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53 UNIONS COMPRISING 627 MUNICIPALITIES**
- **THE MONTHLY INTERVIEWS PAINTER AND
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LEBANON'S BUDGET 2014

LBP 1145 BILLION

TRANSFERRED FROM INEXISTENT RESERVES



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THE FLOATING CEMETERY

Ambassadors of western countries, United Nations' representatives and human rights' associations often lecture on the dos and don'ts of caring for refugees, both Syrian and Palestinian. They issued the Balfour Declaration and left no stone unturned to establish the State of Israel (we certainly did our part) and here they are lecturing at us! They caused the death and displacement of millions of people since the First World War (we certainly did our part) and here they are lecturing at us!

They were the leading and direct cause for the recent misfortunes unfolding in Libya, Iraq and Syria (we certainly did our part) and here they are lecturing at us.

Recently, Europe, more precisely, the European Union, has been deluding us into believing that it cares for the refugees (the US has not even bothered to pretend) after the tragic drowning of hundreds of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea and the rescue of a fortunate few by the Italian Navy and here the EU is lecturing at us!

We must forget that the West decided to invade Libya in 2011; we must forget that the West halted migrant rescue operations in the Mediterranean waters when Italy stopped its Mare Nostrum mission in November 2014 because the rest of Europe failed to fulfill its financial obligations towards this mission. Indeed, the Mare Nostrum mission destined to rescue stricken migrants was replaced by two operations, Triton and Operation Poseidon, aimed at protecting Europe's maritime borders. Some have even gone as far as demanding the bombardment of migrant boats before they set sail. They did what they did to Africa and its people and here they are lecturing at us!

Roughly 1750 people have drowned in the Mediterranean since the beginning of 2015, a figure that is 30 times the death toll registered during the same period last year.

In 2014, Italy rescued roughly 170,000 refugees of different nationalities and detained them until they were assessed and subsequently most of them were deported. Britain hosted 143 Syrian refugees; the US welcomed 524 and is expected to host another 1000. So far, close to 3200 refugees have died in the Mediterranean.

While all of Europe has decided to accommodate 5000 refugees and deport the rest, Lebanon has received alone more than a million refugees from Syria. The European Union, whose population is estimated at 500 million, has sounded the alarm and announced its inability to accommodate the influx of refugees.

If we were to calculate the numbers of refugees that should be hosted by Lebanon by using the European equation, the figures should be as follows:

500 million (Europe's population) / 5000 = 0.00001%

5 million (Lebanon's registered population) * 0.00001 = 50 Refugees

Indeed, if Lebanon were to follow in the footsteps of Europe, it should host 50 Syrian refugees.

To the hypocrites in Europe, Lebanon must say 'How dare you preach morality to us. You transformed our land into a graveyard and the Mediterranean into a floating cemetery!'

— Jawad N. Adra

LEBANON'S BUDGET 2014: LBP 1145 BILLION TRANSFERRED FROM INEXISTENT RESERVES

Thousands of decrees have been issued over the past few years stipulating the transfer of credits from the budget reserves to the budgets of ministries and public administrations and institutions with a view to cover unforeseen expenses that had not been considered while budgeting. However, these transfers are somewhat absurd for there are no funds in the budget reserves to begin with and thus the State is resorting to more borrowing in order to finance unplanned budget items, therefore increasing the public budget deficit.

In the 2005 Public Budget Law, the last to be approved by Parliament, budget reserves totaled LBP 195 billion, that is an imperceptible 1.95% of the public budget, which stood at LBP 10,000 billion. The increase in expenses between 2005 and 2014 and the failure to approve any budget during this period have resulted in the adoption of the one-twelfth rule and the opening of extra credits in the public budget to cover the increasing expenses by virtue of the following laws:

- Law no. 238 dated October 22, 2012 which approved extra credits worth LBP 9248.6 billion - LBP 8315.2 billion for the public budget and LBP 933.6 billion for annex budgets (Loto Libanais, Telecoms, Cereals and Sugar Beets budgets) - to be added to the digits of the 2005 public budget to account for the public spending in 2012. The budget reserves were assigned LBP 1204 billion.
- Law no. 1 dated October 30, 2014 which approved extra credits worth LBP 626,607,155,000 to cover the deficit in the salaries, wages and relevant supplements until the end of 2014.
- Automatically operative Law no. 15 (for it was issued after the presidential vacuum) dated November 11, 2014 which approved extra credits worth LBP 340 billion to be added to the digits of the 2005 public budget to account for the public spending in 2014.

Extra-budgetary spending surpasses reserves

A look at the following Table 1 reveals that the credits transferred from the budget reserves have totaled LBP 1146 billion, an amount way beyond the assigned LBP 340 billion. Spending in the absence of sufficient credits implies that the government and the legislature are likely to issue yet another law approving the opening of additional credits to cover the discrepancies between the credits allocated initially and those that have been spent, which will translate into higher deficit and an increase in public debt.

Below are the credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014:

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014			Table 1
No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
11103 24-1-2014	24,120,000,000	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Implementing the 1 st stage of the projects of Mayfouq Hospital, Amshit School, Lassa School and Qartaba Road in Jbeil
11124 30-1-2014	402,039,000	Higher Relief Committee	Compensating for damages in Shiyyah, al-Qa'a and Baalbeck
11125 30-1-2014	4,011,002,000	Higher Relief Committee	Compensating for damages caused by the Beer Hassan and Southern Suburbs explosions
11131 30-1-2014	294,032,000	Higher Relief Committee	Renovation of Patriarch Howayek's building in Halta, Batroun

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
11130 30-1-2014	89,000,000	Higher Relief Committee	Furniture and equipment for the Higher Disciplinary Committee
11121 30-1-2014	53,700,000,000	Ministry of Energy and Water	Land acquisitions for the construction of the Msaylha dam
11151 6-2-2014	2,550,000,000	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Financing the works at the Midan Street in Ehdn
11155 6-2-2014	2,923,638,772	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Paying for land acquisitions made through the CDR
11154 6-2-2014	14,000,000,000	Ministry of Environment	Contribution to the UNDP Program aimed at renovating Saida's landfill
11177 11-2-2014	1,440,000,000	Presidency of the Republic	Costs of electricity, celebrations and representation.
11190 13-2-2014	216,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Reconciliatory payment to the office that prepared a study on electoral mechanisms in Lebanon
11191 13-2-2014	20,000,000,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Expansion of Saida's Port
11179 11-2-2014	35,913,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Paying the International Olive Oil Council's dues for 2013
11178 11-2-2014	300,000,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Contribution to YADUNA Foundation
11248 7-4-2014	16,582,000	Ministry of Finance	Reconciliation Agreement with the Lebanese Services Company
11249 7-4-2014	220,000,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Organizational expenses of the Lebanese Wine Day
11250 7-4-2014	178,000,000	Ministry of Telecommunications	Different indemnities
11251 7-4-2014	105,612,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Salaries of contract workers
11271 14-4-2014	40,625,000	Jaafarite Ifta'a	Settlement of telecommunication fees
11272 14-4-2014	40,000,000	Central Administration for Statistics	UPS batteries
11274 14-4-2014	175,000,000	Cabinet	Drilling a water well
11275 14-4-2014	5,782,666	Central Inspection	Furniture, stationery and heating equipment
11280 14-4-2014	137,376,000	Ministry of Justice	Salaries of new judges
11270 14-4-2014	5,416,194,000	Ministry of Finance	Contracting out an automated archive system for all the ministry's depots
11273 14-4-2014	151,780,993	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11317 23-4-2014	80,000,000	Ministry of Justice	Metal detectors for courts
11361 24-4-2014	12,000,000	Ministry of Justice	State attorney's dues in the case of embezzlement of public funds by head of Lebanon's Higher Relief Committee
11369 25-4-2014	459,800,000	Ministry of Justice	Salaries of new judges
11349 24-4-2014	4,475,250,000	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants	Cost of trips made on Middle East Airlines
11311 22-4-2014	152,045,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Judicial rulings and reconciliations

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
11312 22-4-2014	7,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Family allowances
11313 22-4-2014	6,362,405,000	Ministry of Finance	Contracting out the purchasing of fixed and mobile cabins for the Real Estate Affairs Directorate General
11316 23-4-2014	3,500,000,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Works at the Palais de Justice and the Ministry of Justice in Beirut
11315 23-4-2014	64,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations resulting from a collision incident
11348 24-4-2014	5,278,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Acquisition of the entire plot of land no. 3191 in Amshit
11310 22-4-2014	36,000,000	Ministry of Energy and Water	Judicial rulings and reconciliations resulting from the occupation of 100 m ² of a plot of land in Rmeil, Beirut
11309 22-4-2014	300,000,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Contribution to the Children's Cancer Center of Lebanon
11381 30-4-2014	47,489,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Reconciliation agreement with Maison de L'artisan Libanais
11407 8-5-2014	69,650,000	Central Inspection	Services and cleaning expenses
11409 8-5-2014	50,000,000	Higher Relief Committee	Costs of entry and distribution of donations to Syrian refugees
11408 8-5-2014	22,690,000	Internal Security Forces	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11388 8-5-2014	25,294,000	Customs	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11405 8-5-2014	152,905,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11394 8-5-2014	65,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Consumer and agricultural materials
11408 12-5-2014	246,084,000	Ministry of Telecommunications	Indemnities for extra works
11425 12-5-2014	198,000,000	Ministry of Telecommunications	Indemnities and reconciliations
11516 19-5-2014	15,000,000	Central Inspection	Office furniture
11461 14-5-2014	100,000,000	Ministry of Justice	Confidential expenses incurred by the office of the Public Prosecutor
11503 15-5-2014	30,150,000	Ministry of Justice	Contribution to carry out an agreement with the IFC
11481 15-5-2014	113,768,000	Ministry of Finance	Taxes and fees
11495 15-5-2014	92,000,000	National Lottery	Indemnities
11502 15-5-2014	700,000,000	Ministry of Public Health	Completion of the renovation of the Kherbet Kanafar governmental Hospital
11514 19-5-2014	50,000,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Office stationery
11515 19-5-2014	12,000,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Leases
11624 19-5-2014	72,000,000	Prime Minister's Office	Allowances due to the members of the Committee on Decentralization, with the exception of the committee's president, Ziad Baroud
11663 21-5-2014	22,000,000,000	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Renovation and equipping of the Rafik Hariri University City in Hadath

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
11585 19-5-2014	1,000,000,000	Internal Security Forces	Paying the deficit in the Roumieh Prison's renovation project
11635 19-5-2014	70,000,000	General Security	Office stationery
11637 19-5-2014	15,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Subscriptions in the National Social Security Fund
11683 21-5-2014	60,781,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11636 19-5-2014	1,000,000,000	Ministry of Telecommunications	Extra works
11634 19-5-2014	173,000,000	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Indemnities, salaries and wages
11681 21-5-2014	22,503,600,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Contributions to NGOs
11685 21-5-2014	98,313,000	State Security	Rents
11961 24-5-2014	15,000,000	Higher Islamic Shia'a Council	Salaries
11964 24-5-2014	1,000,000,000	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Maintenance and operating of the Rafik Hariri University City
11973 24-5-2014	40,625,000	Jaafarite Ita'a	Telecommunications
11989 24-5-2014	12,000,000	Central Inspection	IT equipment
11991 24-5-2014	34,055,000	Higher Islamic Shia'a Council	Office rent
11680 21-5-2014	305,920,000	Ministry of Justice	Salary hikes
11957 24-5-2014	4,000,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11677 21-5-2014	5,000,000,000	Internal Security Forces	Liquid fuel
11678 21-5-2014	880,260,000	Personal Status Directorate General	Publications
11817 22-5-2014	900,000,000	General Security	Expenses related to the Lebanese passport issuance
11818 22-5-2014	2,508,000,000	General Security	Salaries of new ISF members
11819 22-5-2014	111,114,000	General Security	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11843 22-5-2014	180,000,000	General Security	Office rent and maintenance
11844 22-5-2014	12,774,411,000	Internal Security Forces	Purchasing of a fleet of cars designed to fight crime and acts of terrorism
11845 22-5-2014	32,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Family allowances
11847 22-5-2014	6,829,000,000	Internal Security Forces	Confidential expenses
11848 22-5-2014	246,212,000	Internal Security Forces	Expenses for studies
11849 22-5-2014	9,000,000,000	Internal Security Forces	Educational allowances
11962 24-5-2014	12,500,000	Internal Security Forces	Judicial rulings and reconciliations

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
11988 24-5-2014	136,074,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Miscellaneous expenses
11948 23-5-2014	2,680,300,000	Ministry of Finance	Lebanon's contribution to METAC
11958 24-5-2014	9,141,714,000	Ministry of Finance	Banking commissions
11959 24-5-2014	432,435,000	Ministry of Finance	Office rent and maintenance
11990 24-5-2014	3,000,000,000	Real Estate Affairs	Fees for services rendered
11682 21-5-2014	424,875,000	Railways and Public Transport Authority	Contribution to salaries
11836 22-5-2014	10,846,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11684 21-5-2014	68,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11762 22-5-2014	40,000,000,000	Lebanese Army	Dues owed to hospitals following amendment of hospital tariffs
11763 22-5-2014	389,332,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11796 22-5-2014	1,206,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Maintenance of transport means
11826 22-5-2014	85,590,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11929 23-5-2014	300,000,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Publications
11884 22-5-2014	20,000,000,000	Ministry of Public Health	Contributions to operate the Rafik Hariri University Hospital
11986 24-5-2014	870,000,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Salaries of permanent employees
11960 24-5-2014	75,000,000	Ministry of Telecommunications	Office rent and maintenance
11956 24-5-2014	10,711,628	Ministry of Social Affairs	Rent increases
12056 24-5-2014	409,000,000	Ministry of Industry	Appointment of new employees
12000 24-5-2014	65,000,000	Druze Religious Courts	Office rent and maintenance
12001 24-5-2014	54,000,000	Druze Religious Courts	Wages
12068 24-5-2014	300,000,000,000	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Expenses of miscellaneous projects
12002 24-5-2014	3,407,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12003 24-5-2014	900,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12011 24-5-2014	8,057,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12013 24-5-2014	845,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12014 24-5-2014	11,990,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12016 24-5-2014	650,376,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
12019 24-5-2014	300,000,000	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants	Transportation expenses for the delegation accompanying the President of the Republic
12023 24-5-2014	136,784,000	Several ministries	Expenses of appointing translators in several ministries
12018 24-5-2014	173,000,000	Internal Security Forces	Subscriptions to international entities.
12021 24-5-2014	113,836,000	Internal Security Forces	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11992 24-5-2014	372,328,000	Ministry of Finance	Fees for services rendered
12005 24-5-2014	100,000,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Telecommunications
12020 24-5-2014	136,274,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Water bills
11999 24-5-2014	192,410,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12009 24-5-2014	57,325,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12010 24-5-2014	7,718,438,000	Ministry of National Defense	Various equipment
12024 24-5-2014	150,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Transport equipment
12015 24-5-2014	34,101,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12017 24-5-2014	24,272,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12022 24-5-2014	74,260,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
11990 24-5-2014	500,000,000	Ministry of Public Health	Contribution to Yaduna Foundation
12004 24-5-2014	55,690,120	Ministry of Public Health	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12007 24-5-2014	82,500,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
12008 24-5-2014	11,000,000,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Subsidies to fodder and cattle farmers
12006 24-5-2014	4,221,000,000	Ministry of Tourism	Contributions to committees of tourism festivals
12012 24-5-2014	130,000,000	Ministry of Culture	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
49 3-7-2014	353,000,000	Jaafarite Religious Courts	Salaries of contract workers, waged workers and advisors
58 3-7-2014	403,000,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Wages and salaries
48 3-7-2014	1,123,910,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
50 3-7-2014	1,800,113,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
57 3-7-2014	2,537,958,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
54 3-7-2014	46,000,000	Ministry of Economy and Trade	Contract workers' pay
69 3-7-2014	205,000,000	Ministry of Culture	Contract workers' pay

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
105 3-7-2014	12,997,055,000	Higher Relief Committee	Compensation for damage caused by explosions, the Cite Sportive clashes and the Mennieh floods
106 3-7-2014	26,881,000	Jaafarite Ifta'a	Telecommunications
102 3-7-2014	26,000,000	Ministry of Justice	Subscriptions to regional and international organizations
100 3-7-2014	200,000,000	Ministry of Foreign affairs and Emigrants	Publications
110 3-7-2014	203,513,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Fees for services rendered
83 3-7-2014	3,850,000,000	Ministry of Finance	Publications
114 3-7-2014	3,000,000,000	Ministry of Finance	IT equipment
90 3-7-2014	1,554,722,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
91 3-7-2014	3,540,000,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Contract workers' pay
93 3-7-2014	1,000,000,000	Ministry of Public Health	Contribution to the Children's Cancer Center and the Makassed Philanthropic Hospital
99 3-7-2014	120,000,000	Ministry of Tourism	Salaries
80 3-7-2014	5,019,000,000	Ministry of Culture	Land acquisitions
81 3-7-2014	55,000,000	Ministry of Culture	Compensation for salary disparities between 1996 and 1998
186 10-7-2014	9,400,000	Druze Religious Courts	Rewards
187 10-7-2014	3,500,000	Druze Religious Courts	Fuel
167 10-7-2014	4,696,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
171 10-7-2014	15,000,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
174 10-7-2014	108,134,000	Ministry of Justice	Office rents
182 10-7-2014	55,800,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
184 10-7-2014	54,000,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
162 10-7-2014	20,085,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
181 10-7-2014	129,430,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
163 10-7-2014	20,516,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
172 10-7-2014	100,000,000	Ministry of Finance	Banking commissions
164 10-7-2014	33,217,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Compensation for salary disparities
165 10-7-2014	190,177,240	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
169 10-7-2014	610,000,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Judicial rulings and reconciliations

