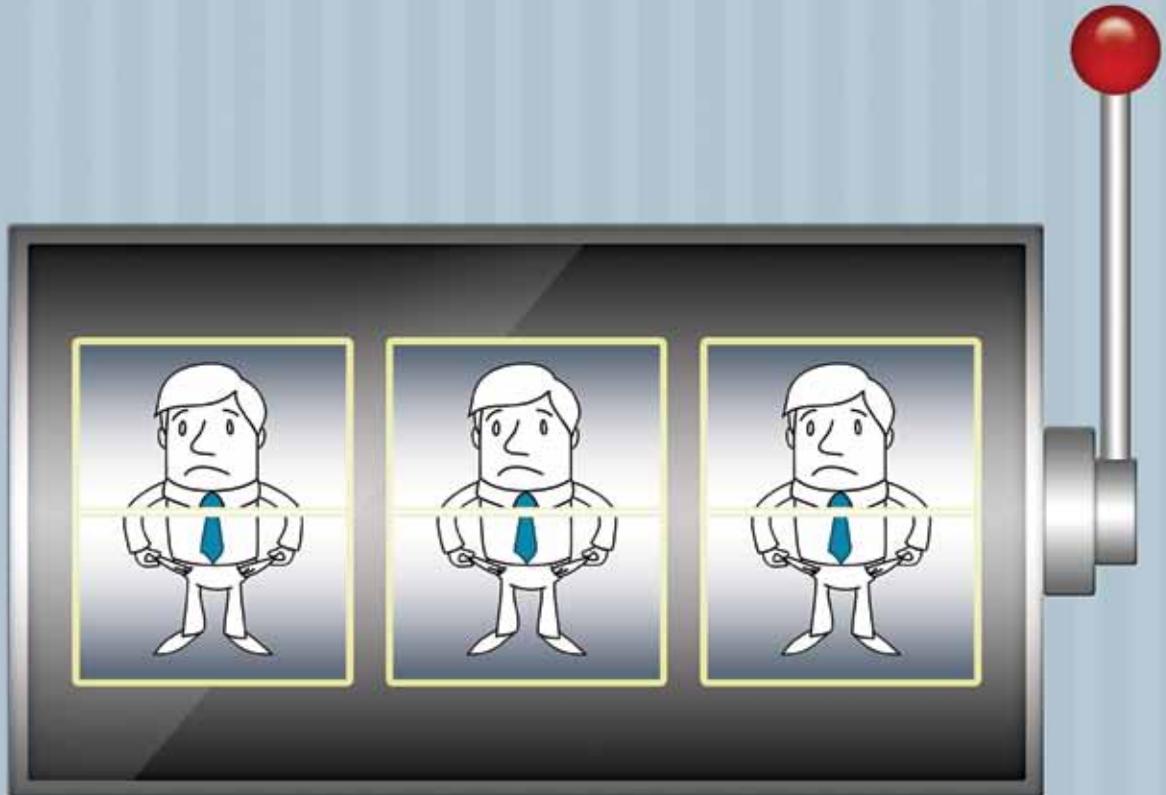


- NUMBER OF VOTERS BETWEEN 1960 AND 2014
- THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES DIRECTORATE GENERAL
- *THE MONTHLY* INTERVIEWS DR. SAMIA KHOURY

## CASINO DU LIBAN

60 YEARS AFTER THE DECISION OF ESTABLISHMENT



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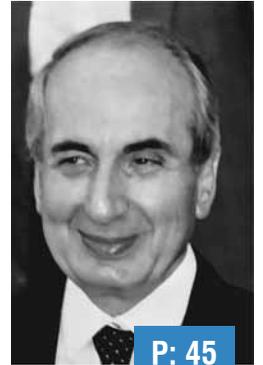
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## LEBANON'S WARS, WHY?

"This is not the Lebanon that I know," said my colleague. "Why are 'they' doing this to 'us'?" she continued. An honest, spontaneous yet "benign" remark, echoing Bush's famous why "they" hate "us", speech. We seem to have this image of ourselves (individuals and nations), that we hold true, where only "good" is within "us" and evil is from "them."

Lebanon is today on the edge of an abyss. However, this is not something new. Since 1943, Lebanon has been witnessing crises and wars, not to mention those of the nineteenth century. The main problem lies in the system that we have developed either by consent, force, inaptness, or by all these combined. In fact, our political and socio-economic system strives on crises.

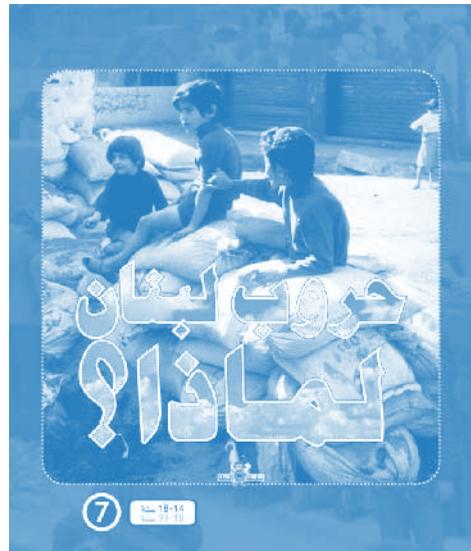
The question is that of legitimacy and authority or the lack of them. A citizen believes that his country's political and economic affairs are not his concern due to the absence of the state, so he delegates a politician, "Za'im" who, for the same reason, is only concerned with protecting his position and political inheritance, so he entrusts technocrats of weak political roots with daily government work and foreign powers with managing the country's key national affairs. The 1975-1990 civil war was not about Palestinians and their weapons. Today, the dispute is not between the "March 14 and the March 8 Forces," or about "freedom, sovereignty and independence" versus "the weapons of the resistance." It is about power sharing in a system that lives on generating fear amongst confessions. Human resources are depleted, forced to emigrate or even assassinated. Moreover, the country's financial resources are also squandered by either corruption or destruction. It seems that the system cannot function without an "enforcer", who is always an external force(s).

Those who are called "Zua'ama" or "Emirs of sects" are not only the victims of this vicious circle, but also its creators, along with their followers and other citizens. It is impossible to get out of this infernal circle unless we agree on the need to identify the defects of our system and join efforts to resolve them. Two steps are required for this purpose: Reconciliation and objectivity.

The process of reconciliation was halted by a general amnesty law drafted by those who participated in the war. It is not acceptable to forget about the long 1975-1990 civil war, which is perhaps still ongoing, as if it never occurred. The subsequent, as well as the organized looting of the state perpetrated under the slogans of "reconstruction" and the "state of law and institutions" as a reward to Zua'ama does not provide for stability.

Understanding one's history as factually as possible and reporting current pertinent facts is another prerequisite not only to achieve reconciliation but to plan for the future. It is time to understand that, in the end, everyone loses. Leaders who seek and live by power are either assassinated or go into oblivion and the people are always the ultimate victims. We hope that Information International, through its monthly magazine and other publications, would contribute to reviving the Lebanese people's memory, and present them with facts and figures in order for history not to repeat itself.

—Jawad N. Adra



This article, written by Jawad Adra, was featured in *The Monthly* magazine in its issue number 55 of January 2007. It served as an introduction to a book entitled *Lebanon's Wars, Why?* that was published by the Social and Cultural Development Association (INMA) in cooperation with Information International within the Bee Series for civic education. Publishing this piece again today attests to how little the situation has changed in roughly eight years.

# CASINO DU LIBAN

## 60 YEARS AFTER ESTABLISHMENT, WHERE DOES ALL THAT MONEY GO?

The Casino du Liban is recognized as one of Lebanon's landmark tourist attractions, and is a quasi governmental company that provides the state's treasury with a share of revenues determined according to the contract signed between the state and the concessionaire. It is rumored that the Casino channels part of its funds to prominent political figures through its "black box". The fact that the Casino's funds are for the most part cash that may be transferred easily after distortion of internal accounts raises the viability of these claims. Yet, the allegations remain unwarranted because of lack of supportable documentation.

### Laying the foundation for the establishment of the Casino

The approval of the gambling law in 1954, sixty years ago, was the first step that paved the way for the establishment of Casino du Liban. The law dated August 4, 1954, "licensed gaming exclusively to a casino that shall be set up by the seaside, along a straight line lying no further than five kilometers from the seashore and no closer than 1.5 kilometers from populous areas. A minimum straight-line distance of 15 kilometers shall separate the casino from Beirut, Tripoli and Saida."

The games allowed at this casino shall include Roulette, Baccarat and Golden Pharaoh Slots. The investment license shall be awarded for 25 years by bidding on the state's revenues from gaming profits provided that the said revenues account for no less than 40% of the gross annual income generated from gambling."

The law identified the bodies benefitting from the share of the state and prohibited non-adults (people below 21 years of age), civil servants, municipal staff, treasurers and those residing in Lebanon whose annual income does not exceed USD 15,000- the figure set later at 100 times the monthly minimum wage, i.e. USD 45,000 currently- from entering the casino, thus limiting casino visits by low-income earners.

Earlier in June 1950, a law was issued specifying how to establish and invest in gambling casinos, but the law was cancelled upon issuance of the gambling law.

### Establishment of the Casino du Liban company

Pursuant to Decree no. 16694 dated July 30, 1957, a thirty-year license was granted to shareholders Victor Moussa, Emile Kharat and Albert Mnassa to start the Casino du Liban company with a capital worth LBP 12 million, raised later in 1966 to LBP 18 million. The contract between the state and the company was approved in December 1959 and was extended until the Civil War broke out in 1975, disrupting the Casino's activities and compelling it to shut its doors several times, before it ceased to operate entirely in 1988, affected by the war unfolding in its vicinity and the consequent damage the Casino sustained.

### Reopening

After the war had ended, and as the Casino was preparing to return to operation, Law no. 320 was issued on March 24, 1994 authorizing the company to invest in a casino in Maamelteyn on the following conditions:

- The maximum period of investment shall not exceed 30 years.
- The revenues allocated to the state from the casino's gaming profits shall be set at 30% of the gross annual income in the first ten years. The share shall be raised to 40% in the following ten years and further to 50% in the final ten years.
- The company shall abide by all the obligations ensuing from previous investment agreements (concessions), be it towards the state or towards its employees.
- The land in Maamelteyn, all existing premises and equipment or those to be built, shall return to the state at the end of the agreement

In order to promote and increase the profits of the company and therefore those of the state, Law no. 417 dated May 15, 1995 was issued under the presidency of Elias Hrawi and the premiership of Rafik Hariri granting the Casino du Liban company “the right to invest exclusively in gambling games at the sole casino present in Maamelteyn.”

### New contract

On the basis of the new privileges awarded to the Casino du Liban company (a thirty-year contract and monopoly over gambling games) a new agreement was signed on July 14, 1995 between the company and the state represented by the Ministers of Tourism and Finance. The agreement stipulated the following:

- The company vows to restore and rehabilitate all existing premises (particularly gaming halls, the theatre and the Ambassadors Hall) at its own expense and according to the designs, regulations, materials and specifications set by Dar Al-Handasa (Shair and Partners) so as to promote the casino to levels higher than ever before. It also vows to finish all the works in two and a half years starting from the date of signature of the contract and to pay the state USD 4000 for each day of delay.
- The company vows to bear the expenses of building a multi-storey car park that will accommodate at least 600 vehicles.
- The company vows to construct a five-star hotel containing 100 to 150 rooms on its own plots of land according to the designs of Dar Al-Handasa in cooperation with the company. The hotel shall be completed during a five-year period starting from the date of signature of the contract and the company shall pay USD 4000 for each day of delay. Should the company fail to initiate its actual investments in the hotel within a maximum period of five years and three months from the date of signature of the contract, the contract herein shall be deemed null and void and the company shall pay the state USD 15 million.
- The investment includes Roulette, Baccarat, Golden Pharaoh Slots and other ordinarily proscribed gambling games. As for the authorized games such as Poker and Bridge, the company may operate them outside its halls and they are not subjected to the terms of investment, meaning that the company does not siphon off any share of profits from these games to the state.

- The period of investment, starting from the date of investment in the premises, is 30 years.
- The share of the state is set at 30% of the gross annual income resulting from gaming in the first ten years. The share shall be raised to 40% in the following ten years and further to 50% in the final ten years. During the first three days of every month, a statement of income for the preceding month is to be produced with the share of the state enclosed therein.
- The state appoints a supervisory committee that consists of the Director General of Finance, the Director General of Tourism and two members of staff from the Ministry of Finance.
- The terms and conditions of entry to the halls shall be strictly abided by.

### Contract amendment

In accordance with the contract signed between the state and the Casino du Liban in 1995, the company initiated investments in the casino on November 17, 1996. Nevertheless, it refused to pay the state its share of profits from the slot machines placed in the entertainment hall arguing that, unlike other games, these machines were not covered by the contract. Other contract provisions were also violated.

Against the company’s inflexibility, the government engaged in a new round of negotiations that led eventually to signing an appendix to the contract stipulating the following:

- The company shall pay the state an amount worth USD 15 million.
- The state’s share of the profits shall be raised starting in 2000 from 30% to 40% until the end of the first ten years. For the following ten years its share shall be 50% rather than 40% and 60% rather than 50% for the final ten years of the contract.
- The state shall agree to the keeping of the slot machines in the entertainment hall.
- The state shall agree to dismiss the clause regarding the construction of the hotel in exchange for an amount worth USD 15 million.

Accordingly, the company vowed to pay the state LBP 83.3 billion as a settlement of the dispute. The parties agreed that the amount would be paid in installments and the company vowed to keep transferring the monthly share it owed to the state during the first week of every month.

## Where do the revenues go?

The figures announced by the Casino's management are not an accurate reflection of the generated income and of the state's share thereof. In fact, it is alleged that the revenues are much higher than the reported figure but part of them are channeled into the so-called "black box", which finances the activities of some of the Lebanese political and partisan classes, based on a certain quota. However, nobody is able to estimate the expenditure of this fund and therefore the actual size of such revenues remains a matter of guesswork. Furthermore, against the backdrop of the indiscriminate hiring of dispensable workers and the outsourcing of some of the facility's works to private companies at exorbitant rates, the share of the state becomes insignificant compared to the actual revenues made. Table 1 illustrates the profits of the Casino and the state's share during the past few years.

Profits of the Casino and the state's share during the past few years			Table 1
Year	Profits (LBP billion)	Share of the state (LBP billion)	
1997	8.16	31	
1998	18	29	
2008	40.9	155	
2010	97	140	
2011	120		
2012	45	186	

Source: Statements issued by the Casino's management

## Profile of Casino du Liban SAL

The Casino du Liban is a Lebanese concessionaire, registered as a joint-stock company in 1966 at number 658 in Baabda's commercial register. Its capital is currently worth LBP 32.4 billion.

### Shareholders:

- Intra Investment Company: 53% (Banque du Liban owns 35% in Intra Investment)
- Abela: 17%
- Banque du Liban: 10%
- Bank Awde: 7%
- National Deposit Guarantee Institution: 6%
- Other shareholders: 8%

At face value, the Casino's board of directors is elected by shareholders, particularly by the Banque du Liban. But in

fact, the selection happens based on a sectarian-political quota. The Board of Directors is chaired by Hamid Kraidi (Maronite). It consists of nine members: Mohammad Choueib (Shia'a), Mohammad Hachem Tabbara (Sunni), Majid Jumblat (Druze), Michel Fernainy (Greek Orthodox), Mohammad Naqib (Sunni), George Nakhlem (Greek Orthodox), Hisham Nasser (Shia'a), Fadi Tamim (Sunni) and Farid Suleiman (Maronite).

The Casino employs 1550 people, some of whom do not show up except to receive their pay.

The Casino du Liban company owns 13 plots of land in Kfaryassine, Adma and Al-Dafna in Kessrouan. They stretch across a total area of roughly 109,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

## CASINO-GOERS GONE BROKE

**Thousands of Lebanese frequent the Casino du Liban's gambling halls on a daily basis. Visitors come from different regions and have different political and sectarian profiles. They are from varied social classes, ranging from the wealthy and the educated to the poor and the illiterate. All of them arrive at the Casino, setting their hopes on hitting the jackpot. Yet, the vast majority comes out with dashed hopes and grievous losses, wiping out the modest salaries of low-income earners and draining the resources of affluent gamblers. Countless are the houses, properties and belongings gambled away inside the Casino. In the following, we outline a few stories by those visitors who frequent the slot machines. Everyone can have access to these machines and play from very modest to very large amounts of money, according to the means of each player.**

**A 25-year-old Sri Lankan woman** arrived in Lebanon two years ago as a migrant domestic worker. Every now and then, her 76-year-old female employer would take her along to the Casino. Having seen her employer occasional winning, the Sri Lankan worker decided to take her chances and started to spend all her Sundays at the Casino. Within a month, she had gambled away all the monies she had earned since her arrival in Lebanon. The sum amounted to roughly USD 3500. Having lost all her savings, she tricked her Sri Lankan friends working in Lebanon into believing that she was

flying back to Sri Lanka so that they would entrust her with their monies, thinking that she would deliver the funds to their families back home. She was hoping to make up for her losses by using their remittances, which amounted to USD 4000 but luck was not on her side. In less than ten days, she lost all the money and is now in such deep trouble, leaving her to face tough choices, which potentially include a suicide.

**A 36-year-old employee with a monthly salary of USD 1700** also fell victim to the gambler's fallacy. The man who is the sole provider for his wife and two children started making regular visits to the Casino every ten days, winning a few hundreds of thousands of liras at times and losing much more at many others. Against his recurrent losses and the high cost of living, particularly the cost of education, accommodation and transportation, his debts started mounting at alarming rates until they were at roughly USD 10,000 because of the debt vouchers of the credit institution that lent him the money at exorbitant interest rates which were as high as 40% annually. Recently, his creditor warned him that if he fails to repay his debts, a legal action will be filed against him. Helpless, the man persuaded his wife to sell her wedding jewelry for USD 4500 to pay off part of his debts. Again, he returned to the Casino in the hope of multiplying the amount. He gambled away USD 1500 on the first day, won USD 800 on the second, then lost USD 2000 and USD 1800 during his third and fourth visits respectively, ending up penniless in just four days.

**Our third victim of gambling is a 58-year-old chef who works at a hospital in Mount Lebanon for USD 1200 per month.** The man had worked previously in Europe and invested the fortune he had made in buying a house for his family, a wife and two daughters who are currently in higher education. In addition to his job as a chef, he joined a taxi business and bought a car so he could work as a cab driver after working hours and during holidays. During the first week of every month, he sets aside USD 500 of his salary for family expenses, then gambles the rest away in frequent visits to the Casino. He spends the rest of the month picking up passengers to make some extra money and then gambles the lot on the thrilling chance of winning a big jackpot. The man and his family are currently in financial distress, and although he knows why, he is not able to cut down or stop gambling.

**Another distressing gambling story is that of a 56-year-old spinster** who dedicated most of her life to looking after her aging parents. After their death, she inherited the house and plots of land while her brother and sister were deprived of any share in the inheritance, which led to a rift between siblings. Shortly after the woman became accustomed to going to the Casino, she sold one of the plots of land she inherited from her parents at USD 70,000 and wasted the entire sum on gambling in less than two years. She then disposed of another plot of land in return for USD 110,000, which also vanished in less than a year on gambling. Left with no possessions except the roof she lives under and riddled with health problems that she could not afford to treat, she pledged her house to the bank for USD 200,000 in order to pay for her treatment and pay off some of her debts, although the house is worth roughly USD 350,000. The woman is broke, which puts the house at risk of being repossessed so that the bank can recover its rights, leaving her with a small sum that will be hardly sufficient to live on.

