disputes between the town's largest families and their exchange of fire, resulting in deaths and injuries and reinforcing resentment and hostilities between residents. ●

THE PHILIPPINES

A DYNAMIC SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARCHIPELAGO

Officially known as the Republic of the Philippines, this nation is home to a breadth of ethnic groups. Given its rich Spanish colonial history and Southeast Asian locale, Filipino culture and landscape are a fantastic fusion of East and West. From its award-winning beaches to its “Chocolate Hills,” the Philippines has a wealth of attractions to admire.

Location and Area:

The Philippines is an archipelago of islands located in Southeast Asia between the Philippine Sea and the China Sea, east of Vietnam. In total, it has an area of 300,000 square meters.

Population:

Nationals of the Philippines are called “Filipinos.” In July 2014, the population of the Philippines was 107,668,231.

Religion:

Around 82.9% of Filipinos are Catholic, 5% are Muslim, 2.8% are Evangelical, and 4.5% identify themselves as other Christian faiths.

Languages:

The official languages are Filipino and English. There are eight major dialects of Filipino spoken throughout the nation: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango and Pangasinan.

Economy:

With resilient domestic consumption, less reliance on exports, a growing outsourcing industry, and large incoming sums from four- to five- million overseas Filipino workers, the Philippines’ economy has fared better than some of its regional neighbors in the globally turbulent economic and financial climate. During former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s term the Philippines experienced a 4.5% economic growth, which, however, it was coupled with more widespread poverty. Under the current administration, led by President Benigno Aquino, the Philippines saw economic growth yet the unemployment rate remains stagnant at around 7%. Also worryingly, the rate of underemployment is at 20% and 40% of employed Filipinos work in the informal sector. In paradox to its low level of economic development, the Philippines’ stock market was the strongest in Southeast Asia during 2012. The main source of income for the Philippines is the services sector which accounts for 57.2% of the national GDP. Industry accounts for 31.6% and agriculture accounts for 11.2% of the GDP. The GDP per capita is \$4,700. Main exports of the Philippines include

semiconductors and other electronic products, transport equipment, garments, copper products, petroleum products, coconut oil, and fruits. Its main export partner is Japan, with 19% of exports going there. It exports 14.2% to the United States and 11.8% to China.

Culture and Tourist Attractions:

Named after King Philip II of Spain, this Southeast Asian archipelago has a rich colonial history. The Philippines was a Spanish colony for over 300 years from 1521 to 1898. Therefore, unlike other nations in the region, Filipino culture, language, and architecture has been heavily influenced by the Spaniards. As it stands today, the Philippines reflects a unique marriage of Western and Eastern cultures. The Philippines has a wide range of tourist attractions. Some notable attractions include the Banaue Rice Terraces where Ifagu tribes carved farm terraces within mountain ranges 2,000 years ago without modern tools. The terraces appear like large steps climbing up to the sky and are still used for growing rice and vegetables. The famous “Chocolate Hills” are another must-see wonder; on the island of Bohol, where tourists come to marvel at approximately 1,268 symmetrical and same-sized mounds scattered around the area. During the dry season, the grass on these mounds become brown, hence the name “Chocolate Hills.” Other popular attractions are the award-winning beaches located on different islands in this archipelago nation. For tourists feeling adventurous, a boat ride through Puerto Princessa’s underground river is a must. For a thrill, visit the perfectly conical Mayon Volcano, the Philippines’ most active volcano which has erupted over 49 times in the last 400 years.

Political System

The Philippines consists of 80 provinces and 39 chartered cities. It is a representative democracy. The current chief of state, by obtaining 42.1% of votes, is President Benigno Aquino; he also acts as the head of government. Earning 41.6% of votes, the vice president is Jejomar Binay. 🇵🇭

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<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-15521300>

NOVEMBER 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

The extension of Parliament's term until June 20, 2015 and the declaration by the Minister of Health of the names of restaurants and shops violating health codes were the two primary events marking November 2014. Presidential vacuum remained unfilled and no changes were seen in the situation of the kidnapped soldiers and policemen except for some political statements and ground movements. Below is the daily digest of news:

November 1

- Qatari envoy Ahmad El-Khatib receives from An-Nusra Front a set of demands for the release of the kidnapped soldiers and policemen including three propositions at the forefront of which is the release of ten inmates from Roumieh prison in exchange for each kidnapped member.

- Minister of Justice Ashraf Rifi visits his bedbound bodyguard Deeb Al-Laheeb who was accused of transporting money to the kidnappers of the Lebanese soldiers in the outskirts of Ersal and says "why do they not raid the armories in Jabal Mohsen and the Southern Suburbs rather than in Bab El-Tebbaneh?"

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil tours the southern border towns in Rmeish, Ain Ebl and Debel, noting that Lebanon is facing the threats of both from Israel and ISIS.

- Nazek Hariri emphasizes in her recorded speech on Rafic Hariri's 70th birthday commemorated at the Al-Amin Mosque that the Sunni are moderate Muslims, stressing her commitment to rights and justice.

- Gunmen steal LBP 500 million from the Jammal Trust Bank's branch in Baalbeck as two bank employees were transferring the funds to the Central Bank branch in the city.

November 2

- The An-Nusra Front issues a statement of the demands it had submitted to the Qatari envoy.

- A delegation from the Beirut National Gathering meets Tripoli's dignitaries at the residence of Mufti Malek Shaar in the presence of Justice Minister Ashraf Rifi.