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
166 10-7-2014	250,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Cost of hosting the World Military Cross Country championship
176 10-7-2014	164,317,000	Ministry of National Defense	Land acquisitions
180 10-7-2014	12,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
168 10-7-2014	40,442,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
203 10-7-2014	2,330,000,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Maintenance of administrative buildings
175 10-7-2014	62,213,747	Ministry of Public Health	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
170 10-7-2014	82,142,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
173 10-7-2014	270,000,000	Ministry of Energy and Water	Transportation equipment
183 10-7-2014	237,000,000	Ministry of Tourism	covering salary scale disparities for 1996, 1997 and 1998
179 10-7-2014	20,130,000	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
210 10-7-2014	758,419,000	Higher Relief Committee	Compensation for the damage caused by the Starco and Beer Hassan explosions
268 10-7-2014	4,950,000,000	Ministry of Finance	Contracting out the preservation of cadastral certificates
267 24-7-2014	3,600,000,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Completing the first stage of works of the Nabatieh's governmental Serail
278 24-7-2014	5,000,000,000	Ministry of Public Health	Medications
279 24-7-2014	600,000,000	Ministry of Public Health	Financing vaccination programs
374 21-8-2014	9,000,000	Druze Mashyakhat Akl	Fuel
397 21-8-2014	15,000,000	Jaafarite Ifta'a	Office rent and maintenance
400 21-8-2014	175,000,000	Civil Service Board	Office rent and maintenance
375 21-8-2014	45,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Rent of the Bsharri Serail for 2014
376 21-8-2014	17,688,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
383 21-8-2014	4,652,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Water bills
396 21-8-2014	25,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Electricity bills
399 21-8-2014	26,420,000	Ministry of Finance	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
390 21-8-2014	78,504,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
380 21-8-2014	14,575,000	Ministry of Telecommunications	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
384 21-8-2014	1,083,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
386 21-8-2014	465,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
387 21-8-2014	169,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
398 21-8-2014	2,907,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
385 21-8-2014	14,870,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
367 21-8-2014	30,000,000,000	Public Housing Institute	Interest on bank loans
419 28-8-2014	30,150,000	Civil Service Board	Transportation equipment
425 28-8-2014	4,160,000	Central Administration for Statistics	Service and cleaning expenses
426 28-8-2014	91,000,000	Jaafarite Religious Courts	Salaries and indemnities
427 28-8-2014	599,000,000	Higher Relief Committee	Medical expenses of treating Sheikh Jalal al-Kalash overseas
428 28-8-2014	150,750,000	Prime Minister's Office	Donations to private actors
416 28-8-2014	5,500,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
417 28-8-2014	33,600,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
423 28-8-2014	14,000,000	Ministry of Justice	Celebrations and representation
413 28-8-2014	27,459,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
412 28-8-2014	1,540,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Food expenses
422 28-8-2014	21,759,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
424 28-8-2014	4,000,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Maintenance of transport means
414 28-8-2014	16,627,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
421 28-8-2014	94,050,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
415 28-8-2014	660,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
411 28-8-2014	75,000,000	Ministry of Environment	Subscriptions to regional and international organizations
418 28-8-2014	115,000,000	Ministry of Environment	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
420 28-8-2014	75,000,000	Ministry of Environment	Maintenance of technical equipment
488 4-9-2014	290,555,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
490 4-9-2014	1,024,995,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Training courses at the Educational Authority
491 4-9-2014	300,274,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
492 4-9-2014	41,431,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
493 4-9-2014	59,094,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
496 4-9-2014	3,366,000,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Contributions to cover salary hikes
545 (4-9-2014)	12,000,000	Druze Religious Courts	Family allowances
560 (11-9-2014)	481,000,000	Prime Minister's Office	Miscellaneous expenses
527 (4-9-2014)	10,000,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Medications
537 (4-9-2014)	83,653,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
542 4-9-2014	2,600,000,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Renewal of social services' joint contracts with NGOs for 2014
613 18-9-2014	20,000,000,000	Parliament	Compensation for the affected and Parliament's expenses
616 18-9-2014	7,537,500	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants	Contribution to the United Nations Institute for disarmament studies
628 18-9-2014	600,000,000	General Institution for Consumer Markets	The Institution's obligations for 2014
610 18-9-2014	7,700,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Food expenses
618 18-9-2014	132,202,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
626 18-9-2014	32,668,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
638 18-9-2014	35,367,000	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
621 18-9-2014	224,420,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Contract workers' salaries
627 18-9-2014	151,000,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Appointment of veterinaries
617 18-9-2014	48,000,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
644 18-9-2014	301,500,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
726 2-10-2014	20,600,000,000	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Operating and maintenance of the Rafic Hariri University City
737 2-10-2014	6,250,000,000	Higher Relief Committee	Compensation for damage caused by floods in Beqa'a
731 2-10-2014	37,675,000,000	Traffic Management Authority	Contracting out car plates and licenses
732 2-10-2014	10,285,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
744 2-10-2014	24,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Fees for services rendered
750 2-10-2014	1,200,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
759 2-10-2014	137,500,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Fees for services rendered
762 2-10-2014	1,568,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Expenses of recruitment of 500 General Security members
756 2-10-2014	6,300,000,000	Ministry of Finance	Fees for services rendered
758 2-10-2014	3,000,000,000	Ministry of Finance	Fees for services rendered

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
757 2-10-2014	2,000,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Social donations
761 2-10-2014	678,000,000	Ministry of Public Health	Completion of the equipping of the Kharbet Kanafar governmental hospital
760 2-10-2014	38,000,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Salaries and indemnities
806 16-10-2014	1,500,000,000	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants	Overseas delegations and conferences
790 9-10-2014	5,000,000,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Expenses of parliamentary election preparations
786 9-10-2014	14,499,000	Ministry of Finance	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
785 9-10-2014	5,800,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Salaries of contract workers
816 23-10-2014	216,000,000	Higher Relief Committee	Fees for the services rendered by 12 controllers in order to check the medical conditions of travelers
817 23-10-2014	1,000,000,000	State Security	Miscellaneous expenses
818 23-10-2014	1,762,909,000	Higher Relief Committee	Renovation of the Saint George Church in Ehden
829 23-10-2014	1,747,000,000	State Security	Education allowances
830 23-10-2014	2,258,404,000	Ministry of Finance	Contributions to the United Nations Development Program
857 30-10-2014	3,500,000,000	Higher Relief Committee	Compensation for damage caused by the natural disaster that hit Dennieh, Akkar and Hermel
863 30-10-2014	30,000,000	Higher Islamic Shia'a Council	Settling the dues of the employees working on an invoice basis
948 6-11-2014	30,000,000,000	Higher Relief Committee	Compensation for damage caused by the clashes of Tripoli in October 2014
941 6-11-2014	11,601,847,000	IDAL	Repayment of the Chinese loan
947 6-11-2014	113,000,000	Ministry of Finance	Family allowances
855 30-10-2014	7,700,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Food expenses
861 30-10-2014	1,153,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
862 30-10-2014	1,915,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
864 30-10-2014)	1,278,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
871 30-10-2014	1,130,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Education allowances
856 30-10-2014	38,160,000	Ministry of Public Health	Hospitalization expenses
870 30-10-2014	226,050,000	Ministry of Public Health	Exceptional assistance for the sick
869 30-10-2014	81,000,000	Ministry of Information	Fees for services rendered in order to issue the National Agency's bulletin in foreign languages

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
946 6-11-2014	3,000,000,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Contribution to development centers
980 13-11-2014	838,191,000	Central Statistics Administration	Office rent and maintenance
981 13-11-2014	34,223,219,000	Higher Relief Committee	Compensation for damage caused by explosions
982 13-11-2014	20,000,000,000	Higher Relief Committee	Compensation for damage caused by explosions
976 13-11-2014	44,900,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
989 13-11-2014	472,765,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Social assistance to the families of ISF martyrs
991 13-11-2014	5,200,000	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Fees for services rendered
988 13-11-2014	600,000,000	Ministry of Finance	Fuel and oil for generators
975 13-11-2014	470,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
990 13-11-2014	772,329,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
993 13-11-2014	3,150,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
978 13-11-2014	10,000,000,000	Ministry of Public Health	Medications
973 13-11-2014	3,015,000	Ministry of Information	Settling the dues owed to the Federation of News Agencies in the Mediterranean
974 13-11-2014	80,296,000	Ministry of Energy and Water	Salaries, judicial rulings and reconciliations
922 13-11-2014	47,171,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Rent increases
996 13-11-2014	51,143,900,000	State Employees' Cooperative	To cover the deficit at the cooperative
1030 20-11-2014	1,794,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
1031 20-11-2014	740,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
997 13-11-2014	65,780,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
998 13-11-2014	48,000,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
999 20-11-2014	29,000,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Subscriptions to regional and international organizations
1025 20-11-2014	9,510,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Family allowances
1024 20-11-2014	25,200,000	Ministry of Labor	Miscellaneous indemnities
1057 27-11-2014	40,000,000	Civil Service Board	Services and cleaning expenses
1071 27-11-2014	83,000,000	Central Inspection	Technical equipment
1072 27-11-2014	567,869,000	Jaafarite Religious Courts	Miscellaneous expenses

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
1073 27-11-2014	11,136,000	Jaafarite Ifta'a	Telecommunication expenses for January and February 2014
1059 27-11-2014	56,382,000	Ministry of Justice	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
1066 27-11-2014	1,250,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Family allowances
1068 27-11-2014	12,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
1069 27-11-2014	4,575,000	Ministry of National Defense	Miscellaneous expenses
1107 4-12-2014	7,600,000	Druze Religious Courts	Internal transportation expenses
1108 4-12-2014	810,000,000	State Security	Education allowances
1104 4-12-2014	369,337,500	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Office rent and maintenance
1094 4-12-2014	1,024,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
1100 4-12-2014	1,151,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
1103 4-12-2014	12,315,000	Ministry of Agriculture	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
1074 27-11-2014	4,120,000,000	National Higher Conservatory of Music- Ministry of Culture	To cover the increase in expenses between 2005 and 2014
1105 4-12-2014	37,500,000	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Transport equipment
1102 4-12-2014	87,000,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Contribution to the project supporting ammunition victims
1134 18-12-2014	18,000,000	Higher Islamic Council	Office rent and equipment
1135 18-12-2014	301,500,000	Prime Minister's Office	Financial contribution to the Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue committee
1137 18-12-2014	450,000,000	Higher Relief Committee	Donating sterilizing equipment to Ebola-stricken countries
1138 18-12-2014	5,276,250,000	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Operating and maintenance of the water and sewage systems in Nabi Sheet in Baalbeck
1140 18-12-2014	5,040,000	Ministry of Culture	Salaries and wages
1142 18-12-2014	35,000,000,000	Council for Development & Reconstruction	Contractors' dues
1151 18-12-2014	3,015,000,000	Ministry of Finance	IT equipment
1155 18-12-2014	330,000,000	Ministry of Finance	Rent increases at the Revenue Department warehouse
1141 18-12-2014	6,400,000,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Updating two radars at the Rafic Hariri International Airport in Beirut
1148 18-12-2014	1,508,577,000	Ministry of Public Works and Transport	Renovation and maintenance of the building of the Youth and Sports Ministry
1154 18-12-2014	55,343,000	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Office rent and maintenance
1147 18-12-2014	10,200,000,000	Ministry of National Defense	Maternity and sickness allowances

Credits transferred from the budget reserves to the ministries and public administrations in 2014

Table 1

No. and date of decree	Worth of credits transferred from Treasury reserves (LBP)	Recipient	Purpose of transfers
1153 18-12-2014	339,741,000	Ministry of National Defense	Judicial rulings and reconciliations
1136 18-12-2014	29,352,000,000	Lebanese University	Lebanese University's operating expenses
1144 18-12-2014	7,052,000,000	Ministry of Public Health	Subscriptions to regional and international organizations
1150 18-12-2014	10,000,000	Ministry of Public Health	Medical assistance
1179 23-12-2014	1,550,000,000	Telecoms Regulator Authority	Salaries and indemnities of the Authority's staff
1175 23-12-2014	2,000,000,000	National Employment Office	Financing the youth training program in cooperation with NGOs
1110 18-12-2014	260,000,000	Ministry of Tourism	Transportation allowance until the end of 2014
1152 18-12-2014	90,480,000	Ministry of Culture	Al-Madina Theater's rent for 2014
1146 18-12-2014	98,750,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Salaries the Medications Committee's staff
1149 18-12-2014	54,696,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Supporting the promotion and development of handicrafts until the end of 2014
1156 18-12-2014	1,100,000,000	Ministry of Social Affairs	Allocations to the national program of "supporting the poorest families in Lebanon"
Grand Total	1,145,798,067,000		

Correction and Apology

In the research issued in the previous issue of *The Monthly* on the Aging Politicians of Lebanon, it was incorrectly stated that MP Ali Eid was born in 1925 (90 years old), based on the data featured on page 381 of the 2007 Lebanese Parliamentary Dictionary prepared by Adnan Daher, Secretary General of Parliament and Dr. Riad Ghannam (see image). In view of this error, we would like to correct the mistake by confirming that MP Ali Eid was in fact born on July 14, 1940. We extend our sincere apologies for this mistake and hope that it has not adversely affected you.



LEBANESE PARLIAMENT 2014

55 LAWS AND 161 COMMITTEE SESSIONS

The current Parliament elected in 2009 has extended its term of office by four years, pushing the date of its mandate's expiration from June 20, 2013 to June 20, 2017. Legislators have been described as self-extending and unproductive, whether in approving laws or in holding plenary sessions or meetings for parliamentary committees.

Laws

Parliament approved 55 laws in 2014 compared to two in 2013, most of which were regular legislation with a few essential laws such as the law on the extension of Parliament's term, the law permitting the government to issue treasury bonds in foreign currencies, the opening of additional credits worth LBP 340 billion to cover expenses in 2014, the Rent Act, the protection of women from domestic violence, the law giving financial incentives to those municipalities surrounding the Abey landfill and exempting them from certain obligations.

Plenary Sessions

Parliament convened three plenary sessions in 2014. The first spanned over 1, 2 and 3 April, the second was held on 9 April and the third on 5 November.

Sessions of Parliamentary Committees

It is known that Parliament is home to 16 parliamentary committees that do not fare better when it comes to meetings. In fact, some of these committees (Information Committee, Committee on the Displaced, IT Committee) have not convened even once in 2014 as illustrated in Table 1. The number of committee meetings totaled 161 in 2014 in addition to 35 sub-meetings. 126 meetings and 64 sub-meetings were held in 2013. The Administration and Justice Committee held 39 sessions, the largest number among all committees, accounting for 30% of total meetings.

Number	Committee Name	Sessions and Sub-sessions
1	Administration and Justice Committee	45 sessions + 17 sub-sessions
2	Finance and Budget Committee	19 sessions
3	Public Works and Transport Committee	26 sessions + 10 sub-sessions



Number	Committee Name	Sessions and Sub-sessions
4	National Defense and Interior Committee	17 sessions + 3 sub-sessions
5	Human Rights Committee	8 sessions
6	Information Committee	0
7	National Economy Committee	5 sessions
8	Public Health Committee	14 sessions + 2 sub-sessions
9	Foreign affairs and Emigrants Committee	7 sessions
10	Education and Higher Education Committee	4 sessions
11	Committee of the Displaced	0
12	Woman and Child Committee	3 sessions
13	Environment Committee	1 session
14	IT Committee	0
15	Youth and Sports Committee	5 sessions
16	Agriculture Committee	4 sessions + 3 sub-sessions
Total		161 sessions + 35 sub-sessions

Source: Volume 94 of Parliamentary Life- March 2015

MUNICIPAL UNIONS IN LEBANON

53 UNIONS COMPRISING 627 MUNICIPALITIES

Article 114 of the Municipal Act defines the municipal union as a union consisting of a number of municipalities and enjoying legal character and financial autonomy.