**The final example of a compulsive gambler is a 40-year old married Lebanese man with a child.** The man inherited a large plot of land and sold parts of it, investing the ensuing funds in the construction of nine residential apartments on the remaining area. Upon completion of his project, he sold all nine apartments bringing in roughly USD 1.2 million. Since the day he tried his luck at the casino and won LBP 3 million, he started making regular visits, thinking he would never run low on funds, no matter how great his losses. He was wrong. His losses escalated within three years, reaching as high as USD 600,000 which is roughly half his fortune. Today, he has come to the realization that if he keeps going down the same road, he will end up down and out.

To see someone walk into the casino with a stuffed pocket and come out without even a few bucks to pay for a ride home is one of the dreariest and most miserable sights one can ever observe. It is both urgent and necessary to tighten control over entry into the Casino and not to allow random access to the large gambling halls or even to the slot machines because this industry can suck cash out of communities and shatter families resulting in serious implications on all socio-economic classes. ●

## NUMBER OF VOTERS BETWEEN 1960 AND 2014: FROM 1 MILLION TO 3.5 MILLION

**The factors governing the outcome of any parliamentary election are numerous. Those include, inter alia, the electoral law, the division of constituencies, the electoral alliances, the running candidates and the number of eligible voters and their distribution by political, sectarian or ethnic affiliations.**

In 1960, a new electoral law was adopted in Lebanon and remained in force in the elections held in 1964, 1968 and 1972. The law was reintroduced in the most recent elections in 2009 but with amendments to Beirut's three electoral districts. The 1960s law is still adopted today.

Political and sectarian alliances have clearly shifted in the period between 1960 and 2014. Most striking in the electoral landscape was the immense increase in the number of voters, which grew from 1,054,774 in 1960 to 3,533,269 in 2014, i.e. up by 2,478,495 voters or 235% as illustrated in Table 1.

The percentage of increase differed from one district to another reaching its peak in the predominantly Shia'a district of Baalbeck-Hermel at 474% and its lowest point in the predominantly Maronite district of Batroun at 102%. It may be said that the districts with Muslim majorities recorded the highest increases in the number of voters, as we will elaborate later.

Evolution of the number of voters per electoral district between 1960 and 2014										Table 1
District	1960	1972	1996	2000	2005	2009	2013	2014	Increase	% of increase
Baalbeck-Hermel	51,141	83,398	191,503	210,607	234,414	256,287	285,567	293,334	242,193	474
Rashaya- Western Beqa'a	37,225	49,105	93,671	101,465	112,387	122,989	131,543	134,607	97,382	261
Zahle	53,378	69,033	124,592	131,033	141,529	158,109	165,018	168,337	114,959	215
Jezzine	23,123	29,237	46,922	48,622	50,950	54,503	56,514	57,499	34,376	149
Tyre	36,580	44,597	112,283	124,913	140,598	155,034	171,082	175,329	138,749	380
Bint Jbeil	25,084	33,855	89,444	96,700	109,070	123,347	133,974	137,247	112,163	447
Marjeyoun- Hasbaya	37,574	51,114	106,339	114,963	124,883	139,590	147,497	151,147	113,573	302
Nabatieh	25,453	32,197	89,928	96,248	107,711	122,644	132,628	135,896	110,443	434
Saida villages	20,759	28,208	70,771	76,345	84,662	93,556	102,058	104,636	83,877	404
Saida	15,574	20,321	41,147	44,274	48,975	53,960	57,398	58,829	43,255	278

Evolution of the number of voters per electoral district between 1960 and 2014

Table 1

District	1960	1972	1996	2000	2005	2009	2013	2014	Increase	% of increase
Shouf	65,140	84,437	143,156	155,921	166,102	183,563	189,139	192,768	127,628	196
Aley	48,010	36,720	100,596	102,930	109,480	116,219	121,224	123,447	75,437	157
Baabda	56,308	75,837	126,744	133,415	142,529	151,927	157,503	160,296	103,988	184
Matn	71,992	89,735	144,152	152,185	163,069	169,870	173,333	177,242	105,250	146
Kessrouan	44,037	52,913	80,285	81,709	86,361	89,360	90,575	92,517	48,480	110
Jbeil	29,441	38,011	63,880	65,882	70,650	75,272	77,900	79,479	50,038	172
Batroun	29,144	34,500	52,270	53,403	55,543	58,488	57,820	58,868	29,724	102
Koura	28,589	43,894	50,342	53,963	56,249	58,037	58,333	59,356	30,767	107
Bsharri	21,334	28,000	40,447	42,054	43,996	46,496	47,508	48,100	26,766	125
Zgharta	30,636	36,931	57,089	62,403	66,986	71,656	73,815	75,258	44,622	145
Tripoli	56,144	71,022	142,120	159,424	175,601	196,061	208,032	212,513	156,369	278
Mennieh-Dennieh	20,721	27,367	69,153	76310	87,089	97,709	107,244	110,276	89,555	432
Akkar	60,725	77,100	158,336	173,172	204,974	224,046	251,622	258,751	198,026	326
Beirut 1	44,625	54,516	86,889	88,919	90,642	92,959	92,080	92,395	47,770	107
Beirut 2	43,947	51,939	87,905	91,885	95,373	101,868	104,729	105,996	62,049	141
Beirut 3	78,090	92,970	201,918	216,809	233,829	252,524	264,635	269,146	191,056	245
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,054,774</b>	<b>1,336,957</b>	<b>2,571,892</b>	<b>2,755,554</b>	<b>3,003,652</b>	<b>3,266,074</b>	<b>3,458,761</b>	<b>3,533,269</b>	<b>2,478,495</b>	<b>235</b>

Source: No. of voters in the respective years as reported by the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities

### Beirut districts (1960-2014)

The new divisions assigned for the districts of Beirut in 2009 differed from the 1960s partitions and our article has abided by the former in counting the number of voters.

- **Beirut 1:** Ashrafieh, Rmeil, Saifi  
Beirut 1 previously: Ashrafieh, Mdawwar, Rmeil, Saifi, Marfaa, Mina Hosn
- **Beirut 2:** Bashoura, Mdawwar, Marfaa  
Beirut 2 previously: Bashoura, Zqaq Blat, Ain Mraisseh
- **Beirut 3:** Mazraa, Msaytbeh, Ras Beirut, Ain Mraiseh, Mina Hosn , Zqaq Blat  
Beirut 3 previously: Mazraa, Msatbeh, Ras Beirut.

## Evolution of the number of voters by sect

Compared to the number of Christian voters, the number of Muslim voters has increased drastically between 1960 and 2014. However, since no data is available on the voter records before 1996, we have used the year 1996 as our baseline. As illustrated in Table 2, Muslim voters accounted for 55.5% of the total voters in 1996 while Christian voters made up 44.3%. In 2013, the percentage of Muslim voters grew to 62.1% compared to 37.8% for Christian voters.

Evolution of the number of voters by sect								Table 2
Sect/ Year	1996	%	2005	%	2009	%	2013	%
Shia'a	634,350	24.7	793,018	26.4	872,237	26.7	957,427	27.6
Sunni	360,229	24.5	801,685	26.7	88,161	27.2	971,796	28.1
Druze	146,835	5.7	169,829	5.6	183,775	5.6	194,025	5.6
Alawi	16,615	0.6	23,804	0.8	25,019	0.8	28,009	0.8
<b>Total of Muslim voters</b>	<b>1,428,029</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>1,788,399</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>1,970,192</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>2,151,257</b>	<b>62.1</b>
Maronite	624,532	24.3	670,566	22.3	713,098	21.8	697,607	20.1
Greek Orthodox	229,432	8.9	237,307	7.9	245,903	7.5	250,422	7.2
Greek Catholics	145,802	5.7	157,285	5.2	161,783	5.0	166,821	4.8
Armenian Orthodox	86,708	3.3	90,810	3.1	87,427	2.7	89,313	2.6
Armenian Catholic	19,228	0.8	20,215	0.7	19,075	0.6	19,693	0.6
Evangelicals	17,216	0.7	17,443	0.6	14,267	0.4	12,787	0.4
Christian minorities	15,225	0.6	15,929	0.5	54,329	1.7	70,194	2.1
<b>Total of Christian voters</b>	<b>1,138,143</b>	<b>44.3</b>	<b>1,209,555</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>1,295,882</b>	<b>39.7</b>	<b>1,306,837</b>	<b>37.8</b>
Jews	5,720	0.2	5,698	0.2	4,293	0.1	5,022	0.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,571,892</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,003,652</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,266,074</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,463,116</b>	<b>100</b>

# MUNICIPALITIES OF LEBANON

## DISSOLUTION OF 71 MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

**Lebanon's most recent municipal elections were held in May 2010. Since then, 71 municipal councils have been dissolved for a variety of reasons: 1) disputes — mostly familial or partisan — among the members of the council, 2) disputes between the members and the head of the council, 3) cancellation of elections, 4) failure of members to submit their source of funds declaration in accordance with the Illicit Enrichment Law, which resulted in their being considered no longer in office, and 5) death of a number of members.**

Municipal by-elections took place twice. The first time was in May 2012 when the by-elections covered 57 municipalities, 31 of which had been dissolved (or excluded from the 2010 elections such as the Municipality of Aabey and the Municipality of Ain Drafeel) and 26 were newly introduced. The second by-elections were held in March 2013 and covered 21 municipalities, of which 10 had been dissolved and 11 were newly introduced. Some of the municipal councils broke apart in the first few weeks after the elections and others were even dissolved more than once, such as the Municipality of Al-Bireh in Akkar, the Municipality of Sahbine in Western Beqa'a and the Municipality of Hjoula in Byblos. Resignations were common in quite a few municipalities but those remained operative from the legal perspective on the grounds that they still maintained more than half their members.

### Dissolution of Municipalities

According to Articles 22, 23, 24 and 25 of the Legislative Decree No. 118 dated June 30, 1977 (Law of Municipalities), a municipal council may be dissolved or considered dissolved in the following two cases:

- By a duly reasoned decree formulated in the Cabinet upon the proposition of the Minister of the Interior and Municipalities in the case where the municipal council commits recurrent substantial violations that prove to be detrimental to the interest of the municipality.
- If the municipal council loses at least half of its members due to death or resignation (resignation is usually submitted to the governor or Qaim Maqam) or if its election is annulled by an official ruling. The Minister of the Interior and Municipalities

shall announce the dissolution of the council within maximum of one week from notifying the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities thereof. Should the municipal council be dissolved or considered dissolved, a new council should be elected within a two-month period from the date of the dissolution decree/decision (although the government has not abided by this period and many councils remain dissolved for months or even years). In such a case, the Qaim Maqam, the Head of the Division at the Qaim Maqamiyah, the Governor, or the General Secretary at the Mohafaza Center may take on the duties of the municipal council until the election of a new municipality, pursuant to a decision issued by the Minister of Interior and Municipalities. If the municipality is dissolved six months before the expiry of its tenure, no elections will be held.

### Problems of Municipality Dissolution

The dissolution of the municipal council and the failure to hold elections within two months from the dissolution disrupts the municipal work and thrusts the political parties and the families into a state of competition as they lie in wait for the elections, especially that the major responsibilities of the Qaim Maqam or the governor and the numerous municipalities that would fall under their jurisdiction after dissolution may render them incapable of duly attending to municipal duties.

### Dissolved Municipalities

Between May 2010 and July 2014, 71 municipalities have been dissolved for the different reasons stated below.

Dissolved municipalities and reasons for dissolution

Table 1

Municipality	No. of members	Qada'a	No. and date of the dissolution decision	Reason for the dissolution	Authority in charge	Date of by-elections
Bissariyeh	15	Saida	Decision no. 1033 dated June 14, 2010	The council lost more than half its members	Governor of the South	May 2012
Al-Khalwat	9	Hasbaya	Decision no. 1173 dated July 12, 2010	Candidates withdrew their candidacy	Hasbaya's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Ebl al-Saqi	12	Marjeyoun	Decision no. 1209 dated June 19, 2010	Candidates withdrew their candidacy	Marjeyoun's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Baz'oun	12	Bsharri	Decision no. 1210 dated June 19, 2010	Candidates withdrew their candidacy	Bsharri's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Alma Shaab	12	Tyre	Decision no. 1268 dated June 29, 2010	Lack of candidates	Tyre's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Nabha El-Mehfara	9	Baalbeck	Decision no. 1505 dated September 3, 2010	The State Shura Council annulled the results of the elections	Baalbeck's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Yater	15	Bint Jbeil	Decision no. 1592 dated September 21, 2010	The council lost more than half its members	Bint Jbeil's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Jibrayel	12	Akkar	Decision no. 1714 dated October 11, 2010	The council lost more than half its members	Substantive Head of Department at the Qada'a	May 2012
Hawsh Al-Nabi	9	Baalbeck	Decision no. 1726 dated October 12, 2010	Candidates withdrew their candidacy	Baalbeck's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Al-Fakiha wal Jdeideh	15	Baalbeck	Decision no. 2254 dated December 27, 2010	The council lost more than half its members	Baalbeck's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Yohmur	12	Western Beqa'a	Decision no. 2255 dated December 27, 2010	The council lost more than half its members	Western Beqa'a's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Al-Qantara	9	Akkar	Decision no. 655 dated April 8, 2011	The council lost more than half its members	Akkar's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Nabha El-Qeddam	12	Baalbeck	Decision no. 656 dated April 8, 2011	The council lost more than half of its members	Baalbeck's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Al-Qotteen	12	Mennieh-Donnieh	Decision no. 657 dated April 8, 2011	The council lost more than half its members	Governor of the North	May 2012
Byaqout	9	Matn	Decision no. 658 dated April 8, 2011	The council lost more than half its members	Matn's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Kfarjarra	9	Jezzine	Decision no. 659 dated April 8, 2011	The council lost more than half its members	Substantive Head of Department at the Qada'a of Jezzine	May 2012
Ardeh- Harf Ardeh	15	Zgharta	Decision no. 674 dated April 9, 2011	The council lost more than half its members	Zgharta's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Kfarmeshki-Selsata	12	Rashaya	Decision no. 689 dated April 12, 2011	The State Shura Council annulled the elections	Rashaya's Qaim Maqam	May 2012

Dissolved municipalities and reasons for dissolution

Table 1

Municipality	No. of members	Qada'a	No. and date of the dissolution decision	Reason for the dissolution	Authority in charge	Date of by-elections
Shawagher Fawqa/ Tahta	12	Hermel	Decision no. 688 dated April 8, 2011	The State Shura Council annulled the elections	Hermel's Qaim Maqam	May 2012 (elections were postponed for security reasons)
Nebha Damdoun	15	Baalbeck	Decision no. 1186 dated July 20, 2011	The council lost more than half its members	Baalbeck's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Bqaatouta	9	Kessrouan	Decision no. 1400 dated September 2, 2011	The State Shura Council annulled the elections	Kessrouan's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Ajaltoun	12	Kessrouan	Decision no. 1401 dated September 2, 2011	The State Shura Council annulled the elections	Kessrouan's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Rasheen	15	Zgharta	Decision no. 1402 dated September 2, 2011	The council lost more than half its members	Zgharta's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Rechdebbine	9	Koura	Decision no. 1470 dated September 12, 2011	The council lost more than half its members	Koura's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Tayr Harfa	15	Tyre	Decision no. 1778 dated October 26, 2011	The council lost more than half its members	Tyre's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Saghbine	15	Western Beqa'a	Decision no. 2132 dated December 27, 2011	The council lost more than half its members	Western Beqa'a's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Tekreet	15	Akkar	Decision no. 271 dated February 22, 2012	The State Shura Council considered the members resigned due to their failure to submit the necessary declaration according to the Illicit Enrichment Law.	Akkar's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Al-Bireh	15	Akkar	Decision no. 361 dated March 6, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	Akkar's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Sfariyeh	9	Jezzine	Decree no. 7792 dated March 20, 2012	The council did not convene and the municipality was quasi-impaired	Jezzine's Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Hjoula	9	Byblos	Decision no. 536 dated April 2, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	Byblos' Qaim Maqam	May 2012
Kfarhouna	15	Jezzine	Decision no. 570 dated April 5, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	Jezzine's acting Qaim Maqam	March 2013
Awniyet	9	Akkar	Decision no. 792 dated May 10, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	Akkar's Qaim Maqam	March 2013

Dissolved municipalities and reasons for dissolution

Table 1

Municipality	No. of members	Qada'a	No. and date of the dissolution decision	Reason for the dissolution	Authority in charge	Date of by-elections
Qernayel	12	Baabda	Decision no. 1149 dated June 29, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	Governor of Mount Lebanon	March 2013
Debbiyeh	12	El-Chouf	Decision no. 998 dated June 11, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	El-shouf's Qaim Maqam	March 2013
Bekfaya	9	Rashayya	Decision no. 1817 dated October 8, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	Rashaya's acting Qaim Maqam	March 2013
Kroum El-Arab	9	Akkar	Decision no. 1818 dated October 8, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	Akkar's acting Qaim Maqam	March 2013
Basloukit	9	Zgharta	Decision no. 2057 dated November 13, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	Zgharta's acting Qaim Maqam	March 2013
Qbayyat	18	Akkar	Decision no. 2224 dated December 4, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	Akkar's Qaim Maqam	March 2013
Al-Bireh	15	Akkar	Decision no. 2325 dated December 18, 2012	By-elections took place after the dissolution of the previous council and the current council was dissolved anew upon the decision of the State Shura Council which annulled the elections.	Akkar's acting Qaim Maqam	March 2013
Al-Kahaleh	15	Aley	Decision no. 2367 dated December 26, 2012	The council lost more than half its members	Aley's Qaim Maqam	March 2013
Mazraat El-Shouf	15	El-Chouf	Decision no. 105 dated January 19, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	El-Chouf's acting Qaim Maqam	March 2013
Nabi Ila	9	Zahle	Decision no. 191 dated February 2, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Governor of the Beqa'a	Elections did not take place
Reshmaya	15	Aley	Decision no. 192 dated February 2, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Substantive Head of Department at the Qada'a of Aley	Elections did not take place
Zaroun	9	Matn	Decision no. 261 dated February 15, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Matn's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Dahr El-Ahmar	9	Rashaya	Decision no. 794 dated May 13, 2013	The failure of three members to submit the declaration associated with the Illicit Enrichment Law and the resignation of another three	Rashaya's Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place

