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# Reconciliation, reform and resilience Positive peace for Lebanon

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# Accord

ISSUE 24

an international review of peace initiatives



**CONCILIATION  
RESOURCES**

working together for peace

Editors

**Elizabeth Picard and**

**Alexander Ramsbotham**

2012

## Reconciliation, reform and resilience **Positive peace for Lebanon**



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ISSUE 24

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June 2012 // Editors

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Cover photo: Lebanese demonstrators hold a portrait of a missing boy during a protest in Beirut to demand information on loved ones, missing since the country's Civil War, on 13 April 2012.

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# Acronyms

**AUB** – American University of Beirut

**CEDAW** – Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

**CGTL** – General Confederation of Lebanese Workers

**CSO** – Civil Society Organisation

**DPO** – Disabled People’s Organisation

**EC** – European Commission

**ECHO** – European Commission’s Humanitarian Office

**EEZ** – Exclusive Economic Zone

**ENP** – European Neighbourhood Policy

**EU** – European Union

**FSI** – Lebanese Internal Security Forces

**GDP** – Gross domestic product

**IDF** – Israeli Defence Force

**IIIC** – International Independent Investigative Commission

**ILMAC** – Israeli-Lebanese Mixed Armistice Commission

**LADE** – Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections

**LAF** – Lebanese Armed Forces

**LCRN** – Lebanon Conflict Resolution Network

**LF** – Lebanese Forces

**LNM** – Lebanese National Movement

**MN** – Multinational Force

**MD** – Ministry of the Displaced

**MP** – Member of Parliament

**NGO** – Non-governmental Organisation

**PLO** – Palestinian Liberation Organisation

**PSP** – Progressive Socialist Party

**SLA** – South Lebanon Army

**SOLIDE** – Support of Lebanese in Detention or in Exile

**STL** – Special Tribunal for Lebanon

**TCC** – Troop Contributing Countries

**UAR** – United Arab Republic

**UN** – United Nations

**UNDP** – United Nations Development Programme

**UNIFIL** – United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

**UNRWA** – United Nations Relief and Works Agency

**UNSC** – United Nations Security Council

**UNSCR** – United Nations Security Council Resolution

**USAID** – United States Agency for International Development

**VAT** – Value added tax

**WTO** – World Trade Organisation

# Map of Lebanon

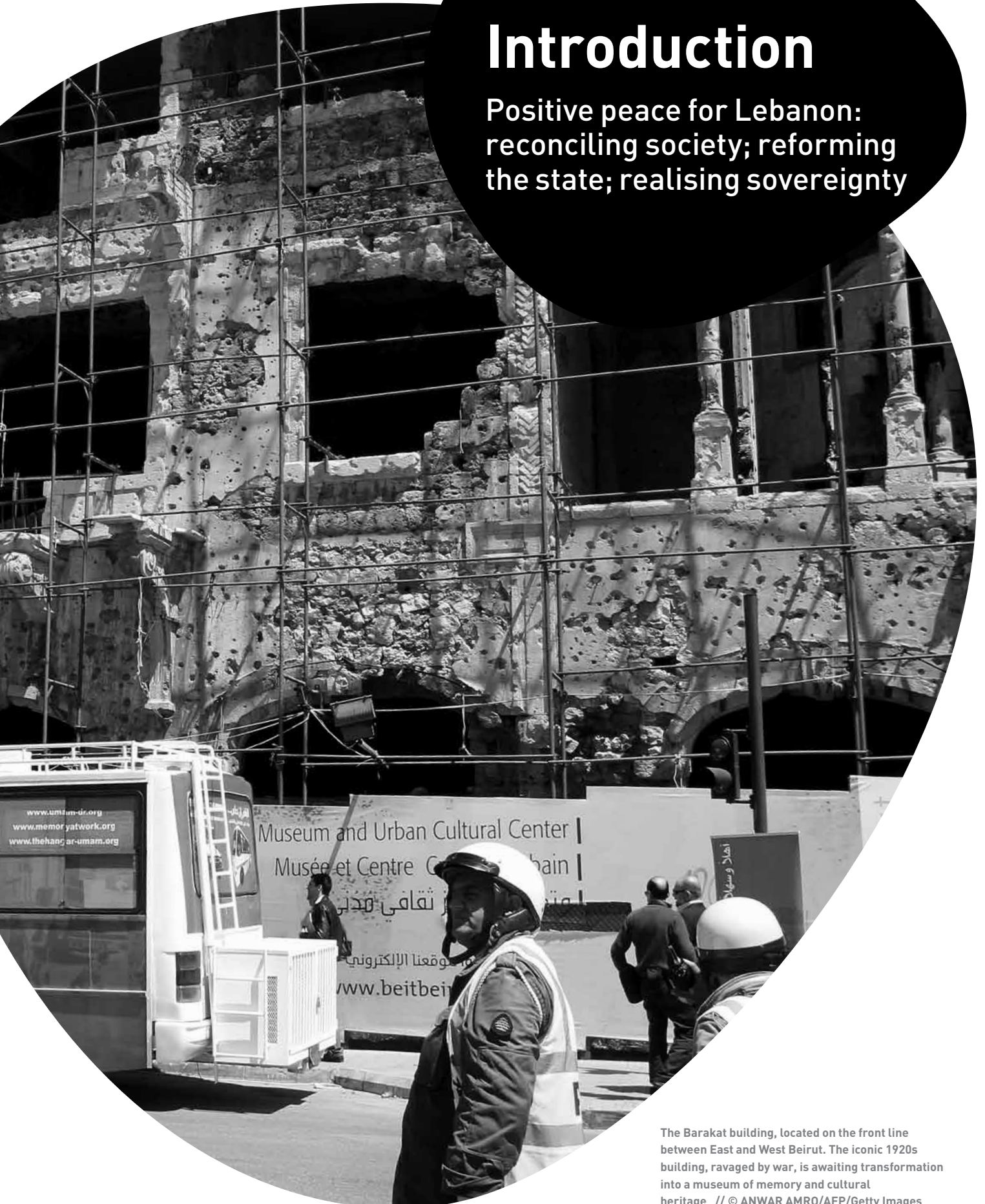




## Section 1

# Introduction

Positive peace for Lebanon:  
reconciling society; reforming  
the state; realising sovereignty



The Barakat building, located on the front line between East and West Beirut. The iconic 1920s building, ravaged by war, is awaiting transformation into a museum of memory and cultural heritage // © ANWAR AMRO/AFP/Getty Images



# Introduction

## Positive peace for Lebanon: reconciling society; reforming the state; realising sovereignty

Elizabeth Picard and Alexander Ramsbotham

Lebanon's much praised post-war model of power sharing and liberal economic growth has failed to deliver for most Lebanese. As repeated outbreaks of political violence since the 1989 Taif Agreement testify, a fundamentally different approach is needed to transform negative and precarious stability in Lebanon into positive and resilient peace.

### Peace deficit on three levels

The 'peace dividend' for the Lebanese is undermined by three levels of predicament – social, governmental and regional-international – which interact, reverberate and fuel each other. The Lebanese situation is often presented as an inextricable conundrum at the mercy of external influences, to which many Lebanese (and also analysts) have surrendered, jokingly remarking that their country survived nearly a century of crises and has not done too badly 'in the end'.

Such a judgment is offhand, outdated, obstructive and inaccurate. As the contributions to this Accord publication show, Lebanese are not merely passive victims of a violent fate, determined largely outside their country's borders. Many are hungry for change and have been actively exploring opportunities and pushing boundaries to achieve it.

Independent Lebanon appeared to do relatively well in the 1950s and 1960s. But social tensions grew alongside the economy and a shifting demographic balance saw rural communities (such as the Shia) expand twice as rapidly as urban communities (such as the Greek-Orthodox). Regional crises surrounding the fate of the Palestinians – not least the relocation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation to Lebanon from the late 1960s – succeeded from the early 1970s in destroying 'miracle' Lebanon. War broke out in 1975.

Today's situation is comparable with the pre-war years, when the combination of domestic tensions and regional pressures resulted in the breakdown of the Lebanese state

and the destruction of the country. In fact, contemporary conditions are perhaps even more precarious. Economic outlooks are grim (although a few dream of 'sea-gas boom' from recent discoveries in the eastern Mediterranean), emigration of qualified Lebanese is even higher than during wartime, and acute underdevelopment of peripheral areas has still not been properly addressed.

In the Middle East region, religious intolerance has replaced Arab nationalist pressures. Sectarian tensions within Lebanon are legitimised and reinforced by a global discourse on 'cultural differences' and by regional appetites for power, namely between Riyadh and Tehran. Palestinian-Israeli relations are deteriorating as military containment appears to be the only 'solution' in town. In response, Lebanese leaders withdraw into conservatism and seek to protect their privileges, blocking practically every peacebuilding initiative and expected reform.

### Peace process: *plus ça change?*

Flaws in the Taif peace settlement continue to resonate and undermine peace today, leaving Lebanese political life stuck in stalemate that has lasted longer than the war itself. In reality, Taif was effectively a ceasefire with ambitious – but hollow – promises, which it is doubtful that those involved in its creation intended to fulfil. Agreed by elites (pre-war and wartime), the revised 'national deal' to share power amongst a conservative oligarchy has done little to extend political inclusion or representation, but rather has enabled leaders to tighten their grip. Confessional political structures decided at Taif have facilitated the extension, elaboration and entrenchment of civil war sectarian animosities.

Lebanon's post-war 'cosmetic democracy' has left internal tensions vulnerable and sensitive to regional interests and instability – namely Syrian interference and Israeli armed threat and incursions. However, looking primarily

outside Lebanon's borders for either causes or solutions to Lebanon's problems mitigates its political leaders' domestic responsibilities, and ignores the Lebanese people's insights and capacity to affect change. Key issues like Hezbollah's arms are intrinsically linked to Syrian-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli developments; but Hezbollah is also a domestic actor.

It is time for Lebanon to wake up to the reality of its situation. If there is to be a democratic and prosperous Lebanon tomorrow – or, some might question, even a Lebanon at all – there should be a move away from criticism, illusion, despair or passive acceptance, to a sense of responsibility, accountability and active initiative. Lebanon's people need to find ways to empower themselves to move forward, so that the reforms which were deemed necessary at Taif are implemented, so that building national consensus and reconciliation are pursued as priorities, and so that policies are adopted that allow their state to survive and manage its perilous environment.

## Structure of the publication

This issue of *Accord* is organised into three sections – reconciling society; reforming the state; and realising sovereignty. These structural distinctions should not disguise that each section reflects questions discussed in the other two. The issues examined receive complementary analysis and understanding through changes in perspective, as actors from each level – local, national and international – are interrelated through overlapping associations and interests.

The publication includes contributions from diverse perspectives and disciplines: applied and analytical, and from inside and outside the country – including researchers, analysts, activists, marginalised voices, parties, politicians, practitioners and policymakers.

While we commissioned and interviewed a range of different actors, we paid special attention to underprivileged and – represented groups in Lebanon's misleadingly open and egalitarian society: namely youth and women. Representation according to a pervading narrative of the history of identity groups and their interactions are of particular importance to a study of peace in Lebanon, in order to take stock of the disparate demands and attitudes of the Lebanese toward their society, state and public administration.