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil tours the northern border towns of Rmah, Shadra, Qbayyat and Andaqt and reiterates the Free Patriotic Movement's rejection of the extension of Parliament's term.

- In his talk with Reuters, Lebanese Forces Leader Samir Geagea calls on Aoun to agree on a third presidential candidate, ruling out holding elections soon.

- MP Nawwaf Moussawi lashes out at Minister of Justice Ashraf Rifi and urges him to serve justice, not weigh it down.

- Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah says in his speech that had he not intervened in Syria, ISIS would have subjected us to the same terror and slaughters inflicted on the Al Abou Nemr clans in Iraq.

November 3

- Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah attends Ashoura ceremony in person and reveals for the first time in his speech that Hezbollah nominates General Michel Aoun for presidency and that it has objections to neither parliamentary elections nor the extension of Parliament's term. Nasrallah urges the Future Movement to engage in dialogue, praising the stand of the Sunni forces and the movement on the most recent events in Tripoli.

- The Special Tribunal for Lebanon postpones the trial of Al-Jadeed Television until 2015.

- Minister of Public Health Wael Bou Faour demotes a number of private hospitals for manipulating hospitalization bills at the expense of the ministry. He reveals that the bills have been inflated between 48.5% and 55.8%.

- The Future Movement announces that it will participate and vote in the extension of Parliament's term session.

November 4

- Lebanese Army Commander Jean Qahwaji attends the signing ceremony of the USD 3 billion arms deal between France and Saudi Arabia in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

- Shia's Muslims take part in the Ashura processions in a number of Lebanese regions and Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah says that the rockets of the Islamic resistance would reach all of occupied Palestine should Israel decide to wage a war against Lebanon, adding that victory over Takfiris is inevitable.

- Lebanese Forces Leader Samir Geagea suggests holding the presidential elections and postponing the constitutional deadlines for parliamentary elections in Wednesday's session. He adds that Nasrallah's submission of Aoun's name aims to open the search for a third presidential candidate.

- The Phalanges Party boycotts the extension of Parliament's term session.

General Michel Aoun renews his objection to the extension of Parliament's term come what may.

November 5

- Parliament session concludes with 95 MPs approving the extension of the legislature's term until June 20, 2015. The session was boycotted by the Phalanges Party and the Change and Reform Bloc. The Lebanese Forces, Frangieh's MPs, the Amal Movement, Hezbollah and the Future Movement voted for the extension while the two Tashnag MPs attended but objected to the extension.

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil says after the Change and Reform Bloc meeting that the Bloc's MPs will not sign the decree extending Parliament's term.

- Lebanese Forces Leader Samir Geagea bashes MP Michel Aoun during his press conference slamming him as the hero of losing battles and defending the Lebanese Forces' position on the extension of Parliament's term.

- Patriarch al-Rai deems the extension of Parliament's term as unconstitutional.

- Civil society activists protest at the extension of Parliament's term at the entrance to Parliament.

- Minister of the Interior and Municipalities Nouhad Mashnouq responds saying that the extension took place for security and not technical reasons.

- Poet George Jerdaq dies at the age of 83.

November 6

- The Cabinet convenes and approves the extension of Parliament's term decree amid the objection of nine ministers representing the Free Patriotic Movement, the Phalanges Party and former President Michel Suleiman, yet the decree will be considered effective in five days. An advance payment worth LBP 54 billion is assigned to the Higher Relief Committee to compensate for the damage incurred during the clashes and bombings and the Cabinet defers discussion on the mobile phone operators' item.

- Lebanon pays its share worth 29.3 million Euros (USD 36.7 million) of STL's funding for 2014 and the tribunal asserts that it can prosecute legal persons.

- The European Union regrets that the term of Lebanese Parliament has been extended.

- Speaker Nabih Berri quoted as saying that the extension is the lesser of two evils, even if it lasts 30 years.

November 7

- PM Tamam Salam receives a delegation of the residents from the border town of Al-Toufail and promises to help them to return to their town.

- PM Tamam Salam and Christian and Muslim dignitaries attend a conference entitled 'The Family and the Challenges of the Century' in Rabwi on the invitation of Greek Catholic Patriarch Gregorios III Laham.

- 'I do not trust MPs and I will talk to those commanding them because their decisions are external,' says Patriarch al-Rai.

- MP Walid Jumblat meets Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow.

- Former PM Najib Mikati visits MP Suleiman Frangieh in Bneshai.

- Former President Michel Suleiman visits former PM Fouad Seniora.

November 8

- Syrian President Bashar Assad receives retired Brigadier General Jamil Sayyed in Damascus.

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil makes a tour in Western Beqa'a accompanied by a Free Patriotic Movement delegation.

- Minister of the Interior and Municipalities Nouhad Mashnouq chairs a delegation heading for Cairo to discuss means of improving military and security cooperation against terrorism.

November 9

- Former President Michel Suleiman inspects the city of Tripoli and visits its dignitaries hoping that the events of Tripoli will pave way for the election of a President of the Republic.

- King Abdullah Bin Hussein receives former PM Saad Hariri in Jordan.

- Defected soldier Omar Khaled Chamtiyeh turns himself in to the Army Intelligence after having pledged allegiance to An-Nusra Front.

November 10

- Minister of Defense Samir Moqbel announces that the deliberations over the Iranian military donation have been postponed until next week.

- The Free Syrian Army urges the release of its commander Colonel Abdullah Rifai who was arrested in Eرسال.

- Patriarch al-Rai calls on lawmakers to end the presidential vacuum and assume their responsibilities to that end. His remarks came during the 48th meeting of the Council of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops.