Dissolved municipalities and reasons for dissolution

Table 1

Municipality	No. of members	Qada'a	No. and date of the dissolution decision	Reason for the dissolution	Authority in charge	Date of by-elections
Kfarselwan	12	Baabda	Decision no. 795 dated May 13, 2013	The failure of the head of the municipal council and the members (10) to submit the declaration associated with the Illicit Enrichment Law as well as the death of two other members	Governor of Mount Lebanon	Elections did not take place
Chlifa	15	Baalbeck	Decision no. 1152 dated June 25, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Baalbeck's Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Jaj	12	Byblos	Decision no. 1207 dated July 3, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Byblos' acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Al-Bireh	15	Akkar	Decision no. 1284 dated July 16, 2013	The council lost more than half its members; this is the third dissolution of the Bireh municipality.	Substantive Head of Department at the Mohafaza	Elections did not take place
Kouba	9	Batroun	Decision no. 1386 dated August 1, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Batroun's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Anan	9	Jezzine	Decision no. 1427 dated August 12, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Jezzine's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Abrin	12	Batroun	Decision no. 1504 dated August 26, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Batroun's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Al-Mina	21	Tripoli	Decision no. 1569 dated September 2, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Governor of the North	Elections did not take place
Khorbet Daoud	9	Akkar	Decision no. 1631 dated September 12, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Substantive Head of Department at the Qada'a of Akkar	Elections did not take place
Al-Sheikh Mohammad	12	Akkar	Decision no. 1632 dated September 12, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Substantive Head of Department at the Mohafaza	Elections did not take place
Nahr Ibrahim	9	Byblos	Decision no. 1951 dated October 29, 2013	The council lost more than half its members; this is the third dissolution of the Bireh municipality.	Byblos acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Bourj al-Yahoudieh	9	Mennieh-Dennieh	Decision no. 1986 dated November 1, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Governor of the North	Elections did not take place
Hasbaya	15	Hasbaya	Decision no. 2057 dated November 11, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Hasbaya's Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place

Dissolved municipalities and reasons for dissolution						Table 1
Municipality	No. of members	Qada'a	No. and date of the dissolution decision	Reason for the dissolution	Authority in charge	Date of by-elections
Yammouneh	12	Baalbeck	Decision no. 2151 dated November 26, 2013	The council lost more than half its members	Baalbeck's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Asia	9	Batroun	Decision no. 26 dated January 8, 2014	The council lost more than half its members	Batroun's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Hjoula	9	Byblos	Decision no. 53 dated January 15, 2014	The council lost more than half its members	Byblos Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Burj Al-Mlouk	9	Marjeyoun	Decision no. 430 dated March 18, 2014	The council lost more than half its members	Marjeyoun's Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Al-Mrouj	12	Matn	Decision no. 587 dated April 7, 2014	The council lost more than half its members	Matn's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Tannoura	9	Rashaya	Decision no. 674 dated April 23, 2014	The council lost more than half its members	Rashaya's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Saghbine	15	Western Beqa'a	Decision no. 675 dated April 23, 2014	The council lost more than half its members	Western Beqa'a's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Kfar Aqqa	15	Koura	Decision no. 676 dated April 23, 2014	The council lost more than half its members	Koura's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Bmariam	9	Baabda	Decision no. 872 dated May 16, 2014	The council lost more than half its members	Mount Lebanon Governor	Elections did not take place
Ain Ksour	9	Aley	Decree no. 11510 dated May 19, 2014	The members did not attend the Aley Qaim Maqamiya to elect a president and a vice president for the council despite recurrent invitations.	Aley's acting Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place
Deir Ames	12	Tyre	Decision no. 1001 dated May 31, 2014	The council lost more than half its members	Tyre's Qaim Maqam	Elections did not take place

Source: Decisions issued by the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities and published in the Official Gazette

In July 2014, Lebanon was home to 1,014 municipalities, seven of which were newly introduced and are run by the Qaim Maqam, the Governor or an official at the Qaim Maqamiya or the Mohafaza. There are also 28 municipalities that have been dissolved and entrusted to the above mentioned authorities. As for the remaining existing municipalities, they do not necessarily accomplish their mandated tasks and are for the most part impaired entities marred by partisan and familial disputes. This should be a motive for redefining the role, functions and means of municipalities and to discuss and call into question the feasibility of the presence of so many municipalities in Lebanon. ●

# CUSTOMS EXEMPTIONS FOR EMBASSIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

**Lebanon has formal diplomatic ties with hundreds of countries around the world. These ties are maintained through the Lebanese embassies overseas and the foreign embassies hosted on Lebanese territories, with a few exceptions to the rule. Accredited embassies are entitled to import motor vehicles free of customs duties and registration taxes. Diplomatic license plates are used on these vehicles.**

In the past few years, Arab and foreign embassies in Lebanon demanded the inclusion of more vehicles in the customs exemption scheme following an increase in their diplomatic workforce. Amid the indiscriminate increase in the number of diplomatic license plates and as low-profile employees given occasionally access to diplomatic cars, the diplomatic license plate has lost its symbolic value, noting that the current regulations have set the number of diplomatic license plates at two per embassy, with a possibility to raise the number if needed. However, the Lebanese government meets the demands of embassies without investigating if there is any urgency for the requested license plates, in consistency with its open foreign policy and its wish not to infuriate foreign countries, particularly the major powers.

## Legal framework of exemption

Exemptions, especially customs exemptions, are granted on the basis of two laws:

- Articles 300 and 304 of the Customs Law stipulate exempting the cars intended to be used by embassies or formal commissions from customs duties. The number of the exempted cars shall be two and may be raised pursuant to a decision taken by the Higher Customs Council upon the proposition of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the approval of the Cabinet. The customs exemption also covers the construction materials used in building or renovating embassies or commissions, with the exception of those materials that make part of national production. These privileges and exemptions are not granted unless legislation at the home country of the diplomatic mission or the consulate allows similar or even better prerogatives to the members of the Lebanese mission. Otherwise, privileges and exemptions shall be reciprocated within the framework that is being applied in the relevant countries.

- Law no. 114, dated December 7, 1991 grants some exemptions to international non-governmental organizations or to those regional federations established with the consent or upon the recommendation of the Arab League Council or within the framework of the Economic Council of the Arab League or the organizations affiliated with the League, provided that these organizations have their headquarters in Lebanon. Exemptions include customs duties, construction taxes and stamp duties. Salaries are not tax exempt.

## Exempted Cars

The Customs Law thus allows any one embassy two tax-free cars but also includes a contrasting provision authorizing a higher number should the need arise. Hence, most embassies have far exceeded the limit as illustrated clearly in Tables 1 and 2.

Sample of the embassies exempted from customs duties			Table 1
Embassy/ State	No. of exempted cars previously	No. of the additional cars exempted in the past few years	
China	7	2	
Canada	14	3	
Kuwait	65	15	
Palestine	2	3	
Norway	2	1	
Sultanate of Oman	7	5	
Ukraine	4	2	
Armenia	5	-	

Source: Proceedings of Cabinet meetings.

### Number of cars exempted from customs duties by regional unions and organizations

Table 2

Federation/ Organization	No. of exempted cars
Arab Federation for Wildlife Protection	5
Arab Economic Forum	5
International Management Group	5
Arabic Language International Council	5
DCAF	5
Arab Forum for Environment and Development	5
World Union of Arab Bankers	2
Arab Union for Surveying	2
Union of Arab ICT Associations	2
Arab Anti Corruption Organization	5
The Arab Federation of Shipping	5

### Number of cars exempted from customs duties by regional unions and organizations

Table 2

Federation/ Organization	No. of exempted cars
Federation of Arab Engineers	5
Arab Federation of Exchanges	2
Palestine Legal Aid Fund	5
Arab Thought Foundation	5
Center for Arab Unity Studies	5
Federation of Arab Banks	5
General Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture	5
Societe International De Telecommunications Aeronautiques	5
Arab Federation for Hotels & Tourism	5
Association des universités partiellement ou entièrement de langue française (AUPELF)	5

Source: Decrees issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants.



## VACANCY RATES IN GRADE 4 AND GRADE 5 POSTS

# 1893 VACANT POSTS

Vacancies in the Lebanese civil service are not restricted to the highest posts (Grade 1, 2 and 3). As a matter of fact, the phenomenon seems much more rampant within the lower grades reaching as high as 73% in Grade 4 and 81% in Grade 5. The vacancy rate registered in Grade 1 posts is 29%.

### Vacant posts by administration

1310 posts are vacant in Grade 4 and 583 in Grade 5, totaling combined 1893 posts. These posts are distributed by administration as follows:

Vacancies in Grade 4 and Grade 5 posts by administration						
Administration	Clerk	Accountant	Typist	Data entry officer	Concierge	Total
Directorate General of the Presidency of the Republic	1	-	2	2	2	7
Directorate General of the Office of Prime Minister	9	3	5	6	15	38
Directorate General of Finance	109	-	13	-	82	204
Directorate General of Lebanese Lottery	6	3	-	-	2	11
Directorate General of Real Estate Affairs	65	2	1	15	25	108
Directorate General of Customs	-	-	15	-	21	36
Civil Service Board	9	1	5	5	5	25
Central Inspection	10	-	3	-	7	20
Audit Court	4	-	4	-	3	11
Central Administration of Statistics	10	-	12	13	12	47
Higher Disciplinary Committee	2	1	2	-	1	6
Ministry of Justice	13	2	8	13	13	49
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants	32	10	21	3	15	81
Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities	10	2	5	-	4	21

Vacancies in Grade 4 and Grade 5 posts by administration						
Administration	Clerk	Accountant	Typist	Data entry officer	Concierge	Total
Directorate General of Personal Status	100	1	35	-	50	186
Directorate General of Local Administrations and Councils	8	1	7	-	6	22
Directorate General of Political Affairs and Refugees	10	-	5	-	2	17
Mohafazas: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, South Lebanon, Akkar, Beqa'a, Baalbeck/Hermel, Nabatieh	31	-	42	9	16	98
Ministry of Public Works and Transport	39	7	34	51	72	203
Ministry of Education and Higher Education	8	111	74	7	99	299
Ministry of Public Health	4	1	-	-	25	30
Ministry of Economy and Commerce	-	-	-	2	2	4
Ministry of Agriculture	66	6	17	3	28	120
Ministry of Labor	7	1	5	15	1	29
Ministry of Information	9	4	-	13	13	39
Ministry of Energy and Water	23	2	13	12	10	60
Ministry of Tourism	6	1	-	2	6	15
Ministry of Culture	8	1	5	2	30	46
Ministry of Environment	-	1	-	1	-	2
Ministry of Youth and Sports	8	1	7	3	3	22
Ministry of Social Affairs	-	-	1	2	6	9
Ministry of Industry	6	1	8	6	7	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>1893</b>

Source: Proceeding of the Cabinet session dated January 25, 2012

# THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES DIRECTORATE GENERAL

The Internal Security Forces is the second largest military institution in Lebanon after the Lebanese Army. Its duties differ from those of the Army although it may occasionally require its help. Complaints over the complacency of the staff at ISF in addressing different types of violations, such as those of traffic and construction, have been growing by the day. Yet, these are often met with various excuses including the lack of personnel, the absence of a decisive political decision and the political authority's tolerance of violations.

## ISF Establishment

On September 20, 1920, the French High Commissioner issued a decision stipulating the organization of Greater Lebanon's gendarmerie, which included the Lebanese gendarmerie and parts of the Syrian gendarmerie. The latter consisted of 1200 members, including 37 officers, who were in charge of some of the territories adjoined to Greater Lebanon. As for the establishment of the ISF Directorate General, it occurred during President Fouad Chehab's term of office, pursuant to Legislative Decree no. 13 issued on June 12, 1954, which increased the number of ISF personnel to 4600 members and officers.

## Functions and role of the ISF

According to Law No. 17/90, the Internal Security Forces are public armed forces with jurisdictions covering the entire Lebanese territory as well as its territorial waters and air space. The law established its functions as an administrative and judicial police as follows:

- Ensuring public order
- Protecting individuals and property
- Protecting freedoms within the framework of law
- Executing legal rules and regulations
- Fulfilling the functions of the judicial police
- Executing letters rogatory
- Carrying out judicial warrants and verdicts
- Assisting public authorities in their duties
- Guarding public administrations and institutions, as decided by the relevant authorities
- Guarding prisons and running them when necessary (prison management has been entrusted to the Ministry of Justice but this is not being applied)
- Guarding diplomatic missions in Lebanon

## Director General

The ISF Directorate General is run by a Director General who is directly linked to the Minister of the Interior and Municipalities. Typically, this post is assigned to an ISF officer carrying the rank of Colonel or above or to a Grade

1 civil servant. In exceptional cases, the position may be awarded to a Lebanese Army colonel or any higher-ranking army officer. The ISF Director General is Sunni by convention. All ISF commanding officers fall under the Director General's authority and are responsible before him for all the duties assigned to them, with the exception of the Inspector General who is associated with the Minister of the Interior and Municipalities.

## ISF Organization

The Internal Security Forces consists of the following units:

1. **The Directorate General** includes the Director General, the General Staff and the Central Administration:
  - The General Staff consists of the units responsible for preparing studies and offering advice to the Director General.
  - The Central Administration consists of all the administrative and technical departments responsible for managing the ISF funds and gear and equipment as well as the premises belonging to them or put at their disposal.
2. **The Social Service Administration:** this encompasses the ISF newsletter and the funds of a special nature established by decrees in favor of the ISF as well as all the institutions associated with these funds, the clubs and other cultural, intellectual and social services.
3. **The Territorial Gendarmerie** consists of all the units operating outside Beirut except for those units which remain wholly or partly attached to any other unit.
4. **The Mobile Battalion** is the ISF general reserve force that is organized, equipped and trained to ensure security and maintain order across all of Lebanon. It includes all the mobile units within and outside Beirut.
5. **The Police of Beirut:** Its prerogatives cover the region of Beirut. It consists of the units operating under its authority except for those units which remain wholly or partly connected to another unit.

6. **The Judicial Police:** its prerogatives cover the whole of Lebanon. It comprises the Forensic Police, the Tourist Police, the Anti-Crime Unit and the Investigation and Inquiries Unit.
7. **The Embassy and Public Administration Security Regiment:** its prerogatives cover all of Lebanon. It consists of all the units responsible for guarding the dwellings of diplomatic missions in Lebanon as well as those of the public administrations.
8. **The Internal Security Forces Institute:** it consists of all colleges, schools and training centers of the ISF.

### The Command Council

In addition to the Director General, there is a Command Council operating directly under the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities. It consists of:

- The Director General as Head of Council
- The Inspector General
- All the chiefs of the above-mentioned units

The Council convenes upon the invitation of the Director General or upon the call of half of its members. It may decide to summon whomever it deems fit to attend the sessions and its deliberations are characterized by utter secrecy. The Head of the Private Affairs Division assumes the responsibilities of the Council's secretariat and decisions are made unanimously or by a majority of at least eight votes.

### The Command Council is in charge of:

- Proposing the establishment of units and the names thereof
- Drafting general schedules of military personnel and equipment
- Drafting detailed schedules of the distribution of military personnel and equipment
- Appointing trained gendarmes and non-commissioned members
- Proposing the appointment of officers and specialist officers
- Terminating the contracts of trained gendarmes and non-commissioned officers
- Rejecting the renewal of voluntary enrolment contracts of enlisted men and non-commissioned officers with poor rates
- Approving the renewal of the voluntary enrolment contracts of enlisted men and non-commissioned officers as a general rule for a minimum of two years
- Approving the discharge of enlisted men and non-commissioned officers should there be compelling reasons

- Reducing the periods of seniority for promotions among enlisted men and non-commissioned officers
- Proposing the granting of exceptional promotion seniority for officers carrying the rank of Major and below
- Posthumously promoting the martyrs among ISF's enlisted men and non-commissioned officers.
- Posthumously proposing the promotion of ISF's officers.
- Selecting those qualified non-commissioned officers for the rank of lieutenant
- Preparing the officers' schedules of promotion to the rank of Colonel and below.
- Determining the centers to which officers will be transferred, save inspectors general and unit leaders.
- Subjecting enlisted men and non-commissioned officers to the punishment of dismissal from promotion schedules and demotions.
- Proposing the punishment of officers ranking from Colonel or below through dismissal from promotion schedules and demotions.
- Assigning centers to officers save those unit leaders who are subject to punitive disciplinary transfers.
- Setting the promotion schedules of enlisted men and non-commissioned officers.
- Establishing voluntary enrolment regulations.
- Establishing the regulations for qualification exams.
- Setting the rules for separating ISF members
- Drafting the instructions concerning the rules and regulations for promotion, the renewal of enrolment contracts and the setting of transferring centers.
- Returning ISF members whose contracts were terminated to normal service.

### Evolution of ISF personnel

ISF personnel grew from 4,600 members and officers in 1960 to more than 23,000 in 2013. Since the ISF directorate has been assigned 29,495 vacancies, efforts are now under way to recruit more personnel to fill the vacant posts and strike a sectarian balance within this security body, especially that Muslims account for 66% of the total ISF workforce while Christians make up only 36%.

Evolution of the ISF personnel		Table 1
Year	Personnel size (members and officers)	
1960	4,600	
1974	6,400	
1978	7,532	
1991	9,000	
1997	15,000	
2013	23,041	

# PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

## RAJYA SABHA AND LOK SABHA

**With a population of roughly 1.3 billion people, India is considered to be the largest democracy in the world. It adopts a democratic system best manifested through its parliamentary elections. India hosted parliamentary elections for the first time in 1952 and has continued to do so.**

### Indian Parliament

India has a bicameral Parliament consisting of:

- Rajya Sabha or the Council of States
- Lok Sabha or the House of Representatives

The two chambers constitute India's legislative branch and join with each other to carry out many duties at the forefront of which is the election of a president of the republic.

### Council of States

The Council of States consists of 245 members, out of which 233 are elected indirectly as representatives of the 29 States and Union territories and 12 are nominated by the President. The allocation of seats to the States and Union Territories is a decision based on the population of each state. As for the members nominated by the President, they are selected on the basis of their skills, knowledge and practical experience in the fields of literature, science, art and social service. The Council, which is chaired by the Vice President of the Republic, renews the election of one third of its members every two years.

### House of Representatives

The House of Representatives is composed of 538 members elected directly for a five-year term. The party or coalition that gains a majority of 272 seats is nominated to chair the government.

### Voting system

India uses a plurality voting system. Any Indian citizen who is 18 years of age is entitled to exercise his/her voting right. In the elections held in April-May 2014, 814.5 million voters turned out for elections in 930,000 polling stations, i.e. up by 100 million voters from 2009.

Elections span for five weeks and are held in nine phases starting April 7 and ending May 12. The seats vary between 1 and 80 in the 36 districts- 29 States and 7 Union territories- depending on the population of each district, as illustrated in Table 1

### Most recent elections

Roughly 15,000 candidates ran in the most recent elections of April-May 2014. The results yielded the success of the National People's Party with 266 seats.

The Indian National Congress obtained 44 seats only, an ultimate defeat down from 206 seats in 2009. Women representatives in Parliament totaled 62 with Sumitra Mahajan serving as the incumbent Speaker of the house.

