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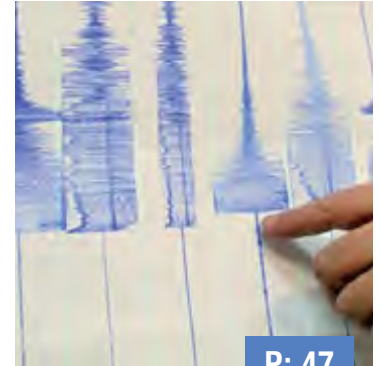
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LEBANON'S GAME OF MUSICAL CHAIRS

The few comments made by Ziad Rahbani about the Diva's (Fairouz) admiration of the Sayyed (Hezbollah's Secretary General, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah), were sufficient to send the March 8 camp into an elated and celebratory frenzy and its March 14 rivals into tantrums of reprehension and condemnation. Whether it was intended or not, Ziad's declaration deployed the Diva in the trenches of the March 8 Forces, but put her in the cemetery of the March 14. Fairouz did not utter a word. Her son did and Rima, her daughter, responded. So why was the backlash aimed at her?

You almost feel ashamed to discuss the statements made by some of the March 14 self-proclaimed theoreticians who sent Fairouz to an early grave and threatened not to listen to her again, accusing her of collaborating with the Baathist regime. Whether those have ever ceased to play the symphonies and songs performed by pro-Israel artists is something nobody can tell. As for the advocating positions expressed by the leftists and the secularists in support of Ziad's statement, those are also worthy of being questioned and debated, for all that has been written to extol the virtues of Fairouz and Ziad has failed to attend to some of the most paramount aspects of the Diva's life and the life of any nation: art, liberty and music. Here, it is worthwhile to quote Antoun Saadeh who, however strange some people might find it, offered great insight on the relation between music and politics:

“..Because he (the musician or the political leader) is a man heedful of the innate virtues of liberty, peace and love rooted inside his people. He never aims for political goals, but instead, sets for loftier and more useful destinations. He is someone who views the political flurry as trivial, when not grounded on a sturdy spirit inculcated into the core of all individuals, men and women, young and old, through vivid literature and music capable of uniting all emotions under one superior banner. This way, people would have common social faith based on love, which, when found within the entire nation, may give rise to phenomenal cooperation and compassion that fills life with hope and vigor. Only then will political effort become productive because the patriotism built on archaic and worn-out traditions remains forever fruitless, even if it yields political freedom...”.

Why are those who believe staunchly in the power of music and wish to praise Ziad, Fairouz and the resistance, reluctant to relay to Sayyed the perplexity that his supporters suffer when confronted with questions challenging the wisdom in banning music, or at least some of it? And why don't we put the matter of political jihad, which Antoun Saadeh has deemed futile if devoid of literature, art and music, up for debate? Why can't we see Fairouz on Manar TV?

How is the new “unity” Cabinet related to music? The genius of our political leaders has been fixated for years on playing musical chairs to the sound of a distorted symphony played by a maestro from outside the stage; a game where players are pointlessly racing to sit down on the chairs, shuffling from one seat to the next for fear of being eliminated from the game.

It is to be hoped that this new Cabinet, which consists of bitter rivals, will serve as a lesson to all the Lebanese, bringing to their attention that, in the game of politics, Zu'ama fall out, then reconcile heedless of the wishes and wants of the people they represent. So let us all chant with Fairouz as she sings Gebran Khalil Gebran's

“..When love beckons to you, follow him,

Though his ways are hard and steep.

And when his wings enfold you yield to him,

Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you.”

And let us all recall these words when the maestro switches his musical notes and when the tambourine is perforated and the party is over.

—Jawad N. Adra

MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS ROTATION OR MANIPULATION?

Soon after the resignation of Mikati's government and the invitation to Tamam Salam to form a new Cabinet, several obstacles emerged to hinder the formation of an all-embracing government. Ten months later, however, a spirit of consensus emerged. With some of the barriers surmounted and others put on hold until after the formation of the Cabinet, portfolio rotation became the major subject of dispute among the diverse political camps. The concept of rotating ministerial portfolios has surfaced to prevent the monopoly of portfolios by one sectarian or political group, a practice which has been the norm in Lebanon since the approval of the Taif Accord in November 1989. This had resulted in crippling the State and converting its institutions into stale and feeble bodies where sectarian and partisan affiliations outweighed competence and productivity. Raising portfolio rotation at this moment seemed central to the regulation of state performance and although it has come 25 years too late, it is better than not at all. The dispute over portfolio rotation delayed the formation of the Cabinet for nearly one month, until finally the diverse political parties ironed out their disagreements and Lebanon announced its new "national interest government" on Saturday, February 15, 2014, ending a 10-month political deadlock.

Some of the political forces, more precisely the Free Patriotic Movement, denounced the timing of the proposition on the grounds that the prospective government was expected to hand power over to a successor right after the presidential elections and hence its life span would not exceed 100 days, which would render portfolio rotation pointless. Apart from its fears of an imminent presidential vacuum and of the government staying in office longer than planned, the Free Patriotic Movement opines that the rotation of ministerial portfolios should occur only when ministers fail to live up to their responsibilities. The latter does not apply to the FPM whose telecoms, energy and water ministers have demonstrated impeccable performance throughout their tenures. Hence, any talks about portfolio rotation are deemed an attempt to cast out the FPM ministers and prevent them from reaping what they had sowed. For all these reasons, the opponents of portfolio rotation suggested that this strategy should be put off until after the presidential elections or until after the parliamentary elections in November 2014, arguing that the principle of rotation can only be effective in a case where a government will remain in power for the long haul.

This is not the first time that Lebanon has experienced delays in the formation of its Cabinet, nor is it the first time that the Zua'ama have quarreled over a ministerial office. Furthermore, the sudden political accord is something to which none of us has been unaccustomed. Yet, there exist sharp distinctions between the past and today. In the past, starting from Independence in 1943, Zua'ama would compete over a ministerial seat out of their strong sense of responsibility and their eagerness to reform and take charge of key portfolios- Rashid Karami and Kamal Jumblat were staunch seekers of the Finance and Interior portfolios respectively. Conversely, it is difficult to picture any member of today's Zua'ama holding a ministerial position in person. Instead, they appoint loyalists and henchmen to assume office while they themselves operate behind the scenes.

Post-Taif Governments

From the approval of the Taif Accord in November 1989 until the government formed by Mikati in 2011, 15 governments have succeeded to power in Lebanon. By premiership, they were distributed as follows:

- Rafic Hariri: 5 governments
- Salim El-Hoss: 2
- Omar Karami: 2
- Najib Mikati: 2
- Fouad Seniora: 2
- Rashid As-Solh: 1
- Saad Hariri: 1

Combined, these governments consisted of 392 ministers (in addition to two ministers, one succeeding the deceased minister Joseph Mghayzel and one replacing the resigning minister Ghassan Salameh)

- 10 Cabinets, each with 30 ministers
- 2 Cabinets, each with 24 ministers
- 2 Cabinets, each with 14 ministers
- 1 Cabinet, each with 16 ministers

A close examination of the accompanying tables (pages 6 to 15) reveals that certain portfolios were frequently earmarked for specific sectarian leaders, to such an extent that we have grown accustomed to naming each ministry after its monopolizing sect: the "Shia' portfolios of Health and Agriculture", the "Sunni portfolio of Finance", the "Druze portfolio of the Displaced", and the "Al-Murr's portfolios of Interior and National Defense", during the time when the family was backed by the Syrian regime. This has transformed ministerial portfolios into platforms for exercising sectarian and political influence and favoring self-serving interests over national ones.

The Rotation Government

The new "national interest government" under Prime Minister Tamam Salam failed to achieve full ministerial rotation both at sectarian and political levels. Salam has partly admitted

this, by stressing that “the position of Deputy Prime Minister was excluded from the principle of rotation” and hoping to apply this approach in its entirety in future cabinets.

Ministerial rotation did not materialize and below is the lineup of the new cabinet:

- The Ministry of Defense remained under the monopoly of the Greek Orthodox but was taken away from the Marada Movement to fall within the share of the President of the Republic.
- The Ministry of Energy and Water remained under the FPM monopoly but was passed on from the Maronite to the Armenian Orthodox.
- The Ministry of Culture remained under the FPM monopoly but was passed on from the Greek Orthodox to the Maronite.
- The Ministry of Telecommunications was handed over from the Greek Catholics to the Maronite.
- The Ministry of Agriculture was handed over from the Shia’a to the Druze.
- The Ministry of Public Works was handed over from the Druze to the Shia’a.
- The Ministry of Tourism was handed over from the Maronite to the Greek Catholics.
- The Ministry of Finance was handed over from the Sunni to the Shia’a
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants was handed over from the Shia’a to the Maronite.
- The Ministry of Public Health was handed over from the Shia’a to the Druze
- The Ministry of Industry was handed over from the Armenian Orthodox to the Shia’a
- The Ministry of Information was handed over from Sunni to the Greek Orthodox.
- The Ministry of Interior and Municipalities was handed over from the Maronite to the Sunni.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs was handed over from the Druze to the Sunni.
- The Ministry of Justice was handed over from the Maronite to the Sunni.
- The Ministry of Labor was handed over from the Greek Catholics to the Maronite.
- The Ministry of environment was handed over from the Maronite to the Sunni.
- The Ministry of the Displaced was handed over from the Sunni to the Maronite.
- The Ministry of Youth and Sports was handed over from the Sunni to the Shia’a.
- The Ministry of Economy and Trade was handed over from the Greek Orthodox to the Greek Catholics.
- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education was handed over from the Sunni to the Greek Orthodox.
- The Ministry of State for Parliament’s Affairs from the Greek Catholics to the Shia’a.
- The Ministry of State for Administrative Reform from the Shia’a to minorities.

The birth of the government with its current components attests clearly that the ministerial rotation was an ostensible excuse for the delay and that the matter was actually tied to an alteration of external factors that proved decisive in tilting the scales.

Note:

When the late PM Rafic Hariri formed his first government in 1992, he introduced a number of portfolios that were later legalized by virtue of the following laws:

- Law No. 190 dated January 4, 1993 stipulated the establishment of the Ministry of the Displaced.
- Law No. 197 dated February 18, 1993 stipulated the establishment of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs as a stand-alone entity after the separation of the municipal department from the Ministry of Interior.
- Law No. 211 dated April 2, 1993 stipulated the establishment of the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education as a stand-alone entity after the separation of the General Directorate of Technical and Vocational Education from the Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts.
- Law No. 212 dated April 2, 1993 stipulated the establishment of the Ministry of Social Affairs as a stand-alone entity after the separation of the General Directorate of Social Affairs from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. The name of the latter was also amended to ‘Ministry of Public Health.’
- Law No. 213 dated April 2, 1993 stipulated the establishment of the Ministry of Emigrants as a stand-alone entity and modified the name of the initial ministry from ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants’ to ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs’.
- Law No. 214 dated April 2, 1993 stipulated the establishment of the Ministry of Transport as a stand-alone entity after the separation of the General Directorate of Transport and the General Directorate of Civil Aviation from the initial Ministry of Public Works and Transport, whose name was changed to ‘Ministry of Public Works.’
- Law No. 215 dated April 2, 1993 stipulated the establishment of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education and modified the name of the initial Ministry of Education and Fine Arts into ‘Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports’.
- Law No. 216 dated April 2, 1993 stipulated the establishment of the Ministry of the Environment.
- Law No. 642 dated June 2, 1997 stipulated the establishment of the Ministry of Industry and updated the name of the initial ministry from ‘Ministry of Industry and Oil’ to ‘Ministry of Oil’.

According to Law No. 247 dated August 7, 2000 (the Law of Merger, Cancellation and Establishment of Ministries and Councils):

- The Ministry of Emigrants was abolished and reinstated within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants.
- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs was abolished and reinstated within the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities.
- The Ministry of Transport was abolished and reinstated within the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.
- The Ministry of Housing and Cooperatives was abolished and cooperatives were reintroduced into the Ministry of Agriculture.
- The Ministry of Oil was merged with the Ministry of Hydraulic Resources under one ministry named “Ministry of Energy and Water”.
- The Ministry of Youth and Sports was established.
- The Ministry of Technical and Vocational Education was reinstated within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Portfolio Rotation				
Premier and government's term of office	President of the Republic	Ministry of Justice	Ministry of National Defense	
	Deputy Premier			
PM Salim El-Hoss from 25/11/1989 until 24/12/1990	Elias El-Hrawi Michel Sassine	Edmont Rizk (Maronite)	Albert Mansour (Greek Catholic)	
PM Omar Karami from 24/12/1990 until 16/5/1992	Michel El-Murr	Khatchig Babikian (Armenian Orthodox)	Michel El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	
PM Rashid Solh from 16/5/1992 until 31/10/1992	Michel El-Murr	Nasri Maalouf (Greek Catholic)	Michel El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 31/10/1992 until 25/5/1995	Michel El-Murr	Bahij Tabbara (Sunni)	Mohsen Dalloul (Shia'a)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 25/5/1995 until 7/11/1996	Michel El-Murr	Bahij Tabbara (Sunni)	Mohsen Dalloul (Shia'a)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 7/11/1996 until 4/12/1998	Michel El-Murr	Bahij Tabbara (Sunni)	Mohsen Dalloul (Shia'a)	
PM Salim El-Hoss from 4/12/1998 until 26/10/2000	Emile Lahoud Michel El-Murr	Joseph Chaoul (Maronite)	Ghazi Zoueiter (Shia'a)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 26/10/2000 until 17/4/2003	Issam Fares	Samir El-Jisr (Sunni)	Khalil El-Hrawi (Maronite)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 17/4/2003 until 26/10/2004	Issam Fares	Bahij Tabbara (Sunni)	Mahmoud Hammoud (Shia'a)	
PM Omar Karami from 26/10/2004 until 19/4/2005	Issam Fares	Adnan Addoum (Sunni)	Abdul Rahim Mrad (Sunni)	
PM Najib Mikati from 19/4/2005 until 19/7/2005	Elias El-Murr	Khaled Qabbani (Sunni)	Elias El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	
PM Fouad Seniora from 19/7/2005 until 11/7/2008	Elias El-Murr	Charles Rizk (Maronite)	Elias El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	
PM Fouad Seniora from 11/7/2008 until 9/11/2009	Michel Suleiman Issam Abou Jamra	Ibrahim Najjar (Greek Orthodox)	Elias El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	
PM Saad Hariri from 9/11/2009 until 13/6/2011	Elias El-Murr	Ibrahim Najjar (Greek Orthodox)	Elias El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	
PM Najib Mikati from 13/6/2011 until 15/2/2014	Samir Moqbel	Chakib Qortbawi (Maronite)	Fayez Ghosn (Greek Orthodox)	
Sectarian and political affiliations of the ministers who succeeded to the diverse portfolios		Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunni: 7 • Maronite: 4 • Greek Catholic: 1 • Armenian Orthodox: 1 • Greek Orthodox: 2 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Movement + Lebanese Forces + March 14 Forces: 10 • Free Patriotic Movement + March 8 Forces: 3 • Independents: 2 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greek Orthodox: 7 • Shia'a: 5 • Sunni: 1 • Maronite: 1 • Greek Catholic: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the Republic: 4 • Marada Movement: 1 • March 8 Forces: 8 • The El-Murr family: 6 • Independents: 1 	

	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities	Ministry of National Education and Fine Arts (Education and Higher Education)	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
	Salim El-Hoss (Sunni)	Elias Khazen (Maronite)	Omar Karami (Sunni)	Walid Jumblat (Druze)
	Fares Boueiz (Maronite)	Sami El-Khatib (Sunni)	Boutros Harb (Maronite)	Nadim Salem (Greek Catholic)
	Fares Boueiz (Maronite)	Sami El-Khatib (Sunni)	Zaki Mazboudi (Sunni)	Chawki Fakhoury (Greek Orthodox)
	Fares Boueiz (Maronite)	Bechara Merhej (Greek Orthodox)	Mikhael Daher (Maronite)	Mohammad Bassam Mortada (Shia'a)
	Fares Boueiz (Maronite)	Michel El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	Robert Ghanem (Maronite)	Ali Hrajli (Shia'a)
	Fares Boueiz (Maronite)	Michel El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	Jean Oubeid (Maronite)	Ali Hrajli (Shia'a)
	Salim El-Hoss (Sunni)	Michel El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	Mohammad Youssef Baydoun (Shia'a)	Najib Mikati (Sunni)
	Mahmoud Hammoud (Shia'a)	Elias El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	Abdul Rahim Mrad (Sunni)	Najib Mikati (Sunni)
	Jean Oubeid (Maronite)	Elias El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	Sami El-Jisr (Sunni)	Najib Mikati (Sunni)
	Mahmoud Hammoud (Shia'a)	Suleiman Frangieh (Maronite)	Ahmad Sami Menqara (Sunni)	Yassin Jaber (Shia'a)
	Mahmoud Hammoud (Shia'a)	Hassan Sabeh (Sunni)	Ghassan Salameh (Greek Catholic)	Adel Hamiyeh (Druze)
	Fawzi Salloukh (Shia'a)	Hassan Sabeh (Sunni)	Khaled Qabbani (Sunni)	Mohammad Safadi (Sunni)
	Fawzi Salloukh (Shia'a)	Ziad Baroud (Maronite)	Bahiyah Hariri (Sunni)	Ghazi Aridi (Druze)
	Ali Hussein El-Chami (Shia'a)	Ziad Baroud (Maronite)	Hassan Mneimneh (Sunni)	Ghazi Aridi (Druze)
	Adnan Mansour (Shia'a)	Marwan Charbel (Maronite)	Hassan Diab (Sunni)	Ghazi Aridi (Druze)
	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maronite: 6 • Shia'a: 7 • Sunni: 2 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amal Movement: 5 • Independents having amicable ties with March 8 Forces: 2 • Independents with previous amicable ties with Syria: 6 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greek Orthodox: 6 • Maronite: 5 • Sunni: 4 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independents with amicable ties with the President: 3 • Ministers with previous amicable ties with Syria: 5 • Future Movement: 2 • The El-Murr family: 5 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunni: 9 • Maronite: 4 • Shia'a: 1 • Greek Orthodox: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Movement + March 14 Forces: 7 • Independents: 3 • March 8 Forces: 5 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Druze: 5 • Shia'a: 4 • Sunni: 4 • Greek Orthodox: 1 • Greek Catholic: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive Socialist Party: 4 • Independents: 1 • Amal Movement: 4