November 11

- Grand Mufti Abdul Latif Deryan visits the Higher Shia'a Council and the Mashyakhat al-Akl stating "we share the same fate and Israel is our common enemy."

- The law on Parliament's term extension law published in the Official Gazette.

November 12

- Following Wednesday's parliamentary gathering, Speaker Nabih Berri is quoted as saying that there are positive signs regarding the presidency of the republic.

- Head of the Constitutional Council Issam Suleiman holds a press conference where he pledges not to disrupt the quorum of the parliamentary sessions and to lawfully tackle the appeal against the law on term extension law.

- Families of the kidnapped soldiers and policemen meet the Turkish Ambassador.

- MP Marwan Hamadeh tells Voix du Liban that neither Aoun nor Geagea are likely to become president.

November 13

- Minister of Public Health Wael Bou Faour continues to unveil names of the restaurants and supermarkets where products non-conforming to health standards were found.

- Ministers Boutros Harb and Gebran Bassil have a dispute in the Cabinet over mobile phone concessions.

- A Hezbollah delegation visits General Michel Aoun in Rabieh and stresses that his nomination for presidency is anchored by conviction, not out of gratitude for his position towards the resistance. Hussein Khalil deems the extension of Parliament's term as a petty act.

- Free Patriotic Movement MPs appeal against the law extending Parliament's term before the Constitutional Council and MP Ibrahim Kanaan notes that security reason are not an excuse to undermine democracy.

- Accusatory Body in Beirut issues a decision to release Bahij Bou Hamzeh, the former aide of MP Walid Jumblat who has been detained for four months over financial accounts' case at one of the Lebanese banks. However, Bou Hamzeh remains in prison over other cases.

- Grand Mufti Abdul Latif Deryan visits Maronite Patriarch Mar Bechara Boutos al-Rai stressing that if no president is elected soon, Lebanon will be open to all options.

- US Ambassador to Lebanon David Hale reiterates from Bkerki the need to elect a president and schedule a date for parliamentary elections.

- Minister of Public Health Wael Bou Faour continues his food safety campaign and replies to his critics saying "let the political and commercial immorality stop."

- A Lebanese Army patrol comes under attack in the outskirts of Eرسال leaving an officer and several soldiers wounded. The An-Nusra Front states the explosives that targeted the Army were planted by Hezbollah.

- Minister of the Interior and Municipalities Nouhad Mashnouq announces during a conference addressing the views of people on how to reform the security sector that 45% of thefts and kidnappings are committed by Syrian refugees, noting that 35% of residents on Lebanese territory are non-Lebanese.

November 15

- Heavy rain causes power cuts during the night and leaves a number of streets flooded.
- Minister of Justice Ashraf Rifi reiterates during his tour in Bab Tebbaneh that he supports undoing the Military Court and the Justice Council and objects to arresting the residents of Bab Tebbaneh for growing beards.
- The Lebanese Army cracks down on Al-Dar Al-Wasia in Beqa'a and the armed fugitives from the Jaafar clan break into a house in the town of Btedaai and kill its residents, a husband and wife from the Farkhri family, after stealing their car in an attempt to escape.

November 16

- Families of the kidnapped soldiers and policemen burn tires in front of the governmental palace after a wife of one of the captives received a phone call from ISIS threatening to slay seven soldiers if the ruling to send five Saudi inmates in Roumieh to life in prison was put into action.
- MP Suleiman Frangieh says in his interview on Al-Jadeed television that the strong president is he who has a Christian legitimacy.
- The March 14 Forces and the Progressive Socialist Party win three of four seats at the Beirut Bar versus one seat for the Free Patriotic Movement.
- Ceremony held in BIEL to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the death of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

November 17

- Families of the kidnapped soldiers and policemen block the road in Downtown, Beirut following threats from ISIS to kill their sons, but reopen it after reassurances from Minister Wael Bou Faour.
- PM Tamam Salam addresses the Lebanese nationals in the UAE saying that the presidential election is currently the main concern of the government.
- The committee tasked with devising an electoral law convenes at the Speaker's residence in Ain Tineh and will have one month to finish its work.
- The Special Tribunal for Lebanon begins to hear the testimony of MP Marwan Hamadeh who blames the assassination of Rafic Hariri on illegitimate weapons, noting that Syria sought to dominate Lebanon.

- Minister of Public Works and Transport Ghazi Zeaiter says during a press conference that the ministry does not have the sole responsibility for street flooding and directed the blame at other ministries, municipalities and residents.
- Zeaiter announces the formation of a crisis cell to address the issue.
- General Michel Aoun calls on Speaker Nabih Berri to convene a parliamentary session to clarify the content of Article 24 of the Constitution on equal representation.
- Minister of the Interior and Municipalities Nouhad Mashnouq chairs the Security Council meeting in Saida and announces that the kidnappers are controlling the fate of families.

November 18

- MP Marwan Hamadeh continues his STL testimony revealing that Rafic Hariri returned from Syria displeased at how Syrian President Bashar Assad forced him to extend the term of Lebanese President Emile Lahoud. Hamadeh adds that Syria pressured Rafic Hariri to sell his shares in an anti-Syrian An-Nahar newspaper.
- MP Walid Jumblat tweets that he will appear before the STL if it ever summons him to testify.
- Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah meets Defense Minister Samir Moqbel for the first time and emphasizes Hezbollah's full support to the Lebanese Army every step of the way.
- The March 14 Forces and The Progressive Socialist Party and the March 14-aligned students emerged as winners in the student elections at the American University of Beirut winning eight seats against six for the Amal Movement, Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement. The Independent Secular Group came third gaining four seats.
- Beirut Governor orders the closure of Beirut's infamous slaughterhouse.
- Minister of the Interior and Municipalities reassures that the security situation is under control, cautioning of what may be awaiting the region and of its possible repercussions on Lebanon.
- PM Tamam Salam meets the Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Rashid.
- EDL contract workers block the road in protest against the delay in receiving their salaries and Labor Minister Sejaan Qazzi mediates to reopen the road.