Establishment of the union

The municipal union is established pursuant to a decree issued in the Cabinet upon the proposition of the Interior Minister, either by a personal initiative on his part or upon the request of municipalities. The term of office of the union expires upon the expiration of the municipalities it includes. The union's council is made up of the heads of those municipalities within the union. Upon the proposition of its president, the council may be represented by any of its members throughout the mandate of the municipal union.

Functions of the union

The municipal union handles public projects of common utility from which all or some member municipalities can benefit. It approves the budget and manages the communal lands within the union.

Number of municipal unions

The first ever municipal union, Union of Municipalities of Kessrouan, emerged in 1977, followed by the Union of Municipalities of Saida-Zahrani in 1978. Today the municipal unions total 53 and contain 627 out of a total 1013 Lebanese municipalities. The remaining 386 municipalities do not make part of any union.

The fees collected by municipalities for the benefit of the union they belong to are insignificant. In fact, the revenues of municipal unions are largely restricted to their shares from the Independent Municipal Fund. In 2013, their share stood at LBP 59 billion, 60% of which, that is roughly LBP 35.5 billion, are distributed on the basis of the registered population within the municipalities of the union and the remaining 40%, roughly LBP 23.5 billion, are distributed in a relative manner depending on the number of municipalities under each union for each Qada'a. The funds are designated for development projects.

The highest share of the population-based allocations was assigned to the Al-Fayhaa Municipal Union and totaled LBP 3.6 billion followed by the Union of Municipalities of Tyre at LBP 2.4 billion. Of the allocations assigned on the basis of the number of municipalities, the highest share stood at LBP 945.5 million and went to several unions including:

Al-Fayhaa, Jbeil, Kessrouan, Coastal and Central Metn, Hermel, Jabal Amel, Zgharta, Batroun, Koura and Bsharri.

Table 1 below illustrates the date of establishment of each municipal union in addition to the union's center and the number of municipalities it has.

Date of establishment of each municipal union in addition to the union's center and the number of municipalities it has

Table 1

	Municipal Union	No. & Date of Decree of Establishment	Union's Center	No. of Municipalities	Names of Municipalities
1	Al-Fayhaa Municipal Union (North Lebanon)	5234 May 25, 1982	Tripoli	4	Tripoli-Mina-Beddawi-Qalamoun

Date of establishment of each municipal union in addition to the union's center and the number of municipalities it has

Table 1

	Municipal Union	No. & Date of Decree of Establishment	Union's Center	No. of Municipalities	Names of Municipalities
2	Union Of Northern Coastal & Middle Metn Municipalities (Metn)	2395 November 7, 1979	Jdeideh	31	Sin el-Fil – Burj Hammoud – Airoun – Bteghrin – Jdeideh, Baouchrieh & Sedd Zalqa & Amaret Chalhoub Dekwaneh, Mar Roukuz & Dahr el Hosn Jal el-Dib & Bqenaya – Antelias & Naqash – Dbayeh, Zouq Kharab, Haret Balleneh & Awkar Beit Chaar & Mazraa Hadira Qornet Chehwan, Ain Aar, Beit el Kekkou & Hbous Bekfaya & Mhaydtheh – Saqiyet el-Misk & Bhersaf Mar Moussa Dwar – Mar Chaaya & Mezkeh Mansourieh, Mkalles & Deishounieh Bsaleem, Mezher & Majthoub Nabieh – Fanar – Broummana – Beit Meri Ain Saadeh – Baabdat – Rabieh – Mazraat Yashuh Dahr Sawan – Byaqout – Beit Shabab – Roumieh
3	Union of Municipalities of Saida and Zahrani	1097 March 23, 1978	Saida	16	Anqoun – Maghdoushe – Darb el-Sim – Miyeh w Miyeh – Ghazieh – Haret Saida – Salhiyeh – Majdelyoun – Abra – Hlaliyeh – Bramiyeh – Saida – Ain Delb – Qaryah – Bqosta – Tanbourieh
4	Union of Municipalities of Kessrouan and el-Ftouh	722 December 12, 1977	Zouk Mikhael	52	All municipalities in the Qada'a of Kessrouan
5	Union of Municipalities of Al-Chqeef (Nabatieh)	5419 September 20, 1982	Nabatieh	28	Nabatieh – Nabatieh Fawqa – Hboush – Zebdin – Al-Kfour – Harouf – Kfarreman – Mayfadoun – Kfartebnit – Ash-Sharqiyah – Zawtar Ash-Sharqiyah – Zawtar Al-Gharbiyah – Jebshit – Zahrani – Kfarsrir – Brayqeh – Duweir – Yohmur – Nmayrieh – Aabba – Choukin – Zefta – Ansar – Arnoun – Adshit – Siney – Sir el-Gharbieh – Qsaybeh
6	Union of Municipalities of Jbeil	4571 December 14, 1981	Jbeil	13	Jbeil – Amshit – Fetri – Nahr Ibrahim – Halat – Jaj – Mayfouq & el-Qattara – Ehmej – Aqoura – Monsef – Qartaba – Lassa & Ain el-Gowaybeh – Tartaj
7	Union of Municipalities of Upper Metn (Baabda)	2632	Hammana	28	Baaleshmay – Btekhmay – Tarshish – Jouret Arsoun – Hammana – Deir el-Harf – Ras el-Harf – Erbaniyeh & Dlaybeh – Chbanieh – Bmariam – Qernayel – Kfarselwan – Araya – Qebbayh – Qrayyeh – Salima – Shweet – Jwar el-Jawz – El-Qala'a – Al-Qsaybeh – Qertada – Hasbaya – Bzebdine – Rouwaiset Ballout – Kneisseh – Arsoun – Khraibeh

Date of establishment of each municipal union in addition to the union's center and the number of municipalities it has

Table 1

	Municipal Union	No. & Date of Decree of Establishment	Union's Center	No. of Municipalities	Names of Municipalities
8	Union of Municipalities of Al-Buhaira (Western Beqa'a)	2191 July 12, 1979	Jeb Jannine	18	Jeb Jannine – Qaraoun – Kherbet Kanafar – Saghbine – Baaloul – Lala – Ain Zebdeh – Aitanit – Bab Mare'e – Mashghara – Lebbaya – Yohmur – Ain Tineh – Maydoun – Qelya – Zellaya – Kefrayya – Sohmur
9	Union of Municipalities of Al-Souwaijani (Baaqleen)	2394 November 7, 1979	Baaqleen	9	Baaqleen – Atrin – Gharifeh – Ainbal – Ain w Zain – Mazraat el-Shouf – Semqaniyeh – Jdeidat el-Shouf
10	Union of Municipalities of Upper Jerd Bhamdoun (Aley)	3932 March 20, 1981	Sawfar	8	Bhamdoun Day'aa – Bkheshtay – Charoun – Sawfar – Al-Mesherfe – Mansourieh & Ain el-Marj – Btater – Badghan
11	Union of Municipalities of Southern Iqlim el-Kharroub (Shouf Qada'a)	4888 February 18, 1982	Joun	6	Joun – Mtolleh – Bsaba – Mazraa Dahr – Hasrout – Zaarourieh
12	Union of Municipalities of Zgharta	4165 September 16, 1987	Zgharta	26	Zgharta & Ehden – Mejdlaya – Rash'in – Kfardlaqous – Kfarhata – Korah Bach – Mazra'a Toffah – Ardeh – Achache – Bnachei – Aitou – Aintourine – Daraya & Beshnine – Basloukit – Raskifa – laal – Sereel – Kfaryachit & Seb'el – Kfarzeina – Kfarfou – Karmasaddeh – Haret al-Fouwar – Arbet Qezhaya – Kfarsghab
13	Union of Municipalities of AL-Sahl (Western Beqa'a)	4268 October 21, 1987	Ghazze	12	Sultan Yaacoub – Ghazze – Khiara – Kamid el-Lawz – Houch el-Harime – Marj – Al-Swairi – Al-Manara – Mansoura – A'ana – A'ammiq – Rawdah
14	Union of Municipalities of Northern Eqim el-Kharroub (Shouf Qada'a)	6100 August 30, 2001	Mazboud	17	Rmaileh – Jadra – Barja – Chehim – Anout – Mazboud – Dalhoun – Ketermaya – Wardanieh – Seblin – Daraya – Dahr Mghara – Jiyeh – A'alman & Mazraat el-Bargoutieh – Al-Bourjain & Mrajat – Mghairiye
15	Union of Municipalities of Al-Joumi- Akkar	7261 January 25, 2002	Bayno	16	Bayno & Qboula – Rahbe – Bazbina – Akkar el-Atiqa – Jebrayel – Tekrit – Iyat – Beit Mallat – Tasheh – Ilat – Dawra – Dahr el-Liyseneh – Memnee – Ain Yaacoub
16	Union of Municipalities of Iqlim al-Touffah (Nabatieh Qada'a)	7187 January 18, 2002	Jba'a	10	Arabsalim – Jarjou' – Kfarfila – Houmine el-Fawqa – Houmine el-Tahta – Sraba – Ain Qana – Roumin
17	Union of Municipalities of Mennieh	7348 January 31, 2002	Mennieh	6	Mennieh – Deir Emar – Bhannine & Rihanieh – Mazraat – Artousa – Markabta – Burj el-Yahoudieh
18	Union of Municipalities of Upper Shouf	8323 August 7, 2002	Mukhtara	12	Mukhtara – Niha – Bater – Haret Jandal – Ammatour – Botmeh – Ain Qani – Maaser el-Shouf – Baadaran – Khraibeh – Mrostri – Jba'a

Date of establishment of each municipal union in addition to the union's center and the number of municipalities it has

Table 1

	Municipal Union	No. & Date of Decree of Establishment	Union's Center	No. of Municipalities	Names of Municipalities
19	Union of Municipalities of Batroun	9071 November 8, 2002	Batroun	24	Batroun – Douma – Tannourine – Bsheeli – Kfarhelda – Kfour el-Arabi – Beqsmayya – Abrin – Heri – Hamat – Selaata – Zan – Kouba – Ejdebra – Edde – Ras Nhache – KfarAbida – Hardin & Bayt Kassab – Assia – Kfarhay – Chabtine – Kour – Jran – Deir Bella
20	Union of Municipalities of Tyre	9761 March 11, 2003	Tyre	61	Tyre - Burj Shamali – Chhour – Tair Felsay – Aitit – Qlaile – Naqoura – Bazourieh – Srifa – Qana – Batoulay – Chehabieh – Abbasieh – Ain Baal – Maarake – Yarin – Alma Shaab – Deir Qnanoun el-Nahr – Maaroub – Siddiqin – Mahrouneh – Tayr Harfa – Salaa – Barish – Janata – Kneisseh – Dhayra – Deir Kifa – Derdghaya – Baflay – Mjadel – Al-Hmeiry – Al-Heniye – Chaitieh – Malikiyet es-Sahel – Boustan – Jbal el-Botm – Berghlieh - Debaal – Deir Ames – Jabin – Shame'e – Al-Bayyad – Toura – Tayr Debba – Rmadieh – Chihine – Hennawiyeh – Borj Rahhal & Ain Abou Abdallah – Marwahine – Mansouri – Bedias – Deir Qanoun – Hallousiyeh – Arzoun – Yanouh – Ras el-Ain – Mazraat Meshref – Zibqin – Majdelzoun - Reshekanai
21	Union of Municipalities of Koura	9970 April 15, 2003	Amioun	30	Feeh - Dar Chmezzine – Btouratij – Btorram – Kaftoun – Kfarhazir – Bziza – Dar Beeshtar – Amioun – Qalhat – Bednayel – Kfarsaroun – Kfaraqqa – Rechdebbine – Barsa – Mejdel – Batroumine – Bkeftine – Ain Akrin – Afesdiq – Bsarma – Anfeh – Kfarhata – Kousba – Kefrayya – Bdebba – Bechmezzine – Deddeh – Ejdebrine – Metrit
22	Union of Municipalities of Bsharre	10171 May 23, 2003	Bsharre	12	Bsharre – Bqerqasha – Bazoun – Hadath el-Jebbeh – Tourza – Qnat – Bekaa kafra – Ban – Hasroun – Hadshit – Abdine – Barhelyoun
23	Union of Municipalities of Dennieh	13730 December 11, 2004	Bakhaoun	24	Taran – Assoun – Nemrine & Bkouza- Beit el-Faqs – Bqarsouna – Qotteen – Mrah el-Sraj – Deir Nbouh – Bakh'oun – Kfarshlan – Seer Dennieh – Bqa'a Safrin – Kfarhabou – Qarsita – Eimar - Behwayta, Afqa & Boushtana – Marah Safira – Izal – Ain Tineh – Azqa – Btormaz – Sfira – Kfarbebnine – Harf Sayad
24	Union of Municipalities of Bint Jbeil	13941 January 4, 2005	Bint Jbeil	14	Bint Jbeil – Aitroun – Tiri – Ainata – Maroun Ras – Rshaf – Kounin – Braashit – Hadatha – Serbine – Yaroun – Chakra & Doubieh – Beit Yahoun - Hunayn
25	Union of Municipalities of Zahle Qada'a	15694 November 9, 2005	Chtoura	7	Chtoura – Saadnayel – Teelbaya – Hzarta – Ferzol – Ebleh – Niha

Date of establishment of each municipal union in addition to the union's center and the number of municipalities it has

Table 1

	Municipal Union	No. & Date of Decree of Establishment	Union's Center	No. of Municipalities	Names of Municipalities
26	Union of Municipalities of Baalbeck	15695 November 9, 2005	Baalbeck	8	Baalbeck – Younine – Eiaat – Hosh Tal Safiya – Meqneh – Dawras – Nahle – Majdaloun
27	Union of Municipalities of Western Baalbeck	15629 December 13, 2005	Chmostar	12	Chmostar – Hosh Snid – Kasarnaba – Bednayel – Temnine Tahta – Temnine Fawqa – Hosh el-Rafiq – Hosh Nabi – Jabaa – Taraya – Hazin – Hadath Baalbeck
28	Union of Municipalities of Hermel	15938 December 15, 2005	Hermel	6	Hermel – El-Qasr – Fisan – Shawaghir Fawqa – Shawaghit Tahta – Kwakh – Jwar el-Hashish
29	Union of Municipalities of Jerd el-Qayteh (Akkar)	15997 December 23, 2005	Hrar	11	Fnaideq – Michmich – Hrar – Qaryat – Mshan – Houeish – Qeb'et – Bayt Younes – Bzal – Safinat el-Qaytah – Al-Qorneh
30	Union of Municipalities of Jezzine	15998 December 23, 2005	Jezzine	27	Jezzine & Ain Majdaline – Bkassine – Bteddine el Liqch – Benwati – Homsiyeh – Roum – Haitoura – Rimet, Chqadif & Araya- Sabah – Snayya – Zhalte – Midan – Azour – Sfariyeh – Qattin & Hidab – Karkha – Qaytoui – Laba'a – Kfarfalous – Kfarjarra – Mjaydel – Jernaya – Wadi Jezzine – Mashmoushi – Saidoun – Maknounieh
31	Union of Municipalities of Central Beqa'a	16197 January 25, 2006	Makseh	7	Bar Elias – Bawarej – Makseh – Mraijet – Qeb Elias & Wadi Ed Delm – Housh Moush – Majdal anjar
32	Union of Municipalities of Jabal Rihan (Jezzine)	16843 April 28, 2006	Rihan	6	Rihan – Aishieh – Loueizeh – Mleekh – Eramta – Sejouh
33	Union of Municipalities of the Southern Suburb	17040 May 25, 2006	Ghoubairy	4	Ghoubairy – Haret Hreik – Bourj Al Barajne – Mraije, Tohwit Ghadir & Laylaki
34	Union of Municipalities of Al-Shallal (Baalbeck)	17599 September 4, 2006	Bouday	4	Bouday & Al Ellaq – Flawi – Al Saideh – Housh Barda
35	Union of Municipalities of Al Shafat (Akkar)	17598 September 4, 2006	Halba	11	Halba – Sheikh Taba – Haizouq – Karam Osfour – Beit Ghattas & Mazraat Nahriyyeh – Machha – Al Qantara – Jdeideh – Zawarib – Meniara – Nfiseh – Sheikh Mohammad
36	Union of Municipalities of Eastern Baalbeck	17581 August 30, 2006	Nabi Sheet	7	Sar'een Fawqa - Sar'een Tahta - El Khodr - Khraibeh - Nabi Sheet - Janta - Maaraboun
37	Union of Municipalities of Jabal Amel (South)	18104 November 16, 2006	Tibeh	16	Tibeh – Hawla – Markaba – Qabrikha – Adsheet – Qantara – Rab Thalathin – Talouseh – Majdal Selm – Oudeiseh – Deir Seryan – Mais El Jabal – Bani Hayan – Souwaneh – Touline – Blida
38	Union of Municipalities of Central and Coastal El-Qayteh (Akkar)	130 March 19, 2007	Bebnine	13	Bebnine – Abdeh – Bourj Al Arab – Ouyoun Al Ghezlan – Berqayel – Wadi Al Jamous – Hmayra – Jdeidet El Qayteh – Majdala – Qerqouf – Mar Touma – Mhammara – Qebbit Shamraa & Smaqli