## Reconciling society

This section of the publication looks at social challenges to building peace in Lebanon, discussing issues of memory, identity, marginalisation, reconciliation and citizenship, as well as the potential for social mobilisation to contribute to political change.

Sune Haugbølle introduces the section by reviewing efforts to pursue reconciliation and deal with the past. He explores issues of memory and remembering, including Lebanon's 'state-sponsored amnesia' over the war years, and the role of culture and of civil society in documenting and discussing them. He considers options to integrate civil and national reconciliation initiatives and to involve political elites, as well as the potential of rural and traditional conflict resolution structures to engage grassroots.

To illustrate civil initiatives for memorialisation, Liliane Kfoury describes the Association for Documentation and Research (UMAM D & R), which gathers wartime testimonies of combatants, politicians, civilians, the displaced and relatives of missing people, in order to help preserve 'collective memory' of the war.

In conversation with *Accord*, Ahmad Beydoun describes how the teaching of history is sectarian for many Lebanese. He stresses the importance of narrative diversity in recollecting experiences of the war, and the potential of a coordinated national educational curriculum to help accommodate and acknowledge different views as a means to improve understanding of the 'other'.

Civil mobilisation has had a mixed record as an agent for political change in Lebanon. Marie-Noëlle AbiYaghi reviews the history and impact of Lebanese civil activism from before the war until the present day. She focuses in particular on anti-sectarian demonstrations in Beirut in 2011, which not only exposed growing popular appetite for de-confessionalised politics, but also reinforced civil society's susceptibility to political interests and interference.

Looking more specifically at youth activism and in particular the 2005 'Independence Intifada' demonstrations against Syrian occupation, Jamil Mouawad discusses the political potential of young Lebanese.

Dima de Clerck then reviews post-war rehabilitation of demobilised Lebanese militia, describing how this has been piecemeal, selective and politicised. Many former fighters remain unemployed and have been left to deal with the psychosocial scars of wartime violence. The fact that a new post-war generation of youth is being recruited through a heroic imagining of the war highlights the dangers of neglecting rehabilitation of ex-fighters.

Religion is central to Lebanese politics and society. Mohammad Sammak reviews priorities and processes of interfaith dialogue to promote tolerance and reconciliation. He describes challenges related to the conflation of religion and politics, as well as the contribution of faith to peacebuilding, including the extent of its social reach: down

to grassroots; out to peripheries; up to political elites; and across sectarian divides.

Fawwaz Traboulsi discusses secularisation, in particular Lebanon's constitutional schizophrenia that simultaneously promises and precludes deconfessionalisation. He also considers the problems of religious consensus and of maintaining the political *status quo*, and the relationship between secularisation and Lebanese national identity.

The patriarchal structure of Lebanese society helps to entrench legal and political restraints on women's participation. Based on interviews with women from Lebanese political parties, Victoria Stamadianou reflects on the possible role of both Lebanese women and of women's issues in promoting trans-sectarian political engagement and peacebuilding.

Finally in this section, Nawaf Kabbara describes how Lebanon's disabled community successfully contributed to anti-war movements using a rights-based approach. Since the end of the war, however, civil society has struggled to sustain cohesion: the disability movement has felt abandoned, while other organisations have become wary of challenging powerful Lebanese religious institutions.

## Reforming the state

The Taif Agreement included comprehensive pledges for political reform. This section of the publication reflects on the reality of post-war experiences of institutional and constitutional reform as a means to promote more participatory and representative governance, highlighting successes, failures, obstacles and opportunities.

In an introduction to the section, Karam Karam explains how both the content and implementation of Taif have precluded genuine political reform or social change, due to structural defects including: flawed revision of confessional power sharing arrangements and a dysfunctional executive Troika; surrendering core state responsibilities to Syrian tutelage; guaranteeing power to warlords; and the marginalisation of key social issues. Karam suggests constructive lessons for the future, based on a framework of political decentralisation and balanced reform 'packages' as part of a clear, incremental strategy.

Interviews with Ali Fayyad (8 March Alliance/Hezbollah MP) and Samir Frangieh (member of the General Secretariat of 14 March Alliance and a former MP) then present perspectives from Lebanon's two main opposing political blocs, regarding: internal and external sources of tension; implications of Taif for contemporary political stability; developing the social contract in Lebanon; and priorities for the future.

Lebanon's convoluted consociational political system is associated with many of the country's political problems. Ziad Majed unpacks its intricacies and impediments, explaining how its apparent intent to guarantee participation in state institutions through consensus and inclusion has in fact obstructed reform, empowering elites that are resistant to change.

Mass displacement during the war resulted in 'confessional cleansing' in many areas. Aida Kanafani-Zahar looks at state returnee policy in the Mount Lebanon region, which purportedly prioritised reconciliation between Christian and Druze to prevent cyclical violence, but in fact has left little room for victims' testimony or memories. Broader goals of 'pacification' and a communal rather than individual rationale have fuelled sectarianism and fed into national-level power struggles.

Chandra Lekha Sriram asks if the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, set up to investigate the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, can support a broader function for transitional justice and peace. To date, both the creation and subsequent operation of the tribunal have been politically divisive, generating parliamentary stand-offs and government collapse.

Post-war reconstruction in Lebanon has favoured the powerful. Exploring the intricacies of monetary and fiscal policies, Sami Atallah explains intrinsic and unhealthy links between politics and economics in Lebanon since the end of the war and how these have impacted negatively on social justice and stability. He also points to the failure of international engagement to challenge these dynamics.

## Realising sovereignty

Instability in Lebanon is often blamed on external influence and interference: Syria and Iran, Israel and the West, Palestine and the Palestinians, and Shia and Sunni tensions. This section examines Lebanon within its regional context, unpacking internal and external relationships, and asking how Lebanese people and politics can safeguard domestic priorities against regional hegemony and transnational dynamics, to build sovereign resilience from the inside out.

Marie-Joëlle Zahar opens the section by challenging prevailing perceptions of the Lebanese as powerless victims of their external environment. She suggests that the roots of Lebanon's vulnerability are internal and emanate from state weakness, as suspicion among Lebanese communities and endemic distrust of Beirut to uphold citizens' interests encourages Lebanese leaders to actively seek protection from abroad.

Joseph Bahout examines armed groups in Lebanon and their various agendas, internal and external. He focuses on

Hezbollah: its relations with both its domestic constituency and with Syria, and its role as a resistance force to Israel. He reflects on the potential impact of the Syrian crisis, and the challenges that overlapping agendas present within Lebanon – for dialogue and internal consensus, and for stability and sovereignty.

Michael Kerr then reviews the largely negative impact of external interventions in Lebanon with regard to consolidating peace. These are primarily driven by external (often conflicting) strategic interests, and interact with Lebanon's sectarian political power sharing system to encourage and embed rivalry amongst Lebanese leaders seeking external patronage.

Shia and Sunni militancy are increasing sources of tension in Lebanon. Bernard Rougier reflects on their evolution, domestic constituencies, regional ties and international drivers and catalysts. Meanwhile developments in Syria also exacerbate friction. More accurate and deeper analysis of the intricacies of these relationships would help to clarify distinctions between social ties, identity values and interests of political entrepreneurs. Combined with the development of communication between the relevant leaders in Lebanon, this could facilitate better understanding as a basis for peacebuilding.

The Palestinian question has weighed heavily in Lebanon, before, during and after the war. Articles by Sari Hanafi and Suhail Natour explore the contemporary status of Palestinians in the country – legally and socio-economically, as well as links to religious radicalism. Hanafi focuses on governance within Palestinian camps and relations with broader Lebanese politics, arguing that a more constructive approach to governance and rights for Palestinians would in fact reinforce Lebanese sovereignty and security. Natour unpacks relationships between Islamism and Palestinian political mobilisation – in Lebanon and the region more broadly.

Nahla Chahal explores the reciprocal nature of Lebanon's relationship with Syria, reviewing contemporary history to explain its evolution and complexity at political and socio-economic levels. She emphasises that recent events in Syria and their cross-border impact in Lebanon highlight the need for Lebanon to disentangle itself from its neighbour and clarify relations between the two countries.

Ghassan El-Ezzi and Oren Barak reflect on relations between Lebanon and Israel, from Lebanese and Israeli perspectives, respectively. They discuss ongoing tensions between the two countries, paying particular attention to implications for peace in Lebanon. El-Ezzi examines barriers to achieving peace – or even to opening talks – between the two countries. He looks at internal divisions

and Syrian influence in Lebanon, as well as prevailing Lebanese opinion of Israel as a military power with designs on key Lebanese resources, and explores relations between Lebanon's national security and Hezbollah's 'resistance' role. Barak focuses on more tranquil periods in relations between the two states, reflecting on lessons that might be learnt from these for improved security in the future.

General Nizar Kader focuses on challenges relating to Lebanon's borders, specifically demarcation of disputed areas like the Chebaa Farms, as well as delineating maritime boundaries in view of recent discoveries of natural gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean. He describes how porous and disputed borders serve as pretexts for political violence or channels for illicit arms transfers. Timur Goksel then analyses the UN Interim Force for Lebanon (UNIFIL), explaining that its role in patrolling Lebanon's border with Israel is more political than military. It has correspondingly played key functions in facilitating liaison between Lebanese and Israeli militaries, as well as with local Lebanese in the south.

Duccio Bandini discusses EU support for Lebanon, and in particular the role of the Instrument for Stability (IfS). EU engagement is increasingly looking to prioritise conflict sensitivity, moving beyond a primarily post-conflict recovery approach to address structural drivers of conflict. This has led to a renewed focus on supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding tools geared towards dialogue and reconciliation, promoting electoral reform and reconciliation, and emphasising participation and civil society as a means to promote inclusion.

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**Elisabeth Picard is a leading Middle East scholar and Lebanon specialist. She has written extensively about security and identity politics in the Middle East and is the author of several articles and book chapters on the Lebanese civil war, including the acclaimed Lebanon, a Shattered Country (New York: Holmes and Meier, 2002). She worked and lived in the Middle East for several years and directed the French Centre d'Études et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain in Beirut and Amman from 1997 to 2000. Dr Picard is currently Director of Research at the Institut de Recherches et d'Études sur le Monde Arabe et Musulman, at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Aix-en-Provence.**

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# Whose Lebanon?

## A post-war history of people, power and peace initiatives

Elizabeth Picard and Alexander Ramsbotham

Lebanon's civil war is history. It ended before the global proliferation of identity conflicts in the 1990s. It was characterised by its durability (April 1975-December 1990); by its complexity, made up of embedded and overlapping domestic and regional conflicts involving a wealth of actors – local and foreign, state and non-state; and by its high proportion of civilian casualties – victims of snipers, car bombs and rocket attacks as scattered fighting erupted from place to place. Goals and alliances changed apparently at random in response to external manipulation or private interests: 'like in a boxing match', the Lebanese used to say, 'rounds of fighting one after another'.

There have been positive achievements since the end of the war in terms of reconstruction (downtown Beirut), economic growth, routinisation of political life (marked by legislative, presidential and local elections), the return of Internal Security Forces to their task of daily public security, and the progressive redeployment of rehabilitated Lebanese Armed Forces over nearly all the national territory. Public administration is working, tribunals are oversubscribed.