**Distribution of seats per state and union territory** Table 1

District/State	# of seats
Andhra Pradesh	80
Uttarakhand	5
Haryana	10
Himachal Pradesh	4
Jammu&Kashmir	6
Jharkhand	14
Carla	20
West Bengal	42
Assam	14
Bihar	40
Andhra Pradesh	25
Oronasal	2
Andaman	1
Chandigarh	1
Chacha	11
Delhi	7
Dadra	1
Daman	1
Gawa	2
Gujarat	26
Sikkim	1
Karnataka	28
Manor	2
Tripura	2
Telangana	17
Rajasthan	25
Madhya Pradesh	29
Maharashtra	48
Meghalaya	8
Odisha	21
Mizoram	1
Lakshadweep	13
Lakshya-ii	1
Pondicherry or Puducherry	1
Nagaland	1
Tamil Nadu	39

# MAURICE GEMAYEL

DESIGNER OF LEBANON, ADVOCATE OF ANTOUN SAADEH AND FOUNDER OF THE PHALANGES' PARTY

**The name of Maurice Gemayel has always been synonymous with development and planning. He was rightfully dubbed the designer of Lebanon and the master of planning, a process that seems quasi-alien to our state today.**

## Birth and upbringing

The son of Elias Gemayel, Maurice Gemayel was born in the Egyptian city of Mansoura on April 25, 1910. He attended school there until 1920 when his parents returned to their hometown in Bekfaya. He then enrolled at the Aintoura Lazarite School in Kessrouan.

## Higher education

In 1929, he moved to France where he studied law at the Sorbonne University. He graduated with a law degree in 1932.

## Professional life

Maurice Gemayel began legal practice after returning from France. He was simultaneously involved in politics and he is said to have engaged first with the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. Later, he joined his brother-in-law (husband of Genevieve Gemayel) to establish the Lebanese Phalanges Party and was in charge of the party's weekly newspaper, *Al-Amal*. He entered the parliamentary realm as MP representing the Metn district following his win at the elections in June 1960, which were marked by fierce competition, especially since the former President of the Republic Camille Chamoun was running as a candidate in the same district in alliance with the Syrian Social Nationalist Party against his one-time ally, the Phalanges Party.

Two main rival lists were formed:

### The Lebanese List:

- Maurice Gemayel: 19337 votes
- Major General Jamil Lahoud (father of the former President of the Republic Emile Lahoud): 18197 votes
- Edward Abou Jaoude: 16092 votes
- Michel el-Murr : 15064 votes
- Vartex Shamilian: 17123 votes

### The National Coalition List:

- Camille Chamoun: 17252 votes
- Salim Lahoud (father of the former MP Nassib Lahoud and cousin of Jamil Lahoud): 13634 votes
- Assad Ashkar (SSNP candidate): 16265 votes
- Albert Moukhaiber: 15945 votes
- Dikran Tosbath: 15282

Three candidates, Maurice Gemayel, Jamil Lahoud and Vartex Shamilian won from the first list and Camille Chamoun and Albert Moukhaiber won from the second. Maurice Gemayel staged a strong presence as he was able to compete against Chamoun. This victory came after two consecutive losses, the first in 1953 when Gemayel ran in Beirut 2 and the second in 1957 in Metn. He was re-elected in 1964 and again in 1968 when another ferocious battle unfolded between two lists: the Chehabi List and the Tripartite Alliance List headed by Maurice Gemayel, which won in its entirety by a wide margin.

Gemayel's victory gave him ministerial opportunities. On August 1, 1960, he was appointed Minister of State in charge of the financial and development affairs under the Saeb Salam government. He remained in office until May 20, 1961. Later on November 25, 1969, he was appointed Minister of Planning and served in this post until October 13, 1970.

## Achievements

Maurice Gemayel conducted studies and drew up designs and plans for most of the sectors, believing that otherwise, no state can ever live up to its duties. Foremost among his milestones:

- A water master plan for Lebanon
- Designing agricultural and industrial production plans
- Regulating banks
- Regulating commerce
- Regulating tourism and summer vacations
- Drawing up plans for transportation
- Drawing up plans for oil industry
- Designing the Beirut-Beqa'a tunnel
- Drawing up the Litani River plan
- Brain Bank Project
- Drawing up designs for monetary, credit and borrowing sectors

Alongside Charles Helou, Said Hamadeh , Edmont Rabbat and Costantine Rizk, he contributed to the

establishment of the Center for Palestinian Studies in 1963 and he was the author of several works and articles. His political activity within the Phalanges Party was marked by distinct positions and stances and he even defended Antoun Saadeh, founder of the SSNP in 1937.

## Death

Destiny did not allow Maurice Gemayel to realize the plans for development he had in mind for Lebanon. After the election of Suleiman Frangieh as President of the Republic, Saeb Salam was designated to form the new government, which he called the Youth Government. During the ministerial statement discussion on October 17, 1970, Maurice Gemayel suffered a heart attack soon after he finished his speech. He was rushed to the hospital but did not survive. He died on October 31 at the age of 60.

He married Josette Awad and had seven children with her.

## Successor

Because of his significant role, the death of Maurice Gemayel left a great vacuum in Parliament. By-elections were held in Metn and the battle was predestined to favor Sheikh Amine Gemayel (Maurice's nephew) who amassed 16977 votes against his rival Fouad Lahoud who had 12832 votes.

## Maurice Gemayel's last words

In what follows, we recall the major highlights of Gemayel's discussion of the ministerial statement on October 17, 1970, before heart attack hit him:

"Before I proceed to read my speech at this great session, I would like to extend a word of gratitude to His Excellency, Minister of Information Ghassan Tueini who has allowed the entire nation, through radio and television frequencies, to partake in our job, even if that meant stopping censorship of the session.

Now that I have expressed my appreciation of the first act, which made democracy assume its truest meanings, I am now going to speak, as a former Minister of Planning, about the data that transpired to me during the change of government and about the roadmap to forming a government in the modern sense. Here, I must begin by thanking two senior officials: Speaker of the House Sabri Hamadeh who mitigated the circumstances, thus allowing us to consult for the first time in the Parliament hall representatives of all the economic, social and cultural activities, and PM Rashid Karami who, through his presence and contribution, has allowed us, for the first time in not only the history of this country, but the history of the entire Arab World, to consult the people on the policy that should be drawn to maintain the affairs of their country. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for that was the first stepping-stone towards the true principle of democracy.

It has become clear to us that the rule laid down by the Lebanese elite made it imperative to consider three main aspects if we wanted wishes to be more than just ink on paper.

First, those in control of the sensitivities of the masses should participate in bearing political responsibility. Obtaining the approval of the masses on what has been agreed upon should not pose a difficulty, provided that the figures handling grassroots responsibilities should act as a coordinator between the ministries each working in a particular field.

Secondly, we should initiate the battle of rating the situation in the country, getting acquainted with its facts and identifying its problems and issues in an adequate, scientific and thorough manner. Through this objective and factual knowledge, we should underline all the foundations, principles, standards, solutions and treatments.

Hence, the first stage is the stage of preliminary work, preparation, planning, identification of the facts and complete elucidation of the matters because what we are immersed in in this country is ambiguity and misunderstandings ensuing among groups of people as a result of the lack of clarity. Lebanon's primary enemy, at this stage in particular, is ambiguity. This is why I pleaded with the Prime Minister to form a government that encompasses three kinds of officials:

The first kind: the official in charge of the masses who should be more of a coordinator than an employee.

The second kind: the official who should be a successful employer running large-scale businesses, because employers have a special perceptive insight and an accurate understanding of how to run groups, how to define the functions of experts, how to select them, employ them and make use of their reports and studies. This kind of work is entrusted to a specific kind of men who should not be holders of advanced degrees and the proof... I will not mention any names. You can sure infer them yourselves.

A kind of survey I conducted on the institution of this employer who hires thousands of workers made me realize that the man had not even completed elementary education. Yet, he is employing more than twenty international experts, each earning 30 pounds a day. Those experts can offer an objective and actual contribution to the elucidation of the matters and the clarification of the obscure.

After our review of the Social Guide in Lebanon, we have found out that there are more than 80 institutions of such large scale in Lebanon, all of which are chaired by people who have demonstrated their efficiency, success and expertise.

We are standing today before this ministry in its current shape. What is my opinion as a former minister?

First, I hope that it will not be involved in carrying out political activities in ministries that were never designed to advance political agendas. If it engaged in a political activity of any kind other than running regular traditional affairs, it would be thrusting itself in areas beyond the functions assigned to this ministry where competencies abound as I previously mentioned. I hope it will have plenty of time to win the battle of elimination of ambiguity.

In principle, the youth and the students succeeded in forming this ministry and for that, they have earned our appreciation.

In this context, I must note that PM Saeb Salam has had enough audacity to take such a step. There is no need to repeat all that has been reported in the ministerial statement. However there is a clause in the third page that I cannot ignore: “.. the government shall also deposit in Parliament the draft law stipulating the establishment of the Social Economic Council, which had been discussed by preceding governments.”

I call on all colleagues to pay close attention to what I am going to say because this is no laughing matter. When I speak, I speak very seriously and I put jokes aside. If you do not want to listen to me, I will withdraw immediately. All things far from serious are totally unacceptable to me. For those wondering, I will give the government my confidence and I will demonstrate why.

I devised the plan of organizing the Lebanese people for purposes of participation because every citizen should partake effectively in his/her country's policies, contrary to what Lloyd George had said in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom. Lloyd George reported that the British citizen used to utilize his citizenship for only a few seconds every four years, when he/she cast his/her vote in the elections.

The Social Economic council does not go far enough. I hope that it will be renamed the Popular Organization for Participation and that it will immediately implement what the previous government had decided, for the government did not have enough time to establish a secretariat for the Lebanese people and entrust them with the realization of this participation. An employee was instead appointed to carry out this task temporarily.

I am pleased to also announce that a few hours prior to our departure from the ministry, the interior and planning ministers had signed a decision to establish the first regional parliament, which would ensure the decentralization noted in the ministerial statement itself. It is my hope that the decision will not be neglected and that efforts will kick up immediately to initiate our first experience with a regional parliament.

A group of municipalities has been dissolved. Their works have utterly failed. At this moment, the orator lashed out at his audience: “ I will not proceed if you do not show some respect for my words. I will not put up with this ritual that one MP is fit and another is ‘second class’. We are all MPs and we should all work towards respecting deputyship. I hope I will not be forced to repeat my words for fear that may incur consequences. Foremost among these consequences is that I will resign from Parliament, go before voters and tell them ‘this is how they treat MPs. I am not prepared to let anyone, whomsoever, degrade my worth as I speak.

The country is in an unconstitutional state. No replacements were elected for the dissolved municipalities due to circumstances, which we all are aware of. However, it is no longer acceptable to continue to deprive voters of the opportunity to have their say in the authority that is directly responsible for their comfort in their own towns, especially that the powers of a group of municipalities have been handed to the Qaim Maqam.

Every country is compelled to put forward urban plans. This is inescapable. This means that each country should have an Ikoshar project- or a better or worse one. But I have something to say to Minister Eddéh who is one of those who have played an effective role in the Urban Planning Higher Council and who is familiar with some of the aspects surrounding the council's opinions. He was also an active contributor to the Council of Planning at the Ministry of Planning.

I am not saying that urban planning is inexistent. But when the state decides on certain urban plans, it should continue to bear the consequences of its decision until the very end, not just lay the burden on the poor contractor. When German Emperor Willhelm wanted to build a road that would lead to his palace in Potsdam, the mill owner refused to surrender his mill, which was blocking the palace's line of sight and thus he fell out with the emperor's guards. The guards said ‘we will demolish the mill by force. He replied: ‘there are judges in Berlin.’

I hope that no measures will be taken to liquidate the rights of the deprived people in order to escape the consequences of the damages incurred upon them. You may expropriate all the Lebanese plots of land and do whatever you desire with them. I requested Mr. Shaaya, the head of the Council of Major Projects in Beirut to lay down an urban planning study and it turned out that the expropriation of all the territories under the Lebanese republic would cost LBP 14 billion. If you want to transform Lebanon's plots of land to a global paradise, do it at the expense of the state not the people. Otherwise, you will be violating the constitution because the first article of the Constitution establishes that property should be protected. Therefore, you cannot infringe on property, neither for total nor for partial expropriation.”

## ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

Dr. Hanna Saadah



**Atrial fibrillation is an abnormal heart rhythm that causes the heart to beat irregularly and often very fast. Rapid, irregular heartbeats cause a decline in cardiac output (blood pumping efficiency), strain the heart muscle and lead to fatigue, shortness of breath and serious cardiac events.**

This abnormal heart rhythm also causes the left atrium to quiver instead of pump, allowing blood to pool in the left atrial cavity. When blood pools, it tends to clot, and the clots pass into the left ventricle. From the left ventricle, they are pumped out with the blood into the great arteries. When these clots reach the brain, they cause sudden strokes.

Strokes caused by tiny clots are quickly cleared by the body's anti-clotting defenses, leaving the brain undamaged. These strokes are called transient ischemic attacks or TIAs. Typically the victim experiences weakness on one side of the body or trouble talking and then promptly recovers. Such transient ischemic attacks are warning signs because they are often followed by major strokes.

Strokes caused by bigger clots can cause significant brain damage, which may not improve with time. These dreaded strokes might leave the patient paralyzed on one side and unable to talk or swallow or attend to personal needs.

Atrial fibrillation is only one of the many causes of strokes, but it is an important cause because it is treatable. The treatment involves two strategies: a) the normal heart rhythm can be restored with medications, electric shock, or by ablating the abnormal nerves through heart catheterization; b) the rapid heartbeats can be slowed down with medications to relieve the heart strain caused by the ultra rapid rate. Treating the irregular heartbeats is called rhythm control, slowing the heartbeats is called rate control, and depending on the situation, the cardiologist may favor one treatment over another.

Another essential treatment entails thinning the blood to prevent clots from forming. To achieve that, special anti-clotting medications are used and this process is known as anticoagulation, which is a life long treatment for most atrial fibrillation patients. Aspirin, which is also a blood thinner, is not as good at preventing clots.

There are other causes of strokes such as defective heart valves, defective brain arteries, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, blocked carotid arteries, etc. Hence, when a patient has a stroke, the common causes of strokes are thoroughly investigated and appropriately addressed. Problems arise, however, when a cause cannot be discovered. Strokes, which have no discernable cause, are called cryptogenic strokes and represent 20% to 40% of all strokes. Such cryptogenic strokes present a clinical dilemma because, unless a cause is ultimately discovered, further strokes cannot be prevented.

To investigate this dilemma, two groups of researchers (New England Journal of Medicine, June 26, 2014) studied patients with cryptogenic strokes using advanced heart monitoring technologies. The aim of their studies was to see if patients with cryptogenic strokes have transient episodes of atrial fibrillation, which could be the reason why blood clots had travelled to their brains.

In one study, which monitored heart rhythm for 30 days in 280 patients with cryptogenic strokes, 45 (16%) had episodes of atrial fibrillation. In another study, which monitored heart rhythm for three years, 8.9% had episodes of atrial fibrillation in the first six months, 12.4% had episodes in the first 12 months, and 30% had episodes by the end of three years. Patients who were diagnosed with episodic atrial fibrillation, and who had their blood thinned with anticoagulants, suffered fewer strokes over time.

The commonly known cardiovascular risk factors that predispose individuals to develop atrial fibrillation are similar to those that predispose individuals to have strokes. Besides high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, smoking, heart failure and older age - high thyroid is one important, additional factor. Another less known, less obvious, but more common factor is the elusive syndrome of obstructive sleep apnea.

Obstructive sleep apnea, which is caused by narrowing and collapse of our upper airways during sleep, chokes our breathing at night and leaves us tired and sleepy the next day. It is a highly under-diagnosed condition, which occurs in 17% of adults, increases with obesity and age, and gets worse with time. It occurs in up to 50% of patients with diabetes or hypertension, and in 30%-40% of patients with coronary artery disease (Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine, August, 2014).

Patients with sleep apnea are at a much higher risk for heart rhythm disturbances, including atrial fibrillation. Moreover, patients whose atrial fibrillation was electrically converted had a much higher rate of relapse when their sleep apnea was not also treated, and their rate of relapse was proportional to the lower levels of oxygen they dropped down to during sleep. Also, patients treated for sleep apnea had a significant decline in cardiac rhythm disturbances and cardiac events, whereas those untreated had three times more cardiac events plus an increased risk of sudden death during sleep. Hence, patients with cryptogenic strokes or with atrial fibrillation should be screened for obstructive sleep apnea because treatment of this elusive condition has been shown to improve clinical outcomes.



Maya Nahoul  
Nutritional Consultant

## FREE COOKING HOW TO COOK WITH NO RISK!

**We are always in a hurry, trying to provide the best meals possible for our families and tend to forget some important safety issues regarding preparing, cooking, serving and often, reheating food.**



Most families, because of the fast working environment we live in, try to prepare food ahead of time for the week or make big portions so that they last longer. This technique is correct as long as you watch out for bacteria, know how to prepare food and store your prepared food in the freezer and not in the fridge.

These are some quick and easy to remember tips while cooking. Try them as they will do you good:

1- Wash hands and work tools often: disinfect work surface, sponges and tools and wash at a temperature of at least 63 degree Celsius.

2- Avoid cross-contamination: Separate food - place food away from each other to prevent their juices from mixing - in cooking, use different boards for fresh produce; raw meat, eggs, chicken, fish, fruits and vegetables, bread and already prepared food to eat.

3- Keep the temperature before, during and after the cooking: to prevent yourself from the hazard zone (zone where bacteria multiply rapidly and can cause serious food poisoning - this can happen 2 hours after the food is left in a temperature of 18 and 60 degree celcius. A temperature of 64 degree C and above is considered as reasonable and sound).

4 - Stir your food: using the microwave, remember to stir the dish to ensure it is evenly hot (or the bacteria can survive).

5 - Think about the refrigerator: never keep fresh food or dishes at room temperature for more than 2 hours in winter and for over an hour in the summer when the temperature can exceed plus 32 degree celcius.

6- Thawing food: when thawing food outside the fridge, the bacteria can multiply and increase. Instead, thaw safely in the refrigerator by placing a tray underneath to prevent the juices from leaking into the refrigerator. Another method is to defrost the food in cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes. And if you are in a hurry, utilise the microwave. Be careful in all cases, food must be cooked without delay!

7 - Do not reheat a dish for more than two times and never refreeze thawed food, that's when bacteria and micro-organisms multiply and can cause food poisoning.



## THE MONTHLY INTERVIEWS

### DR. SAMIA KHOURY

DIRECTOR OF THE MS CENTER AT THE AUBMC

Recent years have seen a rise in the prevalence of Multiple Sclerosis both in Lebanon and in other Arab countries. MS is an incurable autoimmune disease, and thus diagnosing it at its early stages helps mitigate the symptoms and allows patients to lead their lives normally. To gain more insight into this disease and increase awareness about it, *The Monthly* interviewed Dr. Samia Khoury, director of the MS center at the AUBMC and an acclaimed authority on the subject.



Dr. Samia Khoury

#### First of all, could you please provide a brief sketch of your educational and professional background?

I obtained my Medical Diploma from the American University of Beirut in 1984 and then went to Cleveland's Case Western Reserve for specialty training in neurology. After my training there, I followed subspecialty training at Harvard Medical School and completed post-doctoral fellowship before I became a faculty member. With time I was promoted to Professor of Neurology. Afterwards, I was awarded an endowed chair at Harvard and served simultaneously as co-director of the Partners Multiple Sclerosis Center. This is basically my professional and educational profile. I took a leave of absence and accepted a visiting professorship at Harvard when I was summoned back to AUB in 2011 as Head of the Abu Haidar Neuroscience Institute (AHNI), which encompasses basic neurosciences, neurology, neurosurgery and psychiatry. Given that both Lebanon and the region lacked specialized Multiple Sclerosis facilities at the time, we decided to establish a Multiple Sclerosis Center at AUBMC within the AHNI. Although I have recently given up my endowed chair at Harvard, I am still involved in clinical multicenter research trials in the US.