Date of establishment of each municipal union in addition to the union's center and the number of municipalities it has

Table 1

	Municipal Union	No. & Date of Decree of Establishment	Union's Center	No. of Municipalities	Names of Municipalities
39	Union of Municipalities of the Coast of Southern Metn	500 July 3, 2007	Chiyyah	3	Chiyyah – Hazmieh – Furn Chebbak – Ain Roummaneh – Tohwitat Nahr
40	Union of Municipalities Al Arqoub (Hasbaya)	754 November 20, 2008	Hbariyeh	7	Fardis – Kfarhamam – Rashaya El Fokhar – Sheba'a – Hbariyeh – Kafarshouba – El Meri & El Majidiyeh
41	Union of Municipalities of the Zahrani Coast (Saida)	1297 February 4, 2009	Sarafand	15	Sarafand – Saksakieh – Qaaqa'ieh – Sanawbar – Adousieh – Khortoum – Kawthariet El Syed – Adloun – Ansarieh – Njarieh – Marwanieh – Loubieh – Ghassanieh – Bablieh – Bisarieh – Tfahta
42	Union of Municipalities of Eastern Zahle	1895 May 6, 2009	Koussaya	10	R'eit – Deir El Ghazal – Koussaya – Massa – Kfarzabad – Terbul – Riyaq & Housh Hala – Ain Kfarzabad – Hay El Fikani – Ali El Nahri
43	Union of Municipalities of Al Qala'a (Bint Jbeil)	4981 September 4, 2010	Tebnine	11	Tebnine – Kfar Dounin – Deir Antar – Kafra – Qalaway – Safad El Battikh – Harees – Aita El-Jabal – Jmaijmeh – Ramya – Yater
44	Union of Municipalities of Nahr El Ostwan (Akkar)	6602 October 18, 2001	Khraibet El Jendi	9	Khraibet El Jendi – Tal Abbas Gharbi – Kousha – Koueikhat – Swayseh – Mazrrat El Baldeh – Deir Janine – Beit El Hajj – Kroum El Arab
45	Union of Municipalities of Upper El Gharb and Chahhar	7489 February 6, 2012	Baisour	8	Baisour – Mejdlaya – Remhala – Bennieh – Dqoun – Kfarmatta – Kaifoun – Bsateen
46	Union of Municipalities of Central Draib (Akkar)	6788 November 3, 2011	Kwashra	12	Bireh – Doussa & Baghdadi – Kherbet Shar – Ain el-Zait – Kwashra – Doueir Adawiya – Sindyanet Zayden – Kherbet Daoud – Diyabieh – Daghleh – Barbara – el-Majdal
47	Union of municipalities of Northern Baalbeck	6789 November 3, 2011	El Ain	11	Tawfiqiya – Nabi Othman – Jbouleh – El Ain – Zboud – Hlabta – Hrabta – El-Harfoush – Nabha Damdoum – Wadi Faara – Ram & Joubanieh
48	Union of municipalities of Sahl Akkar	6911 November 18, 2011	Mqayteh	7	Tal Maayan – Mqayteh – El-Hissa – Qoulay'at – Telbireh – Masoudiyeh – Tal Abbas Sharqi
49	Union of Municipalities of Deir el-Ahmar (Hermel)	6852 November 17, 2011	Deir el-Ahmar	7	Ainata – Btadei – Zrazir – Barqa – Bashwat – Deir el-Ahmar – Nabha el-Qeddami -
50	Union of Municipalities of Qalaat Al Esteqlal (Rashaya)	8084 May 11, 2012	Kherbet Rouha	10	Mhaidseh – Helwe – El-Bireh – Kfar Danis – Mdoukha - Rfida – Bakka – Kherbet Rouha – Deir el-Ashaer – Ain el-Arab
51	Union of Municipalities of Jabal Sheikh (Rashaya)	8140 May 18, 2012	Rashaya	13	Aqabe – Dahr el-Ahmar – Kfarqouq – Kawkaba – Bayt Lahya – Majdal Balhis – Bkifa – Ain A'ata – El-Houeish – Aiha – Tannoura – Rashaya – Ain Harsha
52	Union of Municipalities of Drayb Gharbi (Akkar)	9535 December 17, 2012	Al Tlayl	5	Al Tlayl – Charbila – Fsaqin, Ain Ashma & Ain Tanta – Rihanieh – Safinat Dreib -
53	Union of Municipalities of Hasbani (Hasbaya)	10039 March 6, 2013	Hasbaya	6	Hasbaya – Chouba - Ain Qanya - Mimes- Kawkaba - El-Kfeir

USD 9 MILLION FOR THE STATE SHURA COUNCIL BUILDING

The State Shura Council is the administrative judiciary of the Lebanese State. Its function is to resolve the lawsuits filed against administrations with respect to abrogating decrees or claiming indemnities for those affected unfavorably by the state's decisions. Despite its significance, the Council does not have independent and adequate headquarters but operates from the floor it occupies at the Justice Palace.

Status quo in the current building

The State Shura Council has roughly 50 judges and 25 employees. It occupies the fifth floor covering about 600 square meters in the Justice Palace building in Beirut, which was constructed in the early 1960s. The number of justice magistrates did not exceed 200 in all of Lebanon's courts at that time. Today though, the number has risen to 650, more than 200 of which are in Beirut alone. The juridical judiciary has thus become in dire need of the floor occupied by the Shura Council.

Proposed building

In view of this reality, the State Shura Council decided to request the establishment of independent headquarters for its operations. An engineering office submitted a technical study on the prospective building, which would consist of:

- Two underground floors used for parking, each covering 3160 square meters.
- A ground floor dedicated for meeting halls with a surface of 875 square meters.
- A first floor hosting a library and a registrar's office covering 865 square meters.
- A second and a third floor, each containing 22 offices, the surface of each is roughly 35 square meters. i.e. a total of 1870 square meters.
- A fourth floor containing 22 offices and covering 895 square meters.
- A fifth floor containing 18 offices and covering 895 square meters.

- A sixth floor containing a division assigned for the Council's president and 8 rooms with a surface area totaling 960 square meters.
- A roof with two ceremony halls stretching across 745 square meters.

The total surface area of the building, parking floors excluded, would thus be 7105 square meters, which is way beyond the Council's need. The cost of the building has been estimated at USD 9,100,000 million, with USD 350 paid per square meter underground and USD 750 per square meter above ground.

“The cost of the building has been estimated at USD 9.1 million, with USD 350 paid per square meter underground and USD 750 per square meter above ground”

The establishment of a building for the Shura Council seems necessary amidst the existing overcrowding of the Justice Palace. What seems unnecessary though is the high cost and unreasonable size in excess of the current needs of the Council or any needs that might arise in the short or long run.

This article was written based on the Cabinet's minutes of meetings on September 18, 2014. ●

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN

QUOTA FOR WOMEN AND MINORITIES

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a pivotal state in the Afghan War and some Middle East affairs, particularly the recent Yemen War where Pakistan joined the Saudi-led alliance against Yemen. Pakistan refused to pledge to send infantry forces to Yemen but declared that it would support Saudi Arabia should it come under the hostility of the Houthis, which brought the Pakistani Parliament to the world's attention.



Legislative power

Legislative power in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is vested according to the 1973 Constitution in two chambers: the 104-seat Senate and the National Assembly.

Voting age

The legal voting age in Pakistan is 18.

Number of MPs

The National Assembly is made up of 342 seats distributed based on the population of provinces. Of these seats, 60 are reserved for women and 10 for non-Muslims.

Term of office

According to the law, members of Pakistan's National Assembly are elected to office for five consecutive years. The assembly may be dissolved before the expiry of the term.

Electoral system

Pakistani elections are administered through two systems: the winner-takes-all system, which brings to Parliament 272 representatives and the proportional system through which 70 seats are filled, 60 for women and 10 for non-Muslims.

In the plurality system, voters elect directly 272 MPs in 272 single-seat constituencies. Each voter is entitled to one vote and the candidate with the highest number of votes is elected.

In the proportional voting method, each winning party shall be entitled to a per centum share of the women's seats in each province by dividing the number of candidates of each party by the number of seats obtained. As for minorities' seats, each winning party shall have a per centum share of the seats allocated for minorities nationwide by dividing the number of candidates of each party over the total number of seats obtained at the national level.

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of seats by provinces

Seats of the National Assembly of Pakistan by provinces				Table 1
Province	General elected seats	Women's seats	Minorities' seats	Total no. of seats
Punjab	148	35	-	183
Sindh	61	14	-	75
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	35	8	-	43
Baluchistan	14	3	-	17
Tribal provinces	12	-	-	12
Federal Capital Islamabad	2	-	-	2
Total	272	60	10	342

Source: National Assembly's Website

Elections and number of voters

In 1970, the Pakistani population was estimated at 43,000,000 including 12,700,000 voters. The number rose in 2002 to 132,000,000 of which 72,000,000 were voters. In the most recent elections held in May 11, 2013, the registered population stood at roughly 180,000,000. Of those, 86,100,000 were eligible voters, with roughly 52,000,000 or 60% exercising their right to vote. This was the highest voter turnout since 1977.

Women obtained 76 seats, 60 of which were through the designated female quota and 16 by vote. The elections yielded the victory for the Pakistan Muslim League led by former PM Nawaz Sharif who obtained a majority of votes enabling him to form the new government.

Table 2 illustrates the number of seats gained by each Pakistani party.

Number of seats gained by each Pakistani party		Table 2
Party	Number of seats	
Pakistan Muslim League	187	
Pakistan People Party	46	
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	33	
Muttahida Qaumi Movement	24	
Assembly of Islamic Clerics	13	

“Women obtained 76 seats, 60 of which were through the designated female quota and 16 by vote”

Number of seats gained by each Pakistani party		Table 2
Party	Number of seats	
Jama'a Islamiyah	4	
Milli Awami Party	4	
Other parties (11)	22	
Independents	9	
Total	342	

Functions of the National Assembly

Together with the Senate and the provincial councils, members of the National Assembly elect a President of the Republic. They also choose the Prime Minister from the party which received the highest number of seats and pass legislation. ●

NAJIB ALAMUDDINE (1909-1996)

BETWEEN AVIATION AND POLITICS

The young Lebanese barrister Amal Alamuddine made local and international headlines when she and acclaimed actor George Clooney got engaged in April 2014. The media shed light on the Druze Alamuddine family but failed to attend to one of its most recognized and prominent members nationwide, Minister Najib Alamuddine.

Birth

Najib Alamuddine was born in Baaqleen, a town in the Shouf Qada'a, in 1909. He was the son of Judge Salim Alamuddine and Mrs. Widad Alamuddine.

Education

Najib Alamuddine pursued his elementary, intermediate and secondary education in Baaqleen before moving to the American University of Beirut where he majored in engineering and mathematics, graduating in 1928. In 1938, he completed his postgraduate studies in English education systems and political economy at the University of Exeter in England.

Professional Life

After graduation, Alamuddine gave Arabic classes at the American University of Beirut. Later in 1933, he travelled to the Emirate of Transjordan where he taught engineering and mathematics at the University of Jordan. He was appointed 'inspector' at the Ministry of Education and used to move from one school to the next across the Emirate in order to assess their conditions and explore ways to improve them. His devotion to work combined with his diligence and managerial and organizational skills resulted in his appointment Inspector General for Customs, Commerce and Industry. Alamuddine stepped up the ladder of promotion until he became a controller and an inspector for several governmental administrations.

In 1940, he became head of the secretariat of the Prime Minister's Office under the term of PM Toufic Abou El Hoda. Alamuddine developed strong friendship ties with Transjordan's Emir, Prince Abdullah Bin Hussein.



Najib Alamuddine

In 1942, he returned to Lebanon to manage Transjordan Resources Company, a company he had established and entrusted in the keeping of his brother before heading for Jordan. Najib and his brother drove the company to stellar success and earned a British honor award in recognition of their work. Alamuddine continued to climb the echelons of success until he was appointed member of the Economic Council in 1952 and represented Lebanon in several conferences.

MEA's Chairman

In 1951, Alamuddine was voted chairman and director of the Middle East Airlines established in 1945. He worked on promoting and improving the airline leading it towards a golden age of great expansion. Over the course of just a few years, the MEA became one of the most prominent airlines thanks to its well-structured fleet, professional crew and numerous offices worldwide. Alamuddine remained in his position as MEA's Chairman until 1977.

Politics and ministerial work

Alamuddine's undisputed success in business ventures and management brought him closer to politics. On July 25, 1965, he was appointed Minister of Guidance and Information and Minister of Tourism under the Rashid Karami government. He served in this position until December 21, 1965 when he was reshuffled to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and remained in office until the resignation of the government on September 4, 1966. Alamuddine reassumed the Public Works and Transport portfolio on April 25, 1973 under the Amin Hafez government, which was recognized for hosting experts and professionals. Nevertheless, political conditions prevented its appearance before Parliament to gain confidence and it ended up resigning on July 8, 1973.

Other activities

Besides his personal business, MEA responsibilities and engagement in ministerial work, Najib Alamuddine juggled numerous simultaneous tasks. He was member of the National Council for Tourism Development, the International Aviation Organization and the AUB's Board of Trustees in Lebanon in 1964. He was also head of the Alumni Association of the AUB in 1967 and 1973. Alamuddine left Lebanon during the Civil War period and settled in London where he published *The Storm* and his biography entitled *The Flying Sheikh* in 1987.

Family Life

He married a Swiss woman and had four children with her: Makram (b.1944) Karim (b.1947), Ida (b.1947) and Rima who passed away.

Death

He died on June 11, 1996 and was buried in Lebanon.

Alamuddine' words on Lebanon and its sectarian structure

Author Salam Rassi quotes Alamuddine as saying: "Lebanon is now home to a patchwork of people, not to one united Lebanese people. A patchwork of people and one united people are two different things. The united people has common rights and assumes common duties. In Lebanon though, there are roughly twenty sects, each of them has a distinct personal status law and unique doctrines, traditions and rituals; even in clothing, each sect dons different costumes.

“For this reason, there are not in Lebanon currently any joint stock company bringing together shareholders from different sects; if there was any such company, it would be made up of brothers or at the very best of partners sharing a common sect...”

This patchwork of people cannot form one united people and one community; how could it ever then form a state where everyone finds equal refuge!"

"For this reason, there are not in Lebanon currently any joint stock company bringing together shareholders from different sects; if there was any such company, it would be made up of brothers or at the very best of partners sharing a common sect... For this reason, the Lebanese are distinguished for their uniqueness; they succeed as individuals, not as a community.

The Lebanese, in their current condition, fail to establish a joint stock company in the fullest sense of the word; how can I reassure them with respect to the coherence of their community and their solidarity in defending their common rights?" ●



Said Chaaya

Researcher at the Paris-Sorbonne University

DEFENDING SUSTAINABLE WOMEN'S RIGHTS: A PATH FOR PEACE?

In the last decade, we have all noticed a significant deterioration in human rights worldwide and specifically those related to women's rights. We all have been marked by what one can argue to be more inconceivable in our time than any time ever, regarding the education restrictions on girls. This was imposed on girls in many of the conflict zones and in sensitive areas as well as in developing countries. But how many other injustices are inflicted on women living in stable areas? Many of these discriminations continue to blight entire lives in silence and sometimes in total indifference.

It is also true that one might think, that the right to live is all what people might need, during times of war. The preservation of human life should be considered more important than the right to education. Whilst this idea seems to be common sense, it doesn't help the prevention of future conflicts nor the reconstruction of society.

We do think that defending the right for equal education for girls and equal rights for them is essential whether in Asia, Africa, Latin America or the Middle East. It is a way of preventing imbalance and future problems in their respective societies.

If we do agree that there is no progress, without an effective role of women in all domains, then we should definitely agree that without the application and the real exercise of the right to education for girls then there will be no progress.

So for, the right for equal education is the cornerstone of the construction of human dignity. The mistreatment of girls from a young age, in different regions of the world seems to be a common occurrence, that few people are concerned about today due to other urgent global issues.

What will historians conclude in a half-century or more seeing the regression of the status and the condition of women in today's society? How can we be proud of any of our achievements and technological advances while women are treated as less than nothing and as slaves in many areas of the world? How can we pretend to be living in

a modern world whilst major parts of the world are still living in a medieval period? All of these thoughts that deny women's rights to "*freedom, equality and fraternity*", under various pretexts, are obscurantists.

Women deserve to have equal rights like men in each society and to be a full citizen, even if citizenship is not yet a word that many know about.

Education is not a utopia, it is not a dream to work, it is simply a basic right that should be granted to each human being and especially to those who are not allowed those rights: the girls.

The path is hard and there is still a long way to achieve total equality in rights. A wonderful way would be to consider working on global rights to education for girls. This would be in the same time achieving stability and progress toward millions of human lives. Tomorrow would be a better day, only if women are fully considered and respected as a full entity, not just a part of something, which means fully entitled to learn, to work, to play sports and to practice the arts. Women should simply be able to achieve and to exist in the public sphere without dispute.