After two decades a new generation has come of age; a generation that did not experience the civil war and which might be supposed, by now, to be living in a reconciled society. Only this is not what Lebanon looks like at present. The country's youth face a difficult future, with many excluded from a bifurcated economy, and their identity torn by competing loyalties. A well-informed analyst (Jo Bahout) even suggests that Lebanon is living in precarious parenthesis 'between two wars'.

### After Taif: what went wrong?

The Lebanese are experts at self-denunciation: of inter-communal prejudices, consumerist selfishness and a lack of public responsibility that they know describe their tired, disenchanted and self-destructive society. They can often be heard complaining that wartime with its wealth

of war money and unruly possibilities was better than the grim and hopeless post-war period. Among all the nation's constituencies there is nostalgia for a bygone era of peaceful communal coexistence, security and prosperity – although the same constituencies are as quick to deny responsibility for common losses.

**“ Goals and alliances changed apparently at random in response to external manipulation or private interests: 'like in a boxing match', the Lebanese used to say, 'rounds of fighting one after another' ”**

For the government and the political classes it seems no lessons have been learnt about how and why Lebanon spiralled into war in the 1970s, nor how to prevent recurrence. There is no consensus on the causes of the war: that it was imposed on the Lebanese by external actors – Syria, Israel and to begin with the Palestinians; or that the growing imbalance between a dominant minority and an expanding impoverished majority could not but have sparked domestic reaction and mobilisation of confessional groups. Since the 1989 Taif Agreement, tension between the wealthy few and the rest of the population (of which one third lives under the poverty line) has in fact steadily increased.

Neither is there consensus on solutions and methods for building peace. Peace initiatives to date have been uneven and incomplete. Taif was primarily (although not only) an agreement to end the war and entrust Lebanon's new political order to Syrian hands. The renewal of the confessional power sharing system allowed post-war state elites to consolidate aggravated competition in order to



promote their own confessional constituencies, paralysing long-awaited reforms in public administration and the exercise of justice. External reconstruction assistance from international institutions, Western and Arab countries, or Iranian subsidies to Hezbollah, fuelled splits in the political leadership. These became blatant after Syrian withdrawal in 2005: notably between the opposing 8 March (pro-Syria and Iran) and 14 March (anti-Syria and pro-West) alliances.

During the fifteen years of Syria's 'mandate' over Lebanon, a new political class joined the traditional representatives of powerful families who had dominated the country for decades. Ex-warlords became politicians thanks to an extensive amnesty law, and business leaders privileged under Syrian patronage were able to protect their economic interests through inter-sectarian deals. Preoccupied with their private interests, they neglected the restoration of key infrastructure (distribution of electricity is a striking example, made obvious to visitors by repeated power cuts), and left a bloated public administration plagued with corruption.

### **Surrendering sovereignty: external ties and influence**

Disenchantment within society and state paralysis in Lebanon today takes place in a regional context of dangerous instability.

Lebanon's extreme sensitivity to its environment can be explained by its small size (some 14,800 km<sup>2</sup>) and the segmentation of its society and political life, as well as by the relative demographic weight of its diaspora: several millions compared with the 4.5 million domestic population. Each party and communal group has traditionally been in search of an external patron since the mid-nineteenth century (with European interventions of 1843 and 1860). They seek protection from without, rather than building resilience from within, but at the same time accuse foreign interests of projecting regional wars onto their territory.

The early 1990s suggested an era of optimism in the Near East. The end of the Lebanese civil war coincided with the liberation of Kuwait and the internationally-sponsored Arab-Israeli Madrid Conference, soon followed by Palestinian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli treaties. But stalemate and deterioration were close behind: the region, and especially Lebanon, did not receive the expected 'peace dividend'; bilateral peace negotiations with Israel were placed on hold and Lebanon was struck by two heavy Israeli air attacks in retaliation for Hezbollah operations over the border in 1993 and 1996.

Moreover some 450,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have been both excluded by the Lebanese state and

let down by the failure of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. In refugee camps after the war, young Palestinians have become increasingly swayed by Islamist rather than nationalist mobilisation, and have played their part in regional Islamist armed and militant movements.

The 2000s witnessed further deterioration. Hezbollah forces – the only Lebanese militia spared demobilisation in 1991, justified through their function as 'resistance' to Israel – received extensive military support from Iran with the aid of Syria. After unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces in 2000, Hezbollah continued to launch skirmish operations in the border region between Lebanon, Israel and Syria. Marginal territorial disputes along the border (at Chebaa, Kfar-Shuba and Ghajar) provided the pretext for all-out war between Hezbollah and Israel Defense Forces in the summer of 2006, resulting in major civilian casualties and destruction of infrastructure.

In the broader Middle East, Islamist trans-boundary mobilisation, born out of the wars in Afghanistan and Bosnia in the 1990s, assumed an increasingly dangerous tone – through the 9/11 attacks and then the war in Iraq in 2003. In Lebanon, it was not only Palestinian youth but also disenfranchised Lebanese Sunnis from peripheral regions (Akkar, Dinniye) who participated in regional jihad against armed forces in the region seen as pro-western, pro-Israeli and secularist, as well as against Shia groups who were considered impious competitors.

Lebanese towns such as Tripoli and Sidon were the scene of terrorist operations from the late 1990s. In 2007 the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) fought a three-month war to defeat a jihadist stronghold in the refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared. A few years later, the spread of fighting between Syrian and opposition forces in Homs has again stressed the significance of Islamic militant networks whose political agenda runs counter to the logic of a power sharing state.

### **New Cold Wars and domestic fracture**

Lebanon since 2010 has been trapped in a new global Cold War that pits Western states (and their Israeli ally) against 'returned' and new challengers – such as Russia and other emerging powers. In the Middle East specifically a new Arab Cold War (a development from the Arab Cold War of the Nasserist period) oppose states (such as Syria) and forces (such as Hezbollah or Palestinian Hamas) led by Shia Iran, against states (such as Jordan) and forces (such as the Hariri dynasty's Sunni Future Movement in Lebanon) supported by Saudi Arabia.

These fractures together with underlying regional strategic issues reverberate within Lebanon, splitting the political

scene into two camps after Rafiq al-Hariri's assassination in February 2005, and paralysing the government's activities, whether headed by the 8 or 14 March Alliances.

### **Syrian withdrawal: sovereignty regained?**

2005 should have marked a clear improvement in the consolidation of peace in Lebanon and the return of Lebanese sovereignty. Israel had withdrawn to the UN Blue Line in 2000. The Syrian military pulled out of Lebanon in April 2005, and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad made an official commitment to respect Lebanese independence.

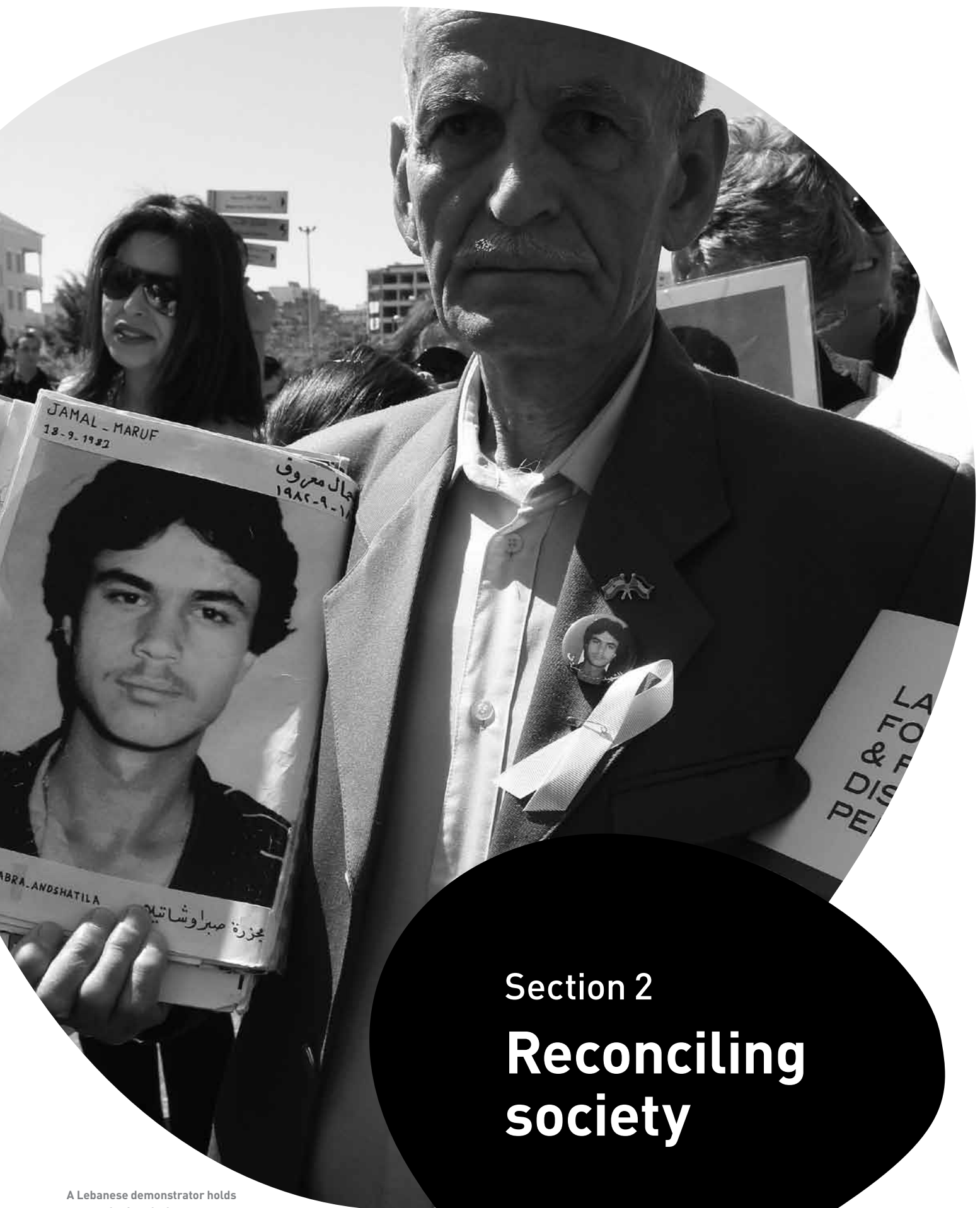
But Lebanese political life has never been so calamitous (with more than 18 months of government paralysis in 2006–07 and again in 2010) and sectarian tensions so evident (with Shia-Sunni open battles in Beirut in 2008 and Sunni-Alawite violence in Tripoli in 2009 and 2011). The Syrian 'lid', which had curbed reform after the Taif Agreement, was lifted, but still strife between the two multi-sectarian coalitions has plagued the three subsequent presidencies, has suspended legislative activities and has placed conflict in the heart of the Council of Ministers.

The Doha Accord of May 2008, agreed between rival Lebanese factions to bring an end to 18 months of political stalemate, was a typical example of unconstitutional gerrymandering that underpins Lebanese politics.

Acknowledging its impotence – or the absence of common will – the Lebanese political class turned to Euro-Arab patronage in order to impose a truce, another power sharing 'formula' (two thirds for the majority and a blocking third for the opposition in the government) and an ad hoc, pre-negotiated legislative election in 2009.