#### When was the MS center established?

Multiple Sclerosis is a very interesting disease as it is an intersection between two fascinating fields: immunology and neurology. The center is the only one of its kind in the region and was launched in October 2011. I conducted all the interviews and the selection of staff myself. Our clinical staff consists currently of two physicians, Dr. Yammout and myself, two certified MS nurses, a pharmacist, a managing director, a social worker, executive assistant and so forth. Psychologists also attend the center after hours to run patient support groups. In addition to the clinical staff, we have a research staff including a research coordinator, a laboratory manager and two research fellows.

When a patient arrives at the MS center, he/she is seen first by a nurse. Nurses take a history of clinically-relevant information and subject patients to a cognitive processing-speed test, a walking test, and a test on hand function. Then, the pharmacist obtains their medication history and documents all currently and previously prescribed drugs before I step in to elicit and evaluate this information and make the neurological exam and the diagnosis.

**What is MS?**

Our immune system usually fights off germs and cancer cells and provides continuous surveillance of the body. The system is designed to recognize antigens- foreign substances on the surface of cells- and react to them. In Multiple Sclerosis, as is the case with all auto-immune diseases, the immune system identifies harmless self-antigens as foreign and attacks them. In the case of MS, the immune system mistakes myelin- the coating that protects nerve fibers and helps messages travel quickly between the brain and the rest of the body- for a foreign body and reacts against it causing inflammation. The loss of the myelin sheath disrupts signal conduction and may ultimately damage the nerve fibers.

The inflammation can occur either in parts of the brain or spinal cord and the symptoms vary depending on the location of the affected nerve fibers. Therefore, patients with MS may experience different symptoms such as a disturbance of vision, dizziness, tingling or weakness in the limbs, tremors, problems with bladder control, etc. However, these symptoms can also occur with other diseases and therefore cannot be decisive in the diagnosis. This is why it is highly important to obtain a detailed and accurate medical history and look at the age groups and the typical clinical presentations. MRIs are helpful but the diagnosis remains a clinical one.

**What about treatment?**

MS sufferers have now access to numerous treatment options and medications. Treatment is an individualized long-term process and patients should be monitored carefully. Regular visits are recommended and if we find that the prescribed medications have failed to control symptoms and stop the disease's activity, we may need to change the doses or even change the course of treatment. Luckily, the Ministry of Public Health realizes that many patients cannot afford their prescriptions and helps them out by covering the cost of their medications. We also extend assistance to economically disadvantaged patients through the proceeds generated from fundraising activities by the "Friends of MS", a lay group of individuals who support our center.

**Is Multiple Sclerosis curable?**

MS is incurable, but this is the case with many diseases. There is currently no treatment that can cure cardiovascular diseases or hypertension or diabetes. But there are efficacious treatments that can relieve the symptoms, prevent progression and improve quality of life. Unfortunately, people hold and pass on the misconceptions that MS patients are doomed to death or debilitation and this is one of the long-standing myths that we are trying to dispel through our awareness campaigns and educational seminars. We have even made a video in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health in order to impart a true and positive image of the disease but the video is not being aired regularly on TV.

If symptoms are properly managed, people with MS can lead a normal and productive life, start a family and get around without assistance.

**What is the peak age of diagnosis?**

Generally, patients are most likely to manifest symptoms in their twenties and thirties but MS can occur in people as young as six years of age or as old as sixty.

**What are the possible causes of MS?**

MS is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Genetic factors account for 30% of the risk and no single gene is causative but rather a combination of genes. If one identical twin has MS, the other has only a 30% chance of developing the condition. If MS was completely genetic, then the other twin would have a 100% chance of having it, because the pair have the same genetic makeup.

On the other hand, environmental factors account for 70% of the risk. Research into environmental factors has uncovered a role for vitamin D deficiency and exposure to a virus called EBV and smoking as risk factors for MS.

**How hard was it for you to balance between work and family?**

Now that the kids have grown up, it is not as tough as before. Some things do not come easy but eventually you do what you have to do and a supportive spouse is a key. ●

# JAD

## JEUNESSE ANTI-DROGUE

### Overview

Jeunesse Anti-Drogue, otherwise known as Youth Against Drugs, was established in 1981 upon the joint initiative of the organization's current President Joseph Hawat and Father Benoit Succar. Having lost much of the documentation it had for NGOs during the war, the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities requested JAD to re-submit its registration file in 1992. JAD was thus licensed under number 64/AD as a non-profit non-governmental organization.

JAD's main focus revolves around four topics: drugs, alcohol, smoking and AIDS. Child internet addiction and the risk of unexploded mines and ordinances have been recently added to the organization's concerns.

### Addiction trends

President Hawat has been tracking the progress of addiction in Lebanon for a long time and says that the problem was never as serious as it is today. "When I first began my work with JAD 33 years ago, only seven or eight addicts would turn to our facilities every year. Since then, the number has been growing steadily, reaching as high as nearly 450 addicts last year. Numbers are growing at alarming rates while the age of onset of addiction is decreasing. People

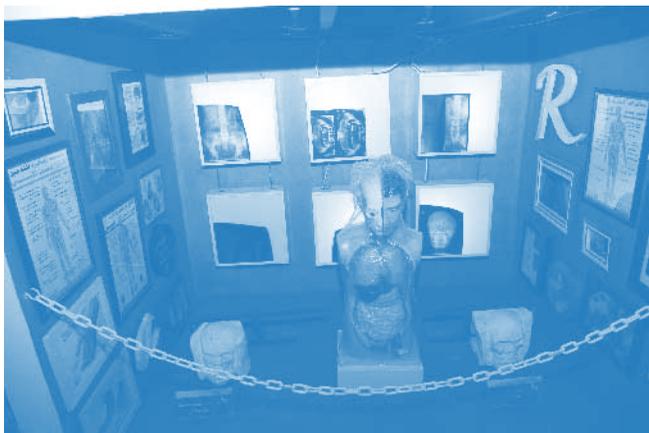


are starting to use heroin as young as at 15. Another striking observation is the expanding spectrum of female addiction and trafficking. This is unusual in our Middle-Eastern societies and is a sign of a stark decline in conservative values and attitudes."

Family disintegration is the leading cause of lapse into addiction in 80% of the reported cases. What complicates the problem even more is the fact that addicts are now abusing several substances at once. Frequently, when the person is addicted to only one substance, the percentage of recovery, after a year and a half of treatment and follow-up, is as low as 8%. With an addiction to a multitude of psychoactive substances, the likelihood of recovery drops to even lower levels.

### Referral to JAD

Addicts are usually referred to JAD by the courts. Some of them turn up at the centers accompanied by their parents but very few come of their own accord. Addicts undergo 32 tests when they first arrive.



They are then admitted to Dahr El-Bashek hospital for detoxification, after which they return to JAD's facilities to attend the rehabilitation program. JAD has launched an inpatient center in Jordan to treat Lebanese youth in collaboration with the Jordanian General Security. The Jordanian government bore the expense of treating 700 to 750 Lebanese youths. Delegates from JAD had to travel twice a week to check on the addicts, but the organization could not afford these periodic travel expenses and thus the facility had to be closed down. Another inpatient facility was set up in Zahle but the cost of services was an inhibiting factor and the center was also doomed to closure.

JAD's President, Joseph Hawat, reports that the organization is now channeling much of its focus and resources towards awareness and training rather than rehabilitation because spreading prevention among youths is far more effective than treatment.

### Structure and activities

JAD operates across Lebanon. It has roughly 33 offices and centers. The organization is not involved in politics and welcomes people from different sectarian backgrounds. Its staff works on a strictly volunteer basis. In addition to its rehabilitation services, the organization cooperates with the public and private associations, committees, universities, institutions and schools in offering consultation services and expertise. It conducts lectures and seminars, organizes training and awareness sessions and distributes thousands of pamphlets to educate about the dangers of addiction and enlighten people against the evil of drugs, AIDS, alcoholism and nicotine.

The organization was licensed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports to launch nine sports teams raising the banner "Sports Against Drugs". Hawat explains that sport is beginning to win the war against drugs, noting that 'moving addicts from the realm of death to the realm of sport' was one of the accomplishments he was most proud of.



### Cultural center

After nearly 30 years of preparations, JAD finally launched on May 10 its specialized center for training and awareness of the risks of psychotropic substances. The center is divided into sections including an exposition hall featuring films and cartoons that target children (6 to 10 year olds) and a massive library containing all the publications issued from 1983 to 2013 on alcohol, tobacco, AIDS, drugs and internet addiction. Section B accommodates a gallery and a museum where roughly 200 paintings and 3000 pieces are displayed to express awareness of the scourges of drugs in addition to thirty photos of celebrities before and after drug abuse. Another hall is designed to accommodate parents, police and social workers. This section is dedicated for special training materials and a drug testing laboratory. A division is dedicated for follow-up and for the reintegration of addicts into community service and another sells gadgets and pieces aimed to support the association's activities.

"Despite the efforts we and other NGOs are making, our work is doomed to failure if the stakeholders do not step in and play their part in fighting addiction. The battle of addiction is not our battle alone. Ministries, parents, religious authorities and media platforms should all be active players in addressing this uphill struggle. If we fail to make a concerted effort and to find rapid and efficient solutions to the ever-expanding addiction trends, our generations are sure to face an unfortunate and horrifying reality over the next ten years," is how President Hawat summarizes the scene of addiction in Lebanon. ●

## AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

‘Where shall I sleep now that the night is here?’

‘Eldorado Hotel is a few meters away,’ the man replied. I thanked him, carried my heavy luggage and went off. In the morning, I asked the lady at the information desk where the university was. ‘You are currently on the premises. If you walk 100 meters, the university’s buildings will rise up before you,’ she explained.

I left my luggage at the hotel and walked towards the university. It was not difficult for me to find the building and the revered teacher. My revered teacher was an American of Germanic roots sporting an Italian temper in terms of enthusiasm, impulse and heated emotions. His name was Sprenling.

He welcomed me warmly and said ‘I was waiting for you. Dodge wrote to me about you. You are most welcome. Where are you staying at the moment?’ ‘Eldorado Hotel’, I replied. ‘Oh good heavens!’ he exclaimed. ‘It is not a hotel for students. I have reserved a room for you at the student dormitory. Go immediately and fetch your luggage,’ he added.

After I have settled down, the teacher said ‘the summer semester has started and you must register even if you have missed some of it. I want you, above all, to enroll in the phonetics class. This is a main course. I also want you to enroll in the linguistics class of my friend Sapir.’ Sapir was a well-known linguist. ‘The third course you need to attend is archeology. That will do for the summer, then we will decide later what to introduce you to in the fall. I will certainly not ask you to study the Hebrew language with beginners still deciphering its alphabet.’

What about food, sir?

You eat at the Cafeteria.

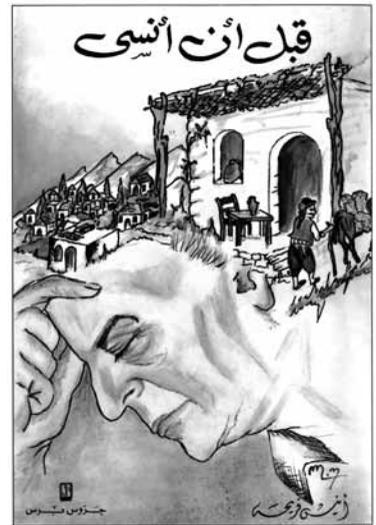
Cafeteria?

One of my students will walk you there and show you how to go about it. These are new popular restaurants. Cheap also.

I learned fast, then got down to my studies.

In the fall, the teacher suggested that I take a course in Assyro-Babylonian language with a German scholar who had fled Germany and joined the university and another in theological studies with the then master of theologians, G.M.P Smith. He also suggested that I enroll in an advanced course of Hebrew language. ‘That is enough for now, for I am going to ask you to help me publish the introduction of Ibn Khaldoun. There are several things that I fail to understand.’

He wanted to publish the introduction but eventually backtracked on it. He was most known for being all talk and no action. Yet, he was smart and impulsive. ●



## MARGARET THATCHER: A FEMINIST ICON?

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### Myth

*As the United Kingdom's first and only female Prime Minister, the late Margaret Thatcher has been viewed by some as a feminist icon.*

### Fact

*Though her achievements did much to challenge gender roles in power, she most definitely did not show any sympathy towards the cause of women's liberation.*

The former UK Prime Minister broke the mold of patriarchal politics and was a tough female leader who confronted her opponents and advanced the values she upheld. Though this in itself challenges the stereotypes of gender and politics, Thatcher herself was no feminist. Both her policy outcomes and her words show that she was never inspired by feminism; in fact, she opposed it. On one occasion, Thatcher was reported to have said to journalist Paul Johnson: “The feminists hate me, don't they? And I don't blame them. For I hate feminism. It is poison”.

Despite being the first female Prime Minister of a western democracy, Thatcher's administration was not concerned with promoting gender equality. She never promoted any women to her Cabinet, and throughout her term, only one woman served in the Cabinet. During her term nothing was done to make child care more accessible to women or to increase child benefits, reinforcing as such the challenges of working mothers. The Prime Minister felt she owed nothing to the feminist movement, and was reported to have deemed the battle for women's rights as ‘largely won’. Concluding that the battle was over and done in the 1980s shows just how distant Thatcher was from the obstacles that women continued to face as a function of their gender.

Her conservative policies aside, Thatcher has earned rightful praise for her hard-headedness. The Iron Lady's reputation as a rigid leader kept her immune from all the stereotypes that continue to affect women in politics until this day. She was never criticized by her counterparts because of her gender. The practice of degrading women in politics as being too ‘weak’ or ‘emotional’ was never directed at her by her opponents. But the fact that such attitudes are still very much intact today serves to show that she in fact did nothing to advance the cause of women in politics. This was never a priority of her administration anyway. 🍀

## THE UNKNOWN WORKS OF DR. KHALIL SAADEH

**BADR EL-HAGE**

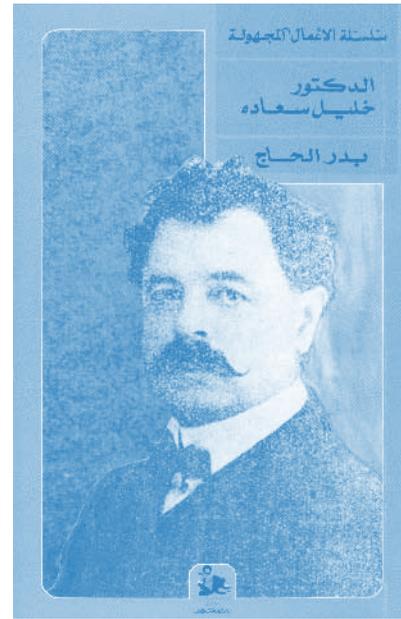
*The Unknown Works of Dr. Khalil Saadeh* is a book by Badr El-Hage that allows readers to explore previously unexplored works by Dr. Khalil Saadeh, the father of Antoun Saadeh-founder of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. The book published in its first edition in 1987 by Riad El-Rayyes unveils the reality of Khalil Saadeh as a physician, an intellectual, a politician and a social reformer.

Khalil Saadeh was born in the Lebanese town of Choueir in 1857. After he obtained his primary education in the town, he moved to the Syrian Evangelical College, later known as the American University of Beirut, where he earned his MD in 1883. Saadeh's beginnings were marked by the release of *Al-Tabib*, a medical and scientific magazine that was published for several years in Lebanon before he relocated to Egypt and started publishing a series of books and novels there.

From Egypt, which he left after severed ties with the Khedives, he migrated to South America where he ended up spending the rest of his life. Soon after setting foot in Argentina, he issued a periodical called *Al-Majalla*. His stay was marked by several social initiatives. He launched the Syrian Press Trade Union designed to address cultural and social concerns, and then announced the creation of the National Democratic Party. Saadeh moved to Brazil in 1919 and maintained a connection between his homeland and the Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian diasporas through a weekly periodical, *Al-Jaridah*. In later years, Saadeh was appointed honorary chairman of the Syrian National League and editor-in-charge of its weekly periodical *Al-Rabitah*.

Saadeh drew attention to the reasons that kept the Arab nations stuck behind the times, warning that should these reasons persist, they would wreak unsparing havoc on the entire Arab world. Foremost among these reasons are the religious divides, which apply to all communities and which will herald abrupt devastation. These divides are, according to Saadeh, the most fatal ailment of all, followed by egoism whereby one is fully absorbed in what promotes him to the highest ranks, turning a blind eye to the interest of his country and people. The third most common reason is the lack of justice, which results in the violation of rights and the loss of claims, all the way down to idleness, which ravages the entire nation.

Despotism, the brutal condition which dates back to the era of Jahiliyyah, had led nations by the nose for so long, turning them into flocks of sheep led by a ruler or a king who deified himself and converted his subjects into slaves, until one day, the world dusted its humiliation off with the eruption of the French Revolution. "As for the Orient, only its mountains, plains and valleys have changed while its nations and peoples remained largely rigid and have not recorded any political development worthy of mentioning." Despotism confined Orientalists in iron chains as they waited for their governments to surrender power and gift it to them; they did not revolt. Khalil Saadeh called on the peoples of the Orient to stage a massive revolution to establish that the people are the true source of power and sovereignty, not the rulers.



In the chapter entitled *The Rise of the Orient*, the author sings the praises of the wondrous Arab nation and its even more wondrous language. He exalts the scientific Arab renaissance under the Abbasid era, which made the Arabs even more civilized and whose lofty remnants remain alive to date. The glories of the ancient Syrians and Phoenicians- traders, industrialists and explorers- are also extolled. Yet, the author calls to the reader's attention that the Andalusian renaissance was the last among the renaissances of the Orient before the nation drifted into torpor and sluggishness. The strangest aspect of this idleness, according to the author, is that the Orientalists do not even view it as strange. The brains of their men and women are too indolent that they can hardly look beyond the banalities of day-to-day life. They are oblivious of the riches of their rivers and of their treasure troves and unexploited soil. They fail to fathom the diseases and ailments befalling the people or the futile teaching methods which graduate students akin to parrots. The lack of roads and railroads and factories are of little concern to them. Superstition has gripped their feeble minds leading them to mistake lightning for evil spirits and thunders for Genie voices. Saadeh described this state as the 'regression of the Orient'; this, in addition to its most fatal ailment, religious tolerance.

Dr. Saadeh's call for secularism, independence and revolutionary zeal was also accompanied with a call for socialism through the philosophy of hunger, which was the primary force that propelled the rise of the French nation. Had the French not felt the pinch of hunger, they wouldn't have revolted against Louis XV in demand of bread. Saadeh cautioned tyrants and despotic rulers to beware the weariness of their people.

The book concludes with an open message to the Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinians in which Saadeh congratulates them for breaking free from the yoke of the Ottomans who oppressed them and controlled their fate for four centuries, hoping that they will put their sectarian differences aside join together to serve the nation and push it to the forefront of civilized nations.