Portfolio Rotation				
Premier and government's term of office	President of the Republic Deputy Premier	Ministry of Electrical and Hydraulic Resources (Ministry of Energy and Water)	Ministry of Telecommunications	
PM Salim El-Hoss from 25/11/1989 until 24/12/1990	Elias El-Hrawi Michel Sassine	Nabih Berri (Shia'a)	George Saadeh (Maronite)	
PM Omar Karami from 24/12/1990 until 16/5/1992	Michel El-Murr	Mohammad Youssef Baydoun (Shia'a)	George Saadeh (Maronite)	
PM Rashid Solh from 16/5/1992 until 31/10/1992	Michel El-Murr	Mohammad Abdul Hamid Baydoun (Shia'a)	George Saadeh (Maronite)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 31/10/1992 until 25/5/1995	Michel El-Murr	George Frem (Maronite). He was dismissed from his post.	Mohammad Ghraizi (Sunni)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 25/5/1995 until 7/11/1996	Michel El-Murr	Elias Hobeika (Maronite)	Al-Fadl Chalak (Sunni)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 7/11/1996 until 4/12/1998	Michel El-Murr	Elias Hobeika (Maronite)	Rafic Hariri (Sunni)	
PM Salim El-Hoss from 4/12/1998 until 26/10/2000	Emile Lahoud Michel El-Murr	Suleiman Trabolsi (Greek Catholic)	Issam Naaman (Druze)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 26/10/2000 until 17/4/2003	Issam Fares	Mohammad Abdul Hamid Baydoun (Shia'a)	Jean Louis Cardahi (Maronite)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 17/4/2003 until 26/10/2004	Issam Fares	Ayoub Hamid (Shia'a)	Jean Louis Cardahi (Maronite)	
PM Omar Karami from 26/10/2004 until 19/4/2005	Issam Fares	Maurice Sehnaoui (Greek Catholic)	Jean Louis Cardahi (Maronite)	
PM Najib Mikati from 19/4/2005 until 19/7/2005	Elias El-Murr	Bassam Yammine (Maronite)	Alain Tabourian (Armenian Orthodox)	
PM Fouad Seniora from 19/7/2005 until 11/7/2008	Elias El-Murr	Mohammad Fneish (Shia'a)	Marwan Hamadeh (Druze)	
PM Fouad Seniora from 11/7/2008 until 9/11/2009	Michel Suleiman Issam Abou Jamra	Alain Tabourian (Armenian Orthodox)	Gebran Bassil (Maronite)	
PM Saad Hariri from 9/11/2009 until 13/6/2011	Elias El-Murr	Gebran Bassil (Maronite)	Charbel Nahhas (Greek Catholic)	
PM Najib Mikati from 13/6/2011 until 15/2/2014	Samir Moqbel	Gebran Bassil (Maronite)	Nicolas Sehnaoui (Greek Catholic)	
Sectarian and political affiliations of the ministers who succeeded to the diverse portfolios		Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maronite: 6 • Shia'a: 6 • Greek Catholic: 2 • Armenian Orthodox: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Patriotic Movement: 2 • Marada Movement: 1 • Amal Movement + Hezbollah: 5 • Independents: 3 • Phalanges Party: 3 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maronite: 7 • Sunni: 3 • Druze: 2 • Greek Catholic: 2 • Armenian Orthodox: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Patriotic Movement + March 8 Forces: 8 • Progressive Socialist Party: 1 • Future Movement: 3 • Phalanges Party: 3 	

	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Public Health	Ministry of Labor	Ministry of Tourism
	Ali El-Khalil (Shia'a)	Abdullah El-Rassi (Greek Orthodox)	Michel Sassine (Greek Orthodox)	Abdullah Al-Rasi (Greek Orthodox)
	Ali El-Khalil (Shia'a)	Jamil Kebbi (Sunni)	Michel Sassine (Greek Orthodox)	Talal Erslan (Druze)
	Asaad Diab (Shia'a)	Marwan Hamadeh (Druze)	Abdullah Al-Amine (Shia'a)	Ahmad Sami Minkara (Sunni)
	Rafic Hariri (Sunni)	Marwan Hamadeh (Druze)	Abdullah Al-Amine (Shia'a)	Nicolas Fattoush (Greek Catholic)
	Rafic Hariri (Sunni)	Marwan Hamadeh (Druze)	Asaad Hardan (Greek Orthodox)	Nicolas Fattoush (Greek Catholic)
	Rafic Hariri (Sunni)	Suleiman Frangieh (Maronite)	Asaad Hardan (Greek Orthodox)	Nicolas Fattoush (Greek Catholic)
	George Qorm (Maronite)	Karam Karam (Greek Orthodox)	Michel Moussa (Greek Catholic)	Arthur Nazarian (Armenian Orthodox)
	Fouad Seniora (Sunni)	Suleiman Frangieh (Maronite)	Ali Qanso (Shia'a)	Karam Karam (Greek Orthodox)
	Fouad Seniora (Sunni)	Suleiman Frangieh (Maronite)	Asaad Hardan (Greek Orthodox)	Ali Hussein Abdallah (Shia'a)
	Elias Saba (Greek Orthodox)	Mohammad Jawad Khalifeh (Shia'a)	Assem Qanso (Shia'a)	Fareed /Wadeeh El-Khazen (Maronite)
	Demianos Kattar (Maronite)	Mohammad Jawad Khalifeh (Shia'a)	Trad Kanj Hamadeh (Shia'a)	Charles Rizk (Maronite)
	Jihad Azour (Maronite)	Mohammad Jawad Khalifeh (Shia'a)	Trad Kanj Hamadeh (Shia'a)	Joseph Sarkis (Maronite)
	Mohammad Chatah (Sunni)	Mohammad Jawad Khalifeh (Shia'a)	Mohammad Fneish (Shia'a)	Elie Marouny (Maronite)
	Rayya Haffar (Sunni)	Mohammad Jawad Khalifeh (Shia'a)	Boutros Harb (Maronite)	Fadi Abboud (Maronite)
	Mohammad Safadi (Sunni)	Ali Hassan Khalil (Shia'a)	Charbel Nahhas/ Salim Jraisati (Greek Catholic)	Fadi Abboud (Maronite)
	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunni: 8 • Shia'a: 3 • Maronite: 3 • Greek Orthodox:1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Movement: 3 • Independents: 2 • March 8 Forces: 5 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shia'a: 6 • Maronite: 3 • Sunni: 1 • Greek Orthodox: 2 • Druze: 3 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amal Movement: 6 • Progressive Socialist Party: 3 • Ministers with amicable ties with Syria: 6 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shia'a: 7 • Greek Orthodox: 5 • Greek Catholic: 2 • Maronite: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 8 Forces: 12 • March 14 Forces: 1 • Independents: 2 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maronite: 6 • Greek Catholic: 3 • Greek Orthodox: 2 • Shia'a: 1 • Sunni: 1 • Druze: 1 • Armenian Orthodox: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Patriotic Movement: 2 • Phalanges Party: 1 • Lebanese Forces + March 14 Forces: 2 • Ministers with amicable ties with Syria: 10

Portfolio Rotation				
Premier and government's term of office	President of the Republic Deputy Premier	Ministry of Agriculture	Ministry of Industry and Oil	
PM Salim El-Hoss from 25/11/1989 until 24/12/1990	Elias El-Hrawi Michel Sassine	Mohsen Dalloul (Shia'a)	Souren Khanamerian (Armenian Orthodox)	
PM Omar Karami from 24/12/1990 until 16/5/1992	Michel El-Murr	Mohsen Dalloul (Shia'a)	Mohammad Jaroudi (Sunni)	
PM Rashid Solh from 16/5/1992 until 31/10/1992	Michel El-Murr	Mohsen Dalloul (Shia'a)	Shahe Barsoumian (Armenian Orthodox)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 31/10/1992 until 25/5/1995	Michel El-Murr	Adel Qortass (Greek Orthodox)	Asaad Rizk (Greek Catholic)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 25/5/1995 until 7/11/1996	Michel El-Murr	Chawki Fakhoury (Greek Orthodox)	Shahe Barsoumian (Armenian Orthodox)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 7/11/1996 until 4/12/1998	Michel El-Murr	Chawki Fakhoury (Greek Orthodox)	"Nadim Salem (Greek Catholic Minister of Industry) Shahe Barsoumian (Armenian Orthodox Minister of Oil following separation of the two portfolios."	
PM Salim El-Hoss from 4/12/1998 until 26/10/2000	Emile Lahoud Michel El-Murr	Suleiman Frangieh (Maronite)	Nasser Saidi (Shia'a Minister of Industry)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 26/10/2000 until 17/4/2003	Issam Fares	Ali Ajaj Abdullah (Shia'a)	George Frem (Maronite)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 17/4/2003 until 26/10/2004	Issam Fares	Ali Hassan Khalil (Shia'a)	Elias Skaff (Greek Catholic)	
PM Omar Karami from 26/10/2004 until 19/4/2005	Issam Fares	Elias Skaff (Greek Catholic)	Layla Solh (Sunni)	
PM Najib Mikati from 19/4/2005 until 19/7/2005	Elias El-Murr	Trad Kanj Hamadeh (Shia'a)	Bassam Yammine (Maronite)	
PM Fouad Seniora from 19/7/2005 until 11/7/2008	Elias El-Murr	Talal Al-Sahili (Shia'a)	Pierre Gemayel (Maronite)	
PM Fouad Seniora from 11/7/2008 until 9/11/2009	Michel Suleiman Issam Abou Jamra	Elias Skaff (Greek Catholic)	Ghazi Zoueiter (Shia'a)	
PM Saad Hariri from 9/11/2009 until 13/6/2011	Elias El-Murr	Hussein El-Haj Hassan (Shia'a)	Ibrahim Dadayan (Armenian Protestant)	
PM Najib Mikati from 13/6/2011 until 15/2/2014	Samir Moqbel	Hussein El-Haj Hassan (Shia'a)	Warij Sabounjian (Armenian Orthodox)	
Sectarian and political affiliations of the ministers who succeeded to the diverse portfolios		Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shia'a: 9 • Greek Catholic: 2 • Greek Orthodox: 3 • Maronite: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministers with amicable ties with Syria: 9 • Hezbollah + Amal Movement: 6 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armenian Orthodox: 5 • Greek Catholic: 4 • Maronite: 3 • Shia'a: 2 • Sunni: 2 • Armenian Protestant: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 8 Forces: 10 • Independents: 6 • Phalanges Party: 1 	

	Ministry of Economy and Trade	Ministry of Information	Ministry of Housing and Cooperatives	Ministry of Environment
	Nazih El-Bezri (Sunni)	Edmont Rizk (Maronite)	Nabih Berri (Shia'a)	-
	Marwan Hamadeh (Druze)	Albert Mansour (Greek Catholic)	Mohammad Abdul Hamid Baydoun (Shia'a)	Agop Jokhadrian (Armenian Catholic)
	Samir Maqdissi (Evangelical)	Michel Samaha (Greek Catholic)	Suleiman Frangieh (Maronite)	-
	Hagop Demirjian (Armenian Orthodox)	Michel Samaha (Greek Catholic)	Mahmoud Abou Hamdan (Shia'a)	Samir Moqbel (Greek Orthodox)
	Yassin Jaber (Shia'a)	Farid Makari (Greek Orthodox)	Mahmoud Abou Hamdan (Shia'a)	"Joseph Mghayzel (Greek Catholic). Pierre Feraoun was appointed upon Mghayzel's death."
	Yassin Jaber (Shia'a)	Bassem Sabeh (Shia'a)	Mahmoud Abou Hamdan (Shia'a)	Akram Chehayyeb (Druze)
	Nasser Saidi (Shia'a)	Anwar El-Khalil (Druze)	Suleiman Frangieh (Maronite)	Arthur Nazarian (Armenian Orthodox)
	Bassel Fleihan (Evangelical)	Ghazi Aridi (Druze)	-	Michel Moussa (Greek Catholic)
	Marwan Hamadeh (Druze)	Michel Samaha (Greek Catholic)	-	Fares Boueiz (Maronite)
	Adnan Al-Qassar (Sunni)	Elie Ferzli (Greek Orthodox)	-	Wiam Wahhab (Druze)
	Demianos Kattar (Maronite)	Charles Rizk (Maronite)	-	Tarek Metri (Greek Orthodox)
	Sami Haddad (Evangelical)	Ghazi Aridi (Druze)	-	Yaacoub Sarraf (Greek Orthodox)
	Mohammad Safadi (Sunni)	Tarek Metri (Greek Orthodox)	-	Antoine Karam (Maronite)
	Mohammad Safadi (Sunni)	Tarek Metri (Greek Orthodox)	-	Mohammad Rahhal (Sunni)
	Nicolas Nahhas (Greek Orthodox)	Walid Daouk (Sunni)	-	Nazem El-Khoury (Maronite)
	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunni: 4 • Shia'a: 3 • Evangelical: 2 • Druze: 2 • Greek Orthodox: 1 • Maronite: 1 • Armenian Orthodox: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive Socialist Party: 2 • Amal Movement: 9 • Independents: 9 • Future Movement: 2 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greek Orthodox: 4 • Greek Catholic: 4 • Druze: 3 • Maronite: 2 • Sunni: 1 • Shia'a: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive Socialist Party: 2 • Proponents of the Syrian regime: 6 • March 14 Forces: 6 • Independents: 1 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shia'a: 5 • Maronite: 2 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amal Movement + Marada: 7 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maronite: 3 • Greek Orthodox: 3 • Greek Catholic: 2 • Druze: 2 • Sunni: 1 • Armenian Orthodox: 1 • Armenian Catholic: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministers having amicable ties with Syria: 5 • Progressive Socialist Party: 1 • Future Movement: 2 • Independents: 4 • Lebanese Forces: 1

Portfolio Rotation				
Premier and government's term of office	President of the Republic Deputy Premier	Ministry of Administrative Reform	Ministry of Land, Sea and Air Transport	
PM Salim El-Hoss from 25/11/1989 until 24/12/1990	Elias El-Hrawi Michel Sassine	-	-	
PM Omar Karami from 24/12/1990 until 16/5/1992	Michel El-Murr	Zaher El-Khatib (Sunni)	Chawki Fakhoury (Greek Orthodox)	
PM Rashid Solh from 16/5/1992 until 31/10/1992	Michel El-Murr	-	-	
PM Rafic Hariri from 31/10/1992 until 25/5/1995	Michel El-Murr	Bahij Tabbara (Sunni)	Omar Mesqawi (Sunni)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 25/5/1995 until 7/11/1996	Michel El-Murr	Anwar El-Khalil (Druze)	Omar Mesqawi (Sunni)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 7/11/1996 until 4/12/1998	Michel El-Murr	Bechara Merhej (Greek Orthodox)	Omar Mesqawi (Sunni)	
PM Salim El-Hoss from 4/12/1998 until 26/10/2000	Emile Lahoud Michel El-Murr	Hussein Chalak (Sunni)	Najib Mikati (Sunni)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 26/10/2000 until 17/4/2003	Issam Fares	Fouad Saad (Maronite)	-	
PM Rafic Hariri from 17/4/2003 until 26/10/2004	Issam Fares	Karim Baqradoni (Armenian Orthodox)	-	
PM Omar Karami from 26/10/2004 until 19/4/2005	Issam Fares	Ibrahim Daher (Maronite)	-	
PM Najib Mikati from 19/4/2005 until 19/7/2005	Elias El-Murr	Tarek Metri (Greek Orthodox)	-	
PM Fouad Seniora from 19/7/2005 until 11/7/2008	Elias El-Murr	Jean Ogassapian (Armenian Orthodox)	-	
PM Fouad Seniora from 11/7/2008 until 9/11/2009	Michel Suleiman Issam Abou Jamra	Ibrahim Chamseddine (Shia'a)	-	
PM Saad Hariri from 9/11/2009 until 13/6/2011	Elias El-Murr	Mohammad Fneish (Shia'a)	-	
PM Najib Mikati from 13/6/2011 until 15/2/2014	Samir Moqbel	Mohammad Fneish (Shia'a)	-	
Sectarian and political affiliations of the ministers who succeeded to the diverse portfolios		Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shia'a: 3 • Sunni: 3 • Greek Orthodox: 2 • Armenian Orthodox: 2 • Maronite: 2 • Druze: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hezbollah: 2 • Independents: 2 • March 8 Forces: 6 • March 14 Forces: 3 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunni: 4 • Greek Orthodox: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Movement: 3 • Independents: 2 	

	Ministry of the Displaced	Ministry of Vocational and Technical Education	Ministry of Municipal Affairs	Ministry of Social Affairs
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	Elias Hobeika (Maronite)	-	-	-
	Walid Jumblat (Druze)	Hassan Ezzedine (Sunni)	Suleiman Frangieh (Maronite)	“Elie Hobeika (Maronite) Shahe Barsoumian (Armenian Orthodox). He succeeded Hobeika after the latter’s appointment to the Ministry of Electricity”
	Walid Jumblat (Druze)	Abdul Rahim Mrad (Sunni)	Hagop Demirjian (Armenian Orthodox)	Estfan Doueihy (Maronite)
	Walid Jumblat (Druze)	Farouq Barbir (Sunni)	Hagop Demirjian (Armenian Orthodox)	Ayoub Hamid (Shia’a)
	Anwar El-Khalil (Druze)	Mohammad Youssef Baydoun (Shia’a)	Michel El-Murr (Greek Orthodox)	Michel Moussa (Greek Catholic)
	Marwan Hamadeh (Druze)	-	-	Asaad Diab (Shia’a)
	Abdullah Farhat (Maronite)	-	-	Asaad Diab (Shia’a)
	Talal Erslan (Druze)	-	-	Ghazi Zoueiter (Shia’a)
	Adel Hamieh (Druze)	-	-	“Mohammad Jawad Khalifeh (Shia’a)”
	Neemeh Tohmeh (Greek Catholic)	-	-	Nayla Mouawad (Maronite)
	Raymond Awdeh (Greek Catholic)	-	-	Mario Aoun (Maronite)
	Akram Chehayeh (Druze)	-	-	Salim Sayegh (Maronite)
	Alaeddine Terro (Sunni)	-	-	Wael Abou Fabour (Druze)
	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Druze: 8 • Greek Catholic: 2 • Maronite: 2 • Sunni: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive Socialist Party: 9 • March 8 Forces: 3 • Independents: 1 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunni: 3 • Shia’a: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministers having amicable ties with Syria: 3 • Independents: 1 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armenian Orthodox: 2 • Greek Orthodox: 1 • Maronite: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marada Movement: 1 • Independents: 3 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shia’a: 5 • Maronite: 5 • Druze: 1 • Armenian Orthodox: 1 • Greek Catholic: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 8 Forces: 10 • March 14 Forces: 2 • Progressive Socialist Party: 1