**“ The Syrian 'lid', which had curbed reform after the Taif Agreement, was lifted, but still strife between the two multi-sectarian coalitions has plagued the three subsequent presidencies ”**

Nevertheless, Doha's precariousness exposes not just the superficiality of peace deals in Lebanon, but also that today's Lebanese political leaders are incapable of taking responsibility for the country and its people, and cannot but act as protégés of foreign powers in a tradition now two centuries old. An impertinent observer might say of Lebanon's leaders, 'Do they really need a state? Do they deserve sovereignty?'



## Section 2

# Reconciling society

A Lebanese demonstrator holds a portrait of a missing young man during a protest in Beirut to demand information on loved ones, missing since the country's Civil War, on 13 April 2012 // © Anwar Amro/ AFP/ Getty Images

# Dealing with Lebanon's past

## Remembering, reconciliation, art and activism

Sune Haugbølle

Twenty years after the official end of the civil war, Lebanese society is constructing memories of it in ways that are not necessarily conducive to reconciliation between the country's sectarian and political groups. This problem is related to a kind of state-sponsored amnesia that coexists with the widely differing and strongly politicised narratives of the war that are central to the identity of particular political or sectarian groups. The challenge is not so much to break with amnesia, but to find a way to accommodate existing peace, reconciliation and memory initiatives – in art, culture and civil society – with the political and social powerbrokers in the country.

### Memory initiatives since the civil war

Lebanon's collective amnesia, resulting partly from the general amnesty law of 1991, has been fostered by political elites who played a role in the civil war and have refused to foster public debates that could implicate them. In protest against this, the country's intellectuals, artists and activists have since the mid-1990s campaigned for a public process of memorialisation. They point to the fact that there are very few national monuments to the war, too many sectarian commemorations, no official research centres and no political will to support critical discussions about the war.

The role of 'memory makers' has been to foster national recollection by promoting different kinds of social activism, debate and cultural production to shed light on the war years. An abundance of films, articles, books and events have been produced, and a number of well-established NGOs carry out community-based and youth-focused projects that stress a causal link between remembrance of the war and inter-confessional reconciliation. However it is an open question as to whether these have succeeded in breaking the silence on a national level – let alone in

achieving the more ambitious goal of breaking the cycle of violence that has arguably fed wars throughout Lebanese history (in 1843, 1860 and 1958).

In the past seven years, since the Syrian army left Lebanon, the country has experienced a series of dramatic events, from the killing of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, the ensuing 'Independence Intifada', the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, prolonged government crises, Sunni-Shiite tensions and a looming confrontation over the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

**“ Lebanon's collective amnesia, resulting partly from the general amnesty law of 1991, has been fostered by political elites”**

A crucial hindrance for free, public debate about the war is the fact that the vast majority of Lebanese continue to live within the confines of sectarian neighbourhoods, associations, schools and even media. Processes of sectarian segregation resulting from wartime violence have only been partly reversed in the post-war period. An attempt to create a common curriculum for Lebanese history books faltered in 2001 owing to disagreements over a commonly acceptable narrative about the civil war. Sectarian divisions and patterns of sociability, as well as the physical division of the country into neighbourhoods, areas and villages along sectarian lines, has in effect reproduced skewed historiographies of the war [see *Ahmad Beydoun article p. 19*].

In defiance of sectarian narratives about the war, civil society groups, media organisations and artists continue to promote various forms of memory work aimed at countering what they see as misinformation and distorted interpretations of the past. As a result, despite much talk about collective amnesia, there is now not just a lively public (albeit rather elitist) debate about the war, but also one about the difficulties of remembering and representing it. This debate now has a considerable past of its own: new participants in the debate perform on the basis of older argumentation in more or less conscious and critical ways. Usually this argumentation is not supported by academic studies of the war, but is largely based on particular narratives about it and about memory. Professional historians could play a central role here in furthering debates based on actual historical research. Projects aimed at involving historians would be a welcome addition to existing initiatives dominated either by youth education or art projects.

### **The legacy of wartime activism**

Civil war memorialisation began during the war. Films by Maroun Baghdadi, Jean Chamoun and Mai Masri, novels by Elias Khoury, not to mention the rich genre of wartime songs or the Lebanese press, all deal with the social and individual effects of war. After the war, other genres like experimental video, collective research projects, installations and web-based art have added to the huge body of war-related work.

Lebanese civil society witnessed a strong peace movement during the war aimed at ending violence and maintaining personal links across the infamous Green Line that divides East and West Beirut [see *Marie-Noelle AbiYaghi article, p.20*]. Many activists who have engaged in post-war reconciliation have built on their wartime experience in the non-violence movement, not least their background in anti-sectarianism, which has influenced the strongly anti-sectarian, often secularist discourse of many memory and reconciliation projects.

Today many memory activists have a keen awareness of competing discourses about the war and their political and ideological anchoring. Several generations of artists are united through influential artists' groups, most notably Ashkal Alwan (The Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts). Like any cultural field, Lebanon's art and cultural scene is fraught with political and generational divisions, which mirror ideological schisms in society. Some artists have even questioned whether the dominant position of civil war themes in Lebanese art can be justified. Still, the notion that an unresolved bundle of memories surrounds the civil war and that it is the unique task of artists and intellectuals to enlighten the nation, continues to be the primary public

script for the Lebanese intelligentsia's view of their society and its history – and of themselves.

A plethora of civil society groups for reconciliation emerged in the mid-1990s. For example, the Lebanon Conflict Resolution Network (LCRN) is an association of civil society activists and volunteers interested in acquiring conflict resolution skills. LCRN undertakes small-scale training initiatives in Lebanon and in other Arab countries, familiarising participants with the basic concepts of conflict resolution and giving them tools to implement these. It has worked with school youth clubs and villages in Mount Lebanon. Similar skill-building projects have been run by The Permanent Peace Movement, a student-based NGO set up in 1986 focusing on peace-building through dialogue and training courses in Lebanese schools. Their projects have engaged thousands of Lebanese youth over the years and have helped to build a solid platform of smaller-scale reconciliation NGOs.

### **Reconciliation: experiences and recommendations**

On a local level, there are often long-standing customs and norms where the interventions of older authority figures have led to peaceful, non-violent mediation and arbitration. Particularly in rural Lebanon, a blend of civil law and tribal codes has long been an intrinsic part of the justice system. While these customs are no guarantee for just arbitration, national reconciliation projects could improve their outreach by overcoming their anti-sectarian bias and communicating with existing modes of reconciliation.

Activists acknowledge that reconciliation is a slow process based on the public acceptance of criminal responsibilities and mutual respect for conflicting war memories. Building commemorative monuments, writing national history and teaching history in schools needs positive interaction and cooperation between NGOs (confessional and civil), academics and political leaders. NGOs such as the Institute for Islamic-Christian Studies have targeted religious teachers in an attempt to combat stereotypes about other sects and religions. [see *Mohammad Sammak article, p.27*]

The most difficult challenge has been how to involve political leaders in the reconciliation process. Many memory activists have criticised the entire political class and prefer to work independently of the 'sectarian system'. More recently some have seen possibilities and openings: for example, several hearings organised by Memory for the Future, a coalition of intellectuals founded in 2002, have involved former militia fighters who speak from within the logic of violence and sectarianism, rather than outside it like most memory activists do. Such projects achieve a more realistic picture of the reasons people have for



remembering the war differently and for continuing to bear grudges against other groups and individuals.

Projects must not dodge hard questions and harsh worldviews if they are to be effective, and there is a basis for such an approach to succeed. Many people within the political establishment support national reconciliation and want to work for it. In 2004 and 2005, as part of the general political upheaval which culminated in the Independence Intifada, a large number of politicians began taking an interest in memory campaigns initiated by The Committee for Kidnapped and Disappeared (formed in 1982) and the Memory for the Future group. Likewise, Umam Documentation and Research, the biggest NGO devoted to memory work, is today partly funded by the Lebanese Ministry of Culture [see *Liliane Kfoury article, p. 18*]. Strong incentives exist to foster reconciliation through memory work. All possible avenues for creative participation between civil society and the Lebanese authorities should be explored.

Memory work needs to build on the experiences garnered from reconciliation conferences, hearings, programmes and publications since the civil war, organised and funded by a large number of Lebanese NGOs as well as a variety

of external actors, from USAID and EU programmes, to the International Center for Transitional Justice and Human Rights Watch. International actors could do more to pressure the Lebanese state to take issues of national reconciliation and historical consciousness seriously. It is imperative to create alternative monuments, rituals, spaces and public discourses that can challenge the politicised memory discourses that currently exist and that are reproduced within particular groups. This can be conducive to national reconciliation.

Creating an alternative culture for remembrance in itself is not enough. National and international projects should do more to engage their perceived opponents in the sectarian leadership and milieus, not least in order to gain a better understanding of why so many Lebanese hold widely different views on their national history. This means working directly with political parties and their interest groups.

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## Documenting memories of war: UMAM and The Hangar

Liliane Kfoury



Visitors watch an outdoor film screening at The Hangar, Beirut // © Zeina Assaf/The Hangar

The 'state-sponsored amnesia' regarding Lebanon's violent past is apparent in the absence of either a national archive or public library containing evidence and documentation about its recent history. In the years following the end of the 1975–90 civil war, individuals and NGOs came up with the idea of reflecting on the questions of memory, truth, society, self-reconstruction and conflict resolution through organising roundtables and debates. The work of this association, Memory for the Future, led to a roundtable and a publication in 2001. In the same period, other committees and associations formed by families and relatives of missing persons also emerged.

In an attempt to explore and understand the intricacies of the civil war years, Monika Borgmann and Lokman Slim embarked on a process of collecting testimonies, including those of combatants, politicians, civilians, displaced persons, relatives of missing people. In order to be comprehensive in their work, they cross-referenced divergent versions and testimonials, and in doing so they felt acutely the absence of a research centre that could accommodate their requirements – especially as state authorities continued to procrastinate over the restoration of the National Library and Archives.

In response to this lack of oral archive or empirical data, they established the Association for Documentation and Research (UMAM D & R) in 2004. It was initially stocked with the archives of the Slim family, which consisted of,

among other things, 'grey literature' including pamphlets, brochures, propaganda posters, and Monika's Audio Fund. The centre produced a daily press review including political articles, columns and news items. It collected archives from booksellers and libraries, while also building up its oral archives by collecting testimonies from veterans, victims and perpetrators. The Hangar was then created as a space to host various cultural and artistic events organised by UMAM D & R.

The centre is intended as a resource for all Lebanese. It is situated in the Shia suburbs, far from the usual centres of cultural and intellectual life in downtown Beirut. This is a way to open memory issues to wider audiences and to invite more privileged classes to visit less prosperous areas.

After some of its material was damaged by aerial bombardment during the 2006 war, the centre began digitising its remaining archives. It also began receiving and safeguarding private family and commercial archives. The creation of such an archive will undoubtedly help identify and preserve part of a personal and collective memory that would have been otherwise lost.

UMAM seeks to work on three levels: documentation, archiving and public dissemination. Activities include film screenings, exhibitions, roundtables and workshops on archiving, memory and the fight against violence. For example, in the summer of 2011 the Hangar hosted a seminar on the concept of transitional justice, and in October an exhibition was organised based on the archives of the Carlton Hotel – the site of several significant meetings during the war.