Saadeh passed away on April 10, 1934 leaving behind a legacy that time has never been able to erase. ●●

## THE SUNRAYS STORIES THE BIRTH OF THE FOAL

*The Birth of the Foal* is the first of seventeen short stories assembled under a single series by Eetimad Mohamad Ali Khan under the title *The Sunrays Stories*. The series, published in 2003, by Dar Al-Moualef hopes to assist children in acquiring sublime values while at the same time strengthening their literacy skills and expanding their imagination. Translated by Dr. Adel Khairallah, *The Birth of the Foal* is filled with vivid illustrations designed by Bilal Fathallah to bring this work of fiction to visual life.

Abdallah was happy that he was going to spend his mid-year vacation at his grandfather's farm. The grandfather took advantage of Abdallah's presence by his side to teach him how to overcome the difficulties of life and to help him find a purpose for his long path in life.

One night, as Abdallah and his grandfather were preparing to call it a day, they heard squirming movements and kicks coming out of the stable. The mare was in labor. After endless hours of mad kicking and whining, a small white foal finally emerged. Abdallah and his grandpa spent the entire night by the horse's side and the child learned that only a short time lag separates life and death and that the will to live shall always prevail despite the struggle and pain. ●



## THE KEBREETS:

SUNNI IN BEIRUT AND SAIDA

## THE ZARNEEKHS:

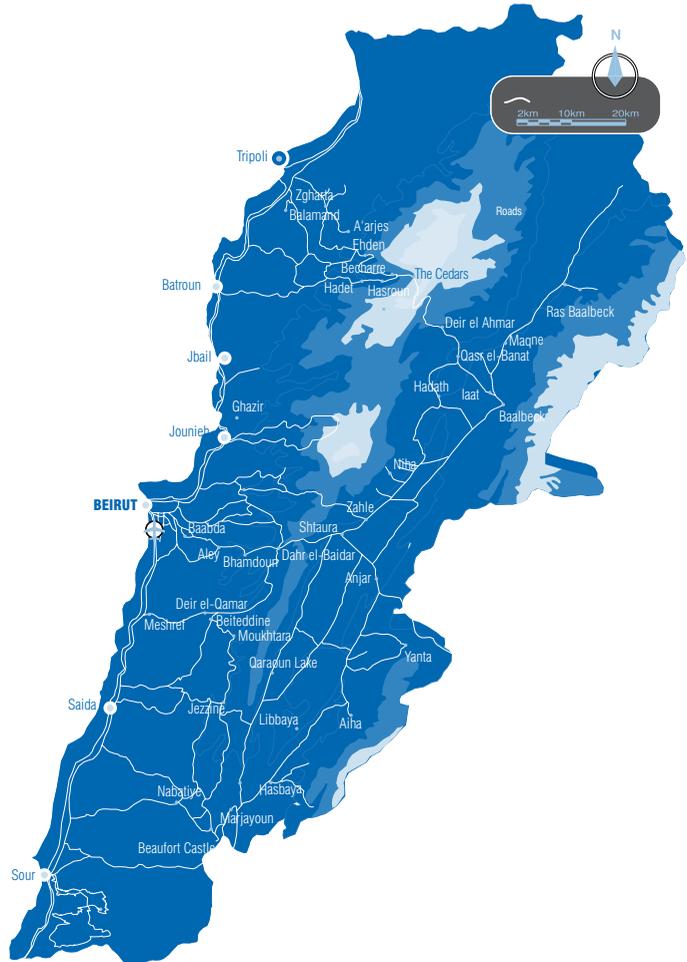
ONLY ONE FAMILY

Sulfur ('Kebreet' in Arabic) is a bright yellow chemical element with the symbol (S). There is sulfur in gunpowder and matches and the element is also used in agriculture and in the making of sulfuric acid, an important chemical in the production of paints and textiles. Raw sulfur can be found in nature and can be removed from oil at the stage of extraction. It is the third most abundant metal in the human body.

Some Lebanese families have assumed the name 'Kebreet' because their forefathers used to work in the sector. There are only 450 Kebreet members in Lebanon, all of them whom are Sunni. The Kebreets are present in Beirut and Saida and are distributed as follows:

- Hay El-Mazraa, Beirut: 156
- Hay El-Bashoura, Beirut: 204
- Hay El-Sabil, Saida: 25
- Hay El-Share'e, Saida: 40
- Hay Rijal El-Arbaeen, Saida: 25

**Zarneekh**, Arabic for 'arsenic', is a colorless and tasteless toxin. Only one family present in Al-Mina in Tripoli carries this name. It consists of six Sunni members. ●



# NAMMOURA IN KESSROUAN

Nammoura is a luscious Lebanese dessert most popular in Saida and Tripoli. It is also the name of a small Lebanese town in the Qada'a of Kessrouan, which is also known by another name, Kfar Jref.

## Etymology

Kfar Jref is a compound word made up of two elements: 'Kfar' meaning 'a small town' and 'Jref' meaning 'washed away in a flood'. The name thus signifies a town that has been washed away by the flood. The town must have been given this name on account of its sloping curve in some areas but it is not known why it was called Nammoura.

## Location

The town is located in the Qada'a of Kessrouan, at an altitude of 300 meters above the sea level. It is 35 kilometers from Beirut and it stretches across 232 hectares. Nammoura may be reached through the following route: from Jal el-Dib to Dennieh, then via Ouqaybeh, Fatqa and Ghedras to Nammoura. The town is bordered by Zaitoun to the north, Ghedras and al-Houssain to the east, Ghedras and Fatqa to the south and Ouqaybeh to the west.

## Population

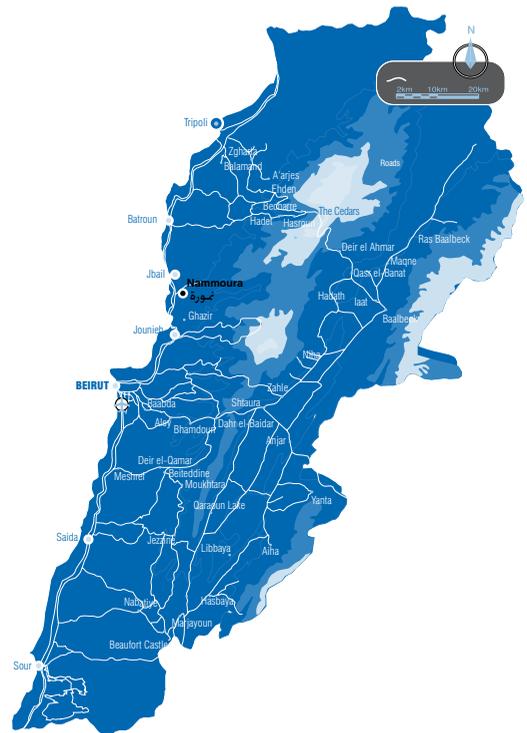
The registered population in the personal status records of Nammoura is estimated at 820, of whom only 150 live in the town. Residents of Al-Watiya belong to the Maronite community and are distributed in approximately 75 houses.

## Voters

Registered voters amounted to 220 in 1972. In 2000, the number of voters had increased to 488 and further to 534 and 586 in 2004 and 2009 respectively.

Voters are distributed among the following families:

- Dakkash: 260
- Khairallah: 177
- Daher: 71



- Atallah: 55
- Salloum: 17
- Bou Ezz: 15
- Karam: 5
- Mezher: 5
- Chamoun: 8
- Fazanjian: 6

## Local Authorities

Nammoura does not have a municipal council and the local authority is vested in a Mukhtar and an Ikhtiyariyah body.

## Economic Life

There are no prospects for economic prosperity in the town as opportunities are merely limited to modest agricultural activities and running of small shops. Some residents keep bees and sell honey to ensure their livelihood.

## Problems

The lack of economic opportunities in Nammoura has led many of its residents to leave in search of a better economic climate. The town is currently quasi-deserted and has no schools or social services. ●

# ICELAND

## ICE, FIRE, FISH AND ENERGY

**Geographically speaking, the Republic of Iceland is where Europe and North America meet. Situated in the northern Atlantic Ocean, it is a land of paradoxes, where fire and ice coexist. This small volcanically and geologically active country consists of sand and lava fields and is home to glaciers along with glacial rivers which flow into the sea. To foreign investors, Iceland is seen as an opportunity to gain access to cheap, green energy; to tourists, it is a country that offers natural wonders, a rich cultural history and northern lights.**

### Location and Area:

Iceland is a Northern European country located in the Atlantic Ocean, northwest of the United Kingdom. It is a large island nation with an area of 103,000 square meters. The capital is Reykjavik.

### Population:

Iceland is a sparsely populated nation with only 317,351 inhabitants. Most of its population is of Norse or Celtic (Irish and Scottish) decent. The Norsemen and Celts allegedly migrated to Iceland around 874 AD.

### Religion:

76.2% of Icelanders follow the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland as it is the official national religious body. 3.4% identify themselves as Roman Catholic. 2.9% follow the Reykjavik Free Evangelical Church and 1% follows The Independent Congregation. 1% identifies themselves belonging to other religions and 11.1% identify as having no religious preference.

### Languages:

The official language is Icelandic, although English, other Nordic languages and German are widely spoken.

### Economy:

Prior to 2008, the economy of Iceland experienced high growth and low unemployment. However once the economic depression hit, Iceland experienced a national financial crisis from 2008 until 2011; three of its largest private commercial banks collapsed. However, Iceland managed to avert national bankruptcy following the nationalization of the banks and receiving loans from other European nations and entities.

The GDP per capita is \$40,700. Services account for 71.2% of the GDP, industry accounts for 22.9%, and agriculture accounts for 5.9% of the GDP. The fishing industry alone is an important player in fueling the Icelandic economy; it provides 40% of export earnings, over 12% of the GDP, and employs around 5% of the workforce. Since the main

exports of Iceland (such as fish, fishing products, aluminum and ferrosilicon) have been experiencing global price fluctuations, Iceland has been diversifying its economy to the services and manufacturing industry, namely software production, biotechnology and tourism.

Geological research reveals the possibility of off-shore oil-reserves in Iceland. As such, the Icelandic government gave joint approval to Icelandic, Chinese and Norwegian energy firms to conduct oil exploration off the northeastern coast. Iceland's copious geothermal and hydropower sources have made it an attractive contender for foreign investment in the aluminum sector. Furthermore, Iceland's energy sources have piqued the interest of several high-tech firms aiming to establish data centers using cheap green energy.

### Political System:

The Republic of Iceland is a constitutional republic that declared its independence from Denmark in June 1944. The president of Iceland serves for a four-year term and can serve for an unlimited number of terms. Iceland was home to Vigdis Finnbogadottir, the world's first female president, who served four 4-year terms. The current president, in power since 1996, is Olafur Ragnar Grimsson. The prime minister is the head of government and, along with the cabinet, is in charge of the executive branch of the government. The current prime minister is Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson. The president is supposedly responsible for selecting the Cabinet; however, in practice, this process is conducted by the leaders of the constituting political parties who decide which parties make up the Cabinet and the number of seats provided to each. If the leaders cannot come to an agreement (a phenomenon which has not taken place since 1944) then the president exercises his right to select members of the Cabinet. ●

Retrieved from:  
<http://www.government.is/how-iceland-is-governed/>  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ic.html>  
<http://globeledge.msu.edu/countries/iceland/government>

# SEPTEMBER 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

There were no major political or security developments that might have contributed to altering the prevailing political and security scene in Lebanon this September. Monotony and impasse were the most domineering features of the month, except for the slaughter of the soldiers and security personnel detained by ISIS and the protests staged by their families in condemnation. Below is a daily digest of the news and events in September:

## September 1

- During a ceremony held at the Grand Serail to commemorate the 94th anniversary of the announcement of Greater Lebanon, PM Tamam Salam urges parties to elect a new Maronite president of the republic and to join forces because the battle against terrorism is still at its beginning.

- The Lebanese Army receives the body of Sergeant Ali Sayyed who was abducted earlier in Ersal and transfers it to the military hospital for identification.

- MP Walid Jumblat calls for expediting trials of Islamist detainees, stressing that trading hostages for Islamist detainees is unacceptable as it would set a dangerous precedent.

- A Free Patriotic Movement delegation visits the Muslim Scholars Committee member, Sheikh Salem al-Rafei in Tripoli.

- Mild earthquake is felt in Lebanon, particularly in the north and Beqa'a.

- ISIS reveals that Hisham al-Hajj from Tripoli was the man behind the suicide attack it launched in Iraq. Another Lebanese man from Tripoli, Zakariya Ahmad, also dies while fighting alongside militant groups in Syria.

## September 2

- Parliament postpones its 11th session scheduled to elect a new president until September 23 due to lack of quorum.

- Speaking in the name of March 14 Forces, former PM Fouad Seniora reiterates that the coalition's candidate is Samir Geagea, yet reports willingness to agree on any other candidate who abides by national parameters.

- PM Tamam Salam notes during a Cabinet session held at the Grand Serail to discuss financial topics and accounting files that the financial situation is as severe as the political situation.

- Families of the military captives continue their protests and block roads in Beqa'a and North Lebanon.

- The Lebanese Customs seizes in the Witwat area of Beirut 200,000 Captagon pills that were meant for distribution in the local market.

## September 3

- Sergeant Ali al-Sayyed laid to rest in a solemn funeral ceremony in his hometown, Fnaideq. The martyr's father apologizes for the verbal assaults launched by family members against the Army Commander and the politicians and considers that his son has sacrificed his life for the sake of Lebanon.

- An explosives expert at Special Tribunal for Lebanon assures that the explosives used in the Rafic Hariri assassination weighed 500 kilograms and lacked incendiary materials.

- PM Tamam Salam participates in part of the periodic meeting of the Maronite Bishops' Council. The council's statement regrets that Parliament has failed for the 11th time to elect a president and deplors the irresponsible acts targeting religious symbols.

- MP Walid Jumblat meets Egyptian President Abdul Fattah Seesi during his visit to Egypt.

- Speaker Nabih Berri renews during Wednesday's parliamentary gathering his objection to prolonging the term of Parliament.

## September 4

- The Cabinet convenes at the Grand Serail to discuss the issue of the captives of Ersal and refuses to compromise their safety, urging the Army to take all measures necessary to release them. The families of the captives stage a protest near the Grand Serail giving the government 24 hours to free their sons and avoid sedition in Beqa'a.

- Speaker Nabih Berri submits his candidacy for parliamentary elections through one of his advisors and then leaves Lebanon on a special visit. MP Ali Bazzi also registers as candidate.

- Patriarch al-Rai attends a ceremony commemorating the 11th anniversary of the inauguration of the Bishop's Park in Qannoubin in the presence of former President of the Republic Michel Suleiman and regrets depriving the Lebanese of a Head of State.

- ISIS militants execute a resident of Ersal, Kayed Ghadad, one week after abducting him, on charges of collaboration with Hezbollah.

## September 5

- A ministerial crisis-cell convenes at the Grand Serail to follow up on the captives' crisis. Minister of National Defense, Samir Moqbel, states that the issue is now being handled through Qatar, reiterating objection to trading captives for Islamist inmates in Roumieh.

- Israel denotes the spy device it had planted in the southern town of Adloun after Hezbollah discovered it and tried to dismantle it. The blast kills a member of Hezbollah.

- The Lebanese Army arrests the Syrian brother of ISIS leader, Abou Talal, in Beqa'a.

- A Qatari delegation is said to have entered Ersal and met ISIS and An-Nusra Front leaders to discuss the captive's issue. Minister of the Interior and Municipalities dismisses the news as rumors.

- An-Nusra Front releases a new video footage featuring the captives, holding Hezbollah accountable for what is happening and urging the Sunni not to support the Lebanese Army.

- The Lebanese Army denies all media statements reporting the presence of ISIS militants in the outskirts of Sannine and Baskinta.

### September 6

- During the annual mass held in Meerab under the title ‘The Martyrs of the Strong Republic’ to commemorate the martyrs of the Lebanese Forces, Samir Geagea brands ISIS as a cancerous tumor, insinuating that the group is associated with the Syrian regime. Geagea announces his objection to self-security measures and urges the election of a president of the republic, saying that beheading the Head of State is a terrible political crime.

- ISIS announces that it has slaughtered the soldier Abbas Medlej after his attempt to escape and to open fire at ISIS members.

- Protesters block roads in condemnation of Medlej’s slaughter and Syrian refugees flee from certain Lebanese areas for fear of a backlash against them.

### September 7

- PM Tamam Salam appears in a televised speech, emphasizing commitment to release the detained soldiers and security personnel. Salam notes that the government is in not in a weak position, branding the abductors as faithless savages and extending his gratitude to Qatari Emir, Sheikh Tamim.

- PM Tamam Salam chairs a meeting for the ministerial crisis-cell at his residence to deliberate on the captives’ issue after the slaughter of Abbas Medlej and follow up on the outcome of the Qatari mediation.

- MP Walid Jumblat continues his tour and makes a stop in the towns of Western Shahhar. Jumblat meets the Druze spiritual leader, Sheikh al-Akl Naem Qassem, and Sheikh Naseredine Gharib who was appointed by Arslan and lauds the struggles of the Islamic resistance, reiterating that negotiations should be made through the state.

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil attends the meetings of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo and meets Sheikh of Al-Azhar.

- Minister of the Interior and Municipalities Nouhad Mashnouq cancels his scheduled trip to Qatar to participate in the works of the committee tasked with laying down the criteria for the Nayef Bin Abdul Aziz Award due to the precarious security situation in Lebanon.

### September 8

- Roadblocks set up in Seednayel after seven people from Baalbeck were abducted in a tit-for-tat operation countering the kidnap-for-ransom of Ayman Sawan in al-Taybeh. The abducted were later released. Members said to be from Al-Masri family in Hawrtaqla also kidnap four residents from Baalbeck, who originally came from Eرسال.

- Minister of Energy and Water Arthur Nazarian holds a press conference at the Zouk power plant in the presence of EDL’s staff and director and holds the Ministries of Justice and Interior responsible for not enforcing the law and for failing to end the contract workers’ “occupation” at the EDL headquarters in Beirut’s Mar Mikhael neighborhood. Nazarian warns that the failure to resolve this occupation will plunge Lebanon into complete blackouts.

- Tamam Salam receives a delegation of Beirut’s MPs at the Grand Serail and MP Mohammad Qabbani says ‘we won’t allow Beirut to be taken hostage.’

### September 9

- After a series of crackdowns in Beqa’a, the Lebanese Army manages to release the abducted citizen Ayman Sawwan from Seednayel.

- Hezbollah issues a statement on the meeting that brought Hezbollah’s Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah together with General Michel Aoun in the presence of Minister of Foreign Affairs Gebran Bassil and Nasrallah’s political aide Huseein al-Khalil. The statement emphasizes the aptness of the choices made by both parties and the need to confront Israel and the takfiri doctrines.

- Former PM Saad Hariri calls for disassociation from all practices that may lead to strife adding that both Sunni and Shia’a should prevent strife from happening.

- Former President of the Republic issues a statement urging the call-up of reserve units and the armament of the Lebanese Army, in the presence of ministers Samir Moqbel, Abdul Mottaleb Al-Hennawi and Alice Shabtini.