Portfolio Rotation				
Premier and government's term of office	President of the Republic Deputy Premier	Ministry of Culture and Higher Education (Culture)	Ministry of Emigrants	
PM Salim El-Hoss from 25/11/1989 until 24/12/1990	Elias El-Hrawi Michel Sassine	-	-	
PM Omar Karami from 24/12/1990 until 16/5/1992	Michel El-Murr	-	-	
PM Rashid Solh from 16/5/1992 until 31/10/1992	Michel El-Murr	-	-	
PM Rafic Hariri from 31/10/1992 until 25/5/1995	Michel El-Murr	Michel Eddeh (Maronite)	Rida Wahid (Shia'a)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 25/5/1995 until 7/11/1996	Michel El-Murr	Michel Eddeh (Maronite)	Ali El-Khalil (Shia'a)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 7/11/1996 until 4/12/1998	Michel El-Murr	Fawzi Houbeish (Maronite)	Talal Erslan (Druze)	
PM Salim El-Hoss from 4/12/1998 until 26/10/2000	Emile Lahoud Michel El-Murr	Mohammad Youssef Baydoun (Shia'a)	Salim El-Hoss (Sunni)	
PM Rafic Hariri from 26/10/2000 until 17/4/2003	Issam Fares	Ghassan Salameh (Greek Catholic)	-	
PM Rafic Hariri from 17/4/2003 until 26/10/2004	Issam Fares	Ghazi Aridi (Druze)	-	
PM Omar Karami from 26/10/2004 until 19/4/2005	Issam Fares	Naji Boustany (Maronite)	-	
PM Najib Mikati from 19/4/2005 until 19/7/2005	Elias El-Murr	"Ghassan Salameh (Greek Catholic)"	-	
PM Fouad Seniora from 19/7/2005 until 11/7/2008	Elias El-Murr	Tarek Metri (Greek Orthodox)	-	
PM Fouad Seniora from 11/7/2008 until 9/11/2009	Michel Suleiman Issam Abou Jamra	Tamam Salam (Sunni)	-	
PM Saad Hariri from 9/11/2009 until 13/6/2011	Elias El-Murr	Salim Wardeh (Greek Catholic)	-	
PM Najib Mikati from 13/6/2011 until 15/2/2014	Samir Moqbel	Gaby Layoun (Greek Orthodox)	-	
Sectarian and political affiliations of the ministers who succeeded to the diverse portfolios		Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maronite: 4 ● Greek Orthodox: 3 ● Sunni: 1 ● Greek Catholic: 3 ● Shia'a: 1 ● Druze: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Independents: 4 ● March 14 Forces: 5 ● March 8 Forces: 2 ● Progressive Socialist Party: 1 	Sectarian Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shia'a: 2 ● Sunni: 1 ● Druze: 1 Political Make-up: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Independents: 3 ● March 8 Forces: 1 	

Ministry of Youth and Sports	Ministry of State
-	-
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nazih Bezri (Sunni) • Walid Jumblat (Druze) • Abdullah El-Amin (Shia'a) • Suleiman Frangieh (Maronite) • Elie Hobeika (Maronite)
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nabih Berri (Shia'a) • Nicolas Khoury (Greek Catholic) • Asaad Hardan (Greek Orthodox) • Samir Geagea (Maronite)
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nazih Bezri (Sunni) • Walid Jumblat (Druze) • Asaad Hardan (Greek Orthodox)
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ali Osseiran (Shia'a) • Fouad Seniora (Sunni Minister of State for Financial Affairs) • Anwar El-Khalil (Druze)
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nadim Salem (Greek Catholic) • Fayeze Shokr (Shia'a) • Qabalan Issa Khoury (Maronite) • Fouad Seniora (Sunni Minister of State for Financial Affairs)
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michel Eddeh (Maronite) • Elias Hanna (Greek Catholic Minister of State for Parliament's Affairs) • Ghazi Seifeddine (Sunni)
Mohammad Youssef Baydoun (Shia'a)	-
Sebouh Hovnanian (Armenian Orthodox)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghazi Seifeddine (Sunni) Pierre Helo (Maronite) • Ghazi Seifeddine (Sunni) Michel Feraoun (Greek Catholic Minister of State for Parliament's Affairs) • Ghazi Seifeddine (Sunni) Bechara Merhej (Greek Orthodox) • Ghazi Seifeddine (Sunni) Talal Erslan (Druze) • Ghazi Seifeddine (Sunni) Bahij Tabbara (Sunni)
Sebouh Hovnanian (Armenian Orthodox)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talal Erslan (Druze) • Khalil el-Hrawi (Maronite) • Michel Moussa (Greek Catholic Minister of State for Parliament's Affairs) • Abdul Rahim Mrad (Sunni) • Assem Qanso (Shia'a) • Karam Karam (Greek Orthodox)
Sebouh Hovnanian (Armenian Orthodox)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albert Mansour (Greek Catholic) • Alain Tabourian (Armenian Orthodox) • Youssef Salameh (Maronite) • Karam Karam (Greek Orthodox) • Wafaa Dikah (Shia'a) • Mahmoud Abdul Khalek (Druze)
Alain Tabourian (Armenian Orthodox)	-
Ahmad Fatfat (Sunni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michel Feraoun (Greek Catholic Minister of State for Parliament's Affairs)
Talal Erslan (Druze)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ali Qanso (Shia'a) • Jean Ogassapian (Armenian Orthodox) • Wael Bou Faour (Druze Minister of State for Parliament's Affairs) • Nassib Lahoud (Maronite) • Khaled Qabbani (Sunni) • Youssef Taqla (Greek Catholic)
Ali Hussein Abdullah (Shia'a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jean Ogassapian (Armenian Orthodox) • Mona Ofeish (Greek Orthodox) • Adnan Qassar (Sunni) • Michel Feraoun (Greek Catholic Minister of State for Parliament's Affairs) • Wael Bou Faour (Druze) • Youssef Saadeh (Maronite) • Adnan Sayyed Hassan (Shia'a)
Faisal Karami (Sunni)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marwan Kheireddine (Druze) • Salim Karam (Maronite) • Ali Qanso (Shia'a) • Ahmad Karami (Sunni) • Panos Manijian (Armenian Orthodox)
<p>Sectarian Make-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armenian Orthodox: 4 • Shia'a: 2 • Sunni: 2 • Druze: 1 <p>Political Make-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 8 Forces: 8 • March 14 Forces: 1 	<p>Sectarian Make-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maronite: 12 • Shia'a: 10 • Druze: 9 • Sunni: 11 • Greek Catholic: 10 • Greek Orthodox: 6 • Armenian Orthodox: 3 <p>Political Make-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 8 Forces: 37 • Independents: 5 • March 14 Forces: 19

NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR RECONSTRUCTION

FEES PERSIST DESPITE CANCELLATION OF THE AUTHORITY

Every now and then, seismic experts raise warnings over the strong possibility of a devastating earthquake in Lebanon. Their announcements conjure up unfortunate memories of the 1956 earthquake that shook the country causing massive destruction in several areas, mainly in Beqa'a, Chouf and Saida. In response to the disaster, the then government established the National Authority for Reconstruction, which continued to operate even after its mission was completed. Although the Authority was dissolved in 1977, the state is still collecting "reconstruction fees".

Establishment

Article 1 of the Law issued on April 9, 1956 stipulated the establishment of the National Authority for Reconstruction with the purpose of reconstructing the areas damaged in Tripoli and North Lebanon by the 1955 floods as well as those affected by the 1956 earthquake. The Authority is a public institution enjoying financial and administrative autonomy and falling under the posterior supervision of the Audit Court. It is run by a board of directors that consists of a president and four members appointed for a renewable year by virtue of a Decree issued upon the proposition of the Minister of Finance.

Functions

According to the law, the National Authority for Reconstruction shall have the following functions:

- Lay down sample plans and designs for the reconstruction of towns.
- Acquire the properties necessary for reconstruction.
- Carry out restoration and reconstruction work.

Occupants of the buildings affected by the flood or the earthquake shall have access to the new or restored buildings under certain conditions.

Funding

Different sources feed the fund supporting the Authority. These sources are:

- Aid and donations.
- Treasury credits.
- Internal loans.
- Fees and taxes.

Abolition

The National Authority for Reconstruction was supposed to be abolished on December 31, 1957 after President Emile Boustany had submitted his resignation. However, the Authority remained operative and expanded its functions and responsibilities beyond the limit set initially by the law. Additional non-seismic-related functions were delegated to the Authority.

Later, Legislative Decree No. 15/59 cancelled the Authority and replaced it with the Reconstruction Administration, which was affiliated with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

In turn, the Administration was abolished in 1964 and the National Authority for Reconstruction was established and remained until the issuance of Legislative Decree No. 29/77 on April 18, 1977, which dissolved it and stationed its personnel to the Directorate General of Housing, falling under the Ministry of Housing and Cooperatives. The Ministry was assigned all the rights and duties of the Authority.

In 1983, the Independent Housing Fund was abolished and the Public Housing Institute replaced it.

Granting Occupants Ownership Rights

In 1996, Law No. 519 was issued granting occupants the right to possess the land plots on which reconstruction occurred, under the terms and the limitations set by the law.

Reconstruction Fees

Although 36 years have lapsed since steps were taken to abolish the Authority and grant occupants ownership rights, the state still imposes what is known as the “reconstruction fee”. The revenues yielded from the collection of reconstruction fees were estimated in the 1999 budget law at LBP 20 billion compared to LBP 18 billion in 1998. These revenues dropped to LBP 2 billion in 2012 following the cancellation of a number of fees.

The taxes were set up since the establishment of the Authority in 1956 as follows:

- An additional 3% tax levied on the income and built property tax dues when such dues exceed 1000 Lebanese liras.
- An additional tax of 2 Lebanese liras on each horsepower.
- An additional tax of LBP 25 piasters on each 20 liters of gasoline, 1.5 piasters on each liter of gas oil and 1 piaster for each liter of fuel oil.
- A postal stamp worth 2.5 piasters on all sealed postal packages/envelopes except for publications and in compliance with the signed international agreements.
- An additional 3% tax on horse racing and pigeon hunting wagers and an extra 1 Lebanese lira on first class tickets, 25 piasters on second class tickets and 10 piasters on third class tickets.
- An additional 10 piasters on ceremony tickets that do not exceed 100 piasters; an extra 25 piasters on tickets between 100 piasters and 2 Lebanese liras; an extra 30 piasters on tickets between 2 and 5 Lebanese liras and an extra 50 piasters on tickets priced over 5 Lebanese liras.
- Additional customs fees on certain imported products.
- An additional 5% on the fees of registration of foreign-owned property.

As previously mentioned, the fees and taxes persisted despite the cancellation of the Authority. In the 1980 draft budget law, the estate registration fee for foreign investors jumped from 5% to 10% . The additional fee was omitted later in 2001.

The reconstruction fees were amended in conformity with Table 9 annexed to the 1991 budget law as follows:

- An additional 5% levied on income and built property taxes when such taxes exceed 1000 Lebanese liras.
- An additional tax of 200 Lebanese liras on every horsepower produced by car engines.
- An annual flat sum of 8 million Lebanese liras paid by the Authority of Post and Telegraph in addition to 25 Lebanese liras for each sealed postal package/envelope.
- An additional 5% tax on horse racing and pigeon hunting wagers and an extra 100 Lebanese liras on first class tickets, 75 on second class tickets and 50 Lebanese liras on third class tickets.
- An additional 10% on the fees of registration of foreign-owned property.
- An additional fee of 250 Lebanese liras on the permits to transfer and acquire 4th category weapons and ammunitions (non-military weapons)
- An additional fee of 150 Lebanese liras on the permits to transfer and acquire 5th category weapons and ammunitions (hunting weapons of all calibers)
- An additional 100 Lebanese liras for each forestry investment petition or request; 200 Lebanese liras for each ton of charcoal and 600 Lebanese liras for every ton of wooden raw material bound for exportation.
- An additional 10% on the license plate registration fees.
- An additional 5% on the advertisement licensing fees.
- An additional 10% on the advertisement annual investment fees and another 10% on the monthly investment fees.
- An additional 15% on the fees of licensing gas stations.
- An additional 5% on the construction permits fees.
- An additional 5% on ceremony tickets.
- An additional 5% on notary fees.
- An additional 10% on the protection of industrial and commercial property fees.

In the 1993 budget law, the fees levied on gasoline, gas oil and fuel oil were cancelled.

According to Table 9 annexed to the 1993 budget law, the additional tax on ceremony tickets was put at 5%.

With this tax maintained, the reconstruction fees dropped to roughly LBP 2 billion annually. ●

SHORT-TERM PERSONNEL AT THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Most of Lebanon's public administrations and institutions are overflowing with 'surplus employees' who have neither a duty to perform nor the skills necessary for the position they have been assigned. After the government's failure to approve administrative appointments in key public vacancies, new cadres have been introduced in several public sectors leading to flagrant overstaffing in the lower ranks of the civil service. The IT Center at the Ministry of Finance is one of many such examples.

Establishment

Pursuant to Decision No. 7, dated November 2, 1994, the Cabinet agreed to hire workers contracted on an hourly basis to handle activities at the Ministry of Finance's IT Center. The Ministry reported at the time that the required posts were temporary and that there was no pressing need to recruit full-time employees, because of the uncertainty about how long the workforce might be needed or the exact nature of their duties.

Scandal

What started off on a short-term basis turned into permanent employment lasting 20 years amid an increase in the number of employees who, in the majority of cases, are said to lack the necessary qualifications for the job, having little if any knowledge in computer and accounting literacy. This workforce has expanded from 25 to 502 employees, some of whom have been employed since 1994 and others who have joined later. Dealings with this workforce used to occur without the knowledge of the Ministry of Finance General Directorate and many were recruited for personal or political reasons, including foreign nationals and retirees over the age of 64.

It has emerged that the files of many such employees are devoid of documentation and personal records, which has made it impossible to track the date of their employment.

Failed Compromise

Confronted by this scandal, the Ministry of Finance suggested the introduction of a provisional cadre that would include these employees in order to deploy them in the Ministry's units depending on the need. However, the Council of the Civil Service turned down the proposal as it was at odds with the laws regulating public employment and violated the rules dictating competitive examinations to test the merit of civil servants. In turn, the Committee of Legislation and Consultations challenged the establishment of new positions on the grounds that such a proposal would lead to permanent, not temporary employment as alleged. A short-term worker is one who assumes position set up for a limited period of time and for a specific purpose, which is not the case at the Ministry's IT Center. The initiation of new positions without a clear time limit for their dissolution would only be aimed at settling the situation of the 502 workers. Against the staunch objection to the introduction of new positions, the employment of the personnel in question was neither settled nor legalized and the workers maintained their jobs on an hourly basis despite their services being dispensable and their competency questionable. ●

LITANI RIVER AUTHORITY

60 YEARS SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT

Despite the decay that has afflicted most of the state institutions and transformed them into hollow structures lacking efficiency, a flicker of hope still emerges for a fortunate few, in the forefront of which is the Litani River Authority.

Establishment

The Litani River Authority was established by virtue of the Law issued on August 14, 1954 as a public institution that enjoys financial and administrative autonomy and does not succumb to the Public Accountability Law, the Audit Court and the labor-related regulations, except within the limits stipulated by the authority's law of creation.

In 1960, the Litani River Authority was annexed to the General Directorate of the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation and fell under its administrative tutelage, which was later delegated to the Ministry of Energy and Water.

Mission and Objectives

The Litani River Authority's law of creation and its amendments have entrusted the authority with the following functions:

- The execution of the Litani River Project for irrigation and drainage, for potable water and electricity production within the integrated Master Plan for Water in Lebanon and pursuant to the studies undertaken by the Lebanese Government assisted by the American Technical Commission.
- The installation of networks that would connect the various power plants of Lebanon.
- The erection of substations, transmission and distribution lines across all regions.
- The management and exploitation of irrigation water in the areas of central and northern Beqa'a, including the Yammounh and the Wadi Massa-Yahfoufa projects.
- The creation of mountain lakes.

Management

The Litani River Authority is governed by a board of directors consisting of 9 members, including a president and a vice president appointed for three years by a ministerial decree. The first board of directors was appointed in 1955 and included:

- Salim Lahoud: President
- Fayez Al-Ahdab: Vice-president
- Director General of Public Works: member
- Director General of Finance: member
- Director General of National Economy: member
- Head of the Legislation and Litigation Committee at the Ministry of Justice: member
- Joseph Najjar: member
- Rida Al-Tamer: member
- Najib Alameddine: member



Later in 1959, the number of members was reduced to 7, inclusive of the president. A Director General appointed by a decree issued in the Cabinet runs the Authority. The norm prescribed that the Director General be a Maronite until 1990, when the position was given to the Shia'a. Nasser Nasrallah took office at the time serving as successor to Iskandar Ziadeh who assumed the post of Director General of the Beirut Water Authority. Nasrallah remained in his post until 2004.