Work and research is financed through Lebanese associations drawing from personal and family funds, as well as international donors including the European Union, the United Nations and other states.

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## War, peace and history in Lebanon

### A conversation with Ahmad Beydoun



**Ahmad Beydoun holds a doctorate from the Sorbonne. He taught sociology at the Lebanese University and has authored numerous books on Lebanon historiography and political system, the civil war and the quest for Lebanese national identity.**

#### **How do contradictory visions of Lebanon's history and the civil war relate to divergent identities, memories and perceptions of the Lebanese nation?**

The writing of history in Lebanon has imposed the idea that it is a new country that was founded in 1920 through contentious procedures in which some elements disagreed even on its existence as a legitimate state. A dominant group – Christians in general and Maronites in particular – saw the founding of the state of Greater Lebanon as compliant with its aspirations. The overriding narrative on Lebanon's history was determined by this majority view and was imposed on other parties.

The history of Lebanon has been written in a controversial way, far from any systematic methodology. Most historians' narratives have adopted partial and sectarian premises – although respective sectarian views have not remained stable, but have moved and changed over time.

The civil war has not been submitted to the 'labour of memory' that true reconciliation would need. Attempts at writing an educational narrative of the war that have been promoted by the state have tended to reproduce the main cleavages that characterised the war itself. Efforts to develop a 'consensual' narrative have failed.

#### **What has been the impact of Lebanon's pluralistic education system and of government attempts to introduce a unified history textbook after the civil war?**

Controversy over the history textbook is demonstrated by two opposing interpretations of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the collaboration between Christian militias and Israel between 1976 and 1982. The first is that militias were defending Lebanese national identity against the Palestinian armed presence and its ambition to make Lebanon an 'alternative homeland'. This considers militia fighters who have been killed to be martyrs. The second perspective is that militias were Israeli agents and that killed fighters cannot be labelled martyrs. It is almost impossible for each point of view to recognise the other as this would challenge the legitimacy of each perspective's self-image.

This problem is also found in other decisive events in the history of Lebanon. For example concerning the struggle against the Palestinians and the 'War of the Camps' in the mid-1980s. Some of the parties involved see themselves today as defenders of the 'resistance' and of the Palestinian cause. Their leaders and their political components are key players in Lebanon's system of power. How can you write the history of the War of the Camps while the President of the Amal Movement, who was personally responsible for the War of the Camps, is the Speaker of Parliament?

Lebanon's civil war did not end with a national narrative that combined war memories. On the contrary, obfuscation and obliteration of what happened was achieved; healing was not. Obfuscation has been the linchpin of the politics of memory in Lebanon.

It is normal to have a national programme to teach history. The state, assisted by a scientific committee, relies on such a programme to select issues to be included in the history curriculum, according to standards and rules. The state takes such standards into account to authorise the use of a diversity of history books in schools. But a unified history book is a bad and pusillanimous idea. People who promote such a way forward know that there is a real problem but refuse to address it properly, trying instead to resolve it 'instantly' through a unified book. This is why I am in favour of an integrated *curriculum*, which identifies issues and defines standards of treatment, rather than a unified textbook imposed on all.

#### **What is the role of history in consolidating a shared national consciousness?**

Lebanon is a divided society. Common national awareness of this situation implies recognition of divisions, of contradictory narratives of events and contradictory judgements about them.

Taking a position on any event in such circumstances should become a gesture of peace towards other viewpoints, recognising their existence and inviting a positive step forward in response. From here Lebanese society could move toward accepting debate, criticism and differences in interpreting key events.

The work of memory will not be complete without taking into account all narratives and confronting them with one another. This is why I am against the idea of creating a unified historical narrative for people to rely on. In Lebanese society, with its multiplicity, divisions and plurality of antagonistic narratives, the desirable role for the state is in criticising history, not in creating an alternative or a parallel version of it.

*Interview by Ali Atassi*

# Civil mobilisation and peace in Lebanon

## Beyond the reach of the 'Arab Spring'?

Marie-Noëlle AbiYaghi

Lebanon's civil society is often seen as a collection of communal groups each with its own associations and structures of mobilisation. However, since the final years of the civil war, Lebanese society has also mobilised through trans-sectarian associations devoted to peacebuilding, social reconstruction and welfare, and to ecology and human and political rights. Although they have been plagued by sectarianism and undermined by sectarian elites, workers' unions and other interest groups have sought ways to mobilise to confront socio-economic crisis and to agitate for change.

What scope is there for civil mobilisation as a political agent for change in Lebanon: a weak state with a sectarian political system? What are the socio-political constraints? And what are the implications of the 'Arab Spring' and other social revolutions?

Analysis of the strategies of Lebanon's sectarian ruling elites helps to understand how authorities divide, co-opt and manipulate civil associations and collectives, in order to preserve their control or further their interests.

### Civil society in civil war

Lebanon's civil society developed from the *Nahda* movement of cultural and political renaissance that began in the late nineteenth century in the Arabic speaking regions of the Ottoman Empire. Civil society associations performed charitable work mainly directed at the 'family' or 'community' and were an expression of religious, confessional or regional identity. In the twentieth century, civil society grew rapidly with the administrative, economic and social reforms of President Fouad Chehab (1958–64), as development NGOs in particular were considered complementary to the state.

The civil war disrupted civil society's momentum. As state presence declined, civil society was called upon to act primarily as a humanitarian relief mechanism for the displaced, the wounded and the marginalised. It became common for powerful political families to 'own' private associations in order to provide for their clientele and religious community – such as the Hariri Foundation, the Randa Berri Foundation, the Bachir Gemayel Foundation and the René Moawad Foundation.

While providing humanitarian services was not contentious, many civil movements and campaigns also called for the end of the war. An estimated 19 humanitarian associations were established to deal with the consequences of the war, and 114 collective actions of civil resistance to denounce it.

The Campaign for the Kidnapped and Disappeared (*hamlat al mafqûdîn wal-makhtûfin*) illustrates how civil society began to try to challenge the state during the war. It was created in 1982 in response to an acute increase in the number of disappearances, and more specifically a radio appeal by a woman whose husband had been kidnapped. The Committee of the Parents of the Kidnapped and the Disappeared (*lajnat ahâli al mafqûdîn wal-makhtûfin*) was joined by hundreds of supporters who began to lobby their political representatives. But reports by numerous commissions of inquiry during the 1980s were ignored because most political leaders were themselves warlords or militia leaders and were directly involved in disappearances. Repeated calls by associations such as SOLIDE (Support of Lebanese in Detention or in Exile) eventually led in 2012 to a proposal for a new law that seeks the creation of an independent body to investigate the fate of the missing and disappeared.

## After the war: bridging sectarian divides

After the end of the war, civil society associations had to readjust their objectives and modus operandi to the communal and clientelist logic of the state. New advocacy groups were founded specialising in non-sectarian issues such as human rights, the environment and women's rights. Funding was mainly provided by external donors.

**“ The assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri in 2005 polarised civil society as most NGOs aligned their mission statements with the political agenda of one or other of the new ‘March’ coalitions”**

These advocacy groups were led by volunteers from all religious and confessional backgrounds, bringing together different segments of Lebanese society. Other trans-confessional initiatives were established to address public issues neglected by the political class, such as the Gathering for Municipal Elections, which was launched in the aftermath of the parliament's decision to postpone local elections in April 1997. The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) brought together more than 15 local associations in a national campaign. After four months of mobilising, petitioning and sit-ins, the campaign eventually convinced parliament to vote in favour of holding local elections on time.

This success inspired many other trans-confessional collective actions. A new generation of politically-oriented activists emerged (the 'new left') who participated in the anti-globalisation movement of 2001 (including an anti-WTO meeting in Beirut to oppose the launch of the Doha round of negotiations) and the anti-war movement of 2002–03 opposing the US-led invasion of Iraq ('No war/No dictatorships').

## Co-opting civil society

The assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri in 2005 polarised civil society as most NGOs aligned their mission statements with the political agenda of one or other of the new 'March' coalitions.

For example, during the 1990s LADE had been a forerunner in trans-communitarian civil mobilisation and had pressed for democratic reforms such as non-sectarian proportional representation in parliamentary elections. However, in 2005 in the wake of the 'Independence Intifada' and the

withdrawal of Syrian troops, LADE aligned with the 14 March coalition as most of its members and staff were part of the Democratic Left Movement, which was allied to 14 March. The 14 March government then solicited LADE to monitor legislative elections in 2005 and 2009. After 2004–05 LADE began making several concessions and treated the question of political representation and democracy in segments, ie demanding proportional representation without the necessity for representation to be non-sectarian. Democracy activists saw this as a political regression of the electoral reform movement, and a laissez-passer tactic for LADE to avoid clashing with the ruling order.

## Workers' unions

Governments have historically tried to manipulate union mobilisation by creating ad hoc syndicates and allotting leadership positions to confessional clientele, thereby contributing to the segmentation of trade unions' demands on a confessional basis.

The General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (CGTL) was, in the aftermath of the civil war, one of the rare political and social forces where strong trans-confessional identities prevailed. In May 1992 it was instrumental in bringing about the resignation of the government of Omar Karami through strikes and demonstrations to denounce inflation, high living costs and the socio-economic crisis. The movement continued until 1995, but the confessional leadership ultimately infiltrated the CGTL, neutralising it by manipulating its electoral processes.

Another example is the taxi drivers' union, created in 1969 by a group of leftist taxi drivers with the support of Kamal Jumblatt, Minister of the Interior and leader of the Progressive Socialist Party. It succeeded in negotiating the affiliation of taxi drivers to the National Social Security Fund in 1982. However, it was weakened under the Hariri government when Minister Abdallah al-Amine (1992–95) granted his Amal Movement a licence to create a new union for taxi drivers. The arrival of Trad Hamadeh (close to Hezbollah) in government in 2005 then led to the granting of another licence to create yet another taxi drivers' union – the Loyalty to the Resistance Union (*ittihād al-wafâ' lil-muqâwama*).

Governments have hijacked NGOs and trade unions, infiltrating them and weakening them from the inside. The progressive Minister of Labour, Charbel Nahas, proposed a reform package in autumn 2011 to support low-income workers, which included measures to ensure periodic adjustment of wages and to reinvigorate the role of the unions. However, this was blocked through joint opposition by CGTL leaders and 8 March (Amal and Hezbollah)



ministers in the Mikati government, as well as the March 14 coalition and Lebanon's economic chambers of commerce and industry.

## The Arab Spring

Activities in Lebanon associated with the Arab Spring have focused on how to get rid of the sectarian system and its ruling elite. In February 2011 more than 3,000 people joined a march for the overthrow of the sectarian regime (*hamlat isqât al-nidhâm al-tâ'ifi wa rumûzihi*). The demonstration grew (according to the organisers) to 10,000 and then 25,000 people on 6 and 20 March, respectively. Its organisers included leftist and secularist political groups, NGOs, gender and sexual preference collectives, and many independent activists

These demonstrations differed significantly from confessional mobilisations – such as 14 or 8 March demonstrations – as participants organised their own logistics and transportation and funded themselves through individual contributions, rather than being organised and facilitated by their political patrons. But contradictions soon started to surface, and two camps developed: 1) those that believed that accumulated reforms would lead to radical change; and 2) those arguing that a more revolutionary movement was needed to effect reform or bring down the whole system.