- PM Tamam Salam receives a delegation of the families of the abducted soldiers and security personnel and reassures them that

efforts are underway to release their sons with the help of Qatari mediation.

- An-Nussra Front allows the mother and the sister of kidnapped soldier Georges Khoury to visit him at dawn in the Syrian side of Aرسال following the mediation of Sheikh Mustafa Hujairi.

- Director General of General Security, Abbas Ibrahim, is assigned to relay the demands of the kidnappers of Lebanese soldiers and security personnel to Qatari authorities in Doha.

### September 10

- The families of the captives pitch up tents and protest in downtown Beirut, demanding the release of their sons.

- Minister of Social Affairs Rashid Derbas announces following the meeting of the ministerial committee tasked with following up on the Syrian refugee file that ‘the migration of Syrians is no longer necessary and that the ministry will be stricter from now on in granting ‘refugee’ status and will discuss the possibility of setting up refugee camps.’

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil meets his Danish counterpart Martin Lidegaard and the two agree on mobilizing efforts to confront extremism.

- Former Minister of Information Walid Daouk honors former President of the Republic Michel Suleiman who reiterates his objection to trading captives for Roumieh’s inmates and to self-security.

- Former President of the Republic Amine Gemayel reveals during an interview on TV that Fouad Seniora informed him that the March 14 Forces was ready to endorse him as presidential candidate, if all the components within the coalition agreed to the proposition.

- Patriarch al-Rai attends a conference on protecting the Christian presence in the Levant, in Washington and urges the US administration to take bigger steps to defend the Christians.

- 33 women file their candidacies all at once for parliamentary elections and announce their objection to the extension of the legislature’s term.

### September 11

- The Lebanese Army finds a car laden with 75 kilograms of explosives parked in Ain el-Shaa area at the entrance to Eرسال.

- The Cabinet convenes at the Grand Serail and agrees to set up trial refugee camps along the border area between Lebanon and Syria in Al-Masnaa and Abboudieh. It also decides to appoint the Election Supervision Committee to be chaired by Judge Nadim Abdul Malak.

- MP Khaled Daher lashes out at the Army Intelligence and calls on the Saudi King not to deliver the USD 4-billion donation to the Lebanese Army arguing that the sum will be used against the Sunni, the Christians, Arabism and the country as a whole. Ministers Nouhad Mashnuq and Ashraf Rifi emphasize that the opinions expressed are those of Daher and do not represent the viewpoints of the Future Movement.

- Civil society rallies again to protest against the extension of Parliament's term of office.

- Patriarch al-Rai says following President Obama's meeting with the Levant bishops 'Obama has promised us to ensure the protection of Lebanon.'

## September 12

- The Lebanese Army discovers a 200-gram explosive device in the Martyrs Square in Saida.

- US Ambassador to Lebanon, David Hale, announces from the Grand Serail that his country will provide Lebanon with armed Cessna aircrafts to be bought with Saudi funds recently pledged to the Lebanese Army.

- The number of candidates standing for election to Parliament reaches 112.

- Family of martyr Ali Sayyed from Fnaideq, Akkar visits the relatives of martyr Abbas Medlej in Anssar, Baalbeck. Ali Sayyed and Abbas Medlej were two security forces personnel who were beheaded by ISIS.

- "I will pursue the Baabda declaration until the end of time," says former President of the Republic Michel Suleiman to As-Safir, adding that no one can sway Christian leaderships in politics.

## September 13

- Special UN envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura visits Lebanon and meets PM Tamam Salam.

- A delegation of Ersal's residents visits Head of Hezbollah's Religious Committee, Sheikh Mohammad Yazbek, to thank him for his efforts in releasing two of the town's inhabitants.

## September 14

- A ministerial delegation chaired by PM Tamam Salam and including General Security Chief Major General Abbas Ibrahim meets Qatari Emir, Sheikh Tamim, in Doha, and talks focus on the Qatari efforts to release the soldiers and security personnel held hostage.

- MP Walid Jumblat visits the family of abducted soldier Saif Zoubiane in his Shouf hometown, Mazra'a, and reiterates the need to accelerate the trials of Roumich's Islamist inmates. Jumblat adds that he rejects laying the blame unjustly on PM Tamam Salam.

- An-Nusra Front releases a video footage showing two of the abducted soldiers addressing their families.

- Mass held in Bekfaya to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of the assassination of Bashir Gemayel.

- A Middle East Airlines aircraft was forced to land in Italy because of a bomb scare after Swiss airport security informed the aircraft of an unclaimed piece of baggage aboard the plane.

## September 15

- Lebanese regions plunge into pitch darkness for three hours due to a technical breakdown in the Zahrani power plant. Contract workers persist in their protest and call out their families upon hearing that the Minister of the Interior had requested the Internal Security Forces to take over EDL's building in Corniche Al-Nahr. However, the move was deferred in the hope of reaching an amicable understanding.

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil participates in the Paris conference on peace and security in Iraq and meets his American and Russian counterparts, John Kerry and Sergey Lavrov.

- Grand Mufti Mohammad Rashid Qabbani chairs the last meeting of the Higher Islamic Council before the expiry of his term and announces the dissolution of the Council in order to facilitate the tasks of the new Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Latif Deryan.

- Sunni and Shia'a dignitaries of Baalbeck-Hermel meet at Imam Khomeini Center in Baalbeck and agree to expose all perpetrators. They also adopt a pact of honor that prohibits kidnapping and calls for preventing sedition.

## September 16

- The deadline for candidates to put themselves forward for the elections scheduled for November 16, 2014 expires, with the total number of candidates standing at 514, including 35 women. The Minister of the Interior and Municipalities points out during the Central Security Council meeting that technical difficulties mar the likelihood of holding the elections.

- Sheikh Abdul Latif Deryan is declared the new Grand Mufti during an inauguration ceremony held at the Mohammad al-Amine mosque in the presence of PM Tamam Salam, a number of religious- both Muslim and Christian- authorities and prominent Islamic figures from the Arab world.

- General Michel Aoun announces the Change and Reform Bloc's rejection of extending Parliament's term and reiterates the need to hold elections on time.

## September 17

- MP Walid Jumblat receives General Michel Aoun at his residence in Clemenceau. Aoun renews his objection to prolonging the legislature's term of office and Jumblat notes that he agrees with the rationale that Aoun holds behind his presidential candidacy. Aoun hands Jumblat his new book My Vision for Lebanon.

- UNDP administrator cautions that it would be dangerous to set up refugee camps at the borders between Lebanon and Syria following the meeting of the ministerial committee for Syrian refugee affairs chaired by PM Tamam Salam at the Grand Serail.

- The Future Parliamentary Bloc holds firmly that presidential elections should be held before the general elections.

- Speaker Nabih Berri assures during Wednesday's parliamentary gathering that there are no under-the-table deals to prolong the term of Parliament.

- Former PM Saad Hariri reiterates that there will be no general election unless a President of the Republic is elected first.

## September 18

- The Cabinet holds a session at the Grand Serail during which it signs previous decrees and agrees on a future session to discuss the situation of Syrian refugees. A debate over Lebanon's

participation in the anti-terrorism conferences in Saudi Arabi and France marks the session.

- Accompanied by his son Taymour and MP Neemeh Tohmeh, MP Walid Jumblat visits former President of the Republic Amine Gemayel at his residence in Bekfaya and the two announce a joint initiative to strengthen the institutions.

- Shia'a cleric, Hani Fahs who is known for his close ties with March 14 Forces dies at the age of 68 after a battle with an illness.

- Pro-March 8 Forces Sunni figures gather at the residence of former Minister Abdul Rahim Mrad and announce their national pact.

- Minister of the Interior and Municipalities, Nouhad Mashnouq, heads for Moscow.

- Lebanese Forces leader, Samir Geagea, challenges the proposition of electing Michel Aoun as president of the republic for two years.

### September 19

- A 10-kg explosive device targets a Lebanese Army truck in Ersal killing two soldiers and injuring another three. An-Nussra Front accuses the Army and Hezbollah of fabricating the attack.

- An official of An-Nussra Front informs Anadolu Agency that soldier Mohammad Hamieh has been shot dead but the soldier's family says that it has been given assurances that Mohammad is still alive.

- The family of slain soldier Abbas Medlej blocks the Baalbeck road and demands capital punishment for the Syrian suspect who has confessed his involvement in the killing.

### September 20

- PM Tamam Salam visits Speaker Nabih Berri and states that no negotiations will take place as long as soldiers are being killed.

- An Israeli reconnaissance drone crashes in Mazra'a Sardeh near the borderline and the Lebanese Army transports parts of the plane to a military headquarters in Marjayoun.

- MP Walid Jumblat tours Western Beqa'a and encourages rotation in power, reiterating his call on citizens not to assault Syrian refugees.

- The Lebanese Army conducts air raids in the outskirts of Ersal killing 50 militants as reported by As-Safir.

- The security meeting held at the Grand Serail concerning the detained soldiers and security personnel stresses its objection to any form of blackmail.

- Father of the slain soldier Ali Kharrat dies of grief at the loss of his son. The two were laid to rest together in a joint funeral.

- An explosive device targets a Hezbollah checkpoint in Khraibeh near Baalbeck but causes no fatalities.

### September 21

- MP Walid Jumblat continues his tour of the towns of Western Beqa'a and Rashaya and calls on the Druze to build mosques and re-embrace their Muslim roots. Jumblat adds that if negotiations and trading captives for Roumieh's inmates are the solution, then he is all for it.

- The Lebanese government hands its report on the Lebanese who went missing during the Civil War to the families of the missing persons.

- Car crash on the Jiyeh highway leaves five people dead and six injured.

- The family of the slain soldier Mohammad Hamieh accepts condolences and his father promises vengeance against the Mayor of Ersal Ali Houjairy and Sheikh Mostafa Houjairy, holding both of them accountable for the death of his son.

### September 22

- A delegation chaired by PM Tamam Salam heads for New York to participate in the UN General Assembly. Salam addresses journalists saying he will do his best to bring attention to the issue of captives and obtain support for Lebanon regarding the Syrian refugee crisis.

- Former President of the Republic Michel Suleiman visits former Speaker Hussein Hussein at his residence in Ain Tineh.

- The finance and budget parliamentary committee approves a draft law stipulating the armament of the Lebanese Army at LBP 2400 billion.

- Families of the captives block the Dahr El-Baidar road demanding the release of their sons and also threatening to block all roads.

- The Muslim Scholars' Committee reports during a press conference that there are certain parties within the Cabinet who are hindering the path of negotiations to release the captives.

The committee announces next Friday to be of support for Ersal in all mosques under the title, "No for slaying Ersal."

### September 23

- Parliament postpones its 13th session scheduled to elect a new president until October 9 due to lack of quorum.

- Hezbollah's Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah discusses the status quo in Lebanon and the region in a televised speech. Nasrallah states that Hezbollah's support of the principle of negotiation stems from a strong, not a weak position, for this can lead to the release of captives, stressing his objection to making Lebanon part of the global coalition.

- A soldier from Tekreet, Akkar, dies during an attack on a Lebanese Army checkpoint in Beddawi.

- Patriarch al-Rai visits Grand Mufti Abdul Latif Deryan to congratulate him on his recent election and points out that no one has the right to dominate Lebanon.

- PM Tamam Salam meets the President of Egypt, the King of Jordan and the President of Iraq during his visit to New York to participate in the UN General Assembly.

- Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah receives former Minister Talal Erslan.

### September 24

- PM Tamam Salam continues his meetings in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session and meets French, Palestinian and Turkish presidents.

- The Lebanese General Security arrests Syrian singer Assala Nassri at Beirut's international airport on an arrest warrant allegedly issued by Interpol. Minister of Justice Ashraf Rifi interferes to denounce the charges brought up against her saying "we will not be tools in the hands of the Syrian regime" and claiming that the charges were nothing but a judicial front for what is essentially a political issue.

- Minister of the Interior and Municipalities Nouhad Mashnouq assures that a prisoner swap with militants is possible, after taking every law into consideration.

- Speaker Nabih Berri assures during Wednesday's parliamentary gathering that there is no connection between the

legislative session and the extension of Parliament's term.

- Families of captive soldiers and policemen continue to block roads in Qlaamoun and Dahr el-Baydar.

- Lebanese Army posts and headquarters come under fire in Tripoli and an attack targets a van transporting soldiers in Akkar.

- Grand Mufti Abdul Latif Deryan continues to receive well-wishers including an Amal Movement delegation and a Lebanese Forces delegation chaired by MP Strida Geagea.

- Dar el-Fatwa hosts a Muslim-Christian summit in the presence of the heads of religious communities in Lebanon. The final statement underlines the need to accelerate the election of a President of the Republic and reiterates support for the Army, rejecting recourse to weapons internally. It is also decided to carry out an overseas tour to back up Arab Christians.

- Families of the captive soldiers and policemen resume their blocking of the Daher el-Baidar road and warn of further escalation.

- The Lebanese Army conducts crackdowns inside Syrian refugee camps in Eرسال and arrest 450 suspects. Syrians and residents of Eرسال respond by raising the ISIS flag near the municipality's headquarters and calling on the group to protect them. An-Nusra Front states that the Lebanese should bear the consequences of their support of the Army.

- Lebanese Army Commander General Jean Qahwaji visits Grand Mufti Abdul Latif Deryan and briefs him on the Army's action in Eرسال, assuring that no siege is laid on the town.

### September 26

- In a speech before the UN General Assembly, PM Tamam Salam stresses Lebanon's unwavering commitment to fighting terrorism, urging the international community to support Lebanon in bearing the brunt of Syrian exodus. Salam meets US Secretary of State John Kerry.

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil meets his Syrian counterpart Walid al-Mouallem in New York. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas eventually joins the two.

- Minister of the Interior and Municipalities Nouhad Mashnouq says

that the government is intending to set up camps for refugees despite the lack of consensus over the decision.

- Former President of the Republic Amine Gemayel calls on candidates who did not get lucky to step back and give a chance to other candidates.

- An-Nusra Front issues a statement announcing that negotiations will be suspended entirely until all the matters in Eرسال are resolved.

- A militant group kidnaps two gendarmes and releases them three hours later after burning down their military vehicles and confiscating their guns.

### September 27

- PM Tamam Salam meets Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in New York and tells An-Nahar that he requested his help in facilitating the election of a Lebanese President.

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil continues his tour in the US and notes that the Syrian refugee camps will eventually burst.

- Minister of Social affairs Rashid Derbas informs that Kuwait will finance the Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon.

- The Muslim-Christian spiritual meeting held at the residence of Mohammad Hamieh's family in Beqa'a promotes coexistence and urges protection of the Syrian refugees.

### September 28

- Minister of the Interior and Municipalities Nouhad Mashnouq says during a ceremony held by the Makassed Association in his honor that Lebanon is not a Muslim country but a country of diversity, adding that even if it carries religious slogans, the ISIS flag is deemed worthless when used to promote the slaughter of Lebanese troops.

- Former PM Saad Harri criticizes the statement presented by the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces to the UN, in which it condemns the practices of the Lebanese Army against refugees.

- Civil Society activists protest about the tweets of journalist Faissal Qassem against the Lebanese Army by invading the offices of Al-Jazeera in Beirut. Qassem had ridiculed the practices of the Army in Syrian refugee camps in Eرسال.

### September 29

- The Parliament Bureau Committee's meeting approves the agenda of the legislative session scheduled for Wednesday, including foremost the approval of the salary scale after amending the figures.

- A Hezbollah delegation chaired by politburo chief Ibrahim Sayyed visits Grand Mufti Abdul Latif Deryan to congratulate him on his recent election. The delegation also pays a visit to the Former Grand Mufti Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Qabbani.

- The General Security denies deporting any Syrians back to Syria as reported by An-Nusra Front.

- MP George Edwan visits the families of the captives in Dahr el-Baydar and assures that the problem can never be solved by blocking roads and assaulting the government.

- Military Judge Riad Abou Ghaida sentences Hussein al-Hassan, operator of the Twitter account of the Baalbeck-based Ahrar al-Sunna Brigade, to death.

### September 30

- Supreme Secretary of the Iranian National Security Council, Ali Shamkhani, meets PM Tamam Salam, Speaker Nabih Berri and Hezbollah's Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah during his trip to Lebanon and reveals that Iran is to offer equipment to the Lebanese Army to assist it in countering terrorism.

- The Future Parliamentary Bloc continues to support the government in resolving the captives' crisis and rejects the families' recourse to roadblocks.

- Minister of Agriculture Akram Shehayyeb conveys a message from MP Walid Jumblat to General Michel Aoun.

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Gebran Bassil meets his French counterpart, Laurent Fabius in France and assures that his meeting with Al-Mouallem was duly arranged.

- Security forces prevent the families of the captives from blocking the road in Al-Masnaa area.

- A Qatari mediator enters the outskirts of Eرسال and returns accompanied with First Adjutant Kamal Houjaury who was abducted at his farm in Eرسال two weeks ago. ●

# THIS MONTH IN HISTORY- LEBANON

## THE ASSASSINATION OF RENÉ MOUAWAD

### WHO WERE THE CULPRITS: SYRIA OR ISRAEL?

**On November 22, 1989, which marked the 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lebanon's independence, Beirut was a stage for a terrorist operation: the assassination of the President of the Republic René Mouawad, only seventeen days after his election. Today, a quarter of a century later, The Monthly recalls the factual circumstances of the assassination.**

### Pre-election

President Amin Gemayel's term of office expired on September 23, 1988 without the election of a successor to the presidency. Pursuant to his constitutional powers, which were later lost in the Taef Accord, Gemayel formed a military government that consisted of members of the Military Council and was headed by the then Army Commander Michel Aoun.

The attempts to elect a new president did not stop, but the persistent political divides and the alarming rise in military actions, particularly after Aoun's declaration of the Liberation War against the Syrian regime, aborted the efforts. Still, the deadlock prompted the activation of Arab and international initiatives that were all geared towards resolving the crisis in Lebanon. Consequently, Lebanese MPs were brought together in the city of Taef in Saudi Arabia where they agreed on a number of political, economic and security reforms. The Taef Accord laid the foundation for a new pact among the Lebanese; rather it improved the national pact of 1943. In response, General Michel Aoun issued a decree dated November 4, 1989, dissolving Parliament and calling on electoral bodies for new elections. Everybody knew that holding the elections at that particular time was not only very difficult, but also practically impossible. Aoun justified his decree by arguing that Parliament had been elected in 1972 and had thus extended its own term unduly and that MPs had legitimized the Syrian occupation.

### Election session

Parliament discarded Aoun's decree and MPs convened on November 5, 1989 at the Qoulayaat airport, north of Lebanon, where they first re-elected Hussein Husseini as Speaker of the House, then approved the Taef Accord with the consent of 58 MPs. Farid Joubran, Hassan Rifai and Chafik Badr had reservations about the Taef Accord.



René Mouawad

Afterwards, MPs moved to elect a new president of the republic and the competition was limited to three candidates: René Mouawad, Elias Hrawi and George Saadeh.

In the first round, Mouawad gained 35 votes, George Saadeh 16 and Elias Hrawi five votes in addition to

two blank ballots. After Hrawi and Saadeh announced their withdrawal in the second round, Mouawad won by 52 votes, a scenario that was pre-planned and agreed upon during the Taef meetings. During the same session, Mouawad took the oath and appointed Salim el-Hoss to form the government. Aoun did not acknowledge the election results and considered Mouawad a former MP, a stance that was also encouraged by Iraq on grounds that Mouawad was pro-Syrian. On the other hand, Damascus declared support for Mouawad and laid down two conditions for the withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon: the withdrawal of Israel from South Lebanon and ending the war.