Finally, there is an evident relation between female literacy rates and life improvement and therefore of improving their societies. The increase of women rights in the world and the hope of lasting peace in any place interlink profoundly in order to live, study and be fully equal. Perhaps this is the right to "a new beginning!"

THE MONTHLY INTERVIEWS

PAINTER AND ARCHITECT

BERNARD ASAAD RENNO

'FROM CHURCH MURALS TO LIVE SHOW PAINTING'

Many children follow the occupation of their fathers and forefathers. Some even inherit the same talent and work towards honing and perfecting their skills, outmatching, on some occasions, the innovation and artwork of their forerunners. Painter and architect Bernard Renno, son of the late artist Asaad Renno who died in 2013 at the age of 91, is one such person.

Were you influenced by your father?

I was greatly influenced by him. I accompanied him on his long journey of painting murals in 38 churches across Lebanon that included the churches of Beit Shabab, Abrine, Al- Fanar and Ebleh. My first foray into painting was in 1966 at the age of seven. I used to assist him in placing and blending the colors at the Church of Bdadoune. I would follow instructions, for I was the one on the ground while he stood up there painting. We would spend a month or two painting church murals. As time went by, I gained my father's experience and trust and earned a major role in executing murals for the final nine churches, particularly the Saint Charbel Church of Abrine in 2010 and the Saint Charbel Church of Fanar where the mural bears the signature of myself and my father after all previous murals bear his signature alone. This is how I first plunged into the realm of painting and it certainly was not an easy plunge given the nature, symbolism and immensity of the work we did. Each mural covered 200 to 250 square meters.

Where did you study?

I finished primary school at the Patriarchate School in Zqaq El Blat where my father was an art teacher. I then moved to the Antonine Institute where he also gave drawing classes and stayed there until the end of the secondary cycle. I enrolled afterwards in the Michelangelo Academy of Arts in Sodeco, an art school founded by my father initially in Zahle, and graduated as an Interior Designer. I was studying drawing simultaneously and obtained a diploma in fine arts. In



Bernard Asaad Renno

1985, I graduated as an Architect Engineer from the Holy Spirit University- (USEK) Kaslik. At this stage, I started out my professional career and started managing and giving courses at the Academy until 2003 when we had to close it down for family reasons.

When did you begin your personal works?

I founded the Vestiges D'Orient Atelier D'Art in Gemayzeh in 1985 and opened a second branch in Naqqash in 2002. When that closed, I reopened another branch in Dbayeh, for I was always keen on having two branches.

What are the themes you focus on in your paintings?

The themes I focus on have been through different stages and changed every decade. The beginning or first stage was with the oriental paintings focusing on the traditions, customs and images of the Orient, hence the name of my atelier, Vestiges D'Orient Atelier D'Art. The paintings were primarily depictions of traditional Lebanese houses. Later I moved to metaphysics depicting themes like life

and death, outer-space and the deep sea. The third stage was three dimensional painting and the use of viscid and original substances in order to avoid the duplication of paintings and create creative pieces. The fourth stage was live painting using rapid techniques. I have so far performed 194 live paintings, which means completing an artwork in front of an audience in a short period of time ranging between five and 90 minutes or more, depending on the theme and size of the piece. The most recent painting portrayed the Syrian actor Doureid Lahham.

Have you painted any public figures?

I have and the best among my paintings of public figures are those depicting popes on the papal chair such as Pope Benedictus XVI and Pope Jean Paul II. The painting of Pope Jean Paul II was beautiful, to the extent that Patriarch Mar Bechara Boutros el-Rai took it and hung it in the Jean Paul II Hall in Bkerke.

How many paintings have you made so far?

I was able to count 6000 paintings. The real number is probably higher than that.

Are you working on promoting the art of painting?

I believe that the spread of the art of painting and the discovery and development of talents is necessary. This is the reason I am currently teaching painting. I either give private individual lessons or group lessons for groups made up of five to six students of varying ages. They obtain a certificate after one year of study with an average of two hours daily.

Do you encourage your children to engage in this domain?

I have a boy and a girl and I do hope that they will one day carry the torch. For now, they do not see painting as their goal but I think with time they will follow the path of the family, which began with my father, Asaad Renno.

What are the difficulties that face those who take art as a profession?

Painting cannot be regarded a profession or a primary source of income in Lebanon. Sales are slow because the majority of the Lebanese do not have the money to buy paintings and well-off people buy their paintings from outside Lebanon instead of encouraging local artists. Therefore, there must be another source to secure our livelihood such as teaching.

Another problem is the faking of paintings which offends art and strips the artworks of their value.

What are your foremost accomplishments?

Besides painting more than 6000 paintings and teaching more than 3000 students over different stages, some of



whom have risen to prominence such as Elie Saab and his wife, Salim Chammas, Majed Tannous and Samir Abi Rashed, I have designed the covers for several poetry books and held more than 12 private exhibitions and another 170 jointly with others. I am currently the cultural attaché to the Consulate General of the Republic of Latvia to Lebanon. This position motivates me to increase my contributions to the art scene in Lebanon and the wider world.

What is the difference between mural and live painting?

Painting remains the bigger umbrella for both methods but there certainly is a major difference. Mural painting is a meticulous work that requires a great effort and can take for months while live show painting is on site, is rapid and has many followers. ●●



CHF LEBANON

DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

Overview

Designed initially to improve the economic standing and quality of life of American communities through the construction of affordable housing, the CHF - Cooperative Housing Foundation-gradually took its operations outside the US and expanded its portfolio of programs. From a housing organization founded in 1952, it shifted to working internationally and began to vary its activities and programs, addressing community needs more broadly, empowering the vulnerable and responding to major crises and disasters. Today, the CHF is recognized as an international development NGO operating in over 100 countries worldwide, including Lebanon, where it started its activity in 1997.

Programs and activities

Over 15 years, CHF has implemented several community-driven programs in Lebanon addressing a broad range of social issues from agriculture to development and education.

Foremost among these programs is the Rural Economic Development Initiative, a USAID-funded program implemented in 86 Lebanese villages with the aim of improving the living conditions of local communities in rural areas. The program focuses on infrastructure projects such as the construction and expansion of irrigation networks, roadways, electricity and dispensaries to name but a few. USD 6,000,000 were spent on the REDI program between 1997 and 2002.

Between 2002 and 2005, CHF launched the Clustering for Economic Development and Revitalization of Industry Sectors - CEDARS Program- in order to strengthen the agribusiness industry and create more jobs. The program identified several target areas and promoted banana



and orange production in Saida and the South. Several techniques were introduced to improve the quality of the crops and boost their competitiveness both in the local market and abroad. It is noteworthy that the concept of the net house, a technique popular in the Canary Islands, has enabled farmers to produce eight tons of banana bunches per 1000 square meters. Early harvesting and proper post-handling has generated higher sales and an increase in net profits. CHF shifted to using devices that release ethylene to facilitate the banana ripening process. Bananas were first washed and then packaged in cardboard boxes, which retained their quality and reduced losses during the transport process. The technique has since been used to package many agricultural products, which has translated into higher demand on packaging carton, leading consequently into higher employment opportunities in the industrial sector.

American varieties of apple trees were provided to Lebanese apple growers. The organization helped increase the total surface planted from 40 to 110 trees per donum. US experts from the University of California were employed to train unskilled farmers on harvest and post-harvest practices and several nurseries were set up to produce and look after new seedlings.

In collaboration with local partners, CHF has also come a long way in enhancing the olive oil sector. Efforts were brought together to revolutionize the traditional practices for growing, harvesting, collecting and storing olives and increasing tree yields. Olive presses were renovated and a top-notch centralized storage facility was set up.

CHF's agricultural footprint was felt everywhere across the sector. Roughly 30,000 saplings of quasi-tropical trees were planted annually benefitting roughly 100 farmers. In cooperation with the Association for the Development of Rural capacities, CHF produced 557 tons of high-quality organic compost from banana peels and 192 farmers were trained on how to use compost. Another project done in collaboration with the Mouawad Foundation focused on expanding forage production in the north by providing modern technical assistance. Approximately 200 farmers were served by the project. Forage prices decreased by 30% and 21 new employment opportunities were created. CHF also cooperated with the Hariri Foundation to develop flower production and marketing. The project included a nursery covering 882 square meters and equipped with the latest heating, cooling and lighting technologies.

As part of the Humanitarian Assistance to Lebanon (HAL) program, which kicked off following the July War and lasted from 2006 till 2007, CHF provided relief and life-saving assistance to the communities affected by the hostility through UNDP funds worth USD 100,000,000. It also built and equipped a solid waste treatment plant in Zahle and the vicinity, which served 28 towns.

CHF was an active player in the TAMKEEN project, a USD 11,000,000 project aiming at transforming 44 municipalities in Lebanon into effective agents for leading local socio-economic development through democratic engagement with the private sector and citizens. Its influence was equally felt in the DIRASATI project which was launched in participation with the Ministry



of Education and Higher Education and other organizations with a view to renovate schools and provide them with modern equipment thus creating a favorable environment capable of keeping up with the times and promoting values such as peace and democracy. Roughly 90 schools were renovated under DIRASATI.

Challenges

Much like all humanitarian organizations working to bring relief to the needy, CHF is hindered by the mentality dominating local communities, which suspects that grant funds are rarely used for their intended purpose and may be spent on personal agendas. Delay in finishing transactions and paperwork is occasionally caused due to the bureaucratic mazes in the public sector's departments, not to mention that some municipalities elected during the execution of a certain project attempt at times to change the roadmap set for the project or to prevent its accomplishment. Other municipalities refuse to let committees elected from the local community pitch in as they believe that the decision making is a privilege restricted to them. In certain areas such as Hermel, the lack of zoning can be an obstacle getting in the way of implementing any potential project. ●

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TUBINGEN

We had to eat both heaps of sandwiches and drink the entire pitchers. Milady would then told us to go to school. Afterwards, she would sit at the table to have her breakfast. She would not eat with us but keep watch instead. I would keep her company for a while and listen as she recounted the cruel times of war and the woes and miseries and starvation inflicted on the Germans. Then, she would ask me about the Middle East. ‘The sufferings of the Germans pale in comparison to what the people of Lebanon had endured,’ I would explain. ‘You sit down to study now. I will do the dishes and prepare lunch,’ she would say.

A strict and monotonous life. Yet, it is in such a generous environment, warm tenderness and rigorous discipline that boys grow into men.

Classes began in early November. I had to register myself. Mr. Littman said he would help me out. I was expecting the problems and complications that our students face at the American University. My daughter Mayya was left in tears after the huge hassle she had registering.

I walked with Mr. Littman into a spacious hall with vault roofing similar to those roofs we have in Lebanon. Renowned German philosopher Hegel used to lecture in that centuries-old building. Some walls were blanketed with green moss. There was no one in the room save an old man sitting behind a decaying table. There was only one chair. When he saw Mr. Littman, the old man assumed an upright military posture and bowed in respect. The amount of reverence paid to university professors was unusual, highly unusual. ‘At your beck and call, Sir,’ he said. ‘Here is a Lebanese student who wishes to enroll at the university. He will be among my students,’ Mr. Littman replied.

The registrar sat down and reached for a pocket-size notebook with worn-out papers. ‘Your name?’, he asked.

-Anis Freiha.

-Freicha?! How do you spell it?

Littman stepped in to help him spell the name.

-Do you have any corroborative documents that entitle you to enroll?

- I have a Masters degree from the University of Chicago. Mr. Littman explained to him the meaning of such a degree, for he had taught for some time at the Princeton University.

-This degree qualifies him for admission, said Mr. Littman.

The registrar complied and wrote down the courses proposed by Mr. Littman: Aramaic language, Hebrew language, Archaeology and History of Art. ●



DO CARROTS IMPROVE YOUR EYESIGHT?

Myth:

Everyone has probably heard that eating carrots is good for one's eyes, but is there any actual truth to this commonly held belief?

Fact:

Carrots are a good source of Vitamin A, which helps maintain eyesight. But carrots do not actually improve vision, or help you see in the dark, as some parents may tell their children in the hopes of getting their children to eat vegetables.

Carrots contain Vitamin A in form of beta-carotene, which plays a crucial part in vision, bone growth and the overall health of the immune system. Vitamin A also helps protect the cornea, the transparent layer forming the front of the eye, which is essential for good vision. However eating a lot of carrots will not improve your eyesight if your vision problems are not related to vitamin A, no matter how many carrots you eat. Extreme lack of vitamin A in our diet can cause blindness. In fact, nowadays vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of blindness. Every year an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 children worldwide become blind as a result of vitamin A deficiency (WHO). Although harmless, consuming too much beta-carotene will cause your skin to become orange.

Carrots are not the only vegetables that contain the essential beta-carotene: sweet potatoes, mango, pumpkins, apricots and cantaloupe are also sources of beta-carotene. The nutrient is also found in milk, cheese, egg yolks and liver. Vitamin A is either derived from animal foods called retinol which can be directly used by the body, or obtained from colorful fruits and vegetables in form of pro-vitamin A carotenoids which are then converted to retinol.

In the Middle Ages, carrots were believed to cure anything from sexually transmitted diseases to snakebites. It was not until World War II that carrots were associated with vision. The British Royal Air Force promoted and announced that a strict diet of carrots helped pilots to see and successfully eliminate Nazi bombers attacking at night. The propaganda was put out to mislead and conceal the fact that the Royal Air Force was actually using a radar which could pinpoint enemy bombers before even entering English territories. At the time France, the UK, the USA, the Soviet Union, Italy, Japan and Germany each had explored and researched radars, but only the British were successful in developing a fully-functioning network which operated 24 hours a day. The British had to make up plausible stories for the sudden increase of enemy bombers being shot down, in response to the story the British public began to grow and eat more and more carrots. They generally believed that eating carrots would help them see better during the citywide blackouts which was very common at the time. Even the Germans were deceived and started stocking up on carrots.

The Radar played a vital role and gave the Royal Air Force an upper hand, which is why they had to keep it a complete secret. The British propaganda greatly contributed to this commonly held belief about carrots. Although carrots won't improve your visual acuity if you have less than perfect vision, the vitamins found in the vegetable help promote overall eye health. 🍷

TOMORROW, WE WILL ENTER THE CITY

IBRAHIM SALAMEH

Issued in its first edition in 2008 by Europe & Middle East Printing & Trading Co., *Tomorrow, We Will Enter the City* is a memoir recounting a set of events and encounters that marked the life of journalist Ibrahim Salameh. Faithful to his usual spontaneity and unparalleled satirical tone, Salameh recollects his own personal history, pinning down his experiences in the press hallways with a careful balance of professionalism and playfulness. Salameh was fond of journalism; he was loyal to the profession and placed its integrity above all other considerations, unwilling to compromise on his principles.

Salameh was taken captive by the ‘printed word’ by sheer fluke of coincidence when, one day, he arrived late to his Baccalaureate exam. He published his first article in *the Telegraph*, making his first foray into journalism. Salameh moved across different Lebanese journals and magazines in the country and abroad, from Salim al-Lawzi’s weekly *Al-Hawadeth*, to Said Freiha’s *As-Sayyad* to George Abou Adal’s *Ousbouh al-Arabi*, all the way to *As-Sahafa*, *Al-Mouharrer* and *Al-Mustaqbal*. Yet, he kept his special column alive and echoed no other voice than his own.

In his book, Salameh evokes his relationship with the Arabs on the left of the political spectrum. His journey with politics and parties began at the tender age of 14 at the official high school of Ashrafieh. His classmates were divided between nationalist Syrians and communists whereas he was magnetized by Abdul Nasser. Occasionally, the author reminisces about several junctures that could undermine the credibility of the profession at those perturbed times: “After September 1970 and the absence of Abdul Nasser, *Al-Hawadeth*’s editor in chief Salim al-Lawzi came to me with a surprising cover suggestion ‘From Mustafa... to the Jews of Israel’, meaning a call for reconciliation between the Arabs and Israelis. I frankly asked him if the magazine had a fourth editor-in-chief so he said ‘who are the other three beside me and you?’ I replied ‘King Faissal, the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, Golda Meir, the Shah of Iran...’ He deplored



and blurted out an immoderate retort ‘if one has reached an understanding with the CIA, is that a big problem for the Arabs?’”

Salameh was keen to retell the event, the encounter or the dialogue in its raw form, even when that meant raising several question marks. At certain junctures, the reader gets the impression that this feature in particular has afforded the author ample margin to dare sometimes to say what should not be said.

The author did not hesitate to mention the discontent of Jihan, wife of Anwar Sadat, with Um Kulthoum who was accustomed to calling him ‘Abou Nour’ in her concerts, until the ‘unfortunate evening’ came in the winter of 1971. Salameh showed no reluctance in recounting how Jihan never returned the pearl necklace she had borrowed from Souad Al-Sabbah, wife of Kuwaiti Prince Abdallah Moubarak, thus severing the relations between Egypt and Kuwait.