November 19

- Speaker Nabih Berri adjourns the 15th parliamentary session scheduled to elect a president until 10 December due to lack of quorum.
- Minister of Public Health Wael Bou Faour unveils a new list of non-conforming restaurants and food markets.
- Lebanese Forces Leader Samir Geagea accuses Hezbollah of disrupting the election arguing that their nomination of General Michel Aoun is meant to cover up this disruption.
- MP Michel Aoun says in a talk on MTV that he is ready to face his Christian rival, Lebanese Forces' Chief Samir Geagea, in a presidential vote in Parliament. In response, MP Walid Jumblat says 'I respect Aoun's suggestion but we have the right to compete.'
- MP Marwan Hamadeh proceeds with his testimony before the STL and touches on the events that surrounded the extension of Emile Lahoud's term and the Syrian threats to both Hariri and Jumblat.
- The STL will resume hearing political testimonies on December 3.
- The committee tasked with devising an electoral law convenes in the absence of some of its members and agrees to resume meetings on Tuesday.
- In an interview with Kalam El-Nas talk show, former President Amine Gemayel notes that his candidacy is a fait accompli, stressing that he supports coordination with the Syrian regime to resolve security problems and facilitate the return of Syrian refugees from Lebanon.
- Al-Jadeed television reports on a mad cow-linked disease at Al-Maqassed Hospital.

November 21

- PM Tamam Salam issues a circular cancelling all the official celebrations to commemorate Lebanon's Independence Day amid presidential vacuum.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil holds a reception in honor of the diplomatic corps on the occasion of Independence Day.
- The Constitutional Council convenes without issuing any decision regarding the appeal against the law on the extension of Parliament's term.
- The Phalanges Party commemorates the assassination of Pierre Gemayel in Bekfaya and former President Amine Gemayel announces the establishment of a university and a garden carrying his name.
- A storm, Micha, hits Lebanon and causes heavy rain and snow.

November 22

- The Phalanges Party celebrates the anniversary of its official establishment and former President Amine Gemayel urges a dialogue session to elect a president.
- PM Tamam Salam receives an invitation from French President François Hollande to visit France.

November 23

- A Hezbollah delegation extends condolences to the Fakhri family in the town of Btedaai.
- Activists from Zahle organize virtual elections in the city in a symbolic movement to reject extension of Parliament's term. The elections were called for by the Free Patriotic Movement.
- Former singer Fadl Shaker says in an audio recording that he has never assaulted the Army and the Palestinian forces deny the presence of both Fadl Shaker and Chadi Moulawi in the Ain El-Helwi camp.

November 24

- Minister of Economy Alain Hakim issues a decision shutting down a number of dairy factories for violating health regulations and Minister of Industry says that operating dairy factories will require from now on prior licensing. Ministers of Public Health and Tourism hold a press conference noting that reforming the health sector is tied to reforms across all sectors.
- A Russian parliamentary delegation arrives in Lebanon and meets Lebanese officials.
- Former President Michel Suleiman receives a papal medal in Vatican.
- The General Security arrests pro-Hezbollah singer Ali Barakat for his anti-Saudi ballads.

November 25

- Hezbollah brokers a swap deal to free one of their fighters Imad Ayyadin in exchange for two Free Syrian Army rebels held by the party. Sheikh Nabil Qarouk states that the joy can only be complete after the release of all the captives.
- Drug Control Office in Beirut announces the arrest of Bulgarian national Karbozov, one of the world's most notorious producers of Captagon, whilst travelling from Lebanon to Jordan.
- The work of the committee tasked with devising a new electoral law is still in its initial stages.

- The Constitutional Council convenes under complete quorum without issuing any decision.
- Lebanese Forces Leader Samir Geagea announces following his meeting with a delegation from the Fakhri family that the political parties have ceased covering up the perpetrators in the Btedaai crime, assuring that they will be prosecuted.

November 26

- US State Department cautions US nationals not to travel to Lebanon for security reasons.
- PM Tamam Salam chairs a meeting for the crisis cell tackling the file of the kidnapped soldiers and policemen and reiterates the continuity of negotiations to release them. Families of the captives threaten to escalate their protest starting on Friday and to block all entries to Beirut, urging Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah to intervene to free their sons.
- Lebanese Army raids weapons' caches in Saida belonging to the followers of Salafist cleric Ahmad el-Assir.

November 27

- The Cabinet approves the formation of a food security committee and adjourns deliberations over licensing new universities after the Progressive Socialist Party and the Phalanges voiced their opposition.
- Former PM Saad Hariri supports during his interview on Kalam el-Nas talk show dialogue with Hezbollah to defuse the tension and agree over a president. Hariri does not consider Aoun to be a consensual candidate.
- The Internal Security Forces seizes containers at the Beirut Port carrying eight cars stolen in France and shipped to Lebanon. Cooperation between Lebanon and France thwarts the attempt and results in arresting members of the car stealing and smuggling network.
- The An-Nusra Front threatens to execute one of the kidnapped soldiers in 24 hours and demands the release of Joumana Hmayyeh as a sign that the government is willing to carry out serious negotiations.
- Former President Michel Suleiman meets his French counterpart François Hollande in France.