## Assassination

On November 22, Lebanon's National Independence Day, President René Mouawad held a reception to mark the occasion at the Grand Serail in Sanayeh. After the ceremony when Mouawad was on his way back to his residence in Ramleh Baidah, a bomb was detonated near the Raml el-Zareef High School, shortly after his departure from the Serail. The explosion targeted his motorcade and killed him immediately. 11 other people were also killed in the attack and another 39 were injured.

## Speculations

Three potential scenarios were raised over the assassination:

- Explosives were planted inside Mouawad's car, which has a low probability of being true and this scenario aims to hold the Syrian Intelligence directly accountable for the assassination;
- A car laden with 250 kilograms of explosives was detonated by a remote control the moment Mouawad's motorcade was passing;
- An explosive device weighing 250 kilograms was blown up inside an empty room on the premises of the Raml el-Zareef High School.

## Responsibility

Conflicting statements and opinions arose as to the identity of the perpetrators behind the operation. An accusing finger was pointed at the Syrian Intelligence as it had held the actual responsibility for the victim's safety. It was later said that Syrian Brigadier General Jameh Jameh, a chief intelligence officer, was behind the assassination as he had

headed the group in charge of the convoy's security and he was also responsible for the choice of its route.

In contrast, Pro-Syrian parties accused Aoun, the Iraqi regime and Israel for they had challenged the Taef Accord, which reinforced the Syrian influence in Lebanon.

In the past few years, news were circulating that the assassination was plotted in coordination between Ghazi Kanaan, Chief of the Syrian Intelligence in Lebanon, Abdul Halim Khaddam, the Vice President of Syria and the then business tycoon Rafic Hariri. The three wanted to get rid of Mouawad, who had shifted his stances and become much stricter towards national affairs and the relationship with Syria after his rise to power. They wanted to replace him with Elias Hrawi so that Hariri could later assume the prime minister's office and become the actual ruler of the country, backed up by the Syrian regime.

Mouawad's family who at first held both Aoun and the Iraqi regime accountable for the assassination, backtracked on their position after the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in April 2005 and instead accused Syrian Intelligence, arguing that Mouawad was killed for refusing to bend to the Syrian will and to violate Lebanon's sovereignty.

## René Mouawad: MP, Minister and President of the Lebanese Republic

René Anis Mouawad was born in Ehden in 1925. He obtained a degree in law in 1947 after which he engaged in politics by running as a parliamentary candidate on Hamid Frangieh's list in 1951. Although luck did not favor him that year, Mouawad ran on Hamid Frangieh's list again in 1957 and was elected the deputy of Zgharta. He was re-elected in 1960, 1964, 1968 and 1972.

On the ministerial front, Mouawad was appointed Minister of Post and Telecommunication under the Rashid Karami government and served from October 31, 1961 to February 20, 1964. He was also Minister of Labor under the same government from January 15, 1969 to November 25, 1969. Under Shafeeq Wazzan, Mouawad assumed office as Minister of National Education and Fine Arts between October 25, 1980 and September 29, 1982. He was elected the President of the Republic on November 5, 1989. ●

# THIS MONTH IN HISTORY - ARAB WORLD

## THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

**November 28, 1960 marked the declaration of independence of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania from France. Moktar Ould Daddah was selected the first president of the republic and one year later, Mauritania was admitted to the UN and became a member of the Arab League later in 1973.**

The name of Mauritania dates back to the Roman era. Romans gave the name to all of North Africa when the region consisted of two Roman provinces: Mauretania Caesariensis and Mauretania Tingitana. When the French colonial project emerged in the late 19th century, colonial leader Xavier Coppolani chose to revive the name, dubbing the territory, stretching between Morocco and Senegal, Mauritania. The area had been previously known by many other names such as the Chinguetti Region, the Al-Mulathammin Desert, the Land of Lamtuna and the Far West. Ordinary people used to call it the Land of Beydanes (White Moors) as opposed to the Sudan located to the South.

The French ruled Mauritania in 1920. The French were mostly deployed along the Atlantic Coast where gold and iron mines abounded and where they could control the pathways and routes linking between their northern and southern colonies. Thus, tribal leaders fought together against colonial threats. Their steadfast resistance movement throughout the years, coupled with the international climate that prevailed following the independence of most of the other colonies, forced the French to acknowledge Mauritania's independence on November 28, 1960. The country was later named the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and Nouakchott became its political and administrative capital while Nouadhibou served as its economic capital. Mauritania became a member state of the UN in 1960 and a member of the Arab League in 1973. Islam is the state religion in Mauritania and Arabic is its official language, although French is still widely spoken. Today's Mauritania is divided into 12 regions and 53 central districts.

Because of its location, Mauritania had to face political crises and disputes. Following Spain's retreat from Western Sahara, Mauritania entered a three-year war, from 1975 to 1978, against the Polisario Front, not to mention the Mauritanian-Senegalese conflict of 1989,

which resulted in scores of killings and injuries among citizens of both countries and in strained relations between Mauritania and its two strategic partners, France and Morocco.

Moktar Ould Daddah became the first president of independent Mauritania and he drafted the country's constitution in May 1961. Military coups swept over Mauritania after his rule. On July 10, 1978, Colonel Mustafa Ould Salek led a military coup d'état against President Daddah and ruled for less than a year, after which he resigned and handed power to Colonel Muhammad Louly who in turn surrendered his post as Head of State to his PM Muhammad Khouna Ould Haidallah. Haidallah drafted a new constitution for the country on December 17, 1980 and his rule was marked by several political, social and economic crises that were sufficient to inspire a new military coup against him, led by the Military Committee for National Salvation. The committee operated under the leadership of the Army's Chief of Staff Mu'awiya walad Sayyidi Ahmad Tayeh who seized power in 1984. In 1991, he drew up the third constitution for Mauritania, which remains in force today. The constitution approved a multi-party system and paved way for the first municipal and presidential elections, which resulted in the election of Ahmad Tayeh as the Head of State in 1992. He was re-elected in 1997, but the wave of military coups did not stop until 2009 when President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, currently in office, achieved sweeping victory among presidential candidates.

Some international organizations accused Mauritania of exercising slavery and violating human rights, thus severing the country's ties with France. This, coupled with other factors, led the Mauritanian government to normalize its relations with Israel in 1999 in order to win the Americans over to their side. ●

## ON THE BELIEFS AND PLOTS OF AL-QAEDA (8)

Disclaimer: the views expressed in the article below are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of *The Monthly*.

**The frequency of military actions is one of the main things that generate dissent among Al-Qaeda members. While some want to rush into military operations, others opt for taking things more slowly until suitable opportunities arise.**

**Rushing operations:** Regarding rushing operations, the solution for is understanding and sitting with the youth to elucidate the general policy for action and the importance of waiting patiently in some of the stages of the battle in order to drain the enemy, for example. We will show them that this matter will only be handed to those who are as sturdy as mountains, who do not rise easily to the bait of the enemy.

Of course, the believer should not be cold and he should be angry for the sake of God and use all that lies in his power to drive back all things forbidden. However, he should know when and how to act so that he can obtain what he desires. Similarly, we should clarify to the youth the importance of listening and obedience, especially when it comes to matters the underlying wisdom of which we cannot unveil due to its secrecy. We should also focus on the matters relating to that in the prophetic biography. We do not do that out of laxity or weakness or retreat; otherwise we would not have declared jihad to begin with. We are working to bring people together and guide them as much as we can and to maintain the ember of ardor through battles that serve the intended purpose at the right time and place. Our viewpoint differs from the viewpoint of those who refrain from fighting.

Likewise, it is possible to unload the excessive ardor of these people for the benefit of the actions. We should also elucidate the importance of and seriousness of any action that falls under the holistic system of actions and emphasize the importance of mastering it, no matter how small and trivial it may seem. This is because the desire for large-scale actions, especially battle, overcomes some of those enthusiastic people. That is a good quality which is usually indicative of high zeal. However, one of its harmful effects is that it may drive them to underestimate actions that are not equally large in scale, a fact which may make them lukewarm or make them undertake those actions without mastering them. In addition to the foregoing, the more we are wise in selecting the leaders so that members can vest their trust in them, the fewer are the members who will overstep authority or rush into reckless actions and so on.

**Immoderation:** the main solution for immoderation is education. The more the intellectual level of the youth is raised, the more limited this problem will be, or, at the very least, the presence of a steadfast, intellectual cadre in each region nips this problem in the bud.

As for those who insist on the method of haste or on stirring immoderate subjects, they must be removed from the ranks

without cutting the bonds of allegiance. He must be dealt with in a manner that is commensurate with the nature and size of his immoderation and commensurate with what he may do.

**Stupidity:** As for the zealous persons who commit stupid acts and it is known that treating them is not possible, they should be excluded entirely because they may cause disasters not only for the group that knows them but also for other groups and infinite problems may arise because of them. Everyone who has dealt with these sorts of people has experience of this. Among these experiences is that some of the major stories which the newspapers and the media recount are, in reality, about one of those stupid people who has conceived a plan for a large operation—at his own discretion and which is frequently never suitable for execution.—and has written it down on paper and put it inside his desk.

And because he, originally, talked too much and had too many connections, investigators go to his house in order to search it and stumble upon the page on which the dangerous plan is outlined. They snatch it up and start interrogating him. Under pressure, he begins to mention names, which sometimes are not connected each other, of those who have no connection to the jihad; rather, sometimes they are ordinary people. However, on account of his numerous connections and the trust that some have placed in him because of his enthusiasm, he also knows some of the members of several jihadist groups and may point at them. The matter then ramifies to include new jihadist groups between which there is no connection and new accusations and stories emerge. A mountain is thus made out of a molehill. More often than not, investigators do realize that the affair is fabricated, yet dozens have to stand trials and the media circulates their fanciful stories.

Of course, long prison sentences are issued for those who are affiliated with jihad and pronouncements of innocence are reserved for the ordinary people and those who are committed (to the cause), who do not have any connection with the jihad, after they have finished the sentence.

On another occasion, one of them is asked to read papers and specific letters then burn them. However, he does not burn them but hides them instead. When his home is searched during the investigators' random searches, the papers are found and not just one; this time, many important and real affairs are exposed. When he is asked, in prison, "why didn't you burn the papers?", he answers: "my soul could not make me comply with burning papers in the handwriting of the shaykhs and the leaders!" ●

## REAL ESTATE PRICES- SEPTEMBER 2014

Real estate transactions continued in the first half of September the upward movement that had begun during the second half of August. However, they returned to the state of passivity in the second half of the month, which is likely to linger over the months leading up to the new year if no major developments arise to inject momentum into the sector.

Prices are still at stable levels with a tendency towards increases for smaller apartments.

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

Prices of some estates sold in September 2014			Table 1
Region	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Price (USD)	USD/m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Beirut</b>			
Bristol	950	11,400,000	12,000
Hamra	350	4,550,000	13,000
Bashoura	220	1,100,000	5,000
Gemmayzeh	390	2,925,000	7,500
Hamra	800	8,000,000	10,000
<b>Baabda</b>			
Hazmieh (Mar Taqla)	750	1,950,000	2,600
Baabda- Loueizy	1,500	435,000	290
<b>Matn</b>			
Broummana	1,000	700,000	700
Ouyoun (Broummana)	1,850	555,000	300
Ain Saadeh	1,950	2,145,000	1,100
New Rawdah	1,200	2,400,000	2,000
<b>Aley</b>			
Bhamdoun	1,150	402,500	350
Choueifat	3,570	2,499,000	700
Bshamoun	1,550	976,500	630
<b>Kessrouan</b>			
Ajaltoun	1,200	600,000	500
Jounieh's Highway	2,500	3,500,000	1,400
Ballouneh	1,500	1,275,000	850
Kfardebian	800	240,000	300
Adma	1,100	1,265,000	1,150

Source: Compiled by Information International- September 2014

Table 2			
Region	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Price (USD)	USD/m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Beirut</b>			
Gemmayzeh	225	832,500	3,700
Ashrafieh (Geitawi)	180	405,000	2,250
Ashrafieh (Sioufi)	150	510,000	3,400
Adliyah	180	540,000	3,000
Rawche (Australia)	165	585,750	3,550
Basta	120	252,000	2,100
Ramlet el-Bayda	300	1,200,000	4,000
Clemenceau	170	637,500	3,750
Ras Nabee	120	300,000	2,500
<b>Baabda</b>			
Baabda	230	471,500	2,050
Hazmieh (Mar Taqla)	120	270,000	2,250
Haret Hreik	100	100,000	1,000
Hadath (Hay el-Amerkan)	300	255,000	850
Road to airport	180	378,000	2,100
Mraiijeh	170	144,500	850
Hadath (Debbas)	200	300,000	1,500
<b>Matn</b>			
Antelias	180	432,000	2,400
Jisr el-Basha	150	180,000	1,200
Jal el-Dib	135	168,750	1,250
Ain Saadeh	230	460,000	2,000
Mansourieh	110	165,000	1,500
Monteverde	175	367,500	2,100
Mar Roukoz	280	308,000	1,100
<b>Aley</b>			
Khaldeh	240	240,000	1,000
Bshamoun	110	132,000	1,200
Aramoun	150	150,000	1,000
Choueifat	175	210,000	1,200
<b>Kessrouan</b>			
Sahel Alma	165	297,000	1,800
Sarba (Jounieh)	120	150,000	1,250
Adonis	180	216,000	1,200
El-Bouar	100	120,000	1,200

Source: Compiled by Information International- September 2014

## Wedding Traditions Around the World

- **In Scotland**, friends and family are invited to throw any disgusting substances they can think of, like eggs, milk, and spoiled food, at the bride and groom. The couple then walks around town with a convoy of friends and family making as much noise as they can behind the couple.
- **In Mongolia**, the soon-to-be bride and groom slaughter a chick. If the chick's liver has an unseemly appearance, they will keep slaughtering chicks until they have found a decent-looking liver. The wedding won't take place until this happens.
- **Among the Massai people of Kenya**, the father of the bride spits on her head and breast as a blessing. The bride then walks away with her new husband and does not look back, fearing that she will turn to stone.
- **During a Swedish wedding**, if the groom leaves the room, the other men in the room are allowed to kiss the bride. If the bride leaves the room, her groom can be kissed by any of the ladies in the room.
- **In Congo**, smiling is not a custom at weddings as they are meant to be taken seriously. Smiling is not even permitted in photographs.
- **Among the Tidong community** in Indonesia and Malaysia the bride and groom are not allowed to leave the house, urinate, or clear their bowels for three days after the ceremony. They are watched over and can only consume limited amounts of food and water. If this custom is not adhered to, it is thought that the couple will have bad luck for years to come.

Retrieved from:  
<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/08/30/living/matrimony-global-traditions/>  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/29/wedding-traditions\\_n\\_3964844.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/29/wedding-traditions_n_3964844.html)



## Beirut International Airport

### Rafic Hariri International Airport Traffic- August 2014

Compared to the passenger traffic handled by Rafic Hariri International Airport in July 2014 and August 2013, the traffic registered at the beginning of August this year increased by 26.7% and 12% respectively.

From the beginning of the year until the end of August 2014, a total of 4,377,950 passengers used the airport, compared to 4,282,858 during the same period last year, i.e. up by 95,092 passengers or 2.2%.

Table 1 illustrates the Rafic Hariri International Airport Traffic in August 2014 compared to July 2014 and August 2013.

Airport Traffic in August 2014 compared to July 2014 and August 2013

Table 1

Traffic	July 2014	August 2014	August 2013	% of change July/August 2014	% of change August 2013/2014
Arriving airplanes	3,081	3,215	3,145	+ 4.3	+ 2.2
Departing airplanes	3,075	3,219	3,157	+ 4.7	+ 2
<b>Total no. of airplanes</b>	<b>6,156</b>	<b>6,434</b>	<b>302,6</b>	<b>+ 4.5</b>	<b>+ 2.1</b>
Arriving passengers	376,277	389,110	343,406	+ 3.4	+ 13.3
Departing passengers	265,266	423,549	382,644	+ 59.6	+ 10.6
Transit passengers	828	1,620	1,036	+ 96	+ 56.3
<b>Total no. of passengers</b>	<b>642,371</b>	<b>814,279</b>	<b>727,086</b>	<b>+ 26.7</b>	<b>+ 12</b>
Imported goods (per ton)	4,862.1	4,215	4,638	- 13.3	- 9.1
Exported goods (per ton)	3,380.6	3,525	3,410	- 4.3	+ 3.3
<b>Total amount of goods</b>	<b>8,242.7</b>	<b>7,740</b>	<b>8,048</b>	<b>- 6</b>	<b>- 3.8</b>

Source: Information International based on the Civil Aviation Directorate General statistics.

- **USD 10,000** is the amount of financial aid granted by the Higher Relief Committee to each of the 11 Lebanese nationals abducted by Syrian armed groups. Each of the abducted also received USD 1500 from Hezbollah and USD 1000 from the Amal Movement.
- **560** is the number of the stolen vehicles in Lebanon in the first half of 2014, of which 320 have been recovered.
- **LBP 13.5 thousand billion** (USD 9 billion) is the worth of the state's bonds maturing in 2015, of which USD 1.250 billion is in foreign currency.
- **LBP 2.3 billion** is the worth of the annual operating and maintenance agreement signed between the state- through the Council for Development and Reconstruction- and a private company to maintain and clean up the Ministry of Education's building at the UNESCO.

## Publications by Information International (in Arabic):

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

## Publications by INMA (in Arabic):

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

## Publications by Kutub (in Arabic):

- 1- May Ziadeh, Evolution of a Free Female Thinker
- 2- Mission in Hijaz - Lion Roche
- 3- Aleppo Cuisine
- 4- From An-Nabk to Florida
- 5- Institution of Aesthetic Discourse -Saad el-Kassab
- 6- Al A'mal Al She'rya Al-Kamila -Kamal Keir beik
- 7- Majhoulat Gibran
- 8- Shweir and Its Hills, *A photographic record*
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## A STAR FROM MY COUNTRY

It is undisputed that Fairouz and the Rahbani Brothers, Assi and Mansour, have made an indelible mark on the entire music scene of Lebanon and the Arab world with an impressive repertoire of songs and music plays. Unfortunately though, the invasion of western culture and music has influenced the taste of today's generations, leaving them with little if any knowledge of the rich and pervasive musical legacy of Fairouz and the Rahbani Brothers. In a bid to introduce children to these towering musical figures and to a genre of music that blends genius with humanity, Dr. Sanaa El-Harakeh set out to chronicle the life and music career of Fairouz through a clever story that unfolds elegantly in a book targeting children between 8 and 14 years of age. Released by the Social and Cultural Development Association (INMA), the book entitled *A Star from My Country* makes part of the Bee Series and is accompanied by a CD featuring the author's distinct vocal timbre while reading the story. *A Star from My Country* is sure to acquaint your children with some of Lebanon's most enduring artistic and cultural giants, while at the same time refining their musical taste.



### BEE SERIES



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