To the rhetorical question raised at the end of the memoir of whether or not ‘the Western policy has failed in countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Tunisia’, Salameh answers a definite and double ‘yes’. ●

FACE TO FACE WITH TORNADOS

Face to Face With Tornados is one of six children's books in the series *Natural Disasters*. The series recounts the story of Samer and his twin sister Zeina who join a youth training camp on disaster management. The camp is held during spring vacation and spans six days, each day giving the twins an opportunity of learning how to deal with such natural disasters as earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, floods and heat waves.

Published originally by Macaw Book in 2010, the educational series was translated from English into Arabic by Eline Nour Mnnassa and published by Academia International. The story aims to introduce children to natural disasters and casts light on the means of addressing them.

On the first day, tornadoes are the central focus of the training. Children are informed on the tornadoes and insight is provided into their causes and hazards, and most importantly the recommended action to mitigate harms and rescue lives when they occur. Readers are taken on a journey through the history's most horrible tornadoes, including the Daulatpur–Saturia, Bangladesh tornado in 1989 and the 1984 Soviet Union tornado outbreak, also known as the 1984 Ivanovo tornado outbreak. ●



NAHLE FAMILIES

SOUTHERN MAJORITY, NORTHERN MINORITY AND SEVEN MEMBERS IN BEIRUT

The Nahles are a medium-sized Lebanese family. Most of its members are Shia'a; a minority is Sunni and a limited number is Maronite. The Nahles are mainly present in South Lebanon, in particular Tibeh and Nabatieh, as well as in the north (Deir Emar) and Beirut.

Etymology

Researchers differ in their opinion on the origins of the family's name. Some believe the Nahles came originally from South Lebanon and were given this name for their tireless labor, which resembles that of the nahle, Arabic for 'bee'. Others argue that they came from the city of Hama and were generous and big-hearted people.

Number

The Nahles total roughly 1800 members distributed by sect as follows:

Shia'a: 1463 members

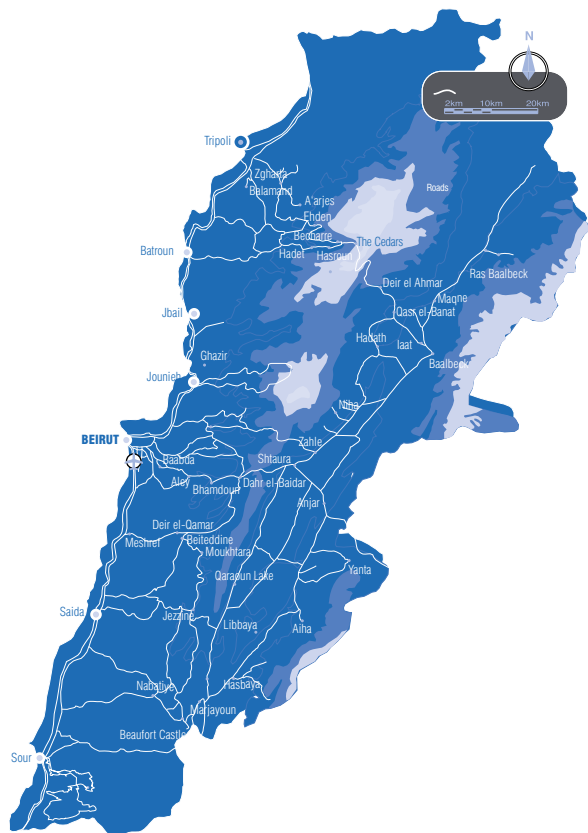
- Tibeh (Marjeyoun): 920
- Deir Seryan (Marjeyoun): 41
- Kfartebnine (Nabatieh): 143
- Nabatieh (Midan, Serail and Bayyad neighborhoods): 150
- Choueifat, Oumara neighborhood (Aley): 34
- Ghoubeiry, Jame'e neighborhood (Baabda): 60
- Msaytbeh (Beirut): 65
- Bachoura (Beirut): 25
- Zqaq el-Blat (Beirut): 15
- Jwayya (Tyre): 10

Sunni: 310 members

- Deir Emar (Mennieh-Dennieh): 274
- Mazraa (Beirut): 36

Maronite: 7 members

- Saifi (Beirut): 7



NAHLE

WATER-RICH TOWN WITH THIRSTY RESIDENTS

Once a tranquil Baalbecki town, the outskirts of Nahle have turned into a front line of confrontation with the terrorist groups on the Syrian side. The town is popular for its natural scenery and water wells.

Etymology

In his book, *Names of Lebanese Towns and Villages*, the author Anis Freiha reports that the name of the town could be of Arabic origins. However, he is more inclined to assume that it is Syriac Aramaic, meaning the valleys and brooklets that dry out in the summer, which applies to some parts of the town.

Location

Nahle is located in the northern part of the Beqa'a Mohafaza, 6 kilometers north east of Baalbeck and 90 kilometers from Beirut. It lies at an altitude of 1300 meters above the seal level and has an approximate area of 12250 hectares. It is bordered by Maqneh and Younine to the south, Baalbeck to the north, Syria to the east and I'aat to the west.

Population and houses

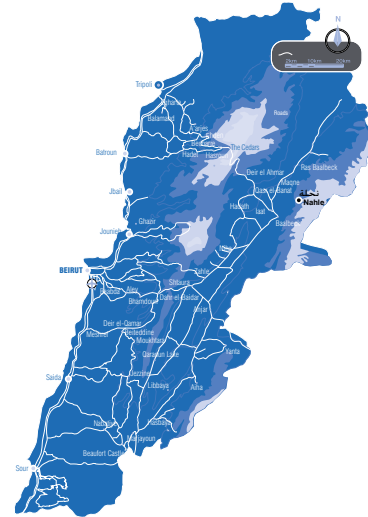
The registered population of Nahle is estimated at 6000. They are Shia'a distributed in about 650 houses. The town has over 50 commercial and craft shops.

Voters

In 2000, there were roughly 2824 registered voters in the town, 1339 of whom exercised their right to vote. The number rose to 3312 in 2009 with 1907 voters casting their ballots.

Voters are distributed by family as follows:

- Yazbek (largest family): 820
- Yahfoufi: 620
- Choucair: 606
- Kais: 470
- Fares: 187
- Hammoud: 145
- Othman: 88
- Nasreddine: 51
- Dandash: 42
- Hamadeh: 40
- Diab: 32



Added to those are the Mathloun, Wez, Yassine, Alaeddine, Jabali, Darwish, Assi and Hamdan families. Local authorities

The town has three Mukhtars and a 15-member municipal council established in 1964. Its share of the Independent Municipal Fund was LBP 299.7 million in 2011 up from LBP 224 million in 2007.

Educational institutions

There is one school in the town, Nahle's Official Elementary School. In the scholarly year 2012-2013, it had 93 students and 20 teachers. A large number of children from the town are enrolled in the schools of Baalbeck.

Economic life

Agriculture is a primary source of livelihood in the town. The availability of water (although nowadays to a lesser extent) and the vast stretches of land facilitate the growing of walnuts, plums and apricots. Few of the residents are beekeepers and others make a living from fish farming. The nature of the town has allowed for the establishment of parks and restaurants that attract visitors from different Lebanese region, in particular Beqa'a.

Problems

Although the town has seven water wells, it still suffers from shortage of water due to the lack of a water network for both irrigation and domestic use. Consequently, residents resort to buying water tanks or installing special networks, thus leading to water misdistribution, not to mention that some of the water resources serve different towns. ●

DOMINICA

A BANANA-GROWING ISLAND WITH VOLCANIC PEAKS AND INDIGENOUS BIRDS

Known as the ‘Nature Island’ for its tropical greenery, sparkling waterfalls and volcanic physique, the Caribbean island of Dominica went back and forth between the French and the British before it was given the status of association with the UK and became fully self-governing in internal affairs in 1967. Dominica achieved full independence on November 3, 1978.

Location and Area

Dominica, otherwise known as the Commonwealth of Dominica, is the smallest among the Antillean islands of the Caribbean Sea with a surface area of 751 square kilometers. Dominica and its capital Roseau, Latin equivalent of ‘Sunday’ in reference to the day when Columbus discovered the island, are not to be confused with the Dominican Republic which is another island nation in the Caribbean. Morne Diablotings is the most elevated point in the island.

Population

According to the World Bank estimates of 2013, Dominica is home to 72,003 people. The island’s indigenous peoples are known as the Kalinago tribes or simply Caribs. Being located between the French Guadeloupe and Martinique, this island nation is occasionally named French Dominica. It is also dubbed the Nature Island thanks to its lush greenery and exquisite scenery.

Religion

95% of Dominica’s population professes the Roman Catholic faith. Protestants make up 3% of the population and the rest practice the Voodoo, a deviant faith originating in West Africa and exercised in parts of the Caribbean.

Language

Once a British colony, Dominica has English as its official language. The elderly still speak French, influenced by the island’s first settlers who were of French descent in 1635.

Economy

Dominica boasts lush mountainous forests where rare fauna and flora abound. It is home to the Sisserou parrot, also known as the Imperial Amazon, which is considered the island’s national bird and is featured on its flag. The island’s scenery and natural profile has made Dominica’s economy reliant primarily on tourism especially that it has large tropical forests, one of which is recognized by UNESCO as a heritage site, and over 365 rivers and hundreds of streams, coastlines and coral reefs. Agriculture,



more precisely banana-growing, dominates Dominica’s economy with nearly one-third of the labor force working in this sector. However, a hurricane hit the island in 2007 causing massive damage to both its agricultural sector and infrastructure. Dominica has attempted to reduce its reliance on bananas since the European Union decided to phase out preferential treatment for producers from former colonies. Dominica has therefore started to diversify its production shifting to coffee beans, aloe vera, cut flowers and tropical fruits such as mango, guava and papaya. The island has largely exploited hydroelectric power.

Political System

Following its independence from the United Kingdom in 1978, Dominica became a parliamentary democracy in the Commonwealth of Nations and a member of La Francophonie. It is one of the Caribbean’s few republics. The president is the Head of State. Executive power rests with the Cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister. Dominica’s Parliament consists of 30 members, 21 of whom are elected directly and 9 are senators appointed by the president or elected by MPs. ●●

APRIL 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

The presidential vacuum remains to be solved; former Minister Michel Samaha appears before Military Court; enforcement of new Traffic Law begins; first shipment of Saudi-funded French weapons arrives in Beirut; Hezbollah and the Future Movement reciprocate hostile statements yet proceed with their dialogue; the Free Patriotic Movement challenges extension of the terms of security chiefs: these are the foremost highlights in April and the daily digest of events breaks down as follows:

April 1

- Heated arguments over the PM's position towards developments in Yemen mark the Cabinet session; and Hezbollah says Tammam Salam's remarks do not represent Lebanon's official position. The Cabinet appoints Mount Lebanon Governor Fouad Fleifel as the Cabinet's Secretary General in succession to Souhail Bouji and keeps him in his position as acting Governor. Bouji remains in the Serail as advisor to PM Tammam Salam.

- Tit for tat kidnappings between Syrians and the residents of Ersal.

- Media war erupts between al-Jadeed and LBC after the latter broadcasted a report on the rows between Hezbollah and al-Jadeed television. Al-Jadeed fired back by airing a report on Pierre Daher's beginnings at the Lebanese Forces.

April 2

- Speaker Nabih Berri adjourns the 21st session scheduled to elect a new president until April 22 due to lack of quorum with only 43 MPs attending.

- The Lebanese Army Intelligence receives from An-Nussra Front, through the Committee of Scholars of Qalamoun, the body of soldier Ali Bazzal in order to hand it over to his parents. Bazzal's father holds Sheikh Mosatafa Houjeiry responsible for the death of Ali.

- Economic, agricultural and industrial events caution of the disaster that Lebanon will suffer as a result of the closure of the Nasib border crossing between Jordan and Syria, after it was captured by the Syrian opposition, for this crossing is Lebanon's portal to the Gulf.

- Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil holds a press conference where he emphasizes the importance of national unity and Arab solidarity and commends the resistance.

- Hezbollah and the Future Movement hold their ninth dialogue session in Ain Tineh.

- Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil

visits the headquarters of the Regie Libanaise des Tabacs et Tombacs and emphasizes the discovery of large-scale smuggling.

April 3

- Lebanese towns celebrate Good Friday mass.

- Syrian rebels abduct a number of Lebanese truck drivers on the Jordanian border and demand ransom for their release.

- Patriarch al-Rai receives the Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea and his wife Strida. Geagea says the US-Iran nuclear deal will not bring Lebanon any benefits.

April 4

- Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon Ali Awad Assiri reveals that a group of lawyers has been designated to sue Al-Akhbar for assaulting Saudi leaders, stressing that the newspaper has crossed the line. Hezbollah expresses solidarity with Al-Akhbar.

- Drug Office patrol comes under fire during a crackdown on the neighborhood of the Zouaiter family.

- Maronite Patriarch al-Rai renews his call for MPs to elect a president during his Easter speech.

April 5

- Syrian militants release Lebanese national Hussein Seifeddine, resident of Hosh el-Rafiq, after having kidnapped him from the border town of Ersal and held him for days.

- Six of the kidnapped truck drivers return from the Nasib border crossing and the fate of the remaining five remains unknown.

April 6

- US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken meets Lebanese officials and reiterates that the presidential election is a strictly Lebanese matter adding that Hezbollah's entry to Syria brings harm

to both Lebanon and Syria. Blinken also visits MP Walid Jumblat.

- Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah tells Al-Ikhbariyyah TV that his views are justified when it comes to the Yemen issue and renews his attack on Saudi Arabia. Nasrallah says the Qalamoun battle is a Lebanese-Syrian issue.

- Maronite Patriarch al-Rai leads annual mass in honor of France and accuses a political group of failing in their electoral duty.

- Security forces thwart an attempt to smuggle 3.5 tons of hashish from Lebanon to Egypt.

- Proponents of Al-Akhbar stage a protest of solidarity condemning the positions of the Saudi ambassador.

April 7

- Spanish King Philip arrives in Lebanon and inspects the Spanish contingent in UNIFIL in South Lebanon. He later visits PM Tammam Salam.

- The Lebanese Army carries out a military operation in the outskirts of Ras Baalbeck to clamp down on terrorists.

- Information Minister Ramzi Jreij apologizes to Saudi ambassador Ali Awad Asiri over Tele Liban's broadcast of an interview with Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah during which he renewed his harsh criticism of the kingdom; he promises to investigate the matter.

- Following its weekly meeting, the Change and Reform Bloc warns against extending the mandate of security leaders and calls for new appointments much like the appointments made in the Banking Supervision Committee. The Bloc applauds the Iranian nuclear deal.

- The Future Parliamentary Bloc welcomes the Iranian nuclear deal and encourages Iran to stop exporting sectarian strife.

- Families of the Abra martyrs hold a

press conference cautioning from any compromise at the expense of their children.

April 8

- Special envoy of the Iranian President and Foreign Minister Mortada Sarmadi emphasizes during his visit to Lebanon that the military donation destined to the Lebanese Army will resume after lifting sanctions.

- Former PM Saad Hariri regrets that Tele Liban has aired Nasrallah's interview and lashes out at both Nasrallah and Bashar Assad.

- A media gathering at the Faculty of Information and Documentation at the Lebanese University voices solidarity with Al-Jadeed television in the STL summons issue.

- The Cabinet designates the Agriculture Minister to look into the possibility of transporting agricultural commodities overland and appoints members of the Exclusive Economic Zone in Tripoli under the chairmanship of former minister Rayya Hassan. Among the other decisions is the appointment of Firas Rabih al-Abyad as a chairman of Rafic Hariri University Governmental Hospital.

- The Lebanese Army Intelligence arrests two terrorist suspects in Beqa'a, one named Nabil Seddeeq of Syrian nationality and one Lebanese called Nabil Saddiq.

- TV personality Mona Abou Hamzeh holds a press conference urging the release of her husband Bahij Abou Hamzeh after he was arrested unfairly and was forced to renounce his shares in all the companies he managed.

April 9

- The Intelligence Branch chases down Sheikh Khaled Hablas in Tripoli for allegedly orchestrating terrorist attacks and manages to arrest him after shooting dead notorious Islamist militant Osama Mansour and one of his partners, Ahmad Naze, during the operation to arrest Hablas.

- In his STL testimony, former aide of the late PM Rafic Hariri, Mustapha Nasser, says Hariri and Nasrallah have developed a good relationship over the years, judging from the meeting he attended in their presence.

- MP Ibrahim Kanaan visits Patriarch al-Rai before going to Meerab to meet the LF leader Samir Geagea to complete dialogue between the Free Patriotic Movement and the Lebanese Forces.

- Abdallah Nabih Berri announces that he does not seek to inherit the leadership of the Amal Movement.

April 10

- MP Walid Jumblat visits Mohsen Ibrahim, Head of the Organization for Communist Action, and extols his support for Ibrahim and his father.