Achievements

The Litani River Authority has carried out a number of successful projects, especially during its initial years. Of these projects we mention:

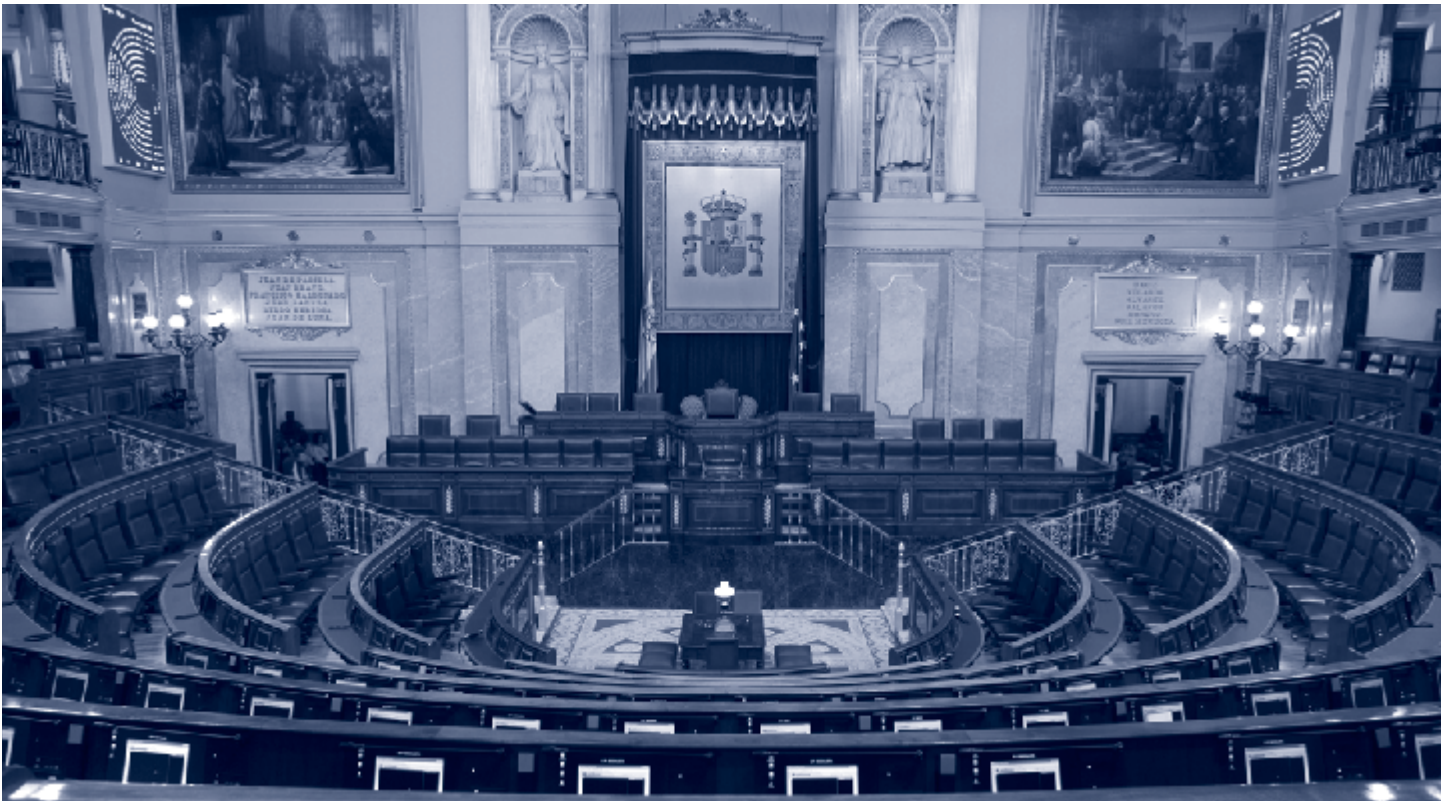
- The creation of the Qaraoun Lake in Western Beqa'a in 1960. The lake is an artificial reservoir stretching across 12 km² with a capacity of 220 trillion m³ of water used for irrigation and power generation.
- The creation of the 34 MW hydro-electric plant of Ibrahim Abdul Al in Markaba in 1962.
- The creation of the 108 MW hydro-electric plant of Boulos Arqash by the Besri River near Joun in 1965.
- The creation of the Charles Helou hydro-electric plant of 98 MW by the Awwali River in 1968.
- The installation of irrigation networks in South Lebanon.
- The preparation of several studies pertaining to irrigation and dam projects.
- The development of the prescribed tendering procedures related to the Irrigation of the South Project. ●



CORTES GENERALES

616 SENATORS AND DEPUTIES BY PROPORTIONAL VOTING

Like Britain and Japan, Spain is an example of those countries governed by a constitutional monarchy. The promulgation of Spain's new Constitution in December 1978 restricted the prerogatives of the king, instead handing more powers to the elected assemblies, precisely the Cortes Generales, Spain's bicameral parliament.



How are parliamentary elections held in Spain?

Cortes Generales

Spain's legislature, known as the Cortes Generales, consists of:

- The Senate or the upper house.
- The Congress of Deputies or the lower house.

The Senate is made up of 266 members, 208 elected by popular vote based on a proportional system and 58 appointed by the self-governing committees with 1 seat allocated for each of the 17 autonomous communities and 1 for every 1 million voters. Senators serve for four years.

The Congress of Deputies contains 350 seats. All members are elected directly to the seats by closed-list proportional representation in 48 multi-member provinces in proportion to their populations. Two seats are assigned of Ceuta and Melilla where plurality voting is used. Only lists that poll 3% of the total vote are considered triumphant. Members of the lower house are elected for a four-year term.

Voting and Candidacy Ages

The legal age at which a person can qualify to vote or to run for parliament is 18.

Legislated Quotas

In order to ensure a balanced proportion of men and women in Parliament, the law set the maximum percentage of candidates of either sex within an electoral list at 60%.

Current Congress of Deputies

The Spanish general election, scheduled for March 2012, occurred earlier than planned due to the PM's dissolution of the Cortes on September 26, 2011. The snap election took place on November 20, 2011 upon the call of King Juan Carlos I. Electoral turnout stood at 71.7% with 24.272 million out of 33.5 million voters casting their ballots. Women won 124 seats against 226 for men, which accounts for 35.4% of the assembly. The results broke down as follows:

- People's Party: Spain's right-wing party won a record 186 seats, up by 32 seats from the 2008 election, thus becoming the ruling party in the country.
- Spanish Socialist Workers' Party: 110 seats, i.e. down by 59 seats from the previous election.
- Convergence and Union: 16 seats
- United Left: 11 seats
- Amaiur: 7 seats
- Basque Nationalist Party: 5 seats
- Union, Progress and Democracy: 5
- Republican Left of Catalonia: 3
- Galician Nationalist Bloc: 2
- Canarian Coalition: 2

Spanish Proportionality

Spain adopts a proportional representation electoral system according to the D'Hondt method, which makes it quasi equivalent to plurality systems since it favors large parties over small ones. For instance, the total votes cast for each list/party in a 6-seat electoral district are divided first by 1, then by 2, then 3 right up to 6. For each of the 6 highest quotients produced after the division, the corresponding party obtains a seat.

Let's suppose the first party obtained 50,000 votes. The six quotients would be: 50,000 votes- 25,000 votes- 16,666 votes- 12,500- 10,000 and 8,333.

For the second party, which gained 30,000 votes, the quotients would be: 30,000- 15,000- 10,000- 7,500- 6000 and 5000.

In the case of the third party, which received 20,000 votes, the quotients would be: 20,000- 10,000- 6,666- 5000- 4000 and 3,333. The quotients corresponding to the fourth party with 7000 votes would be: 7000- 3500- 2,333- 1,750- 1,400 and 1,166.

As per the D'Hondt method, the first party would be entitled to 3 seats, the second to 2 and the third party to 1 seat, whereas the fourth party leaves the electoral round empty-handed. ●



EMILE BOUSTANY

UNFULFILLED DREAMS

Whenever the identity of the first Lebanese female to make it to Parliament is raised, the name of Myrna Boustany comes promptly into mind. Myrna was the daughter of Emile Boustany, a minister, a Member of Parliament and a prominent businessman and philanthropist who rose from poverty to become one of the most revered figures of his time at both national and regional levels. Boustany had an enduring vision for the country but his death in an unfortunate accident put an end to his aspiration to build a better Lebanon.

Emile Boustany (1907-1962)

Birth

Emile Mershed Boustany was born to a poor family in 1907 in the Debbieh town of El-Chouf. His father died at 26 of typhus during an outbreak in World War I, leaving a widow and four children with no provider. The family suffered from abject deprivation, which led the widow to sell their small holding and move to the Salihyya town of Saida where her parents, who were of the Gherbil family of Hasbaya, lived.

Education

Emile moved to an evangelical orphanage in Saida and had to serve at tables to feed his hunger. Every Sunday, he would visit his mother and siblings and hand them the bread he had managed to save for them during the week. Later, Emile enrolled in the Evangelical school and his only daughter, Myrna, is reported to have said that her father used to take off his shoes and walk barefoot for fear of wearing out the soles of his only shoes. From the Evangelical school in Saida, he moved to the National School in Aley. Boustany was awarded a scholarship to the American University of Beirut when an expatriate Lebanese businessman of the Maalouf family from Zahle decided to sponsor the higher education of a high-achieving needy student. Luck favored Boustany from among all others. In 1932, he obtained a bachelor's degree in science. It was when he started teaching that he met Laura Syriani, his student and future wife. He married her in 1937. Laura, who came from a Syrian family who had migrated to Lebanon, died in February 2012 at the age of 94. In summer, Emile would travel to Ramallah, Palestine, for work.

In 1933, he left for the United States of America to continue his studies. Charles Malek advised him to

enroll at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and approached a wealthy member of the Boustany family to help Emile pay his tuition fees.

Establishment of C.A.T.

After obtaining his Civil Engineering degree in 1935, he worked for the Iraqi Petroleum Company for two years, and left it to become a co-founder of the Contracting and Trading Group- C.A.T.- in Haifa, Palestine. Boustany gained full ownership of C.A.T. after his partner, Kamel Abdul Rahman, gave up all his shares in Boustany's favor. The company expanded its contracting and construction activities across the Gulf region, Pakistan, Nigeria and Yemen. It operated 21 branches in 17 countries and employed around 20,000 people, a huge workforce that outnumbered that of the Lebanese Army, which did not exceed 14,000 members at the time. In 1962, it yielded roughly USD 30 million in profits; it should be noted that the state budget of Lebanon stood at LBP 375 million or USD 123 million that same year.

Boustany, the politician and businessman

The prominence of Emile Boustany in the business and finance world propelled him to engage in politics. In 1951, he ran for Parliament on the Jumblat-Chamoun electoral list and won one of the Maronite seats in El-Chouf. Voters elected him again in 1953, 1957 and 1960 and his presence was an added value to any electoral list in which he enrolled. He could even run independently and still win. On May 19, 1956, he was appointed Minister of Public Works and General Planning but resigned from his post on June 8, 1956, when the government resigned. He then assumed an inferior post as Head of the National Authority for Reconstruction, which was established to reconstruct the neighborhoods hit by the 1956 earthquake and the

houses demolished by the flooding of Tripoli's Abou Ali River in December 1955. He announced that he would accept no remuneration for his services and soon enough, his gigantic efforts paid off. Below are some of the projects he oversaw before his resignation on October 26, 1957:

- Constructing 3000 houses in the towns struck by the earthquake.
- Devising in 1957 a master plan for a new city in Tripoli. The plan consisted of 250 residential units allocated to those families whose houses had been swept away by the flooding.
- In Saida, he aspired to build a new city in Ain el-Helwi to accommodate the residents from Saida's old neighborhoods.

His financial, administrative and political eminence, coupled with his uninhibited ambition, made Emile Boustany a deserving candidate for the Presidency in the 1964 elections, following the expiry of President Fouad Chehab's term and his opposition to amending the constitution to allow for a renewal of his term. Many believed that the arrival of Boustany to presidential power would turn Lebanon into a heaven on earth, a dream that was shattered by his unfortunate death.

End

It was the 15th of March, 1963. Boustany was scheduled to attend the Arab Bank board meeting in Amman but what was supposed to be a brief business trip turned into a tragic event. After packing and giving his instructions to the C.A.T staff, he left the house careful not to wake up his wife. She was meant to accompany him later that same night to a dinner held by the then President of the American University of Beirut, Mr. Norman Burns, in honor of Lord Hartley, the newly appointed member of the Board of Trustees.

He got into the car and instructed the driver to drive to Haret Hreik to pick up Dr. Tawqan. They arrived there at 6:30am and headed for Ras Beirut to pick up the C.A.T. architect Marwan Khartbeel. The cold was biting and stormy clouds had started to billow up in the sky of Southern Beirut as they made their way to the airport. The C.A.T. twin engine Aero Commander and its British pilot John Ogilvy were ready and awaiting takeoff commands.

At 7:45 am, the four men fastened their seatbelts. Dr. Tawqan was seated next to the pilot and Boustany and Khartbeel were in the back seat. The aircraft headed

for Damascus on its way to Amman. Worried about the layers of ice that had been accumulating on the aircraft's rudder, the pilot contacted the control tower at the Beirut airport, which advised him to return to Beirut immediately. Around 8:20, he re-contacted the control tower from somewhere near the coast and was given the landing instructions, but it wasn't too long before the aircraft was lost on the RADAR. Later, the control tower received a phone call from a German ship docked in Beirut's port reporting that the captain had seen an aircraft falling from the sky 1.25 miles west of the pier. Coast Guards and rescuers were summoned and a helicopter flew above the sea in search of the wreckage. Eye witnesses recounted that they had seen an aircraft flying normally above the sea until a thunderous explosion tore off the craft's nose and caused its fall at massive speed. The aircraft was said to have made five rotations before it crumbled and was swallowed by the sea.

After two hours of searching, rescuers spotted two bodies floating on the surface of water, whipped up of the sea by forceful waves. Authorities confirmed that they belonged to Tawqan and the pilot. The former's chest was open and his heart ripped in two and the latter had lost one of his legs.

Boustany's hat, suitcase and notebook were found in the same area along with three deformed seats and wooden shreds and parts scattered across the water. Experts estimated the aircraft to be some 2 meters deep but said it was impossible to recover it. The debris was later dragged away and placed in an evacuation boat and placed under guard. Boustany's body was never found which led many to believe that he might still have been alive.

Fate did not allow Boustany to pursue his aspirations and his life ended prematurely at the age of 56. Yet, the popularity and public admiration he enjoyed, particularly in the Chouf area, manifested itself clearly when his 26-year-old daughter, Myrna, won the uncontested by-election held on April 18, 1963. In 1964, his brother Sami also won a parliamentary seat.

50 years after his death, many still suspect that the plane crash was plotted to prevent Boustany from becoming President, but the perpetrators, if they existed, remain unidentified. ●

CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

(THE OLD PAP SMEAR & THE NEW HPV TEST)

Dr. Hanna Saadah



Cervical cancer is the third leading female cancer, killing 275,000 women annually. The annual cost of the 50 million screening tests done in the US is about \$6 billion. The traditional Pap smear, which has its limitations, is no longer the screening test of choice for women over the age of 29. Consequently, augmentation of the traditional Pap smear with testing for the HPV virus is gradually becoming the current standard of care.

Cervical cancer is a sexually transmitted disease, caused by certain, specific types of the HPV virus family. Type 16 causes 50%, type 18 causes 15%, and the ten other types cause 35% of cervical cancers. Unlike women who have never had sex, sexually active women, even those who don't have intercourse, are at risk and the risk rises with the number of intimate partners.

Luckily, most women who get infected with the HPV virus clear it spontaneously within two years. However, a small minority develops persistent infection, which can take 10 to 30 years to cause cervical cancer. Current screening recommendations are based on these two facts: a) the high spontaneous resolution rate and b) the long delay between infection and cancer. Consequently, because adolescent girls have a high rate of transient HPV infection and an extremely low rate of cervical cancer, screening should not begin before age 21. Moreover, because the risk of cervical cancer is extremely low after a negative HPV test and a negative Pap smear, re-screening need not be repeated more frequently than every five years.

In cervical cancer screening, a shift is occurring away from the traditional Pap smear towards testing for the HPV virus. Studies lasting more than ten years have shown that women who have no detectable HPV have only a 1% risk of developing cervical cancer. In contrast, women with detectable HPV have a 5% to 10% chance of developing cervical cancer. An eight-year trial in India confirmed that women who were HPV negative rarely died of cervical cancer.

Uncertain areas remain, however, because of the imperfections inherent to Pap smears and HPV tests. In a minority of cases, abnormal Pap smears may not be associated with detectable HPV, but nevertheless, may lead to cervical cancer. Also, a minority of positive HPV smears may not be associated with abnormal Pap smears, but may still lead to cervical cancer. Because of these two caveats, two strategies have evolved: a) screening with Pap smears every three years and testing for HPV only the Pap smears that reveal abnormalities, or b) co-screening with both Pap smear and HPV every five years.

Because in women ages 21 to 29, HPV prevalence is high but the risk of cervical cancer is extremely low, Pap smears only every three years are recommended. This is because testing for HPV will cause undue worry and lead to unnecessary cervical surgeries.

For women 30 to 65 years, however, co-testing with Pap smear plus HPV every five years, or else testing with Pap smears alone every three years, are the contesting strategies. When both the Pap and HPV smears are negative, the risk of cervical cancer is half that of negative Pap smears alone. Hence, among 300,000 women in the Kaiser Permanente database, of those co-tested and found to have negative Pap and HPV smears, the incidence of cervical cancer was 2/10,000 women, and the incidence of pre-cancer was 2/1000 women.

Screening is no longer recommended in women who have a low risk of cervical cancer. These include women over 65 with history of negative Pap smears, women who have had a hysterectomy for non-malignant reasons, and women who have never had sex. Heightened screening is recommended for women whose immunity is suppressed, and in those who smoke, use oral contraceptives, or have multiple births.

HPV screening alone is less expensive than co-testing with both Pap smear and HPV, and is just as good. In the study of Kaiser Permanente Northern California, the risk of cervical cancer was 0.16% after both negative Pap smears and HPV, and 0.17% after negative HPV alone. Consequently, a shift towards only HPV cervical smears every five years may soon supplant the traditional Pap smear because it is more cost effective and needs to be done less frequently.

Less than 10% of women show positive results on co-testing with both Pap and HPV smears. The commonest combination is a positive HPV and negative Pap smear, which occurs in 4% of women older than 29. Among such women, the 5-year cancer risk is 10%, which means that 90% will clear their HPV infection with time. The second commonest combination is an ambiguous Pap smear and negative HPV, which occurs in 5% of women, putting their 5-year risk of cervical cancer at about 0.05% in contrast to 0.01% for those with both, negative HPV and Pap smears. Until more data is collected, co-testing every five years with both Pap smear and HPV seems to be the preferred US strategy thus far. ●

Mark Schiffman, M.D., M.P.H., and Diane Solomon, M.D. Cervical-Cancer Screening with Human Papillomavirus and Cytologic Co testing. New England Journal of Medicine 396; 24 December 12, 2013.



Issam Bekdash

PUBLIC SAFETY APPLICATIONS FOR LEBANON'S BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

1- Public safety between urban growth and protecting human life

Public safety falls generally within a two-pronged dilemma. The more technology advances and construction expands, the higher the risks to human life.

Here's what to do:

Either we need to pull back from development and progress, which will be practically impossible for it stands at odds with human nature and propensities, or we have to move towards realizing the following intricate equation: to achieve development with zero risk.

However, the complete elimination of risk seems equally implausible and is hard to apply for the following reasons:

- Human development is inevitable.
- Human knowledge, in almost any subject, is limited and can never be all encompassing.
- There is no technology without gaps.
- Errors, inattention and negligence are bound to arise, for they are part of human nature.
- The occurrence of unpredictable things beyond human will is inescapable.

Therefore, we are left with one solution:

- Push towards supplementing the technical and scientific capacities, which induce urban sprawl, with the ability to ensure the best protection of human life from risks, without necessarily eliminating them.
- Predicate the assessment of urban projects on human values, rather than just on economic feasibility.