November 28

- Families of the kidnapped soldiers and policemen block the Saifi road but the security forces reopen it by force acting on the orders of the government. 'The roads shall not be blocked anymore,' says Minister of the Interior and Municipalities Nouhad Mashnouq. The families resume their blocking of roads during the night but withdraw upon hearing that An-Nusra Front has retracted its threat.
 - Poet Said Akl dies at the age of 102.
 - The Constitutional Council rejects the appeal against the extension of Parliament's term arguing that while the extension does contradict the preamble of the Constitution, there are exceptional circumstances that render it justifiable.
 - PM Tamam Salam attends the opening of Beirut's 58th International Arab Book Fair and calls on restoring the standing that politics has lost and electing a new president.
 - Former president Michel Suleiman meets former PM Saad Hariri at his residence in Paris.
 - Single Criminal Judge in Beirut issues a decision sentencing Bahij Bou Hamzeh to two years in prison and forcing him to pay USD 3.4 million to Safa Sporting Club.
- ## November 29
- Sheikh Mostafa Houjeiry reassures in press talks that the execution of soldier Ali al-Bazzal has been postponed.
 - Families of the kidnapped soldiers and policemen gather in Saifi and offer flowers to citizens and members of the Internal Security Forces.
 - MP Nahiya meets the Palestinian Security Committee and security officials in Saida to discuss the security situation in Ain el-Helwi camp.
- ## November 30
- Patriarch al-Rai chairs the funeral mass held for the Lebanese diva Sabah at the Saint George Church.
 - Labor Minister Sejaan Qazzi unveils dialogue between the Phalanges Party and Hezbollah.
 - The Lebanese Army dismantles two explosive devices, one in Ersal and the other near the Lebanese University in Hadath.
 - PM Tamam Salam heads for Belgium to persuade it not to withdraw its troops from south Lebanon. ●

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY- LEBANON

THE DENNIEH SECURITY INCIDENTS TERRORISTS OR BELIEVERS?

The clashes that broke out on the outskirts of Dinnieh at the end of 1999 constituted a crucial - military, political and religious- turning point in the history of Lebanon, as they marked the first-ever military confrontation between the Lebanese Army and the Takfiri groups. Several clashes have followed: in Majdal Anjar, Tripoli, Saida and most recently in Ersal in August 2014. What happened on the outskirts of Dinnieh, how the crisis ended and whether the involved militants were terrorists or Muslims are all questions addressed below.

Beginning

On the night of Sunday October 24, 1999, an unknown person threw a stick of dynamite at the Mar Georgius Church in the Zahirieh area of Tripoli. The Lebanese Army arrested a number of suspects from among Islamist extremists but they were later released due to lack of evidence. Subsequently, in November, the Church of Mar Mikhael in Qebbeh, Tripoli, was targeted with a hand grenade. Once again, the Lebanese Army launched a series of crackdowns in the area in search of suspected Islamists, but the suspects ran away seeking shelter in Jurd Al-Njas, a barren area in the high part of Dinnieh.

The fugitives contacted their comrades to back them up so that the Army would not hunt them down. There were 12 fugitives in all who had obtained their weapons from a man named Bassam Kanj. During Ramadan, the group increased to 150, some of whom had joined during the last ten days of the holy month. They had received military training with the Lebanese Army in the run-up to the potential confrontations, the same Army which was tracking their movements in preparation for the final attack. The militant groups were led by Bassam Kanj, Abdul Hakim Al-Jazzar and Abdullah Hazim.

Prior to the clashes

As the number of Islamist recruits deployed in the barren areas increased and their movements between the fringes of Dinnieh and the city of Tripoli became more frequent, there were reports in the news that the militants might be gearing up for action and efforts began to find a solution for these groups in order to avoid confrontation with the Army. Islamist authorities convened an expanded meeting on December 30, 1999 at the Islamic Jama'a headquarters in Tripoli, in the presence of the Islamic Jama'a, the Islamic Unification Movement, the Salafist Islamic movements and a

number of Islamic leaderships. It was agreed to form a delegation composed of MP Khaled Daher, Sheikh Bilal Shaaban, the Islamic Unification Movement Secretary General, and Sheikh Dai al-Islam Al-Shahhal, head of the Salafist Jama'a, and to dispatch it to Jurd Al-Njas to convince the militants to turn themselves in.

The delegation headed to the area where the militants were staying and started negotiating with them. Negotiations were due to be completed on the second day, before the expiry of the ultimatum set by the Army on Saturday at noon.

Trigger

On Friday, December 31, 1999, the delegation continued its meetings with the militants represented by Abdullah Hazim. Meantime, the Lebanese Army was enforcing a security clampdown across all Lebanese regions on the eve of the New Year festivities. Part of the security plan entailed setting up a checkpoint near the Al-Hidaya Wal Ihsan Association's radio, which belonged to Sheikh Al-Shahhal, in the town of Assoun in Dinnieh. At 3pm, while Major Miled Al-Naddaf was examining the checkpoint, a van transporting gunmen under the command of Bassam Kanj attacked the site, shooting dead four soldiers and abducting Al-Naddaf and his bodyguard, Master Sergeant Balabel Balhas. The news spread quickly and Hazim presumed that while MP Khaled Daher was holding talks with him, the Army was getting ready for the battle. Having been accused of collusion with the Army against the militants, the delegation was detained and stripped of its devices and the guns of its bodyguards. A number of Islamic movements embarked on mediatory efforts to release the abductees but the militants agreed only to let go of members of the delegation while the officer and his bodyguard remained captives. Faced with the intransigence



of the militants, the Army blocked all mediation channels and resolved to launch a military operation.