Secular political parties such as the Syrian Social Nationalist Party and *Kifâh al-Talâbbâ'* (close to the Iraqi Baath Party) joined the movement, sharpening the rift between the two camps. The Syrian revolt added a new problem: whether or not to support it? Political parties from both March coalitions have also tried to hijack the movement by publicly – and controversially – backing it at strategic moments.

The movement in 2011 has also sparked the birth of several campaigns and groups removed from the polarisation of 8/14 March and the classical Left. It has acquired new layers of activists around the country, such as the *Haqqî 'alayi* ('My right') campaign in Beirut, the Tripoli Without Arms campaign (which has focused on local mobilisations in north Lebanon against sectarian violence), the Civil Forum in the Beqaa which managed to bring together secular and leftist activists from the different villages and towns, and the *'Amal mubâshar* (Direct Action), a coalition of independent activists in Beirut, Beqaa and the Chouf.

## Conclusion: civil challenges to the sectarian status quo

Neither the Lebanese state nor civil society provides an arena in which citizens can claim their rights or hold sectarian leaders to account. At a time when sectarian ties define citizens' participation in politics, civil society activists have learnt that sectarian leaders will only support or represent agendas that do not challenge their hegemony, or that contribute to consolidating their patronage networks. In this highly fragmented context most civil associations do not act as means for civil interaction, but rather are used as tools to reinforce the clientist and sectarian status quo.

Civil movements face many challenges, not least the strength of political elites bolstered by financial resources and foreign support. Lebanese civil movements that want to challenge elites must tackle external interests and power, manifested domestically as funding or media support. Furthermore, one of the main shortcomings of the NGOs' collective actions has been that they have tended to be short-term and project-oriented rather than strategic, which means that they depend on specific budget lines and the requirements and limitations of donors, who often have their own agendas.

In order to earn trust Lebanese civil interventions have to prove their independence from both the ruling class and foreign and regional powers. The 2011 campaign to challenge the sectarian regime tried to do just that. Its transience and limited impact, despite the considerable popular support it attracted at its peak, underlines the barriers civil society faces and the apparent invulnerability of the ruling elite.

Civil movements attempt to overcome the risk of political and confessional hijacking by recruiting activists only from those already sympathetic to their cause. However, this tactic further widens the gap between specific movements and the broader Lebanese population. In the long-term, however, adopting such independent positions may help convince sympathisers of both 8 and 14 March that the movement is worth joining.

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## Youth activism in Lebanon: the challenge of domesticating politics?

Jamil Mouawad

After the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri on 14 February 2005, many young people spontaneously took to the streets of Beirut in protest, calling for justice and the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in what has been called the 'Independence Intifada'. This culminated a month later on 14 March, with the largest demonstration in the country's history, the effects of which continue to be felt today. But what impact can youth activism really have in shaping Lebanon's future?

### Political impact of the Independence Intifada

The 2005 demonstrations succeeded in influencing public opinion to place greater emphasis on Lebanese independence and sovereignty, and established clear political lines of demarcation from the 8 March Alliance that was advocating for a more pro-Syrian strategy in dealing with the country's political turmoil.

The demonstrations therefore helped to segregate Lebanese society into two distinct camps – 8 and 14 March. They consolidated vertical, partisan alliances between certain parts of civil society and their sectarian, political counterparts; and also paved the way to further internationalise Lebanon's domestic scene through the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL).

Since 2005, Lebanese political leaders have exploited existential rhetoric to play on communities' political or sectarian fears, glorifying themselves as the solution and inciting a kind of 'collective hypnosis' or 'communal delusion'. This has played out politically within the parameters of the prevailing 8/14 March divide and has contributed to a Manichaean understanding of politics and democracy.

In the 2005 parliamentary elections, held in the aftermath of the demonstrations, electoral selection was effectively reduced to support for, either the side of the 'victim', ie Rafiq al-Hariri's son Saad, or for the suspected perpetrators. The 2009 elections saw voting in support of either Iranian or Western tutelage over Lebanon. Upcoming 2013 elections are likely to be similarly framed; for example, the 14 March coalition has already begun to label the ballot as 'fateful' and a 'war of elimination' – including, possibly, for themselves.

Despite the intention of the 2005 demonstrations to highlight domestic priorities and sovereignty in Lebanon, they have, in fact, helped to both polarise and externalise Lebanese politics as a choice between Syria and the West.



Civil society demonstrators in Beirut demand full equality between men and women and an end to sectarianism // © Marie-Noelle Abi Yaghi

### Youth mobilisation in 2011

Youth mobilisation in 2011 was not as large as in 2005 nor did it raise the same questions. Nevertheless, it still has the potential to revitalise youth political engagement and to bring the political debate 'back home'.

Inspired by other Arab uprisings, a group of young people has initiated a call to 'bring down the sectarian regime', which, along with parallel struggles (eg against rape and the physical abuse of women, for civil marriage, for freedom of expression, for the right to Lebanese nationality, and for lowering the voting age from 21 to 18), has the potential to reclaim public and political questions from their international focus.

To be effective, these movements need to be developed through networks and advocacy campaigns that are structured, organised, grounded, efficient and decentralised, so as to promote horizontal cooperation between youth from diverse confessions and educational backgrounds.

Whilst civil mobilisation is not new to Lebanon and was evident in the 1990s, its re-emergence now is critical to the development of the country's political sphere, especially as public debate has for a long time been trapped between the opposing issues of the STL and Hezbollah's arms.

Can youth activism thrive to help reshuffle the political debate in Lebanon and breach the wall of the sectarian and political establishment? Lebanese youth must strive together for the answer.

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# Ex-militia fighters in post-war Lebanon

Dima de Clerck

After the end of Lebanon's civil war (1975–1990) a political decision to disarm and demobilise all militias was taken on 28 March 1991. An Amnesty Law (26 August 1991) covered all political and wartime crimes prior to 28 March. Most militias had officially handed over heavy weaponry, headquarters and barracks to Lebanese or Syrian army officials ahead of the 30 April deadline. But some 50,000 militia fighters from all denominations had 'vanished' – estimates differ regarding the 1990 numbers of militia fighters among Lebanon's estimated population of around 3.25 million, from 1.25 per cent (40,000) to 3 per cent (nearly 100,000). In reality, post-war militias sold armaments abroad, hid heavy weapons in remote mountainous areas, kept light and medium weapons to hand and continued to train potential fighters.

Demobilisation was highly selective, largely because of Syria's interest in keeping its proxies armed. Exemptions included Palestinian militias and Hezbollah – as a resistance force against ongoing Israeli occupation. The Israeli proxy, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), rejected a proposal for its integration into the regular forces. Continued collaboration with Israel prevented them from benefiting from Lebanon's Amnesty Law. When Israel withdrew from south Lebanon in 2000, many SLA members fled to Israel or emigrated.

Today, sectarian groups in Lebanon show characteristics of minorities 'under siege', anxious about their future and wary of rivals within and enemies without. This mindset perpetuates the militarisation of Lebanese society, while lasting political stalemate hampers the consolidation of peace.

## Reintegration into the state

As part of the official demobilisation effort, on 5 May 1991 the government offered to 'rehabilitate' 20,000 militia

fighters – divided between Christians and Muslims – in administrative and military state institutions. Law 88 (June 1991) allowed the integration of 6,000 militia fighters (5,000 Muslims) into the army and interior security forces. An estimated 2,000 were recruited into the civil administration, but no further phases of demobilisation followed.

Syrian stewardship of post-Taif Lebanon was an important factor in dealing with the different militias. The primary 'winners' in the rehabilitation process were Syrian allies and clients, including the Druze Progressive Socialist Party, Shia Amal, the Frangieh's *Marada*, followers of Elias Hobeika – former commander of the Lebanese Forces (LF) militia turned Syrian ally in 1986, the Sunni Popular Nasserist Organisation, and the secular Baath and Syrian Social Nationalist Parties. Former militia warlords, now cemented as sectarian leaders, were able to place their supporters at all levels of national institutions. Insertion and amnesty gave peacetime legitimacy to militia fighters. Along with the persistence of 'gun culture' and predatory behaviour in society, militia fighters were able to pervade the administration, instead of becoming 'civilianised'.

The leaders of the defeated LF found themselves in a weaker position to negotiate the integration of their fighters. Their incorporation into the army failed and emigration was facilitated for hundreds of undesirable LF elements. Only a few who had the required credentials and were backed by post-war political Muslim elites were able to join the public sector.

The government's neglect of sustained reintegration is attributable amongst other things to its fear from intensifying ex-combatants' self-perceptions as a distinctive social group capable of challenging sectarian leaders' authority. With no comprehensive strategy for insertion, the civilian administration was encumbered

with a surplus of recruits and a depleted budget. Rafiq al-Hariri's governments (1992–98) granted his Sunni, Shia and Druze allies ministries, administrative positions and funds, but abandoned further plans to insert militia fighters. Hariri feared he could not control them, since he had no militia of his own while ex-militia leaders ran the core of the administration.

Many ex-militia fighters who successfully enrolled in the army were posted to their hometowns, which effectively legitimised their wartime causes and allowed for bonds to be created between the sectarian population and the military. In some cases, ex-militia fighters moved from secular militias to religious armed groups: jihadist networks for Sunnis and Hezbollah for Shia. Many ex-combatants of all factions turned to religion more generally, which often played a major role in their recovery. Some concentrated on theological studies to better understand the religion in whose name they fought; others became monks or sheikhs.

It is common for ex-fighters (including those living abroad) to have maintained strong group identities and kept ties with their former leaders. When militias were 'civilianised' in the 1990s, morphing into political parties, ex-fighters were encouraged to rejoin the newly reconditioned structures. Some even got elected to parliament; others as members of local municipalities.

## Reintegration into society

Former militia fighters have had uneven experiences reintegrating back into Lebanese society and economy. Former militia leaders were able to place their men in private firms in Lebanon or abroad. Demand for their services was high during the 1992–96 post-war economic boom, due to the absence of a skilled workforce in Lebanon owing to massive emigration and wartime disruptions, such as of schooling. Some were directed towards domestic or foreign private security companies, for instance in Iraq from 2003. Religious institutions and their associated social and educational networks employed some ex-fighters, but fewer than expected – probably fearing this might leave the impression that they condoned their wartime conduct.

Society has looked upon former militia in different ways. Ex-fighters described by Najib Hourani as 'iconic' – poor and somehow 'pre-modern' – as well as those reputed as having been especially sanguinary, have struggled most to find employment. Children of the upper classes found a safe haven in their families regardless of whatever crimes they had committed. Those on society's bottom rungs found it harder to re-socialise: their increased wartime status and power did not upgrade them in their families' eyes, especially as the army would not integrate them. Nevertheless, strong kinship ties have helped people to

cope in times of crisis, particularly in rural communities and city suburbs, where families live close together. Families filled the void when there was no institutional support for reintegration and caring for the wounded and disabled after political parties stopped paying indemnities or hospital fees.

Young men became involved in the war believing they were protecting their community and way of life. Once it was over, however, some found themselves neglected by those communities. The Sunni *Murâbitûn* who fought alongside the National Movement, for example, were disregarded by the new Sunni elite. In contrast, the Druze community honoured its fighters as having acted as shields against their adversaries.