Conclusion

In parallel to the existence or contrivance of a new knowledge or technology aimed at driving urban prosperity or equipment manufacture, there must

be a counter-technology or knowledge aimed at preserving human life. This is the reason additional standards and specifications emerged during the construction and equipping processes.

Examples in everyday life:

Means of transportation: Car

- Despite the staggering numbers of annual deaths from traffic-related accidents, nobody accepts the idea of dispensing with the car. In Lebanon, around 500 people annually die on the roads and another 6000 sustain severe injuries and disabilities. Road traffic fatalities have risen in the US to 45,000 per year, which is equal to the number of deaths recorded in the US army during the American war in Vietnam, despite the fact that the US has the best record worldwide as to the number of fatalities per 100 million vehicle-kilometers traveled.
- New items have been taken into account by the auto manufacturing industry:
 - Adding new safety measures such as the seatbelt and the airbag.
 - Amending the technology used to design the front of the car in a manner that makes it more prone to deform and crumple in order to absorb the excess forces of collision impact. The crumple zone has been designed despite the presence of the air bag and the use of seatbelts.

2- Public safety applications for Lebanon's buildings and facilities

When it comes to ensuring public safety in the buildings and facilities in Lebanon, the official concern is limited to protection against the hazards of earthquakes, fire and elevators.

Since 1997, this concern has gone through multiple transitions:

First transition

On November 11, 1997, three Decrees numbered 11266, 11264 and 11267 were issued to guarantee safety against earthquakes, fire and elevators respectively.

However, the Decrees did not come into effect for administrative, technical and regulatory reasons among which we highlight the following:

- Holding municipalities, the Directorate General of Urban Planning, Civil Defense teams and fire squads responsible for inspection and examination functions that are beyond their qualifications or adequate preparedness.
- Overlap of powers and responsibilities between the Directorate General of Urban Planning and the municipalities or the municipal union.
- Drawbacks to the efficiency of the Lebanese Standards Institution in following through and updating the standards stipulated by the decrees.
- Overseeing the implementation of all provisions on buildings of all sizes and types at the same time and without preparing the public, which transcends the powers of even the topmost administrations.

Second transition

Later on March 11, 2005, Decree No. 14293 was issued, canceling its three predecessors and revolutionizing the principles of public safety applications for Lebanon's buildings and facilities. The decree was predicated upon new foundations:

- Entrusting the private sector with the performance of technical inspection, after due consideration and assessment of this task, through specialized technical offices, all in conformity with the criteria postulated by the Decree.
- Adopting the principle of progression while implementing mandatory technical inspection. The procedure was thus divided into three phases, starting with the large buildings or those designed to receive a huge number of people.
- Granting the Lebanese Standards Institution full scope to resume its work in introducing, developing and updating standards, until they finally become binding.

Accordingly, the application of the standards designed to prevent seismic and fire perils and guarantee elevator safety became mandatory to all

buildings lacking permits as of the date of issuance of the Decree, i.e. March 11, 2005, provided that those standards had gained a binding capacity as per the provisions of the Lebanese Standards Institution. Otherwise, the specifications adopted by the European Union, the US or Canada should apply.

However, the coercion of inspection did not materialize under this Decree. The disturbance that had been plaguing state institutions for a relatively long period prevented the formation of the special committee responsible for accrediting the inspection offices, especially the fact that the committee was assigned 11 members mandated to operate for only 2 years.

Third transition

The above-mentioned Decree has been amended recently by virtue of Decree No. 7964 dated April 7, 2012. To facilitate the formation of the accreditation committee and help it proceed with its work, the amendment reduced the number of members to 5 and also increased their tenure to 5 years.

Among other amendments, the Decree stipulated a technical modification in the seismic sphere raising the minimum horizontal acceleration from 0,20 g to 0,25 g, following evidence provided in the past few years about the presence of a fault line in the sea that poses greater hazards than the onshore fault.

The Decree has practically resulted in imposing compulsory technical inspections starting December 6, 2012 for the first stage, then gradually starting December 6, 2014 and December 6, 2016 for the second and third stages respectively, as per the table pertaining to the classification of buildings and facilities. It is understood that the binding application of standards is permanent and continuous from March 11, 2005.

3- Content of public safety applications against seismic risks (Mission L + Mission PS)

- Verifying the implementation of the standards pertaining to the strength and sturdiness of the facility as well as its integral equipment elements, according to the static condition parameters. (Mission L)

- Verifying the implementation of the seismic safety standards according to the horizontal acceleration parameter. This does not only cover the measurements and sizes of the building structure components but also pertains to certain aspects of design as well, such as the location of walls, pillars and staircases and the interconnection between the building's parts and joints, and other technical issues. (Mission PS)

NB: Applying Mission PS standards to the building structure entails an additional cost that ranges between 5% and 8% of the cost incurred in the case of Mission L standards.

4- Content of public safety applications against fire and elevator risks (Task S)

Fire

This mission entails a close examination of the implementation of technical standards aimed at the prevention of a potential fire or the protection from it should it occur. This involves inspecting the electrical equipment and installations as well as the heating and air conditioning systems and by providing emergency exits, fire alarm and extinguishing systems and opening to vent out smoke naturally.

Elevators

This mission attends to examining the implementation of the standards central to safety in passenger and freight elevators as well as escalators and moving walkways.

Others

Mission S is also designed to look into the application of the standards necessary to prevent falls from abutments, railings, facades and windows.

Diverse highlights

- The binding implementation of public safety standards, coupled with the compulsory technical inspection, requires a transformative leap in the field of structural engineering and construction at large in a manner that ensures both the sturdiness of the building and the safety of the people using it.

- In cooperation with the Directorate General of Urban Planning, the Order of Engineers and Architects has had a substantial and positive role in devising and following up the Decrees that encouraged this leap.
- This turnaround promotes engineering and makes way for newer specialties in the field thus expanding employment opportunities.
- The need to raise the awareness of those people profiting from the buildings and facilities to their right to verify and even claim the availability of public safety elements. This would in turn lead to precedence being given to those buildings holding a certificate of conformity, thus creating a prosperous cycle that would prove useful to everybody, including both project owners and beneficiaries.
- Expanding educational curricula at the various Faculties of Engineering to include courses in the application of these standards, for although deriving from a general knowledge and technology, these should be studied as separate and independent materials. ●



THE MONTHLY INTERVIEWS

JOSEPH KHAIRALLAH MAALOUF

HEAD OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF DOUMA



Joseph Khairallah

Could you introduce us to the town of Douma?

It is not without reason that Douma has been crowned the queen of Lebanese towns. The name of this Batrounian town means ‘tranquility, calm and comfort’, features that are attributed to Douma thanks to its strategic location in a valley encircled by mountains on its three sides which shield it from storms and humidity. Douma is situated 80 km from Beirut at an altitude of 1050 m above the sea level in the Qada’a of Batroun, North Mohafaza, and is best known for its traditional red-roofed houses, which date back to hundreds of years.

Today’s Douma is like a city in a mountainous area. Despite its small population, Douma has a court, a police station, a modern hotel, a hospital, restaurants and coffee shops, schools, summer houses and souks. The town is deemed an extension of an earlier history of prominence marked by a crucial role in the ancient crafts and trade thanks to the then vibrant commercial souk, which gave rise to a remarkable economic boom in the town. In 1905, the residents and the municipal council of Douma took it upon themselves to build roads and passageways for carts, thereby connecting the town to the Qada’a of Koura. Douma’s communal lands were sold entirely for the purpose of this vital

project. Its streets had paved sidewalks even before the capital and electricity has been connected to its households since 1946, thanks to initiatives taken by its emigrants.

What were the major milestones achieved at the environmental, economic, administrative and infrastructure levels?

To begin with, it is worth mentioning that the municipal council of Douma is the sixth oldest council in Lebanon after Zahle, Baaklin, Deir el-Kamar, Bsharri and Choueifat. In 1880, thanks to the tireless endeavors of the residents, the Ottoman Mutasarrif Rustom Pacha issued a decree stipulating the formation of a municipal council in the town. Members were appointed, not elected.

Despite its scarce finances, the current municipality has been keen not to paralyze progress in a town acquainted with development and growth since times immemorial. We have paved internal roads and driveways, and the widening of the entrances leading to the town in order to facilitate the passage of buses during the festival seasons is still under way. We have also restored the cemeteries and the ancient water springs and opened a public

library aimed at promoting and spreading culture of reading. Several employment opportunities have become available to the residents after the municipality accommodated governmental entities in the town such as the Civil Defense, the Batroun power maintenance center, to name but a few.

Special attention has been given to Al-Qasr al-Baladi, an ancient heritage house that has been repaired and restored into an exquisite work of art. Most importantly, we have finalized the master plan for the restoration of Douma's old souk, which includes commercial and artisan shops, a cinema, a theater, etc and which stands on par with Lebanon's other most prestigious ancient markets. We are hoping to provide the funding sources necessary to refurbish the site and launch the restoration works very soon.

At the level of agriculture, the municipality has built an agricultural road to facilitate the farmers' access to their lands. Noteworthy is that Douma has had a modern cooling chamber for apples since 2004, and four olive presses- two ancient and two modern- as well as two olive oil factories responsible for refining, bottling and packaging olive oil.

Regarding tourism, the town is popular for hosting annual tourism festivals in cooperation with the

Douma Festivals Committee. This vibrant event is a long-standing tradition that brings life into the town and momentum into its economy, attracting scores of tourists and visitors from the Qada'a and its vicinity.

In addition, the municipality is active in providing aid and assistance to the public schools and the NGOs present in the town.

What are your prospective plans for the next 3 years?

Aware of the promising, yet unexploited, economic prospects of Douma's old market, our agenda is oriented first and foremost towards ensuring the monetary resources necessary for the restoration of the souk. Bringing back the souk to its earlier dynamic status would help regenerate the town's economic cycle, rendering it an unmatched commercial and tourist destination in the area.

A plan has been proposed to build a public park that would serve as a space of comfort and a platform to bring the residents of Douma and the neighboring towns together. For this purpose we have allocated 8000 square meters of land. We are also hoping to complete the connection of the households' drains to the public sewer network and later to the wastewater treatment plant and to finalize the restoration of the slaughterhouse and its surroundings. ●●



Douma



Douma

CHRONIC CARE CENTER



Establishment and Objectives

Until 1993, not much was known about Thalassemia in Lebanon and the public was largely unaware of the risks associated with this illness and the available management and the approaches for its treatment. The lack of public knowledge about childhood chronic diseases motivated Mrs. Mona Haraoui, former First Lady of Lebanon and wife of the late President Elias Haraoui, to think about ways that would educate people about Thalassemia and provide medico-social support services to those suffering from it in order to integrate them into society and help them start their own families. This is how the idea of the Chronic Care Center started. The Center was founded in 1993 as a non-profit medico-social institution dedicated to the care of vulnerable Thalassemic and insulin-dependent diabetic children.

What is Thalassemia?

Thalassemia is a severe form of anemia known as the Mediterranean anemia due to its high prevalence in the Mediterranean basin. The disorder is genetically inherited and passed down through families whose both parents are carriers of the defective gene. There

is a 25% chance with each pregnancy of having a child with Thalassemia. The blood disorder manifests itself in children between 6 months and 2 years of age. At this stage, the Thalassemic child starts receiving blood units on a regular basis. Transfusions are a life-long treatment and should be repeated every 2 to 3 weeks. However, the frequent blood transfusions accumulate high levels of iron in the patient's body, which can prove detrimental to certain organs and which entails an expensive iron-chelating therapy to treat the build-up of iron.

Chronic Care Center

The Chronic Care Center is the first medical institution of its kind in Lebanon. It specializes in the treatment and follow-up of the childhood chronic diseases of Thalassemia and Type I Diabetes and the Center has a blood bank, a genetic laboratory and a professional medical team of specialists, physicians, nurses and dietitians. The Center adopts a multidisciplinary approach in its therapeutic process and each patient is examined by a doctor who decides on the necessary treatment plan suitable for each individual patient. Social workers and psychologists empower both

patients and parents to cope with the disease and focus on deepening their understanding of the possible complications and the different treatment procedures. Nutritional sessions are also provided to highlight the importance of a healthy and balanced diet, especially for diabetic patients.

In its attempt to attend to the complications that the patients diagnosed with Thalassemia and diabetes might suffer, the Center has expanded its medical team to include a cardiologist, an eye-care professional, a dentist, etc. This integrated course of therapeutic action saves parents the time and the cost of seeking medical assistance elsewhere.

It is noteworthy that the entire course of treatment and its follow-up are provided at nearly no cost and the Center has chosen not to introduce a network of branches in order to maintain its excellence of services and become a center for all referrals.

Parents can make an appointment for their children over the phone once they have learnt about their chronic illness. In urgent cases- mostly cases of diabetes- patients can drop by the facility without a prior notice providing they carry identification cards. Although foreigners do not receive free admission to the center like the Lebanese do, the charges they incur remain largely insignificant compared to the quality of the administered treatment. The Lebanese who wish to take part in their treatment expenses can donate a maximum of 10% of the total cost.

Being a health care facility for outpatients only, overnight stays are not allowed. Thalassemia patients visit the Center during the day to receive life-saving transfusions. As for diabetic patients, they pay frequent visits to the center in the initial stages of their treatment- once every couple of days- but their visits are reduced to once every month or two, once they have adjusted to the treatment and follow-up routine. Should any of the patients need a particular supervision or face a late night emergency, a 24-hour nursing hotline is available to respond to all emergencies and answer inquiries.

Achievements

Since Thalassemia requires a lifelong care, prevention plays a major part in the management of the illness. In 1994, the Center developed its first Thalassemia prevention program in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, which resulted in lowering the annual number of babies born with Thalassemia from 20 to 25 to fewer than 4.

The Center launched large-scale awareness campaigns and delivered educational lectures in schools and universities across Lebanon in order to enlighten students about the importance of pre-marital testing and pre-natal diagnosis and the risks of marrying a carrier of Thalassemia. The Ministry complemented the Center's efforts by legislating pre-marital screening for Thalassemia.

Unlike Thalassemia, the Type 1 Diabetes cannot be prevented, which explains the growing number of cases. Since its establishment, the Chronic Care Center has admitted 1876 patients with diabetes and 724 with Thalassemia. Currently, 525 diabetic patients are receiving regular treatment at the center and every year 100 to 125 new patients are admitted.

Challenges

With every patient needing no less than 18 blood transfusions per year, maintaining supplies of blood constitutes one of the major concerns facing the Chronic Care Center today. Despite the Center's tireless quest to collect blood donations with the assistance of the Red Cross and other NGOs, the patient's family remains the most pressured party to provide a regular network of donors through friends and relatives.

Despite tremendous efforts made at self-financing, in order to reduce the gap between revenues and operational expenditures, the Center depends on the generosity of its supporters and friends to sustain the high level of patient care and research. Funding remains a key obstacle preventing the expansion of services to cover other chronic diseases. The current annual budget stands at USD 3.6 million, half of which is provided through private grants and donations. ●

AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

SENIOR YEAR

“We are planning to establish a Department of Semitic Languages that would operate under the Arabic Language Department. We are looking for someone who would be interested in this new project. I heard that you have a good knowledge of Syriac and Hebrew languages (I remember that, despite my tight resources, I was still attending my classes with Father Isaac Armala and I used to head once every week for Wadi Abou Jamil) and you have been highly recommended by Mr. Ali Maqdissi and Mr. Rustom. Would you be interested in continuing your studies at the Institute of Eastern Studies in the University of Chicago? The Institute is chaired by a friend of mine, Mr. James Brosted, and is regarded the best of its kind in the United States,” Mr. Dodge said.

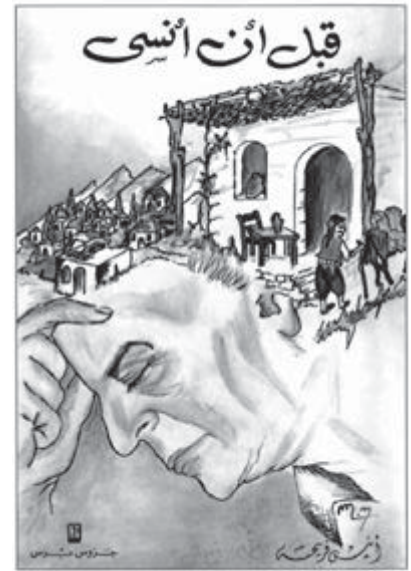
“A yearly donation of USD 1200 has been offered to our scholarship fund and the amount is enough to cover your tuition fees and living expenses. So what do you think?” he added. My reply was prompt. “The matter requires no thought. I am very pleased to accept your offer. It is a wish come true.” I thanked him and left, feeling happy.

Having finished my final exams, I headed for Ras El-Matn at the end of the weekend to tell the good news. Surprisingly, my parents did not greet it with equal enthusiasm. “Have you not already finished your education, my dear? Do you think I will live long enough to see you again?” my mom mused. “Why get into such a bother? You’re better off staying. You can teach and lend us a helping hand.”

I was back in Beirut to take care of the expenses for the trip. At the time, there was in Beirut an educational association- named Cultivate the Youth if I’m not mistaken- headed by my friend Shahadeh Shahadeh and consisting mainly of college professors and several philanthropists who used to collect money to teach the needy students destined for future success. That year, a decision was made to dissolve the association and about 100 Ottoman gold liras were left in the fund. Mr. Maqdissi instructed me to fill out a scholarship form. I pursued the matter with president Shahde who said: “I do not mind doing it, but I need to check with the rest of the committee”. Among the members were Jerjes Maqdissi, Boulos Khoury and Daoud Qurban, all of whom had been my teachers in the past.

I was granted the 100 Ottoman gold liras after having signed a pledge to return the money should the association ever restart again. But it didn’t; it was dissolved for good. What a spectacular stroke of luck!

I sought permission to travel prior to my graduation ceremony, partly in order to save the 1 gold lira prescribed to obtain the degree. I then set out to apply for my passport. ●



ARABIC OR HINDU-ARABIC NUMERALS?

Myth:

The common system of numbers used across most of the world today is attributed to Arab mathematicians, and thus the system is known as Arabic numerals. The 10 digits between 0 and 9 were spread to Europe by the Arabs.

Fact:

This system was indeed transmitted to Europe through the Arabs, but they were not the original creators of this system. The numeral system we use today was developed by Indian mathematicians and was passed on to the Persians and Arabs through their own mathematicians who had been studying in India. The numbers later moved into Europe through the work of the Arab mathematician Mohammed Ibn-Musa al-Khowarizmi who wrote a book explaining the Hindu system when he was teaching in Baghdad around the mid-9th century.