Military Operation

The Army began a large-scale operation during which Maghaweer troops- Lebanese Commando Regiment- disembarked from military helicopters in Jurd Al-Njas and engaged with the militants. Army troops continued to pursue militants until Saturday, January 1, 2000 but the manhunt only resulted in the arrest of eight men. The rest escaped, including the most powerful group of Bassam Kanj and Abdullah Hazim, which was able to reach the town of Kfarhabou- a predominantly Orthodox town at the entrance to Dennieh- by Sunday noon. They broke into the house of Sergeant Jean Yazbek who was detained with his pregnant wife and mother-in-law. Another group headed to the house of Jean's brother, George Yazbek, and held him hostage with his wife and three children. An army force hurried to the town while the Army Command briefed a number of Tripoli's Islamic leaders on the latest developments. Former MP Asaad Harmoush took the initiative to call the militants who had demanded to be allowed to move, with their captives, to Ouyoun Al-Samak. However, the Army insisted that the militants should first release the hostages and surrender their weapons. The failure of negotiations forced the Army to crack down on the two houses and clash again with the militants.

Outcome

The confrontation resulted in 14 fatalities among the militants, including Abdullah Hazim and Bassam Kanj and 11 among the Lebanese Army, including Major Al-Naddaf, who was executed by the militants. Four civilians- Jean Yazbek's wife and her mother, Mahmoud Al-Shaqeeq from Bqarsouna and a woman who used to work on a

farm in Kfarhabou- were also killed. Eight militants were arrested and another four remained on the run.

Crime before the Justice Council

The severity of the crime entailed its referral to the Justice Council pursuant to Decree no. 2081 dated January 5, 2001. However, the Council refrained from delivering any judgments in the case for several reasons, foremost among which was that the judges were fearing for their own lives and subsequently were reluctant to render decisions. The judges kept adjourning sessions amidst an atmosphere that suggested an amnesty would soon be granted to the suspects, especially since Islamic authorities denied that the suspects had been planning to target the Army, but instead saw the suspects merely as faithful Muslims who, following in the footsteps of the Sunni of the Prophet, set up a camp in celebration of Ramadan. They argued that the misunderstanding and the Army's wish to resolve the issue speedily and halt negotiations had led to clashes and to the use of violence while the suspects were fighting the Army.

Amnesty

Following the parliamentary elections of 2005, Parliament approved on July 19 Law no. 677 granting amnesty to the Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea. The 12 suspects in the Dennieh and Majdal Anjar clashes were also pardoned pursuant to Law no. 678 dated July 19, 2005. They were released on July 22, 2005 – after five years, seven months and 23 days- and returned to Tripoli where they were given a hero's welcome. Some are of the opinion that this was the first sign of the leniency that led Islamic movements to grow and expand in contempt both of the State and of the Army, especially when one takes into consideration that political support for these movements resulted in their being granted an amnesty even before they had been convicted. ●●

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY- ARAB WORLD

THE LAUNCH OF THE FATAH MOVEMENT, THE FIRST PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT DEDICATED TO ARMED STRUGGLE AGAINST ISRAELI OCCUPATION, TOOK PLACE ON JANUARY 1, 1965

The Fatah movement is part and parcel of the Palestinian political spectrum and the largest faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Its launch on January 1, 1965, is a date that marked the official initiation of the Palestinian revolution. By announcing its first military communiqué, which was issued by the General Command of its armed wing, Al-Asifah (The Storm), the Fatah Movement launched military action against Israeli occupation through the Eilaboun operation, where Ahmad Moussa Al-Dalaki died, thus becoming the first martyr of the Palestinian revolution.

The principles espoused by Fatah establish that Palestine is a land for all Palestinians; it is an Arab land that all Arab Brethren should join to liberate.

The movement was established by Yasser Arafat and a group of his comrades in 1959. Through its primary media platform, Filastinouna (Our Palestine), a periodical issued in Beirut under the management of Toufic Khoury, Fatah undertook the mission of introducing itself and disseminating its principles. It attracted many revolutionary groups before launching its armed struggle in 1965 when the movement tried to blow up one of Eilaboun's main pipelines, which Israel was using to steal Arab water by diverting the course of the Jordan River towards Tiberias' water tank.

The launch of the armed struggle in January 1965 constituted the true birth of the modern Palestinian resistance after the Nakba (catastrophe). It restored the image of the Palestinian identity and national personality and drew attention to the rightful cause of the Palestinians and to its distinct standing among all the movements of liberation around the world. Fatah summarized its goals as follows:

Liberating Palestine, putting an end to the Israeli settlement and realizing the intrinsic rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination, an inalienable and non-negotiable right acknowledged and affirmed by the International Community, its right to establish an independent and sovereign state on the liberated Palestinian land, with Jerusalem as its capital and the right of Palestinian refugees to return and to be compensated, according to the UN charter and the General Assembly's resolution no. 194.

The struggle stems from the right of the Palestinian people to resist occupation and to fight against settlement, expulsion, deportation and racial discrimination, a right enshrined within international laws and charters.

The Fatah movement revolved its strategy around the Palestinian people and its struggle and the fact that it has no alternatives to its land; hence, the movement mobilized efforts across all fields to affirm Palestine's independent national personality and consolidate its identity.