Today, few ex-fighters are inactive; 40 per cent are self-employed – as businesspeople, contractors, carpenters, plumbers, mechanics, taxi-drivers, etc. Around 15 per cent are employed by private companies or banks. Others (mostly women) are in social work and entertainment. Those who resumed their studies achieved professional conversion more easily. According to a 2008 UMAM poll, 72.3 per cent of fighters who stayed in Lebanon claimed to have achieved complete integration in *their environment*, even if 38 per cent do still consider emigration, mainly for economic reasons.

## Psychological and ethical challenges

In the absence of a viable public rehabilitation policy, ex-combatants were left to struggle with psychological disorders on their own – post-traumatic stress or depression. Very few ex-militia fighters have undergone psychological treatment. Many have kept war reflexes, suffer from severe paranoia or feel vulnerable without weapons. Alcohol, drugs, domestic violence and divorce are common. Dealing with authority in a work environment is often problematic. Some ex-fighters have become involved in illegal or criminal activities, have ended up murdered or dead from drug overdoses or suicide. An estimated 12–20 per cent of ex-fighters have served prison sentences for murder, rape, assault with a deadly weapon, crimes related to state security, smuggling, fraud and drugs.

Nevertheless, many ex-fighters claim to have reintegrated reasonably well into Lebanon's post-conflict reality. If some blame the war for their troubles, most avoid talking about it. They tend to evade responsibility for violence through denial, and the state-sponsored 'collective amnesia' certainly helps. Very few concede that their wartime actions were horrific, sedating themselves by adhering to their self-proclaimed innocence. According to the UMAM survey, 57 per cent say they have no regrets at all, and 62 per cent will not apologise for their deeds.

## Conclusions

The lack of a comprehensive rehabilitation programme has helped encourage new young militia recruits from post-war generations, who carry their fathers' frustrations and romanticise the civil war. The main pre-war incentives for militia mobilisation in the early 1970s – frustration, fear of the enemy within, lack of education, unemployment – remain today. Political tensions and poverty have deepened since 2005. Fuelled by propaganda, these dynamics put pressure on people and could help to propel them towards violence.

Post-war, militias are able to recruit and train a new generation of young men by exploiting their 'heroic' image, a delusion facilitated by the widespread unwillingness to speak about the horrors of war. By neglecting 'demobilisation of the mind', sectarian leaders have kept new and former fighters ready to mobilise at any time: 33 per cent in the UMAM poll declared their readiness to fight another war. Some harbour frustration about past defeats and think of revenge and continue to train for combat along with their children.

In the two last decades the deliberate deficiency of state demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration has not been addressed by international engagement, by states or NGOs – except isolated and extremely limited programmes

such as were introduced by Moral Re-Armament, dedicated to effecting social change through personal change.

What is urgently needed is proactive international engagement to help complete the disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life as part of a broader peace-building strategy, assisting them in reconciling their personal perspectives with Lebanon's current social reality, and combating the prevailing gun culture. This could start with a thorough census of all ex-combatants and their grown-up children, to identify the most vulnerable (ie the least integrated and most zealous) and offer them psychological and economic assistance.

Working with ex-fighters and involving them in reconciliation activities is the best way to endow Lebanese society with 'bottom-up' immunity from the country's tendency to war. Without this, there can be no guarantees for peace in Lebanon.

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# Building bridges through interfaith dialogue

## A conversation with Mohammad Sammak

Mohammad Sammak is Secretary General of the Committee for Islamic-Christian Dialogue. He has academic training in Political Science and Islamic Thought. He is also counsellor to the Mufti of Lebanon. Highly involved in inter-confessional dialogue, he has authored several books on the subject, including *Islam and the Conflict of Civilizations*, *Introduction to Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, and *Living together in Christianity and Islam*.



### Why did you become involved in interfaith dialogue?

In the early 1990s the civil war had left a deep impact on society, as one can imagine. Civilians had been forcibly displaced based on their religious backgrounds,

which meant new generations were born not knowing each other, mistrusting each other, and considering each other as enemies. So those who were born during the war were growing up very prejudiced against people of other religions, and there was no cultural or religious bridge between them.

This was a very worrisome problem but nobody seemed to care. In any case, it did not appear to affect the peace process – political parties reconciled, but the people were left out of the process, and nothing was being done to bring unity and promote a culture of reconciliation. That is why I decided to get involved in promoting tolerance and dialogue. Today's generations will be tomorrow's leaders, so it is important to focus on the problems of stereotyping and mistrust in order to prevent more violence. We need to build new bonds of respect and understanding, and all sectors of society have a role to play: NGOs, members of the government and citizens.

### What kind of activities does the Islamic-Christian National Dialogue Committee organise?

We work with leaders of all religions in order to promote dialogue and peace, and to build bridges between the different faiths. It is composed of seven members, each one a representative of a different community.

One of our main areas of concern is education. As a counsellor to former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, I talked to him about the way in which religion is taught in public schools. Educational establishments provide children with religious education specific to the community they belong to. Christian children leave the classroom when the course is about Islam, and Muslims leave when it comes to Christianity! As a result, they remain ignorant of other faiths.

Al-Hariri was shocked to learn this and at one point decided to stop religious teaching in public schools. I advised this was not a good solution: if public schools renounced religious teaching, it would just go underground, and extremists and intolerant people could impose their own reading of religious dogma and drive the wedge between communities deeper still.



My colleagues and I decided to propose an educational book which could be provided to all children, regardless of faith, and inform all of them about the basis of Christianity and Islam. In order to achieve this we solicited leaders from all communities. But it is no easy task. For example, Christians are divided into around 14 different churches, all of whom must be involved. For Islamic representatives, it seems to be even more difficult. Four groups are involved – Alawites, Druze, Sunnis, and Shia – and despite working for several years it seems that they cannot get it done! In truth, I am quite pessimistic about it.

### **Attempts to develop a single history book for schools in Lebanon have failed. What can we learn from this?**

The inability to agree on a cultural identity and a history transcending religious particularities for our society is very telling. It indicates deep divisions in our society. One man's hero is another's traitor. That is why it is so urgent to build bridges between people.

### **Why is it so difficult for communities in Lebanon to work together?**

This failure has to do with dogma but much more with politics. Before, the Christian-Muslim issue was very serious, but that is not the case now. By contrast, the gap between Shia and Sunnis seems to be more serious nowadays and I am afraid that it could get worse. Understanding among leaders of the main communities is the first step as it relates to mutual respect within society. Broad consensus among these leaders is necessary to fight sectarianism. But the mixture of religion and politics makes the situation very difficult, and the leaders seek to get the best they can for their own interests and don't think about the future of our country.

### **Is interfaith dialogue becoming more difficult now?**

It is becoming harder but at the same time more pressing. The situation is complicated by interactions at a global level. For example, Sunni-Shia relations have been worsening for some time. A few years ago, clashes erupted in Pakistan and bombs exploded in Sunni and Shia mosques. Lebanese religious Islamic leaders decided to make contact with religious representatives in Pakistan in order to help them calm the situation and initiate an interfaith dialogue.

Violence spreads from country to country and can easily destabilise other parts of the world. In 2006, inter-communal tensions were very high in Iraq. We decided to bring religious leaders from Iraq to Beirut for a conference to promote dialogue and reconciliation between them. But on the day in July that we had scheduled our announcement, Israel attacked us!

### **Can you point to any interfaith dialogue activities that have been a success?**

For the last four years we have been involved in an exchange programme for students in several parts of the country. Muslims spend time at Christian schools and are welcomed in a Christian community; Christian youths are likewise welcomed in Muslim schools in Beirut. These youths meet new friends of the other faith, they lunch together, visit their family friends. This experience is very encouraging.

In truth, I was at first quite astounded when I heard some of these young Lebanese saying that it was the first time they had had a friend from another faith! They all belong to the same generation – 15 to 25 years old – but have been artificially separated for so long. The initiative is very successful and has exceeded expectations. People maintain regular contact. The youths introduce their new friends to their relatives so that families become friends. This shows that it is possible to transcend religious differences and build bridges between communities.

### **Is there a gap between interfaith activities at the grassroots – for example among youth – and engagement with political leaders? How might this be overcome?**

It is wise to avoid generalisation. It is true that there is a gap between youth involved in interfaith activities and leaders, but this can be bridged thanks to some political leaders who believe in the positive outcome of interfaith activities. President Michel Suleiman for example turned to us to arrange a spiritual summit meeting at the President's palace. Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri also adopted our initiative to make the annunciation day of Mary on 25 March a national holiday. But other leaders refuse to take these activities seriously. Some consider them folkloric. But whenever there is a confessional tension, all of them look positively at these activities and call for them.

### **Will things get better, and how?**

It is not easy to imagine a future Lebanon without sectarianism. It is a 'mini-Middle East': a place where so much blood has been shed, so many tears wept, and prayers raised. At the same time, all civilisations and religions started here. Someone once said: "a problem well stated is a problem half solved". People need to define the problem first, before trying to solve it, and that means understanding the complex story of this land. My aim is to make people aware that we can all help build bridges and improve interfaith understanding, and that it is in our common interest to do so.

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Interview by Fatiha Kaoues

## The question of secularisation in Lebanon

### A conversation with Fawwaz Traboulsi



**Fawwaz Traboulsi holds degrees from the American University of Beirut and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. He is Professor at the Lebanese American University. Founder of Bidayat, an intellectual**

**review, he has also authored a number of books, including *A History of Modern Lebanon* (Pluto Press, 2007).**

#### Constitutional schizophrenia

Lebanon suffers from constitutional schizophrenia. The political regime, with quotas for the electoral system and government appointments, contradicts the rights of political and legal equality enshrined in the Constitution. Yet Articles 9 and 10 of the same Constitution stress respect for all religions and the rights of religious communities. Both are a direct legacy of the Constitution of 1926, which required the state to respect all confessions and safeguard religious interests as long as they did not undermine public order. So while the Constitution makes the abolition of the confessional system a “basic national goal”, other parts of it tend to protect that same system.

#### Isolation of secular activists

Facing such a complex institutional situation, the question is whether, and how, existing resources within Lebanese society could bring an end to the political system based on confessional representation, and how these could contribute significantly to the secularisation of personal status and education.

The programme of the Lebanese National Movement (a coalition of political ‘progressive’ parties and movements founded in the first days of the civil war) is a useful historical reference. It gave a central place to the secular state, advocating an electoral system where the entire Lebanese territory would be considered a single electoral constituency, based on a list system and on proportional representation. It recognised two main identities of the Lebanese: as ‘individual citizens’ and as ‘members of a community’. It also tried to establish a voluntary non-religious civil code (it is worth noting that a similar decree in 1936 never saw the light of day). However, the project failed and the forces behind it were destroyed.

Since then, there has been no mass mobilisation in favour of secularising the electoral system. Admittedly, in 2005 there was a residual movement embodied in the

‘Beirut Spring’ (alternatively the ‘Cedar Revolution’ or ‘Independence Intifada’) but this crumbled quite rapidly due to its heterogeneous character. Indeed, the movement was composed of militants from the Left and members of a somewhat apolitical new generation – overly romanticised and anti-religious – who naively believed they could bring down the confessional system, but were incapable of working out how to achieve this.