Al-Khowarizmi's famous book *On Calculation with Hindu Numerals* is credited with spreading the system of numbers across the Arab world and Europe. European merchants traveling in the east brought the book to Europe where people had been used to use Roman numerals and translated the book into Latin. In 1202, Leonardo of Pisa wrote a book in which he explained the Hindu system of numbers – which he learned himself through traveling across the Mediterranean-, the use of the zero and a number of algorithms, all named after al-Khowarizmi. He believed that the Indian numbers were easier to use than the Roman ones, and after studying the system abroad, he returned to popularize it in Europe.

For Europeans, since the Latin text was translated from the Arabic, this led to the belief that the Arabs had created the system of numbers, and thus they became known as Arabic numbers. In the Arab world, they were rightfully referred to as Indian numbers. After their introduction, they became popular in Europe for arithmetic equations. Through colonization, many parts of the world also adopted this system. In parallel to the modern system, Roman numerals continued to be used but were limited to a smaller number of applications, and they continue to be thus employed today. The numbers as we know them today, 0123456789, are even generally thought to be European digits. The numbers used in the Arabic language today are the true Arabic ones, while the ones used in English and other languages are Indian. ●

IMPOSSIBLE EXONERATION VS. SLANDER IN THE BOOK OF EXONERATION

FIDDLES AND RIDDLES

News releases and press conferences are no longer sufficient battlefields for the Lebanese to wage verbal wars against each other, and the fight has now assumed a wider scope with the opposing parties thrusting their hostilities onto new battlefronts: books. The fact of the matter is that the tit-for-tat attacks that the Lebanese keep engaging in might need volumes, not only books, to do them justice. The management of the state and the public funds has been catastrophic in the past two decades and resulted in severe havoc in the economy. Whether with their silence, or ignorance, all parties have proved to be accomplices to the crime. In this context, it is fair to blame the laws, decrees and decisions issued and ratified by the successive governments and Parliaments. Three presidents- Elias Hrawi, Emile Lahoud and Michel Suleiman- have held office since 1992. Speaker Nabih Berri has presided over 5 Parliaments over the same period while six figures- Rafik Hariri, Salim Hoss, Omar Karami, Najib Mikati, Fouad Seniora and Saad Hariri- have assumed premiership over 12 cabinets. All of those are partly responsible for the excessive accumulation of public debt and the deterioration of the country's economic and financial outlook.



The Change and Reform Bloc launched on February 11, 2013 a book entitled *Impossible Exoneration*, English for the Arabic *Al-Ibra' Al-Mustahil*, where documentation in facts and numbers is presented to expose the flagrant financial scandals and corruption of the state during the terms of the Future Movement, mainly under the premiership of the late Rafik Hariri, his son Saad Hariri and Fouad Seniora.

The Future Parliamentary Bloc retaliated to what it has viewed as a distortion of reality and a slur on its reputation with a counter book issued on May 8, 2013 under the title *Slander in the Book of Exoneration*, English title for the Arabic *Al-Ifira' Fi Kitab Al-Ibra'*.

Much to our surprise, the FPM and the Future Movement seem to have buried the hatchet today. But between exoneration and slander, where does the truth lie?

Impossible Exoneration

Public Debt

“The gross public debt stood at USD 195 million on October 31, 1992 and soared to USD 54,638 billion by September 30, 2011. Should we add the due arrears accrued throughout the years and amounting to roughly USD 8 billion, the gross public debt would then jump up to USD 63 billion.”

Mobile Phones

The privatization of Lebanon's cell phone sector, starting from the awarding of contracts to the clearance of rights, was riddled with a list of infractions that forced adverse implications on the public finance and short changed the Lebanese treasury of around USD 900 million. Decreasing the state's share of gross revenues from 30% to 20% was among the top reasons behind the lost government revenue.

Missing Transfers and Checks

451 transfers were found to have been missing from the Ministry of Finance in 2011 in addition to 2810 checks since 1997. The Ministry of Finance refrained from giving a sound justification to any question raised in this respect although the Ministry's check register balance did not agree with BDL's statement

balance, which leaves a question mark over the relation between some of the employees of the two entities.

Power at the Service of Elections

Prior to the elections of 2009, the Lebanese government had accepted by virtue of a number of decrees in-kind donations from MP Saad Hariri for the establishment of 12 public schools in the Qada'a of Akkar, a school in Batroun, a high school in the Al-Basateen region in Tripoli and one school in each of the Tebbaneh and Haddadine towns. Hariri's non-cash contributions also included equipment for a medical center in Batroun, two schools in En-Nabi Youchaa and Deir Amar, one in Bakh'oun, in the Zaytoun town of Tripoli and in Mennieh. Furthermore, a monetary donation of USD 6.5 million was assigned for the construction of pedestrian bridges. However, none of the projects has materialized in five years and the acceptance of offerings was no more than a free electoral propaganda for Saad Hariri.

Seniora's Deeds

Law No. 7/85 authorized the Minister of Finance to establish and organize lottery games in Lebanon. Accordingly, the then Finance Minister issued two decisions that stipulated the creation of the Loto Libanais and the Tic-o-Tac.

Later, Article 28 of the 1990 budget law emerged to cancel all kinds of lotteries, yet allowing the Loto Libanais to remain operational until March 4, 1993 and the Tic-o-Tac until August 8, 1993. However, Minister Fouad Seniora violated the law and kept the games in action even after the expiry of contract.

This violation was covered up five years later when the 1998 budget law re-put these games into operation as of 1993.

However, it was later found that the Tic-o-Tac agent had breached the 1993 Booklet of Terms and Condition and attempted to import into Lebanon large amounts of Tic-o-Tac tickets beyond the permissible limit set by the law. Although the violation cost its committer a fine of LBP 6 billion, the arrangement brokered by the Ministry of Finance's consultant incurred serious

financial damage to the public treasury as the state missed out on the opportunity to cash LBP 5 billion. Later, the Audit Court took a decision against those held responsible for the violation.

Treasury Advances

The *Impossible Exoneration* put forward several legal and constitutional provisions that elucidated the mechanism of granting and paying back treasury advances. The documents accessible from 1979 until 2010 inclusive revealed that the total advances granted during that period equaled LBP 12 billion and that many of those were illegal, mainly the ones given to the High Relief Committee to cover urgent administrative expenses in public administrations.

Slander in the Book of Exoneration

Public Debt

“Lebanon’s gross public debt started to accumulate when General Michel Aoun came to office in 1988 and was over USD 3 billion, not USD 195 million, by the end of 1992. Does the General not know that the cumulative cost of servicing the debt in the past 20 years has grown to around one third of the current gross public debt? Does he not know too that the piled up electricity deficits are responsible for around one third of the public debt or USD 23.2 billion and that the increase in public debt set a record high at USD 4 billion in 2012?”

Mobile Phones

The Change and Reform Bloc claims that upon privatization of the mobile phone industry in 1994, the then government amended the terms of the BOT (build-operate-transfer) contracts in favor of the operators in charge. However, reducing the share from 30% to 20% for the first eight years was a reflection of the global investment status quo that dominated the telecommunications sector at the time.

Missing Transfers and Checks

The fuss made over what has been so falsely dubbed “missing transfers” is groundless as the funds of both the Ministry of Finance and Banque du Liban have asserted that no disbursements were made for the transfers cancelled.

As for the missing checks, they are a mere fabrication by the FPM as all checks are properly cancelled and drafted in the records of the Ministry of Finance.

Power at the Service of Elections

Action was taken immediately to carry out the undertakings vowed by Saad Hariri. A number of the intended projects have already come to fruition while others are still under way. Complete projects included 7 schools in Akkar, one in Batroun, one in Mennieh and two high schools in Tripoli, in addition to a medical center in Batroun. Furthermore, equipment is being provided for 4 schools in Akkar and another 2 in Mennieh.

Seniors’ Deeds

Despite the critical political and security situation that governed that phase, the governments under the premiership of former PMs Fouad Seniora and Saad Hariri presented draft budgets for all years between 2006 and 2010 but those weren’t passed due the closure of Parliament. It is true that the spending according to the “twelfth provision rule” has exceeded USD 11 billion, but that was during a four-year span. However, what are the reasons that the Change and Reform Bloc has to offer to provide grounds for the expenditures that exceeded USD 11 billion in less than two years only, and why weren’t there any draft budgets between 2011 and 2013?

Treasury Advances

It is true that the previous governments gave loans to a number of public institutions, councils and funds, but this was always carried out in perfect compliance with the rules and regulations in force. Ironically, the government headed by former PM Najib Mikati, of which the Reform and Change Bloc forms part, has approved dozens of advances including one at LBP 11 billion, while hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent by the Minister of Telecommunications affiliated with the bloc. ☛

AFAAL... LA AFAAL

Afaal... La Afaal is a book on manners written by George Trad and illustrated by Bahij Jaroudi. It was published by Yuki Press in 2012.

The book is an attempt to teach children good manners and social graces by portraying appropriate daily behaviors against ill-mannered actions. It helps children make the distinction between polite and impolite conduct through vivid illustrations and simple instructions that clarify the do's and don'ts of social etiquette.



Proper behavior

- Wash your hands before dinner
- Cover your mouth when you cough
- Carry your plate to the sink after you've finished eating
- Keep the streets clean
- Queue up quietly
- Apologize when you tread on someone's foot
- Wait for your turn to speak

Rude behavior

- Place your dirty hands down on the seat
- Talk while eating
- Leave the dinner table without permission
- Throw garbage on the street
- Push in and jostle against others
- Cause pain to others
- Interrupt others

FAMILY NAMES DENOTING LEBANESE TOWNS (12)

In the twelfth part of the series exploring the families named after Lebanese towns, *The Monthly* continues to track down these families, which initially carried different names but were later given the names of the towns into which they had moved. Some of the families maintained their sectarian affiliation, while others converted into the mainstream sects of the region where they settled.

Dfouni (Al-Dfouni): 193 members

This family is named after Dfoun, a town located in the Qada'a of Aley, 25 km from Beirut, at an altitude of 680 m above the sea level. Dfoun hosts a Maronite community of 1750 people.

The Dfounis are also Maronite and are distributed in:

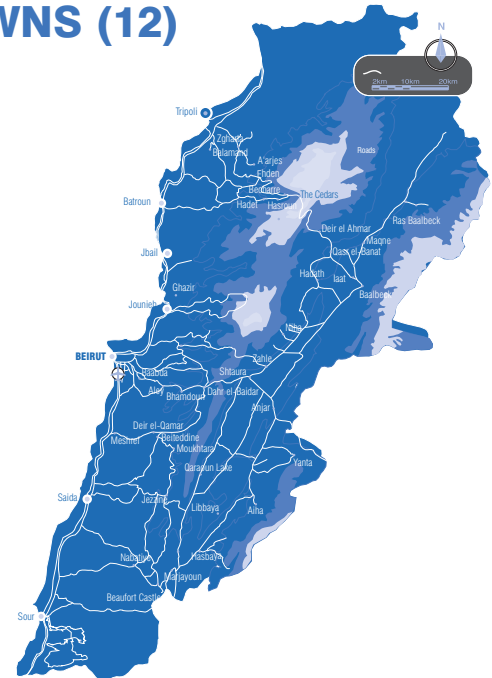
- Dfoun: 103 members
- Shemlan: 22
- Beit Mery: 10
- Aintoura (Kessrouan): 12
- Ashrafieh: 10
- Ain Remmaneh: 4

Aqouri (Al-Aqouri): 1750 members

This family name is inspired from the town of Aqoura in the Qada'a of Jbeil, which is situated 70 km from Beirut, at an altitude of 1400 m above the sea level, with a predominantly Maronite population. Aqoura is home to 6150 people.

The Aqouris are Maronite and are distributed in:

- Aqoura: 20 members
- Mazraat Beit Matar, Baalbeck: 120
- Jezzine: 162
- Jarjou', Nabatieh: 23
- Chlifa, Baalbeck: 110
- Tal wel Nouri, Tripoli: 52
- Rmeil, Beirut: 45
- Jal el-Deeb: 10
- Zqaq el-Blat, Beirut: 16
- Antelias: 15
- Zahle: 12
- Baskenta: 15
- Saidoun: 25
- Hosh Tal Safiyi, Baalbeck: 25
- Qottin w Hideb, Jezzine: 10
- Burj Hammoud: 4
- Ras Beirut: 10
- Deir el-Ahmar, Baalbeck: 293
- Roum, Jezzine: 76
- Kfarhouana, Jezzine: 10
- Zgharta: 70
- Hosh Barda, Baalbeck: 6



- Sarba: 30
- Sid el-Bouchrieh: 56
- Falougha: 7
- Deir Yala, Batroun: 45

Damouri (Al-Damouri): 228 members

This family name is derived from the coastal town of Damour, which is situated in the Qada'a of Shouf, 14 km from Beirut. Damour is home to 14,000 people who are predominantly Maronite (90%). The Sunni, Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics constitute a small portion of the town's population.

The Damouris are distributed by sect and region as follows:

Maronite

- Haret Hreik: 20
- Hlaliyeh, Saida: 37
- Hazmieh: 18
- Jbeil: 16

Sunni

- Mazraa, Beirut: 22
- Zqaq el-Blat, Beirut: 35
- Tyre: 30

Baaseeri (Al-Baaseeri): 590 members

The Baaseeri family is named after Baaseer, a town located in the Qada'a of Shouf, 35 km from Beirut at an altitude of 300 m above the sea level. Baaseer hosts a Sunni community of 2600 people.

The Baaseeris are also Sunni and are present mostly in Saida (510 members) and Mazraa, Beirut (48 members). 🗳️

AL-HARIQA

THE ONE-FAMILY TOWN

Al-Hariqa is a remote border town in the Qada'a of Hermel. It suffers from abject poverty and scarce resources. The sweeping majority of its population belongs to the Rash'eeni family (92%) whereas the rest are distributed amongst small families such as Jaafar, Ismail and Moussa. Al-Hariqa's residents make their living by keeping cattle and cultivating land.

Etymology

The origin of the name 'Al-Hariqa' is not identified accurately. It is likely the town was named due to its scorching temperatures in the summer, which may cause 'fire', English equivalent for Arabic Hariqa.

Location

Al-Hariqa is located in the Qada'a of Hermel, 150 km from Beirut at an altitude of 850 meters above the sea level.

Population

Al-Hariqa's registered population is estimated at 800, all of whom are Shia'a; the number of those residing in the town do not exceed 250.

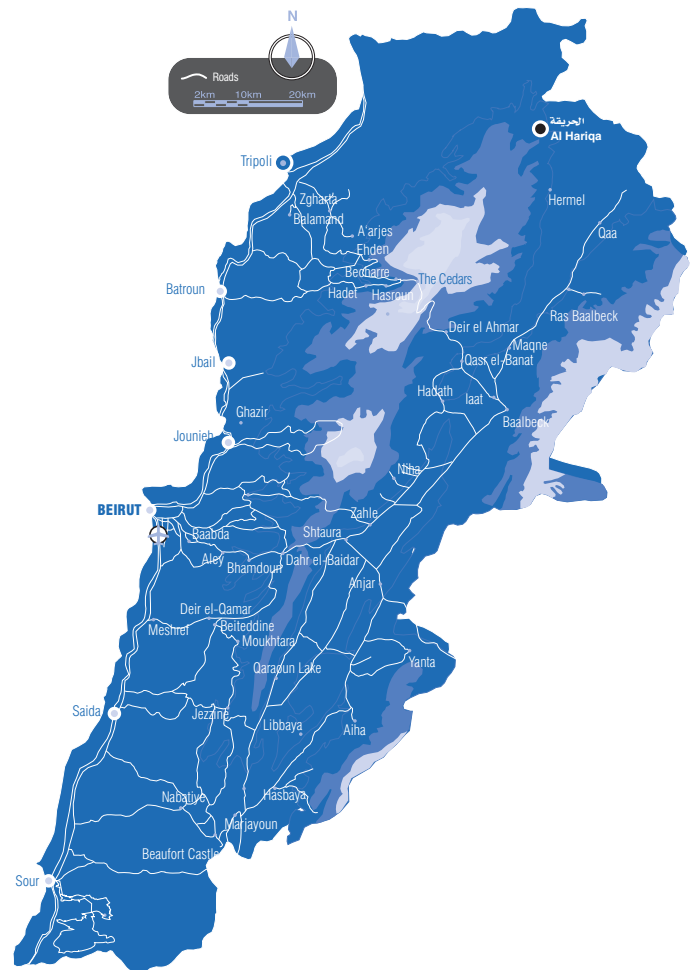
Voters

In 2013, the number of registered voters was at 490, up from 325 in 2000. Voters are distributed across the following families:

- Rash'eeni: 450
- Jaafar: 15
- Moussa: 12
- Ismail: 9

Local Authorities

Al-Hariqa's local authority is represented by a Mukhtar and a 3-member Ikhtiyariyah body.



Educational Institutions

The town is home to one public middle school that had 70 students and 19 teachers in 2010.

Economic Life

The income generated from agriculture and keeping cattle is highly negligible and puts Al-Hariqa among the poorest towns in Lebanon.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

UNDER QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Antigua and Barbuda is a constitutional monarchy that gained full independence from Britain in 1981. Since then, Queen Elizabeth II has been the reigning monarch represented by a Governor General.

Location

The twin Caribbean islands are located in the Atlantic Ocean between the Venezuelan and Dominican coastlines. Antigua is the main island, and its capital and largest city is Saint John's.

Area

Antigua and Barbuda stretches across a relatively small area of 442 km².

Population

The twin island state has an estimated population of 90,000.

Religion

75% of Antiguan are Christians-Anglicans, Evangelicals and Catholics. The island also has Jewish and Muslim minorities.

Language

Because of its British colonial past, English is the official language in Antigua and Barbuda.

Economy

Tourism, industry and services are the main pillars of the economy in Antigua and Barbuda. Sandy beaches and luxury resorts abound in the twin-island and make it a global tourist attraction. Plagued by water shortages and lack of labor force, agriculture does not contribute to the economy as substantially as other sectors. Tourism accounts for 78% of the GDP, which stands at USD 1.6 billion. Industry and agriculture make up 20% and 2% respectively.



Political System

Following its independence in 1981, Antigua and Barbuda became a member of the United Nations but remained under the authority of Great Britain. Queen Elizabeth II appoints a Governor General to represent her in the monarchy- currently Dame Louise Agnetha Lake-Tack who in turn appoints the Prime Minister and the Cabinet members, provided that the former belongs to the winning party in the general elections. The Senate consists of 17 members appointed by the government and the opposing party with the approval of the Governor General, while Parliament is made up of 17 members elected for 5 years. ●

JANUARY 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

January 1

- The Lebanese Army Intelligence arrests Majed Al-Majed, the Saudi Commander of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, which claimed responsibility for the Iranian Embassy attack. Sources reveal that the arrest had occurred Friday, 28th of December, 2013.