April 11

- Temperatures drop, leading to heavy rain and snow in different Lebanese regions and causing road closures in mountainous areas.

April 12

- The Greek Orthodox celebrate Easter.
- Actor Issam Breidy dies in a car crash in Dawra.

April 13

- Saudi ambassador Ali Awad Asiri receives envoys of member countries of operation "Decisive Storm" at his residence and says Hezbollah's tirade against Saudi Arabia did not serve Lebanon's interests.

- The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim, receives a delegation chaired by the former PM Saad Hariri who says 'Lebanon has not exited a war to enter into others.' Hariri returns to Saudi Arabia where he meets Interior Minister Nouhad Mashnouq.

- The STL listens to the testimony of journalist Ali Hamadeh who says he had transmitted messages from Hariri to President Bashar Assad through Major General Mohammed Nassif.

- The drivers detained at the Nasib border crossing return from Amman via the Beirut airport, welcomed by Agriculture Minister Akram Chehayyeb who thanks the Free Syrian Army. The ninth truck driver returns via Al-Masnaa road after a ransom has been paid to kidnappers.

- Former President Michel Suleiman launches his political gathering, which issues a statement urging commitment to the Baabda Declaration.

April 14

- Chief of General Security Major General Abbas Ibrahim visits Speaker Nabih Berri and briefs him on the positive developments in the captive soldiers' file.

- Hezbollah and the Future Movement hold their tenth dialogue session in Ain Tineh.

- The Change and Reform Bloc calls for the appointment of military leaders.

- Prominent playwright Raymong Gebara dies after a long battle with illness.

- STL President Judge Ivana Hrdličková arrives in Lebanon in her first official visit to the country and holds meetings with PM Tammam Salam and a number of officials.

- The Future Parliamentary Bloc says Hezbollah's burial of Yemeni leader Abdul Malak Chami in Rawdat al-Shahidayn near the grave of Hezbollah's military commander Imad Mughniyeh plunges Lebanon deeper into regional conflict.

April 15

- MPs quote Speaker Nabih Berri saying during Wednesday's meeting 'dialogue is a national and Arab necessity'. Berri voices optimism about the release of captive soldiers.

- A number of journalists and lawyers backing al-Jadeed television and Karma Khayyat, including Head of the National Audio-Visual Media Council, Abdul Hadi Mahfouz, arrive to the STL headquarters in Hague.

- Hezbollah issues a statement denouncing the Future Bloc's assault on Iran and support of Saudi Arabia.

- In his STL testimony, former aide of the late PM Rafic Hariri, Mustapha Nasser says Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah had obtained Basha Assad's approval to establish an Arab tribunal to look into Hariri assassination but Saad and Bahaa Hariri insisted on an international tribunal.

- The Cabinet discusses the 2015 draft budget and disputes arise over whether to include the salary scale in the budget or not.

- The Loyalty to Resistance issues a statement following its weekly meeting voicing solidarity with al-Jadeed television and slamming the Saudi hostility against Yemen.

- The Ambassadors of the Security Council's big five powers and the representatives of the UN Secretary General and the European Union convene in Bkerke upon the call of Maronite Patriarch Mar Bechara Boutros al-Rai for talks over recent developments in the local and regional scenes and urge speedy elections of a president, supporting the dialogues taking place among the Lebanese.

- In his speech before the Arab clans in the north, Future Movement's Secretary General Ahmad Hariri reiterates the continuity of dialogue, stressing that the

days of overlooking Iranian encroachments are long gone.

- Former PM Najib Mikati says during the inauguration of the al-Azm University in Tripoli that Lebanon is better off far from polarizations, calling for the respect of public liberties in his talk about the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

- An-Nusra Front announces the death of Ossama Mansour and urges the Sunni to take action.

- Deputy head of news in al-Jadeed television, Karma Khayyat, appears before the STL and the prosecution claims that the TV station intended to intimidate the witnesses by publishing information about them.

April 17

- Lebanese Army Commander General Jean Qahwaji inspects army units in Marjeyoun and assures that the armament of the army has begun.

- In a speech delivered during a gathering of solidarity with Yemen in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut, Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah launches a fierce tirade against Saudi Arabia, calling for distancing Lebanon from the Yemeni conflict. Nasrallah's words draw rebuke from former PM Saad Hariri who assures that Nasrallah obeys Iran's orders and that his escalation will not lead the Future Movement to sabotage dialogue.

- The Constitutional Council emphasizes continuity of work until new members are elected.

- During his meeting with a delegation from the Syndicate of Press Editors, Chief of General Security Major General Abbas Ibrahim says he foresees a not-too-distant solution for the captives' crisis, adding that he refuses to have a vacuum in security institutions.

April 18

- MP Walid Jumblat receives a delegation of the parents of captive soldiers and renews his support for a swap operation to release them.

- The Roumieh Prison regains order after stamping down the rebellion.

- In an interview with Voix du Liban radio, former President Michel Suleiman says he will not run for presidency unless he is a consensual candidate. He proceeds to explain that had he wished to stay President, he would have worked towards extending his term.

- Judge of Summary Matters in Baabda,

Hassan Hamdan halts the convening of the Baath Party exceptional conference called for by the Head of the Baath Party in Lebanon, Fayeze Shokr and scheduled for Sunday at the Marriott Hotel. Shokr slams the decision as 'illegal'.

April 19

- Greek Catholic Patriarch Gregorius Lahham III hands former President Michel Suleiman the Rabieh Gathering document, calling on everyone to rise above their personal interests and elect a new president.

- Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil tours towns in the Qada'a of Akkar.

- Justice Minister Ashraf Rifi lambasts Iran during a ceremony held by the National Liberal Party at the Quality Inn Hotel in Tripoli.

April 20

- The first shipment of Saudi-funded French weapons arrive in Lebanon containing 48 "Milan" anti-tank missiles. Army Commander General Jean Kahwaji, Lebanese Defense Minister and Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon welcome French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian upon his arrival at Beirut airport airbase, during a ceremony to hand over the weapons to the army.

- Former PM Saad Hariri holds talks with the Saudi King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz in the presence of Saudi Crown Prince and Deputy Crown Prince and commends the Saudi donation offered to the Lebanese Army.

- Families of Islamist inmates in Roumieh Prison demand the dismissal of Interior Minister Nouhad Mashnouq and stage a protest near the residence of Justice Minister Ashraf Rifi in Tripoli.

- Speaker Nabih Berri chairs a meeting for the Parliament's Bureau Committee to agree on the agenda scheduled for the legislative session; the Lebanese Forces refuse to participate in any session that does not touch on the electoral law and the public budget.

- Maronite Patriarch al-Rai receives former PM Fouad Seniora who accuses Iran of holding back the presidential elections.

- Military court initiates the trial of former Minister Michel Samaha who admits smuggling explosives to Lebanon after having fallen in the trap set by Milad Kfoury.

- Military court sentences Omar Fostuq and Jamal Daftardar to three years and

seven years in prison respectively.

April 21

- The Cabinet postpones budget discussion and approves an advance worth USD 1 million to the Higher Relief Committee to cover the expenses of returning the Lebanese drivers and their trucks from Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Kuwait.

- Families of the Islamist inmates in Roumieh Prison rally in front of the Interior Ministry crying for the dismissal of Minister Nouhad Mashnouq. Mashnouq says he will not resign for he has not made any mistakes.

- The ISF Directorate General says new Traffic Law will be implemented starting tomorrow, April 22.

- Ministry of Education and Higher Education holds a conference entitled 'All for Education' at the Phoenicia Hotel.

April 22

- Speaker Nabih Berri adjourns the session scheduled to elect a new president until May 13 due to lack of quorum.

- Speaker Nabih Berri brandishes the possibility of dissolving non-working Parliament.

- Former PM Saad Hariri holds meetings with a number of officials including US Secretary of State John Kerry in Washington and reiterates his refusal to allow Iran's interference in the region. Kerry stresses the need to elect a president in order to protect Lebanon.

April 23

- The Cabinet approves a request by the Interior Ministry to recruit 500 new officers to General Security and adjourns talks about a donation to the Ministry of Social Affairs to assist Syrian refugees after a row erupted between Minister Rashid Derbas and Minister Gebran Bassil leading the former to leave the session.

- Islamists in Tripoli refuse the Education Minister's decision to close schools in honor of the Armenian genocide centenary commemoration, which results in cancelling a concert for an Armenian band in Tripoli.

- The Lebanese government reportedly hands over two al-Qaida-linked Saudi nationals, including Fahd Mghames, to Saudi Arabia.

- Three ministers from the Change and Reform Bloc, including Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, participate in Armenia's

commemorating ceremony of the Armenian Genocide centenary. MP Walid Jumblat lays a wreath on the memorial erected at the Haigazian University.

- MP Mohammed Kabbara criticizes Interior Minister Nouhad Mashnouq and former PM Fouad Seniora. Mashnouq denounces Kabbara's statement and assures that he has the Future Movement's support.

- Employees at the Rafic Hariri University Governmental Hospital go on strike and close the entrance of the Emergency Room.

- The Union Coordination Committee stage a protest and schools strike demanding the approval of the salary scale.

April 24

- Armenians rally from Antelias to Bourj Hammoud's playground in commemoration of the Armenian genocide centenary. All speeches delivered in the occasion hold Turkey accountable for the genocide and urge it to acknowledge the rights of Armenians.

- Sources report the death of Major General Rustom Ghazali, head of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon.

- International movie star Salma Hayek arrives in Lebanon to launch her movie, which is adapted from Gebran Khalil Gebran's book 'The Prophet'.

- The Islamic Makassed Alumni Association honors Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon Ali Awad Asiri who criticizes Hezbollah and urges dialogue to defuse the tension.

- Some mosque preachers denounce the closure of schools in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, yet acknowledge the massacre and its causes. This coincides with a protest near the Taqwa Mosque in Tripoli condemning Interior Minister Nouhad Mashnouq.

- Former PM Fouad Seniora assures that General Michel Aoun has been informed that he has zero chances in becoming President and reiterates ongoing dialogue with Hezbollah.

April 25

- PM Tammam Salam holds in the Grand Serail an honorary ceremony on the occasion of retirement of the Cabinet's Secretary General Souheil Youji on April 26. Salam says Youji's presence has helped him face several critical junctures and

reveals that Youji will continue to serve in the Serail as his advisor.

- Head of the Municipality of Tripoli Nader el-Ghazal resigns upon the request of former PM Saad Hariri and says he would not have attained his position without the sacrifices made by Islamists. El-Ghazal lashes out at Armenians.

April 26

- Former PM Saad Hariri continues his Washington visit and meets US Vice President Joe Biden and National Security Advisor Suzan Rice.

- Maronite Patriarch al-Rai meets the Lebanese diaspora and a number of French officials in France. Al-Rai awards a papal honor to former Minister Issam Fares and inaugurates Archdiocese headquarters in the French City of Mondon.

April 27

- A delegation from Tripoli and North Lebanon visits the Saudi embassy in Beirut to express solidarity with Saudi Arabia and support for its stances.

- Former PM Saad Hariri says in a talk in Washington 'Syrian Major General Rustom Ghazali called us before his death and wanted to appear on television and announce something we don't know', but he was killed before doing so.

April 28

- Security forces kick off implementation of the security plan in the Southern Suburbs and crack down on suspects.

- Following the Change and Reform Bloc's weekly meeting, General Michel Aoun brands the decisions of the Army Commander as illegal, saying they could be subject to an appeal. Aoun reiterates the need to appoint a new Army Commander with a wide popular base.

- Maronite Patriarch al-Rai meets French President François Hollande at the Élysée Palace before concluding his visit to France and requests him to back the efforts exerted to elect a new president. The presidential statement emphasizes France's support of minorities.

- MP Atef Majdalini testifies before the STL and says 'Syrian Brigadier General Mohammed Khallouf summoned me to the Beau Rivage Hotel asking me to approve the extension of Lahoud's term.'

April 29

- Interior Minister Nouhad Mashnouq tours the Southern Suburbs to verify proper implementation of the security plan and assures that there are no areas in Lebanon beyond the control of the state.

- The Cabinet convenes at the Grand Serail and approves the Terms of Reference to tender the licenses of mobile phones after extending the current operation contracts until the end of 2015. It also approves a budget worth USD 30 million to build a regional prison.

- Following Wednesday's meeting, Speaker Nabih Berri acknowledges the difference of opinion between him and General Michel Aoun while assuring that they do agree strategically.

- Cosmetic surgeon Nader Saad reveals that he operated on Sheikh Khaled Hablas causing an alteration of his features without knowing his real identity.

April 30

- During his press conference, Interior Minister Nouhad Mashnouq runs a footage showing the assaults carried out by inmates against members of the security forces, stressing that the security operation in Roumieh prevented the transformation of Roumieh into a center of terrorist operations. Mashnouq says Hezbollah's weapons falls within the defense strategy agreed upon in Baabda and is not part of any security plan.

- The Loyalty to Resistance Bloc accuses the Future Movement of violating the Taef accord, wrenching away the presidency and paralyzing the institutions.

- General Michel Aoun and Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah hold talks during a night meeting.

- Amer Rafei elected Head of the Municipality of Tripoli following the resignation of his predecessor Nader Ghazal.

- Justice Minister says he met Khaled Khoja, President of the Syrian National Coalition, in Turkey and explored with him ways to release the captive soldiers.

- Army Commander General Jean Qahwaji inspects the Commando Regiment led by Brigadier General Shamel Roukuz.

- Health Minister Wael Bou Faour and Education Minister Elias Abou Saab reveal that 49% of water samples from schools do not conform to safety standards. ●

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY- LEBANON

ELECTION OF ELIAS SARKIS AS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LEBANON

Elias Sarkis was voted President of the Republic under exceptional circumstances. The election session was held at Parliament's temporary headquarters at the Mansour Palace in Mathaf. Shells and rockets were launched by members affiliated with the Palestine Liberation Organization at the palace to hinder the attendance of MPs and prevent the election from taking place.

Circumstances

Against the escalation of military action and the divides between the Lebanese National Movement and Muslim forces on the one hand and the Lebanese Front and Christian forces on the other over the term of President Suleiman Frangieh with the former demanding his resignation and the latter insisting that he stays in office, Article 73 of the Lebanese Constitution was amended. This was to allow the convening of Parliament by its Speaker to elect a new President of the Republic for the duration of at least one month and at most for six months before the expiration of the term of office of the serving President of the Republic.

This amendment paved way for the election of a new president six months before the expiry of the presidential term but the Syrian-Palestinian dispute complicated the election process because the Palestine Liberation Organization feared that it would suffer if the Syria-backed candidate Elias Sarkis were to be elected. Thus, the PLO attempted to disrupt the elections until another candidate was agreed upon.

Firing at Parliament and Intimidation of MPs

“The day of election started out very early. Beirut woke up, holding its breath, to the sound of fire everywhere. Most roads in the Western Region, particularly in Corniche Al Mazraa, were blocked with rocks, barrels and burning tires, following the instructions of the national parties and forces. Shortly before opening fire at the driver of MP Amine Hafez in front of Le Bristol Hotel, an explosion blasted at the White Palace Hotel where Speaker Kamel Asaad was staying, breaking glass windows. A bomb was thrown at the car of MP Abdul Latif Zein and another targeted a garage near the house of MP Nazem Al-Qadiri. These developments increased the likelihood of adjourning the session but Speaker Kamel Asaad insisted on attending and proceeding with the voting and if there was no quorum, then the adjourning decision would be announced from Parliament. Meantime, men from both the Palestine Liberation Army and the pro-Syria al-Saiqa



Elias Sarkis

Forces were careful to ensure the protection of some MPs, particularly those who were at the Le Bristol before arriving at Parliament. Upon his arrival, PM Rashid Karami had to run to escape the hail of bullets that awaited him.

The same scenario replayed with the arrival of the rest of the MPs. Some of them were even chased on their way to Parliament and had to take shortcuts in order to arrive alive.

Session proceedings

The session was held on Saturday, 8 May 1976, at 1:15 pm, under the chairmanship of Speaker Kamel Asaad and in the presence of PM Rashid Karami. 29 MPs were absent including first and foremost MP Kamal Jumblat and members of his bloc, and also MP Raymond Eddeh and PM Saeb Salam and members of his bloc. Despite the shelling of Parliament, 69 MPs attended and were considered Fida'iis.

63 votes were cast in favor of Elias Sarkis, the sole candidate, in the first round and five were found to be blank. Having failed to obtain a two-thirds majority, a second round took place in which Sarkis gained 66 votes against three blank ballots. The session ended at 1:40 pm, 25 minutes after its opening, thus becoming one of the shortest sessions ever held. ●●

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY IN SYRIA

DEATH OF SHUKRI AL-QUWATLI, THE FIRST PRESIDENT OF SYRIA AND THE CO-FOUNDER OF THE UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

Shukri al-Quwatli was born in Damascus in 1891 to a Kurdish family. He was the President of the first Syrian republic between 1943 and 1949 and later between 1955 and 1958 and a key political leader in the National Bloc, then the National Party.