The Palestinian people have a clear identity and a sense of belonging. They have been struggling for roughly a century in order to preserve their land and national identity and to liberate their land from occupation and settlement. The Arab Palestinians

are a unified entity both within the country and in the diasporas.

The Fatah movement is driven by the fact that the Palestinian people are an Arab people and an integral part of the Arab nation.

Palestine is the Holy Land for all three religions; Islam is the religion of the majority of Palestinians and all other religions are accorded equal sanctity and respect. The Fatah movement prohibits all forms discrimination based on religion, doctrines or level of piety among Palestinians and respects the freedom of worship.

The Fatah movement seeks always to develop and strengthen its international relations and to widen its circle of friends and allies, strategically abiding by the International Law and the UN Charter. In its foreign relationships, Fatah draws on the fact that it is a national liberation movement countering occupation, premising its popular and official activity on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and return to Palestine. It is also based on the protection safeguarded by the International Humanitarian Law, particularly the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention concerned with the protection of civilians in times of war and under foreign occupation as well as on the provisions of the International Law, which affirmed the right of peoples to resist occupation and to struggle for their freedom, independence and self-determination.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the Fatah movement has been facing numerous challenges. With the onset of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, the return to armed struggle and commando operations became a hard equation for the Fatah movement command, particularly after the political negotiations it had brokered with Israel, from the Madrid Conference of 1991 to all the subsequent agreements, including the Oslo Accord and its ensuing security obligations. Because of his elevated symbolism in the eyes of Palestinians, the death of the movement's leader, Yasser Arafat, constituted a major turning point in the path of Fatah and in the national Palestinian path in general. However, one of the toughest blows dealt to Fatah was its defeat in the 2006 legislative elections against its primary rival, Hamas. No sooner had Fatah swallowed the blow than Hamas took over the Gaza strip in 2007. As a result, voices were raised within the Fatah movement, at various levels, urging the need to convene the Fatah conference, which had been absent for years. The conference lent itself to restoring the efficiency of the movement and to renewing its command and unity under the chairmanship of "Abou Mazen". ●

REAL ESTATE PRICES- NOVEMBER 2014

As was the case in the past few months, the real estate market recorded a slight recovery in November 2014, which helped revive the sector after a period of stagnation. The fear of a potential rise in prices in the future and the Syrians' interest in acquiring property in Lebanon amidst the foggy prospects of the Syrian crisis after four years of war are thought to have fueled momentum in the market.

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the prices of some estates and apartments sold in November 2014.

Prices of some estates sold in November 2014			Table 1
Region	Area (m ²)	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Ramlet Bayda, Spinneys	1,100	6,930,000	6,300
Bachoura	250	1,250,000	5,000
Ashrafieh (Hotel Dieu)	420	2,940,000	7,000
Saqiyet Janzeer	820	6,560,000	8,000
Baabda			
Hazmieh	600	960,000	1,600
Hadath	850	1,912,500	2,250
Baabda	1,500	2,100,000	1,400
Furn Chebbak	750	2,475,000	3,300
Matn			
Hayek Roundabout	840	2,100,000	2,500
Broummana, Mar Chaaya	1,900	950,000	500
Sin El-Fil, Horsh Tabet	630	2,331,000	3,700
Antelias	920	5,980,000	6,500
Aley			
Aramoun	1,100	770,000	700
Kessrouan			
Ghazir	1,050	2,667,000	2,540
Ballounneh	850	637,500	750
Faraya	1,500	195,000	130
Ajaltoun	1000	800,000	800

Source: Compiled by Information International- November 2014

Prices of some apartments sold in November 2014			Table 2
Region	Area (m ²)	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Ras Beirut	165	412,500	2,500
Verdun	270	1,012,500	3,750
Mar Elias (Chehade)	150	277,500	1,850
Hamra	180	576,000	3,200
Saqiyet Janzeer	175	577,500	3,300
Ain Tineh	200	760,000	3,800
Corniche Al-Mazraa, Abdul Nasser	160	312,000	1,950
Batrakiyyeh	120	264,000	2,200
Ashrafieh, Sioufi	145	326,250	2,250
Ashrafieh, Geitawi	190	380,000	2,000
Baabda			
Ain Roummaneh	100	200,000	2000
Hazmieh, Mar Taqla	220	517,000	2,350
Hazmieh, Brazilia	350	752,500	2,150
Chiyyah, Maroun Misk	150	150,000	1,000
Furn Chebbak	160	320,000	2,000
Hadath	180	270,000	1,500
Matn			
Mansourieh	300	390,000	1,300
Rabieh	350	980,000	2,800
Broummana	130	195,000	1,500
Ain Saadeh	230	471,500	2,050
Dekwaneh	120	144,000	1,200
Aley			
Khaldeh	130	208,000	1,600
Doha Aramoun	220	279,400	1,270
Bshamoun (Madares)	150	195,000	1,300
Choueifat (Amrousiyeh)	100	100,000	1,000
Aramoun	180	203,400	1,130
Kessrouan			
Zouk Mikhael	125	143,250	1,150
Adonis	160	227,200	1,420
Jounieh, Ghadir	200	300,000	1,500
Ballounneh	175	245,000	1,400
Zouq Mosbeh	135	182,250	1,350

Source: Compiled by Information International- November 2014

Global Military Expenditure

- **USD 112 billion** is China's military spending in 2013 up by 40% from 2010.
- **11.6%** is the increase in the total Asian defense spending in 2013 compared to 2010.
- **USD 86.2 billion** is Russia's military spending in 2013 up by 30% from 2010.
- **USD 600 billion** is the US military spending in 2013, which accounted for 38% of the total military spending in the world.
- **USD 59.6 billion** is the Saudi military spending in 2013 up by 8.6% from 2012 and 2013. Saudi Arabia has now the fourth largest military budget beating the UK and France which spent USD 57 billion and USD 52.4 billion respectively.
- Military expenditure refers to all government spending on military forces and activities, including salaries and benefits, operational expenses, arms and equipment purchases, military construction, research and development, and central administration, command and support.