January 2

- A suicide bomber detonates a Grand Cherokee Jeep laden with 20 kilograms of explosives on Al-Arid Street in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut killing 5 people and injuring 77. Informed sources reveal that the car was bought by a member of the Ammoun family who belongs to the Qaeda-linked Sami and Ibrahim Al-Atrash's group.

- Iran asks Lebanon to participate in the ongoing investigation with Majed Al-Majed.

January 3

- Investigations identify the Hnaider resident, Qoutaiba As-Satem, as the suicide bomber who blew himself up in the Southern Suburbs. His family claims not to have been in touch with him since December 28, and his father has been called in by the Lebanese Army Intelligence for interrogation. The Wadi-Khaled families deplore the explosion and regard the alleged presence of Qoutaiba in the Southern Suburbs as unlikely, wondering how his ID remained intact while his body was blown up.

- MP Walid Jumblat and Minister of Social Affairs, Wael Abou Faour, return from Turkey after having met the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmad Daoud Oghlo.

- Families of the victims of the Iranian Embassy bombing hold a press conference at the Press Syndicate demanding the trial of Majed Al-Majed, the Saudi Commander of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, which claimed responsibility for the attack, in Lebanon rather than in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

- A number of vandals burn the historic library of the Greek Orthodox priest Ibrahim Al-Sarrouj in Tripoli. Al-Sarrouj had received threats over an anti-Islam pamphlet falsely attributed to him. General Ashraf Rifi and Tripoli's Mufti Malek Al-Shaar condemn the attack.

- The Lebanese Army makes an official announcement asserting that the DNA tests have confirmed the detained Saudi man is Majed Al-Majed.

January 4

- The Lebanese Army announces the death of Majed Al-Majed from medical complications. Sources speculate that the Army could not extract any information from him because of his illness and Iran demands autopsy to determine the cause of death.

- The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), known colloquially by its Arabic acronym, 'Daesh', claims responsibility for the bombing that shook Al-Arid Street and branding it as part of settling scores with Hezbollah.

- March 14 Forces commemorate the martyrdom of Mohammad Chatah in Downtown, Beirut, one week after his assassination. "We will be armed with the notion of statehood to liberate Lebanon from illegal weapons," says Ahmad Hariri in his speech.

- Tensions flare between Jabal Mohsen and Bab el-Tebbaneh leaving one dead and 7 injured.

- MP Walid Jumblat holds meetings with the Speaker's representative Minister Ali Hassan Khalil and Hezbollah's delegate, Hajj Wafiq Safa, to discuss the government formula.

- President Michel Suleiman signs a decree approving the promotion of 15 ISF Colonels to the rank of Brigadier Generals from January 1, 2014. Imad Othman, the ISF Information Branch Chief, is at the top of the list for promotion.

- March 14 Forces strongly deplore the torching of the priest Ibrahim Sarrouj's Al-Saeh Library in Tripoli.

- Gladys Joseph Tabet, the first officially elected Miss Lebanon (1960) and the sister-in-law of MP Boutros Gladys Joseph Tabet, is announced dead.

January 5

- US Embassy calls on its citizens to avoid all travel to Lebanon and to exercise extreme vigilance in hotels and their vicinities.

- Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon, Ali Awad Asiri, announces that the family of Majed Al-Majed has requested the repatriation of his body, denying rumors about the Kingdom's alleged autopsy request.

- "When I was still a fetus, the Prophet appeared in my father's dream and preached of my advent. When I heard about this, I turned into a charging rocket in defense of all Muslim matters," says MP Khaled Daher during his press conference, accusing Hezbollah of carrying out the latest bombing in the Southern Suburbs.

- Former ISF Chief Ashraf Rifi states on Radio Orient that Hezbollah is the other face of Daesh and An-Nusra Fron, stressing that only moderation can save Lebanon.

January 6

- Armenians celebrate Christmas and Catholicos Aram I says "history won't have mercy on Lebanese politicians."

- "Non-partisan Lebanese have the right to form a government," says President Michel Suleiman during the inauguration of the renovated Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Beirut, reiterating his opposition to term renewal.

- Al-Manar reporter, Abbas Karnib, dies of the wounds he had sustained during last week's bombing that shook Al-arid Street.

- "Your signature of the government formation decree would be worthless if it is at odds with the constitution," says MP Talal Erslan in an address to President Michel Suleiman during his press conference.

- The Saudi Cabinet deplores the two terrorist bombings in Starco and the Southern Suburbs, urging the Lebanese to listen to the voice of reason.
- A Hezbollah delegation visits the Grand Mufti Mohammad Rashid Qabbani and deplores the Khasheqji Mosque incident.
- The March 14 General Secretariat suspends public periodic meetings.

January 7

- President Michel Suleiman receives Ali Hassan Khalil and Hussein Khalil, political advisers to Speaker Nabih Berri and Hezbollah Chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah respectively, in Baabda to discuss the government formula.
- Rifaat Eid, the Arab Democratic Party politburo chief, appears in court for his first hearing on charges of threatening Intelligence Branch officers. He is released on bail by Military Investigative Judge Riad Abou Ghiada.
- General Michel Aoun urges President Suleiman to name the persons hindering the formation of the cabinet following the Change and Reform Bloc's weekly meeting, stressing that no one should be isolated from the new cabinet.
- UN invites Lebanon to participate in the Geneva 2 conference on Syria.

January 8

- The Future Bloc urges President Michel Suleiman and caretaker PM Najib Mikati to form a non-partisan government, stressing that the Haret Hreik martyrs are paying the price for Hezbollah's intervention in Syria.
- Speaker Nabih Berri expresses annoyance over the Future Bloc's statement during Wednesday's meeting.
- The monthly statement of the Maronite Bishops urges speedy formation of government and holding of presidential elections on time, calling on politicians to assume their responsibilities.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs Adnan Mansour files a complaint with the United Nations over Israeli spying.
- Military Investigative Judge sues 14 suspects on charges of planting bombs along the Masnaa highway.

- First Investigative Judge, Ghassan Oueidat, refers the case of embezzlement of the Higher Relief Committee's funds to the Court of Appeals Public Prosecution in Beirut.
- Civil society activists protest in the Mathaf area against violence.
- MP Ahmad Fatfat reveals to LBC that Hezbollah has the capacity to wiretap mobile phones.

January 9

- The Loyalty to Resistance Bloc reiterates that a fait-accompli cabinet would be an unprecedented venture that might hinder the presidential elections, urging a strategy where the roles of the army, the people and the resistance go hand in hand.
- Medical examiners confirm that the death of Majed Al-Majed was due to medical reasons and Attorney General, Judge Samir Hammoud asserts that his body was handed over to the Saudi embassy in Beirut.
- Trial Chamber of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon holds a preliminary hearing in preparation for the trial.

January 10

- President Michel Suleiman expresses optimism over Hariri's approval of the 8-8-8 government formula and grants all parties a 10-day ultimatum to form a cabinet. Otherwise, he will announce a neutral government.
- Majed Al-Majed's body is repatriated to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on board of a Saudi Arabian Airlines' plane.
- Rocket-propelled grenade targets a Lebanese Army post in Tripoli leaving 4 soldiers slightly injured.
- The principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense for US policy in the Middle East, Mathew Spence, voices unwavering support for the Lebanese Army following his meeting with President Michel Suleiman. The US Embassy reveals that since 2005 aid worth over USD 1 billion has been delivered to the Lebanese Army and the Internal Security Forces.
- Patriarch Al-Rai receives a Hezbollah delegation in Bkerke.
- Caretaker Minister of Energy and Water Gibran Bassil and the American NEOS Company sign a contract on

carrying out oil and gas exploration via photogeology, in the presence of the US ambassador to Lebanon

- STL Prosecutor, Norman Farrell tells An-Nahar that new evidence will emerge soon in the Hariri assassination case, rejecting the doubts raised on the telecommunications evidence.
- President Michel Suleiman holds discussions with the head of the Future Parliamentary Bloc over formation of government.
- General Michel Aoun leaves for Vatican

January 12

- Following his visit to Speaker Nabih Berri, MP Walid Jumblat announces that the meetings with Berri are always positive.
- The Mohammad Choucair-list wins the elections of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Beirut and Mount Lebanon.
- Former PM Saad Hariri meets Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov in Paris.
- Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jawad Zareef arrives in Lebanon for an official visit.
- PM-designate Tamam Salam announces that January 20 is the final day granted before the formation of government.
- Former PM Saad Hariri and LF leader Samir Geagea have a lengthy phone conversation over cabinet formation.
- Leaflets distributed in Aarsal in protest at the Syrian presence in the town and the competition for work it entails.
- Members of the March 14 Forces attend an event entitled "Age of Justice" in Meerab and LF leader Samir Geagea delivers a speech urging the formation of a cabinet lead by March 14 Forces. Other speeches were delivered by former Minister Ibrahim Najjar, MP Fares Soueid and MP Jamal Al-Jarrah.
- Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jawad Zareef continues his visit to Lebanon and holds meetings with top officials with the exception of caretaker PM Najib Mikati who had headed for Umra. Zareef holds a banquet in the Phoenicia Hotel in honor of a number of figures including MP Walid Jumblat, Phalanges Party

official Sejaan Al-Qazzi and former Speaker Hussein al-Husseini.

- Head of the Congregation for Eastern Churches at the Vatican, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, ends his visit to Lebanon after emphasizing the need for stability in the country.

- Former PM Fouad Seniora and Speaker Nabih Berri hold a meeting to tackle the situation of the government.

January 14

- A number of sacked employees from the KVA service company contracting with EDL block a main highway in Dawra in protest of their dismissal, leaving drivers stranded for hours in their vehicles. Lebanese Minister of Labor urges the company to reverse the dismissals.

- Trial Chamber of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon adjourns its decision on the possible joining the cases of Hassan Merhi and Rafic Hariri assassination.

- Caretaker PM Najib Mikati arrives in Kuwait to take part in an international donor conference for Syria.

- The Abdullah Azzam Brigades issues a statement consisting of the biography of its Saudi Prince Majed Al-Majed and accuses Hezbollah of murdering him. The statement reiterates that the Brigades will not stop its war against Iran and Hezbollah in defense of the Sunni.

- Sheikh Ahmad El-Assir tweets an apology for his declining social media activity.

January 15

- Former PM Saad Hariri, MP Sami Gemayel and MP Marwan Hamade arrive in the Netherlands to attend the opening of the Hariri assassination trial. President Michel Suleiman assures that justice is stronger than crime and terror.

- During his participation in the Kuwait's international donor conference for Syria, Caretaker PM Najib Mikati holds meetings with a number of officials including US Secretary of State John Kerry who announces a transfer of USD 76 million so that Lebanon can attend to the relief efforts for Syrian refugees.

- Lawyer Rashid Salameh holds a press conference calling on the Special Tribunal for Lebanon to remove the testimonies of 13 witnesses whose names were leaked to the media from the court's files.

- Der Spiegel reports that two of the suspects in Hariri's assassination are in Iran and the rest might have been killed.

- STL President, Judge David Baragwanath, appoints Italian Judge Nicola Lettieri as the new international alternate judge to the Trial Chamber.

- The Lebanese Army arrests the leader of Abdulla Azzam Brigades, Jamal Daftardar, in the Beqa'a valley area and shoots dead the Fateh El-Islam member Mazen Abou Abbas.

January 16

- STL proceedings kick off in The Hague and the prosecution outlines through a model of the crime scene how it believes Mostafa Badreddine and Salim Ayyash carried out the assassination, premising its case on the telecommunications' evidence. The prosecution adds that the explosion did not occur underground as previously speculated but was the result of an unidentified suicide bomber. Attending PM Saad Hariri says he is seeking justice, not revenge, adding that defending the suspects is pointless.

- The Head of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon Defense Office, Francois Roux, announces that the trial could last at least three years.

- A suicide bomber detonates a Kia SUV laden with 33 kilograms of explosives at the Hermel Square leaving 4 dead and 43 injured. The An-Nusra front claims responsibility for the explosion and investigations reveal that the car was stolen from Antelias two months ago.

- An Iranian delegation, headed by Deputy Justice Minister Abdul Ali Mirkuhi, holds talks with a number of Lebanese officials on the investigations into the bombing that targeted the Iranian Embassy in Beirut.

- Talks circulate about a potential meeting between former PM Saad Hariri and General Michel Aoun in Rome.

- Al-Jamaa Al-Islamiya deplores the death of Mazen Abou Abbas during the Lebanese Army's crack down on his house in Kamed Al-Lawz and stages a protest near the Jeb Jennine Serail.

January 17

- Reuters reports that former PM Saad Hariri is ready to participate in a coalition government with Hezbollah, which he describes as a political party. Hariri says that the suspect is presumed innocent until proven guilty and that he will not make compromises.

- Rockets target the town of Arsal killing 9 people, including 5 children from the Hujjeiri family, and injuring 13 others. Head of the municipality of Arsal, Ali Al-Hujjeiri, accuses Hezbollah of launching the rockets from Al-Qa'a but the army assures that they came from Syria.

- Initial investigations identify the suicide bomber involved in the Hermel attack as Hussein Ghandour who is thought to have been a supporter of Sunni cleric Sheikh Ahmad Al-Assir.

- Clashes pick up again between Jabal Mohsen and Bab El-Tebbaneh, killing one person and injuring others.

- On the STL's third day of hearings, the Prosecution asserts that Hariri was tracked for 50 days before his assassination and brands Mostafa Badr as having orchestrated the entire assassination. Badreddine's lead counsel, Antoine Korkmaz, says that the Prosecution presented nothing new.

- Hezbollah's officer for international relations, Ammar Mussawi, discusses regional and local developments with Emmanuel Bonne, French President's adviser for Middle East affairs. Bonne also meets PM Najib Mikati, Speaker Nabih Berri and other former President Amine Gemayel.

- Head of the Iranian Shura Council, Ali Larijani, reports that Iran would give its life for Hezbollah.

- Army Commander General Jean Qahwaji addresses military attachés and emphasizes that the Lebanese Army will not step into random uncalculated ventures.

January 18

- Injuries sustained in renewed clashes in Tripoli.
- Trash piles up along the streets of Beirut and Mount Lebanon after the Sukleen waste management company halts its work due to the residents of Naameh protesting against waste being dumped in the Naameh landfill.
- Lebanese and Israeli Armies on alert following Israel's installation of spying devices in a disputed zone.
- The Lebanese Army Command announces that the rockets fired at Aarsal, Ras Baalbeck and Al-Fakiha originated from east Aarsal, which straddles both Lebanon and Syria.
- Lebanese Forces leader describes Hariri's statement as indicative of good will and says "there will be no return to the Army-People-Resistance trilogy".

January 19

- Following their meeting with PM-designate Tamam Salam, the residents of Naameh agree to halt the protest for 48 hours and make way for Sukleen's waste disposal trucks until a solution is reached. Sukleen resumes its cleaning operations in Beirut during the night.
- 1 killed and 21 injured in Tripoli's clashes.

January 20

- During talk show appearance on Future TV, former PM Saad Hariri reiterates his alliance with the March 14 Forces and expresses willingness to be in a cabinet where Hezbollah has a part, yet refusing the Army-People-Resistance trilogy. He adds that the new government will focus on getting things moving, stressing once again that Syrian President Bashar Assad ordered the assassination of Rafik Hariri.
- President Suleiman emphasizes in front of the diplomatic corps that the crucial events awaiting the country will occur on time, stressing that the new cabinet will see the light by the end of the week and that the ministerial statement will be discussed after the formation.
- The STL continues its hearings and listens to the Defense, which questions the validity of the provided

telecommunications evidence, arguing that the Prosecution has not addressed the motives behind Hariri's murder.

- Former PM Saad Hariri asserts to Europe 1 radio station that he will return to Lebanon before the elections in November 2014.
- The 19th round of clashes flares in Tripoli, claiming the lives of 5 people and injuring 40 others.

January 21

- A car bomb explodes in Al-Arid Street, 60 meters away from the bomb that hit the same street on January 2, killing 4 people and injuring 36 others. Investigations reveal that a suicide bomber administered the attack and that the car used in the operation was a Kia stolen from Kfarhabab in October 2013 and laden with 15 kilograms of explosives. Lebanon's An-Nusra Front claims responsibility for the explosion and charges the Sunni against Hezbollah.
- Investigative findings implicate Nabil Moussawi in the theft of the cars blown up in Hermel and the southern Suburbs. Moussawi is a member of a group that used to sell stolen cars to Maher Tlais who, in turn, would sell them to militants in Syria.
- Clashes continue in Tripoli claiming the lives of 7 people and injuring 27 others, including 7 Lebanese Army soldiers.
- Following the Reform and Change Bloc's weekly meeting, General Michel Aoun reiterates the right of every political part to nominate its representatives in the cabinet, insinuating that he intends to hold onto the two ministerial portfolios he controls- Ministry of Energy and Water and Ministry of Telecommunications. Aoun adds that the principle of rotation of portfolios is a punishment for successful ministers.
- The dignitaries of the town of Aarsal hold a meeting deploring the explosion that hit the Southern Suburbs and emphasizing that the attack came in reply to the targeted shelling at Aarsal.
- Trucks of the waste management company Sukleen blocked once again from accessing the Naameh landfill.

January 22

- An armed Islamic group releases a video slamming former PM Saad Hariri for shaking hands with Hezbollah and urging the army to strike with an iron fist in Tripoli.
- Security Forces arrest the rap singer, Hussein Sharafeddine, on the suspicion of him being a suicide bomber.
- Calm returns to Tripoli following the death of a Lebanese soldier in an attack on the military.
- The STL resumes its proceedings and starts listening to testimonies. Spokesman Martin Youssef reports that the number of witnesses amounts to 500.
- LF leader Samir Geagea announces that the participation of the Lebanese Forces in the government is tied to listing the Baabda Declaration as a single political paragraph in the ministerial statement.

January 23

- Sami Marroush, a former advisor to the Progressive Socialist Party leader, Walid Jumblat, is found dead with shots to his head near Aley. The murder of Marroush, who had returned from the US a week earlier, sparks a series of protests in the area.
- Residents of Naameh allow Sukleen's trucks to dump garbage in their landfill after an agreement was reached and MP Walid Jumblat pledges to have the landfill closed for good by January 17, 2015.
- The STL continues to hear testimonies and former detective Robyn Frase addresses the images captured by the surveillance cameras of the canter van carrying the explosives.
- Ibrahim Abdul Moti Abou Muaileq, a Palestinian member of the al-Qaeda-linked Abdullah Azzam Brigades dies of wounds he sustained during a shoot-out with the military in Bar Elias, Beqa'a.
- Director General of Finance Alain announces in a press conference that the Ministry's staff has completed the examination of public accounts, a step that has been suspended since 1997.