Al-Quwatli became politically active early on when he joined al-Fatat in 1910. Al-Fatat was a secret society, which called for the liberation of the Arabs. His activism, together with a number of al-Fatat's members, resulted in them being placed under arrest and subjected to torture and humiliation at the Khaled Basha prison in Damascus, before they were sentenced to death. However, the Arab revolt led by King Hussein against the Ottomans yielded the arrest of a number of Ottoman army officers and troops and the detainees were swapped for the release of al-Quwatli and his companions.

Following the departure of Ottomans from Syria, al-Quwatli established the Independence Party, the first party which undertook the responsibility of educating the people and preparing it for the struggle against the French colonizer, which occupied Syria after the Ottoman retreat. In 1920, a sentence was issued forcing al-Quwatli and his companions to leave for Egypt and other Arab countries and they could not return until 1930 after they had been pardoned from death row. Al-Quwatli participated in the Arab nationalist conference held by a number of Arab liberals in Jerusalem in 1931 in order to lay down the historical pact that the Arabs needed to abide by in the next stage. In 1932, he was a founding member of the National Bloc which later became a national party calling for the independence of Syria. When Jamil Mardam Bey formed the first government in the independence era, he appointed al-Quwatli as Minister of both Finance and Defense.

In 1937, while al-Quwatli was on pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia, Mardam Bey held a series of meetings with the French that concluded an agreement to carry on the cooperation between the two countries. This agreement was challenged by ministers and MPs, raising the ire of al-Quwatli in particular who responded by resigning from the ministry. Al-Quwatli maintained his parliamentary post and was re-elected in 1938 as Speaker of Parliament. Three years later, he was voted leader of the National Bloc, in succession to Ibrahim Hanano. Al-Quwatli led the electoral battle with a unified list after the death of French-appointed President Taj al-Din Hasani and was voted President on

August 17 1943, moving Syria to a new era of internal reforms on economic, political, social and urban levels. Syria made the transition towards liberty and independence and garnered international recognition from all countries around the world, except France.

In 1945, al-Quwatli met British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the two held lengthy discussions on the need to reach an understanding with France but al-Quwatli refused to acknowledge any rights for the French in Syria. When the Big Four conference was held in the presence of Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin to approve the UN Charter, the US addressed invites to the nations to attend the conference, excluding Syria and Lebanon, upon the request of France. However, al-Quwatli kept on mediating with foreign and Arab countries until finally Syria and Lebanon were invited to join and became official members of the UN before the withdrawal of foreign troops from Syria on April 17, 1946.

In 1949, the Syrians were struck by the coup conducted by Chief of Staff Hussni Al-Zaim, which resulted in the detention of al-Quwatli and his ministers. Al-Quwatli was released after a while and was placed under house arrest until he left for Egypt. Voices were then raised in Syria demanding his return, so he returned, once again, as a presidential candidate. Al-Quwatli kept on fantasizing about the Arab unity until his dream finally came true upon the birth of the United Arab Republic.

Chairing a Syrian delegation, al-Quwatli headed for Egypt to work out the union between Egypt and Syria with President Gamal Abdul Nasser. The United Arab Republic was thus born and al-Quwatli waived his position in favor of the union, paving way for the election of Abdul Nasser as President of the United Arab Republic. However, the UAR did not last long and the two countries split in September 1961. Following the Baath coup of March 8, 1963, al-Quwatli's properties were confiscated so he left for Beirut and retired from politics. He continued to support Gamal Abdul Nasser until he died on June 30, 1967 and was laid to rest in Bab el-Saghir Cemetery in Damascus. 🍷

ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS (5)

TAHRIR PARTY (LIBERATION PARTY) AN ISLAMIC OR A LEBANESE STATE?

Pursuant to notification no. 182/AD dated May 11, 2006, the Ministry of the Interior and Municipality, which was headed by the then acting Interior Minister Ahmad Fattat, was informed that a political association named 'Tahrir Party' had been registered with the State. The news was greeted with a wave of protests, particularly from the Christians, for the group does not recognize the existence of the Lebanese State and calls for a revival of the Islamic Caliphate.

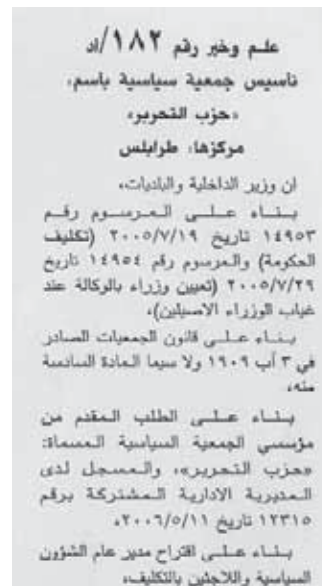
Founder and establishment

The party was established on March 14, 1953 by Palestinian Sheikh Takieddine Al-Nabhani (born in Palestine in 1914) who, after the 1948 Nakba, was motivated to find a framework that would bring the Muslims together in the face of Israel. However, the party soon collided with the Jordanian government leading al-Nabhani to leave Jerusalem and head for Damascus. He was then forced out of Damascus and was banned from entering Lebanon except after the mediation of the then Grand Mufti Sheikh Mohammad Alaya. Beirut was al-Nabhani's first stepping stone towards spreading his doctrines. However, from 1958, the government escalated pressure on him so he moved to Tripoli and then to Iraq, from where he was expelled shortly afterwards. Al-Nabhani returned to Beirut to complete his preaching. He died and was buried in Beirut on October 22, 1977.

Doctrines

The Tahrir Party's doctrine revolves around three main pillars:

- The unity of Muslims under a single political entity and the need for only one prince or ruler in alignment with the Prophet's saying ".....". The presence of roughly one billion Muslims necessitates the rise of this one entity, meaning the Caliphate and the single Islamic ruler.
- The Muslims' pursuit of unity will obtain a divine blessing, which will make their victory over their enemies inevitable.
- The Quran is the law of the Muslims and the constitution of their state whose building entails community cohesion. This cohesion is realized through:
 - Persistence in education and spiritual and intellectual preparation
 - Spread of Islamic culture and awareness among Muslims in mosques via lectures and press releases
 - Fighting anti-Islamic doctrines
 - Political struggle against colonial states in order to foil their conspiracies and debunk their schemes



- Bringing rulers to accountability, exposing their failure to abide by Islamic teachings and expelling them from power when possible

Objectives

The party aims first and foremost to resume Islamic life by reviving the Caliphate in all Islamic countries and removing artificial boundaries. Muslims from Palestine to Indonesia have one primary concern and they should all obey the Caliph when the Islamic Caliphate is announced.

Position on Israel

Despite the wars and hostilities launched by Israel against Muslims, whether in Palestine or in Lebanon, the Tahrir Party has never engaged in an armed conflict with it for the party believes the elimination of Israel cannot be possible except by uprooting the country through a massive military operation including all Arab troops under a unified leadership. However, such a large scale and unified military action can only happen after a radical political change in the region and the replacement of all the present regimes that support the US and Israel indirectly.

The Tahrir Party is a political, not a military party and it will not use weapons except upon the emergence of the Islamic State and upon the order of the Caliph. Contrary to common belief, the party's position on Israel is not one that calls for truce or peace, for the party considers Israel to be a usurper and no negotiation or reconciliations should be held with it.

Although it renounces the Lebanese entity and urges the formation of an Islamic Caliphate, the Tahrir Party remains a legitimate party by virtue of its notification of registration. Ironically, the party does not conceal its doctrines and vision and has listed them in its notification of registration based on which it was certified. ●

REAL ESTATE PRICES- APRIL 2015

Contrary to the modest recovery recorded in the real estate market in the past few months, land and property transactions declined by roughly 5% in May 2015, most likely because of the ongoing political unrest in Lebanon, the fierce battles in Syria and the eruption of the war in Yemen.

The prices of expensive properties (properties exceeding USD 2 million) declined by 10%. Those of medium size properties remained largely stable while prices increased by slightly, by 5% to 7% for small size properties (USD 200,000- USD 300,000).

The following tables illustrate the prices of some estates and apartments sold in April 2015.

Table 1: Prices of some estates sold in April 2015

Prices of some estates sold in April 2015			Table 1
Region	Area (m ²)	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Ashrafieh	720	4,680,000	6,500
Tareeq Jdideh	450	2,655,000	5,900
Baabda			
Baabdah	1,400	3,150,000	2,250
Hazmieh	1,000	1,300,000	1,300
Metn			
Horsh Tabet	1,200	4,200,000	3,500
Ain Saadeh	900	900,000	1,000
Beit Mery	1,300	975,000	750
Aley			
Aley	1,000	300,000	300
Bkheshtay	3,100	558,000	180
Aley	800	136,000	170
Kessrouan			
Kaslik	1,100	2,640,000	2,400
Kfour	900	243,000	270
Harissa	1,500	1,650,000	1,100

Source: Compiled by Information International- April 2015

Prices of some apartments sold in April 2015 Table 2

Region	Area (m ²)	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Ashrafieh (Sioufi)	210	735,000	3,500
Ashrafieh (Al-Roum Hospital domain)	150	330,000	2,200
Msaytbeh (LIU)	170	280,500	1,650
Rawche (Australia Street)	160	528,000	3,300
Ras Nabe'e	180	468,000	2,600
Karakol el Druze	170	297,500	1,750
Mazra'a	170	357,000	2,100
Baabda			
Brazilia	300	720,000	2,400
Baabda (Tallet Rayyes)	200	520,000	2,600
Chiiyah (Matahen)	130	182,000	1,400
Hazmieh	240	324,000	1,350
Hazmieh (Mar Taqla)	160	360,000	2,250
Ain Roummaneh	110	148,500	1,350
Tahwit al-Ghadir	120	120,000	1,000
Metn			
Mansourieh	175	318,500	1,820
Beit Mery	250	425,000	1,700
Monteverde	200	300,000	1,500
Antelias	160	208,000	1,300
Naqash	250	450,000	1,800
Awkar	120	174,000	1,450
Aley			
Doha Aramoun	140	161,000	1,150
Bshamoun (Yahoudiyeh)	150	135,000	900
Bshamoun (Madares)	200	220,000	1,100
Choueifat	100	120,000	1,200
Kessrouan			
Adma	200	400,000	2,000
Ballouneh	180	207,000	1,150
Jounieh (Ghadir)	200	300,000	1,500
Adonis	165	206,250	1,250
Sahel Alma	250	412,500	1,650
Souheily	200	260,000	1,300

Source: Compiled by Information International- April 2015

5 Most Beautiful Mosques in the World

- **Al-Haram Mosque (Masjid al-Haram)** is situated in the city of Mecca, west of Saudi Arabia and surrounds one of Islam's holiest places, the Kaaba. It is believed that one prayer in the Al-Haram mosque is equivalent to one thousand prayers elsewhere. The mosque can accommodate up to 4 million people during the period of the Hajj.
- **An-Nabawi Mosque:** this mosque is built by the Prophet Muhammad in the city of Medina. It is the second holiest site in Islam and the second largest mosque after Masjid al-Haram in Mecca. An-Nabawi Mosque is most known for its Green Dome where the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad is located and can accommodate 698,000 worshippers.
- **The Sultan Ahmet Mosque:** popularly known as the Blue Mosque due to the blue tiles adorning its interior walls, was completed in 1616 under Sultan Ahmet I. It is considered one of the finest mosques in the world and has one main dome, six minarets and eight secondary domes.
- **Hassan II Mosque** is the largest mosque in Morocco. Its minaret is the world's tallest at 210 metres. The mosque stands on a promontory looking out to the Atlantic Ocean and its walls are of hand-crafted marble. A maximum of 105,000 worshippers can gather together for prayer inside the mosque hall and on its outside grounds.
- **The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque** is located in Abu Dhabi. It can accommodate more than 7000 worshippers. It has four minarets, each rising about 107 meters in height.



Passenger traffic (arrivals, departures and transit) at the Rafic Hariri International Airport increased by 20.2% in April 2015 compared to the previous month and by 10.3% compared to the same period last year.

Compared to April 2014, arrivals registered an increase of 8.4% in April this year; departures increased by 12.6% while transit traffic decreased by 80.6%.

The airport handled 1,972,583 passengers in the first four months of this year compared to 1,800,095 in the same period last year, i.e. an increase of 9.6%.

Beirut International Airport

Rafic Hariri International airport Traffic- April 2015

Airport traffic in April 2015 compared to March 2015 and April 2014					Table 1
Traffic	March 2015	April 2015	April 2014	% of Change March/April 2015	% of Change April 2014/April 2015
Arriving airplanes	2,469	2,710	2,490	+9.7	+8.8
Departing airplanes	2,466	2,710	2,495	+9.9	+8.6
Total no. of airplanes	4,935	5,420	4,985	+9.8	+8.7
Arriving passengers	242,806	291,874	269,270	+20.2	+8.4
Departing passengers	233,260	306,181	271,799	+31.2	+12.6
Transit passengers	1,371	286	1,475	-79.1	-80.6
Total no. of passengers	477,437	598,341	542,544	+20.2	+10.3
Imported goods (per ton)	4,839	4,437.5	5,177.3	-8.3	-14.3
Exported goods (per ton)	2,060	3,168.6	2,999.4	+53.8	+5.6
Total amount of goods	6,899	7,606.1	8,176.7	+10.2	-6.9

Source: Compiled by Information International based on the Directorate General of Aviation

- **USD 1 million** is the advance granted by the government to the Higher Relief Committee to cover the expenses of returning the drivers and their trucks stuck in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan to Lebanon after Jordan closed the Nassib border crossing into Syria.
- **LBP 7.7 billion** are the confidential expenses that the Cabinet allocated to the Lebanese Army on its session on April 16, 2015.
- **LBP 5 billion** is the cost of the computers purchased for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants.
- **USD 6 billion** is the estimated deficit in the 2015 public budget draft law, a figure likely to increase if this year, much like previous years, sees a rise in expenses and a decrease in revenues.
- **14,000** is the average number of speeding tickets issued in Lebanon every month, most of which in the Mount Lebanon Mohafaza.

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
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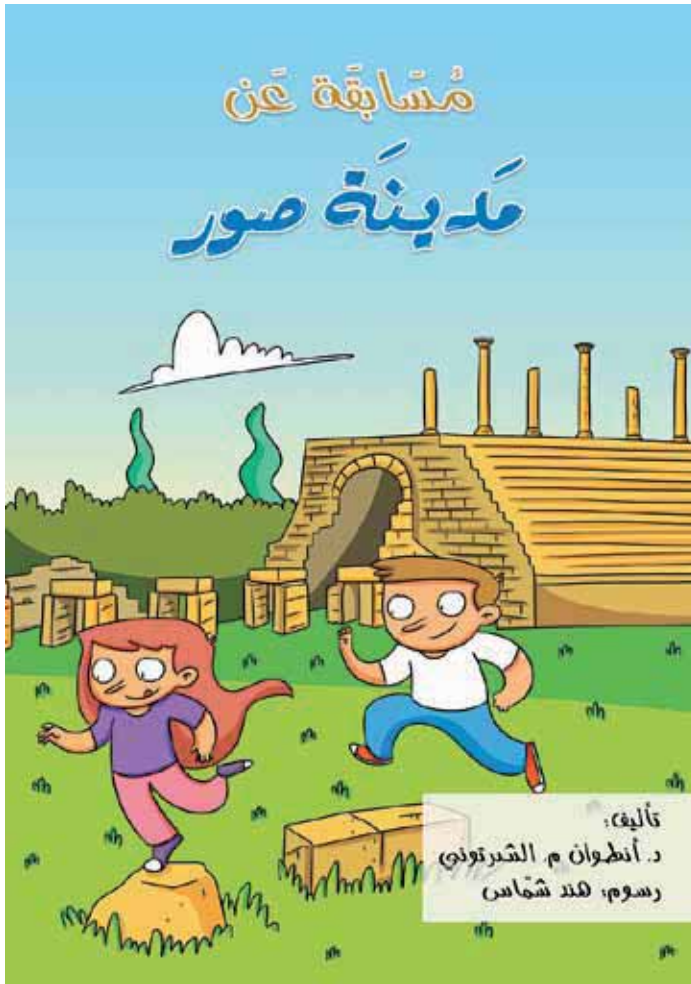


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RESEARCH CONTEST ABOUT THE CITY OF TYRE

Against the threats besetting the cultural heritage and the archaeological and natural sites of our Arab world today, Kutub Publishing House has published, in cooperation with the Lebanese Ministry of Culture, a new book *Research Contest about the City of Tyre* with a view to help school children between the ages of eight and ten explore the history of Tyre and understand the cultural and historical significance of the city, which has been declared by UNESCO a World Heritage Site. This story is part of a series of books aimed at preserving our cultural heritage and promoting the sense of belonging for new generations. *Research Contest about the City of Tyre* has been prepared under Archeomedsites, an EU-funded project to improve the management of archeological sites in the Mediterranean area.



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