Beirut International Airport

Rafic Hariri International Airport Traffic- November 2014

Passenger traffic at the Rafic Hariri International Airport recorded a decline of 23.2% or 127,843 passengers in November 2014 compared to October. However, the number of passengers increased by 3.4% compared to the same period in 2013. Table 1 illustrates the Rafic Hariri International Airport traffic in November 2014 compared to October 2014 and November 2013.

Rafic Hariri International Airport traffic in November 2014 compared to October 2014 and November 2013

Table 1

Traffic	October 2014	November 2014	November 2013	% of change October/ November 2014	% of change November 2013/ 2014
Arriving airplanes	2,834	2,377	2,404	-16.1	-1.1
Departing airplanes	2,834	2,374	2,401	-16.2	-1.1
Total no. of airplanes	5,668	4,751	4,805	-16.1	-1.1
Arriving passengers	259,275	202,609	193,931	-21.9	+4.4
Departing passengers	289,378	218,126	213,000	-24.6	+2.4
Transit passengers	1,025	1,100	938	+7.3	+17.3
Total no. of passengers	549,678	421,835	407,869	-23.3	+3.4
Imported goods (per ton)	4,221.6	4,120	5,421.5	-2.4	-24
Exported goods (per ton)	2,966	2,715	3,295.5	-8.4	-17.6
Total amount of goods	7,187.6	6,835	8,717	-4.9	-21.5

Source: Information International based on the Directorate General of Aviation

Stats & Numbers

Publications

- **LBP 5 million** is the annual subscription fee paid by the Beirut Municipality to a Lebanese newspaper.
- **LBP 600 million** is the worth of the credits allocated to the Prime Minister's Office under the newly-introduced Confidential Expenses clause.
- **LBP 4 billion** is the annual cost of recruiting 250 Second Inspectors at the General Security.
- **USD 58.3 million** is the estimated cost of the Jal El-Dib's intersection tunnel, including USD 20 million for land acquisition.
- **USD 100,000** is the cost of completion of an 850 m² office space to be used as headquarters for the Directorate General for Political Affairs and Refugees.
- **LBP 30 billion** is the estimated cost of the parliamentary elections including LBP 8 billion for the heads and clerks at polling stations.

Publications by Information International (in Arabic):

- 1- Salaries and Remunerations in the Public Sector
- 2- Public Seaside Properties
- 3- Lebanon's Parliamentary History 1920-2000
- 4- Taxes and Fees
- 5- Lebanon in Figures 1992-2002
- 6- Lebanon in Figures 2003-2004
- 7- Lebanon in Figures 2005-2006
- 8- Lebanon in Figures 2007-2008
- 9- Lebanon's MPs and Lebanese Parliamentary Elections 1960 - 2009
- 10- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-North District
- 11- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Beirut District
- 12- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Mount Lebanon District
- 13- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Beqa'a District
- 14- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-South and Nabatiyeh District
- 15- Municipal Elections 2010

Publications by INMA (in Arabic):

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

Publications by Kutub (in Arabic):

- 1- May Ziadeh, Evolution of a Free Female Thinker
- 2- Mission in Hijaz - Lion Roche
- 3- Aleppo Cuisine
- 4- From An-Nabk to Florida
- 5- Institution of Aesthetic Discourse -Saad el-Kassab
- 6- Al A'mal Al She'rya Al-Kamila -Kamal Keir beik
- 7- Majhoulat Gibran
- 8- Shweir and Its Hills, *A photgraphic record*
- 9- The Wars of Lajat 1837-1838
- 10- New Funerary Phoenician Stelae, *Private Collection*
- 11- Harakat Al Hadasa fi Al-She'r Al-Arabi Al-Mo'aser -Kamal Keir beik
- 12- Al Tanassot Ala Al Hatef fi Lebnan 1947-1958
- 13- Beirut Daw' Ala Warak 1850-1915



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INFORMATION INTERNATIONAL AND KUTUB AT THE ARAB BOOK FAIR

As in every year, Information International and Kutub took part in the 58th Beirut International Arab Book Fair held at the Beirut International Exhibition and Leisure Center (BIEL) in downtown Beirut from the 28th of November 2013 to the 11th of December. Around 50 publications issued by Kutub and Information International were in the exhibition and covered diverse topics, such as electoral and municipal elections, culture, history, literature, poetry, cooking and civic education. The fair, organized by the Arab Cultural Club and the Union of Publishers in Lebanon, was open from 10 am to 10 pm for 13 days and hosted several events, including seminars, lectures and book signing. Over 200 publishing houses from Lebanon and the Arab world took part in the fair.



Information International and Kutub distributed flyers featuring the exhibited books and their pavilion was marked by a heavy turnout. The five best—selling books were:

- *A Star from My Country*
- *Beirut- Light on Paper*
- *Majhoulat Gebran*
- *Parliament in Lebanon*
- *Writers from My Country*



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