January 24

- The An-Nusra Front threatens Hezbollah and urges the Sunni to avoid Hezbollah areas.
- Demonstrators re-open the road leading to the Naameh landfill and threaten to resume their sit-ins if no solution is found 15 days after the formation of the cabinet.
- US Ambassador to Lebanon, David Hale, holds talks with PM-designate Tamam Salam, former PM Fouad Seniora, General Michel Aoun and MP Walid Jumblat.

January 25

- Ceremony held in Hazmieh to commemorate the slain Elie Hobeika.
- MP Ghazi Aridi represents MP Walid Jumblat in the funeral held for murdered PSP member, Sami Marroush, refuting all suggestions of a rift between the two.
- Abou Sayyaf al-Ansari pledges allegiance to Daesh from Tripoli and calls on Sunni enrolled in the Lebanese Army to defect and repent.
- Former PM Saad Hariri urges the Sunni not to slide into the war between Hezbollah and Al-Qaeda.

January 26

- Muslim scholars protest near Lebanon's Ministry of National Defense, demanding the release of Sheikh Omar Al-Atrash suspected of having links to groups responsible for the car bombings hitting Lebanon and accusing the Army of hostility against the Sunni.
- Minister Gebran Bassil refuses portfolio rotation, stressing that the energy portfolio is strategic to the Christians.
- A ceremony is held in Meniyeh to mark the 6th anniversary of the assassination of ISF Major Wissam Eid and his bodyguard under the patronage of former PM Saad Hariri.
- US Ambassador David Hale leaves for Riyadh to discuss with Saudi officials international support for Lebanon.

January 27

- Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon receives MP Walid Jumblat and the meeting tackles the latest developments.

- In response to the accusations thrown at the Army, President Michel Suleiman assures, following his meeting with Army Commander, General Jean Qahwaji, that the Lebanese Army is acting in conformity with the laws and the national interest.
- Mysterious blasts erupt in an Israeli army post near the Lebanese border town of Adaisseh.

Minister of Energy and Water Gebran Bassil reports that the initial scans for oil were promising.

January 28

- For the ninth time, Speaker Nabih Berri adjourns the legislative session until March 4 due to lack of quorum.
- Former PM Fouad Seniora meets Sheikh Sabah Ahmad Al-Sabah in Kuwait.
- Former Minister Michel El-Murr holds a banquet to honor his son, Elias El-Murr, for his new INTERPOL position in the presence of Lebanese President Michel Suleiman, PM-Designate Tammam Salam, and other senior officials. General Michel Aoun and MP Walid Jumblat both were absent.
- Following the Change and Reform Bloc's weekly meeting, General Michel Aoun slams PM-designate for tampering with the criteria of proper cabinet formation and urges him to relinquish his position.
- STL continues to hear testimonies of prosecution witnesses.

January 29

- Hezbollah politburo member, Mahmoud Qmati, announces in the name of the delegation visiting General Michel Aoun that those who called for portfolio rotation agreed to keep the energy and telecoms portfolios with Aoun.
- State Commissioner to the Military Court Judge Saqr Saqr charges Jamal Daftardar and 12 others with ties to the Abdullah Azzam Brigades.
- Speaker Nabih Berri says following Wednesday's meeting he has done his part with regard to the efforts of forming the cabinet and is awaiting the results.

- Youssef Medhat As-Saghir, a Lebanese citizen from Bekaasafrin dies while fighting alongside the Syrian opposition.
- Muslim scholars continue their visits to top officials, including Justice Minister and ISF acting Director General, to demand the release of Sheikh Omar Al-Atrash.

January 30

- Lebanese Army Intelligence refers Sheikh Omar Al-Atrash to the military judiciary after investigations have proved his involvement in the latest explosions and his ties to suicide bombers linked to Daesh and An-Nusra Front.
- Minister of Energy and Water Gebran Bassil stresses on Kalam El-Nass talk show that Hezbollah is not designated to negotiate on behalf of the Free Patriotic Movement.
- "It is sad that the fate of Christians and their strategic status is now a function of oil and gas," says MP Boutros Harb following his meeting with US Ambassador David Hale.
- Lebanese professor, who has invented a new technique that turns garbage to coal, shows the end product of his invention in Ashrafieh.

January 31

- Lebanese Army Commander heads to KSA to discuss means to improve bilateral military cooperation.
- In a statement issued following his meeting with MP Moueen Merhbi and a number of Muslim scholars from Tripoli and the North, MP Khaled Daher slams the Lebanese Army for becoming a tool manipulated by Hezbollah.
- During an interview with the pan-Arab, Beirut-based al-Mayadeen television, General Michel Aoun assures that he has not yet decided whether or not he would run for presidency, reiterating that he rejects the principle of portfolio rotation as it is not stipulated by the constitution. ●

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY- LEBANON

LEBANON'S 1956 EARTHQUAKE

WHAT IF IT STRUCK TODAY?

Is Lebanon at risk of a devastating earthquake in the future? This recurrent question fails to receive absolute answers, although the current geological parameters raise the possibility of an earthquake, especially that the country lies on three main fault lines:

- The Yammouneh Fault, the longest fault in Lebanon
- The Roum Fault, which runs from south Lebanon to the town of Roum in the Jezzine Qada'a, then deviates towards Beirut.
- The Serghaya Fault, which runs from Syria to Lebanon and then to Palestine.

Situated in a seismic-prone zone, Lebanon has been struck by several earthquakes in the past centuries and decades. In 551 AD, parts of the city of Beirut were reduced to ruins by an earthquake. In 1170, the city of Tripoli faced a similar fate. A few hundred years later, in 1759 Beirut suffered another deadly earthquake. The tremors were so strong that they were felt in Damascus and according to accounts caused the death of roughly 40,000 people.

The most recent earthquake to hit Lebanon occurred in 1956.

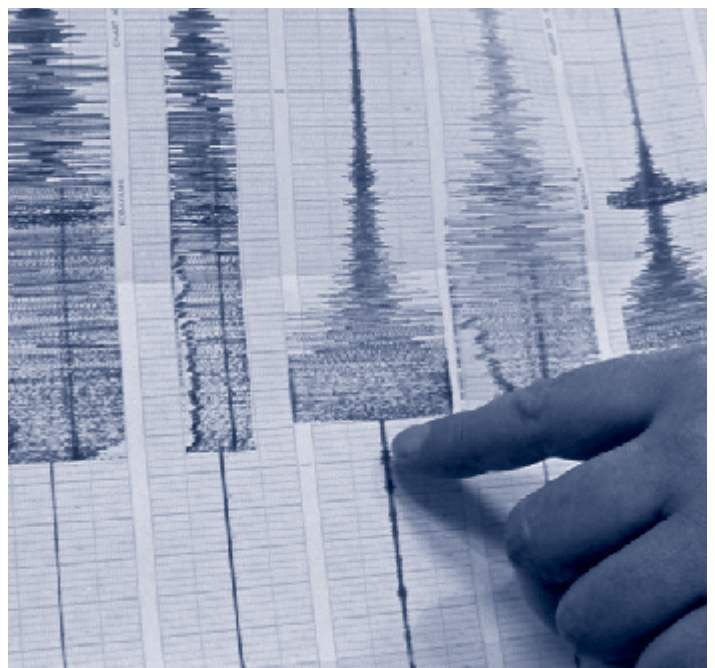
The 1956 Earthquake

On the morning of March 16th, 1956, Lebanon was hit by a catastrophic earthquake of 5.6 degrees on the Richter Scale, mainly affecting the regions of El-Shouf, Jezzine, Saida and parts of the Beqa'a. The aftershocks left 140 people dead and 500 injured and caused huge structural damage both to buildings and infrastructure. Amongst the latter were roads, which being not modern, sustained extensive damage.

The earthquake wreaked havoc on most of the houses, mainly in the towns of Chehim, where the center of the earthquake was, and in Anout, Mazboud and Joun all the way to El-Chouf and Saida. The construction was too primitive to withstand even the weakest of earthquakes, and thus approximately 6000 houses were leveled to the ground.

In response to the disaster, the state stepped in to shelter approximately 15,000 people in displacement camps and to provide them with food and medical kits and other basic survival items and heating devices to endure the freezing cold of March. 24 days later, on the 9th of April, 1956, the government formed the National Authority for Reconstruction, with a clear mission to reconstruct those areas that were affected by the earthquake.

Lebanon has several fault lines, which makes it prone to earthquakes in the future. It is certain that none of the Lebanese wishes to re-live the misery that followed the disaster in 1956. Even though Lebanon back then was a solid state with strong administrative and financial structure, it still could not prevent the repercussions of the earthquake, from displacement to delay in compensating the injured parties, etc. Because of the deficiencies and failures marring the effectiveness of the government today, Lebanon is unlikely to face up to a disaster on such a scale when it occurs. Thus, the Lebanese will probably end up being stranded for months or even years, lying in wait for the promised aid for reconstruction. ●



THIS MONTH IN HISTORY- ARAB WORLD

TUNISIA GAINS INDEPENDENCE ON MARCH 20, 1956

After 75 years of occupation, Tunisia gained its independence from France on March 20, 1956, forcing powerful colonial troops to bow to the will of a people that had struggled and stood up for the legitimacy of its rights.

Great Britain and France, as colonial powers, had been competing for influence in Tunisia, long a province of the Ottoman Empire, since 1871. During the 1878 Congress of Berlin, a diplomatic compromise was reached whereby Britain seized Cyprus from the Ottomans and France took over Tunisia. Using the pretext that Tunisian tribes had advanced towards the French colony of Algeria, the French sent their troops across the Tunisian borders and besieged the palace of Bey Muhammad As-Sadiq, forcing him to sign the Bardo Treaty and thus turning Tunisia into a French protectorate.

Although they maintained the system of Beys (the Ottomans title of provincial rulers), the French were the ones exercising actual power in the country, a domination reinforced by the 1883 Al-Marsa Convention signed by Ali Bey, successor of As-Sadiq. The strict French military rules did not allow initially for any systematic political opposition. However, demonstrations started to pick up pace, encouraged by two incidents: the Djellaz riots that erupted when the Tunisian municipality falling under French control applied for the registration of the Djellaz cemetery domain, and the boycott of Tunisian trams following the accidental death of an 8-year old Tunisian child, killed by a tram run by a French company.

On the heels of World War I, and with the US President Woodrow Wilson declaring that all peoples have the right to determine their own fate, the Constitutional Liberal Party, Destour, was founded, advocating reforms but without an explicit call for independence. Later though, the party became uncontrolled and its leader, Abdelaziz Thaalabi, was forced into exile. In the early 1930s, tensions flared

up following the Eucharistic Congress at Carthage which was deemed provoking to Islam. Tensions ran even higher when the population refused to bury French Tunisians in Muslim cemeteries.

In this atmosphere, a group of Tunisian nationalist politicians, lead by Habib Bourguiba, founded the New Constitutional Liberal Party, commonly known as the Neo Destour, in 1934. But the party was outlawed after its leader was deported to the south, only to be released again in 1936. Fed up with these incidents, the Tunisians staged violent demonstrations in 1938 demanding fairer reforms; the demonstrations cost them several casualties and fatalities. The Neo Destour was banned again and its leaders were repeatedly detained. In 1950, the Neo Destour participated in negotiations discussing Tunisia's internal autonomy but the talks produced no results and paved the way for the eruption of armed resistance against French intransigence in January 1952.

The French confronted the revolt by launching large-scale combing operations and arresting top Neo Destour officials including Habib Bourguiba. However, against the heightened Tunisian, Libyan and Algerian guerilla attacks on one hand and the deterioration of the situation in other colonies on the other, the president of the French Council, Pierre Mendes, recognized Tunisia's right to internal autonomy.

Conventions were signed in 1955 and Bourguiba returned to Tunisia as a hero. Soon after the formation of the first government on September 18, the party's secretary general Saleh Ben Youssef initiated an open conflict with Bourguiba calling for total independence and alliance with the Algerian revolution. However, Bourguiba was able to defy Ben Youssef's faction and independence was finally declared on March 20, 1956, thus ending the 75-year long protectorate era. ●



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REAL ESTATE PRICES- JANUARY 2014

The real estate market began the New Year with a modest increase in the number of transactions. Despite this, the general trend continues to exhibit sluggishness and a relative stability in prices. A slight increase (3% to 5%) has been recorded in the prices of apartments below USD 500 000 against a decrease (10% to 15%) in the prices of luxury apartments. Even short-term forecasts seem beyond possible at the moment because the market is governed by three main factors:

- The developments in the region- precisely, Syria - and their implications on Lebanon.
- The local political and economic situation.
- The size of the Lebanese and Arab capital drawn into the market for investment.

Table 1 and 2 illustrate the prices of some estates and apartments sold in January 2014.

Prices of some estates sold in January 2014			Table 1
Region	Area m ²	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Rmeil, Ashrafieh	290	2,030,000	7,000
Sodeco	790	7,702,500	9,750
Baabda			
Hazmieh	760	1,786,000	2,350
Loueizi	2,650	3,047,500	1,150
Arayya	1,200	540,000	450
Matn			
Nar el-Mawt	1,610	1,449,000	900
Bsaleem	1,800	1,980,000	1,100
Elissar	650	682,500	1,050
Aley			
Aley	1,000	170,000	170
Bshamoun	1,050	577,500	550
Kessrouan			
Adma	2,100	1,785,000	850
Adma	1,300	1,950,000	1,500
Chnanaair	2,250	1,125,000	500
Ajaltoun	1,500	600,000	400

Source: Compiled by Information International

Prices of some apartments sold in January 2014			Table 2
Region	Area m ²	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Rizk, Ashrafieh	110	385,000	3,500
Sioufi, ashrafieh	150	510,000	3,400
Gemmayzeh	170	391,000	2,300
Rmeil	120	288,000	2,400
Tallet el-Khayyat	200	640,000	3,200
Ain Mreisseh	200	880,000	4,400
Ain el-Tineh	250	1,000,000	4,000
Dennawi	160	320,000	2,000
Baabda			
Hazmieh	200	380,000	1,900
Burj el-Barajneh	150	129,000	860
Hadath	165	239,250	1,450
Yarzi	280	672,000	2,400
Baabda	230	345,000	1,500
Matn			
Mansourieh	165	222,750	1,350
Awkar	170	255,000	1,500
Sin el-Fil, Horsh Tabet	400	800,000	2,000
Rabweh	270	486,000	1,800
Qornet Chehwan	230	460,000	2,000
Ain Saadeh	200	400,000	2,000
Sin el-Fil, Habtour	190	437,000	2,300
Aley			
Khaldeh	130	130,000	1,000
Aramoun	160	184,000	1,150
Doha Aramoun	200	240,000	1,200
Bshamoun (Madares)	120	132,000	1,100
Aley	140	119,000	850
Kessrouan			
Sarba	120	144,000	1,200
Al-Bouar	100	130,000	1,300
Ajaltoun	250	250,000	1,000
Sahel Alma	140	196,000	1,400
Zouq Mosbeh	150	150,000	1,000
Jeita	170	246,500	1,450

Source: Compiled by Information International

Violence against Women

- The following information is from “Violence Against Women”, the latest available fact sheet on violence against women, published by UNITE (The United Nations’ General Assembly Campaign to End Violence against Women).
- Around 70% of women worldwide in their lifetime are the victims of violence in one form or another.
- Women between the ages of 15 and 44 are at a higher risk of being victims of rape or physical abuse than suffering from cancer and malaria, involved in car accidents or war.
- The most common form of violence inflicted on women is that committed by their partner. In the United States, for example, one third of murdered women annually are killed by their partners. In South Africa, a woman is killed by an intimate partner every six hours.
- It is estimated that more than 60 million girls worldwide are married off before the age of 18. Forcing young girls into marriage is still a common phenomenon worldwide.
- Between 20,000 and 50,000 women were subjected to rape and sexual violence in the conflict that took place in Bosnia in the early 1990s. In 1994, the genocide in Rwanda came with the abuse of 250,000 to 500,000 women. More than 60% of HIV-positive youths between the ages of 15 and 24 are women. The sexual abuse of women during times of conflict has become a tactic of war in many parts of the world and continues to be reported in areas of conflict.
- 80% of victims of human trafficking are women.



The Rafic Hariri International Airport saw a 5% increase in the number of passengers in 2013. The passenger traffic stood at 6,264,368 compared to 5,960,414 in 2012. The increase recorded in 2012 was 7.3%.

The passengers handled in December 2013 were 510,367 in total compared to 407,664 in November 2013, i.e. up by 102,103 passengers or 25.1%. Compared to the same period in 2012, the passenger traffic rose by 14,607 or 2.9%.

Beirut International Airport

Rafic Hariri International Airport Traffic in 2013

6.2 Million Passengers and 5% Increase in Traffic

Rafic Hariri International Airport traffic in December 2013, compared to November 2013 and December 2012					Table 1
Traffic	November 2013	December 2013	December 2012	% of change November/December 2013	% of change December 2012/13
Arriving airplanes	2,137	2,647	2,540	+23.8	+4.2
Departing airplanes	2,172	2,661	2,546	+22.5	+4.5
Total no. of airplanes	4,309	5,308	5,086	+23.1	+4.3
Arriving passengers	193,931	268,941	251,129	+38.6	+7
Departing passengers	212,995	239,742	243,268	+12.5	-1.4
Transit passengers	738	1,684	1,363	+128.2	+23.6
Total no. of passengers	407,664	510,367	495,760	+25.2	+2.9
Imported goods (per ton)	5,421	5,752	4,788	+6.1	+20.1
Exported goods (per ton)	3,296	3,196	3,113	+11.3	+2.7
Total amount of goods	8,717	8,948	7,901	+2.6	+13.2

Source: Information International based on the Directorate General of Aviation

- **16** is the average number of construction-related incident reports recorded daily by the Internal Security Forces units across Lebanon. The actual number of construction violations, however, is far higher than the reported one.
- **4** is the number of countries to which the Lebanese passport holder can get an entry visa upon arrival at the airport. The countries are Malaysia, Oman, Turkey and Jordan.
- **USD 3.8 billion** is the value of the contracts signed by the Council of Development and Reconstruction in 2013. The execution of projects is expected between 2013 and 2015.
- **1262** is the number of ISF incident reports on drug use compared to 1162 in 2012 and 963 in 2011.
- **LBP 5340 billion** is the cost of public sector salaries and indemnities, which accounts for 26% of total public spending.

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SYRIA

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