#### Religious consensus and the status quo

There is a consensus among religious authorities in favour of the status quo. They assert a demagoguery of sorts: for example, Christian authorities expect violent reactions from their Sunni counterparts against any proposed changes in personal status, only to support their position in the end.

However in a context where confessionalism is inherently embedded, the problem runs deeper than this. Confessionalism also keeps the Lebanese divided in a way that is convenient for other interests. The leaders of religious groups are business people, militia fighters and former warlords. The general public belief is that politicians make the decisions in Lebanon. In reality, however, decision-makers are actually accountable to a class of traders, merchants and bankers who have officially nothing to do with politics.

#### Secularisation and national identity

The confessional system must be understood as a modern creation, not as a legacy of a remote past, that is linked to many external interests. The existence of a Lebanese national identity cannot be questioned, even if it is one that often asserts itself negatively – ‘against’ another, eg the Palestinians or the Syrians. Nowadays, no one defends the idea of uniting Lebanon with Syria. But how should we understand nationalism and patriotism in a country where the majority of the population works overseas and those living in the country are dependent on them for subsistence?

Implicit in the reference to a common identity should be the domestic market as an economic foundation for Lebanon’s independence. The Lebanese state became globalised in the 1950s, and this globalisation was amplified by Lebanon’s particular historical tendency to look for support elsewhere, instead of its own resources. The recurring civil wars that characterise Lebanon’s history have only reinforced the propensity to resort to external forces. And breaking this is no easy task.

*Based on an interview conducted for Accord in March 2012 by Vincent Geisser*

# Women, participation and peace in Lebanon

Victoria Stamadianou

There is widespread discrimination of women in Lebanon – politically, legally and in society in general. Lebanon’s legal system reflects and buttresses a patriarchal, sectarian socio-political order. This acts as a prism through which women’s roles, rights and responsibilities are perceived and defined in Lebanon, and so institutionalises and perpetuates the subordinate status of women in the country.

Women’s circumstances provide valuable insights into the nature of power in Lebanon, and the challenges and opportunities for change. Initiatives to support Lebanese women and improve their circumstances may also offer a platform to promote cross-sectarian collaboration; more broadly on key issues. Putting in place mechanisms and conditions aimed to systematically increase women’s participation in political life could have great benefits for women, but could also provide openings for new approaches to how democracy, justice and rights are understood and applied in Lebanon more broadly.

## Women and politics

Lebanese structures of political representation, governance and democratic constituencies are ordered along sectarian and confessional lines. Furthermore, access to high levels of political power is dependent on familial ties and networks, specifically from male to male relatives. The system is closed, competitive and mutually reinforcing. These structures discourage constructive and collaborative engagement on key issues that are central to the daily lives of the citizenry. Along with religious leaders, political actors play an important role in upholding and reproducing this way of doing politics. In a context of multiple centres of power, the ability to catalyse change is related to collaboration and consensus building across sectarian divides.

It is often assumed that the existence and tradition of cultural plurality in Lebanon as well as the democratic

values instilled in the Lebanese political system, by the nature of the power-sharing system, leads to some degree of inclusivity and equality. In fact, Lebanon was the first Arab state to give women the right to vote. However, by both global and regional comparisons, Lebanon has one of the lowest rates of women’s political representation.

Today, Najib Mikati’s 30-member cabinet includes no women, and women’s political participation since independence has been marginal. The government formed in 2000 was the first to assign female ministers, and this amounted to only two. The 2009 parliamentary elections brought only four women into the 128-member legislature whilst two women were assigned to the 30-member cabinet. Women who have entered this level of politics have often been affiliated to male relatives with a political career, thereby embodying the system of kinship politics. At the local political level, women filled only 139 of 8,200 (1.7 per cent) municipal posts in 1998, 215 of 10,646 (2 per cent) in 2004, and 526 of 11,424 (4.7 per cent) in 2010. For a country that has long boasted its democratic credentials in the Middle East, even with a slight percentage rise since 1998, this paltry track record is surprising compared to others in the region.

## Women and justice

Lebanon’s legal system is a potent and pervasive source of inequality. The Constitution purports to guarantee equality before the law regardless of religion or gender. However, Lebanese citizens face different judicial fates depending on their sects or their sex, and for women the principle of equality is regularly breached. Lebanon’s 18 religiously based sects maintain legislative and judicial autonomy over personal status and family laws, and confessional affiliation is defined on a patrilineal basis. This is not optional but part and parcel of being a Lebanese citizen.

Despite ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1997, the Lebanese state maintains reservations to provisions that ensure women's equality in legislation governing the acquisition of nationality, marriage and family relations (Article 9, Paragraph 2 and Article 16, Paragraphs 1 (c), (d), (f) and (g)). Discrimination against women remains in the National Law, penal code and personal status laws. This legal landscape underpins women's limited participation in the country's political life.

Key areas of personal and family law perpetuate power dynamics to disadvantage women, in areas of marriage, divorce, custody of children and inheritance. For example, Muslim men may practice polygamy and also marry non-Muslim women, whereas Muslim women are not allowed to marry non-Muslims. Sunni and Shia men may easily divorce their wives without due legal process while for a wife it is very hard to file for divorce, even for serious reasons. Sunni and Shia husbands can further revoke divorce and demand a wife's return.

Child custody and guardianship is the legal right of the father, and in the event of the father's death most sects pass custody to male kin. When it comes to inheriting parents' property, Muslim sons are entitled to twice what their sisters are. If a Sunni family has only daughters then the male cousins are entitled to a portion of the inheritance.

The Lebanese penal code also discriminates against women and leaves them unprotected. A wife can be accused of adultery at any time and under any circumstances while a man will only be tried if it occurs in the conjugal home or in the case of an established extramarital relationship. A wife committing adultery is punishable with a sentence from three months to two years, while for the same crime the husband faces only one month to a year. A woman can be forced into sex by her husband without legal consequence. Furthermore, the rape of a virgin by means of deception is potentially subject only to a fine and the law provides impunity to a rapist who marries his victim. Nationality laws transmit citizenship from the father. Women cannot transmit their nationality to their husbands or children, apart from in exceptional cases. But men can transfer Lebanese nationality to their spouse within a year of submitting the relevant paperwork.

The relationship of a Lebanese woman to her context is dependent on and mediated by male relatives with serious implications for her sense of belonging, her autonomy and her security. Since 2009, there has been a strong public demand to place law in conformity with constitutional principles of equality. This has been expressed in a public campaign, *Jinsiyâtî* ('my nationality'), and supported by NGOs such as *Al-Masâwa al-Ân* (Equality Now).

## Women's participation as a unifying cause for peacebuilding

In 2010 International Alert, an independent peacebuilding organisation, conducted research into young women's participation in political parties, interviewing representatives from 11 of Lebanon's largest and most influential parties from diverse backgrounds. This research uncovered multiple explanations for women's exclusion: that women lack interest in politics; the patriarchal society's role in casting women in traditional gender roles; the gendered economy and its implications for women's ability to invest time in taking part in public life; and women's role as primary caretakers in the Lebanese family unit. But the research also revealed emerging consensus when it came to the importance of increasing women's representation in politics, and much debate around what increased participation should look like, and how it could be actively pursued.

Suggestions for ways in which participation might be promoted included using the media as a strategic point of intervention and encouraging increased women's education – which may also serve as broader platforms and open up spaces for dialogue and collaboration across sectarian divides. The media was recognised as key in increasing coverage of the socio-economic contributions of women who are already active in politics and elsewhere. The promotion of alternative narratives through the media showing the abilities and potential of women could also contribute to challenging traditional or conservative perceptions. The rise in the level of women's education has had a positive impact on women's political mobilisation and opportunity, and could serve as an entry point through which women can pursue deeper participation.

There is perhaps an abundance of prescriptions to resolve a host of challenges in Lebanon – including those faced by women. However, suggested initiatives fall short without buy-in from diverse stakeholders, both political and religious, and also if the political sphere is not engaged in implementing them. Political will needs to be built, the right knowledge acquired and advocated, and pathways of constructive interaction etched collectively. One way forward is to identify political 'champions' within the centres of power to push for particular issues, and to work with them over time to achieve progress.

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# Non-violent resistance and reform in Lebanon

## The experience of the Lebanese disability movement

Nawaf Kabbara

The disability cause has been omitted from the political agenda of governments and political parties in Lebanon for some time. The civil war left thousands of Lebanese people with different forms of disability, both physical and psychological. There are no clear statistics for the number of people injured or left disabled because of the war, but government figures show that out of 77,000 registered to get a disability card in Lebanon, 57 per cent have a physical disability, and that many of these are from war injuries. Mental illness is not officially recognised as a disability in Lebanon.

Militias were first to respond to disability issues during the war. Supported by religious and other social groups, they built medical and rehabilitation institutions and programmes to deal with injured and handicapped militia fighters and civilians from their own communities.

In the 1980s disabled people began to organise themselves outside of any form of Lebanese patronage – from traditional institutions or from militias. Disabled people's organisations (DPOs) tried to move away from a remedial model of organisation focusing on care and rehabilitation, towards a rights-based policy approach. Supported by international non-governmental organisations, Lebanese DPOs developed creative programmes and activities that have helped to stimulate a shift in social attitudes towards disability.

From the DPOs' perspective, the most important innovation was the adoption of a new and expanded discourse. Instead of focusing exclusively on disability issues, Lebanese DPOs looked to participate actively in anti-war and anti-violence movements, and to defend the human rights of all Lebanese people. A universal human rights approach was seen as the

correct path to achieve rights for people with disability, and Lebanese DPOs and prominent disabled people began to support anti-war and anti-violence activities.

### **The anti-war movement and disability rights: cooperative strength**

Lebanon's anti-war movement started as soon as the Lebanese civil war began. A few months after violence broke out prominent religious leaders led by Imam Moussa Sadr, head of the Shiite Islamic Council, called for a hunger strike until the violence stopped. In 1977 a group of well-known intellectuals and journalists formed 'The Gathering for a United Lebanon', calling for secularisation and the dismantling of all militia forces.

The first popular action against the war began on 6 May 1984 and was led by a young female university student, Iman Khalifeh. She called on all Lebanese opposed to the war and militia control of the country to gather around the demarcation line in the Museum area of central Beirut in order to commemorate Martyrs' Day in Lebanon. As 6 May approached it became clear that the campaign had been gaining momentum and a large turn-out was expected, with the press widely reporting the reactions of trade and teachers' unions and other civil society organisations (CSOs). Many DPOs also welcomed the call. However, on 5 May two opposing militia forces began bombarding the planned gathering area, and the organisers were forced to cancel the event.

Even though the event did not take place, the circumstances of the demonstration revealed that militia forces were losing popular support – the bombing exposing militias' fears of how successful the demonstration was likely to have been. Furthermore, the organisers of the event gained





A disabled man and his colleagues, some of them victims of Lebanon's civil war, send a strong message to Lebanon's political leaders as they depart for talks in Qatar, May 2008 // © AFP/Getty Images

confidence in their capacity to rally the Lebanese people against the war.

In response, the non-violent movement was established in Lebanon in 1985. It included some of the leaders of the 6 May event and other activists – including prominent feminist leaders, youth leaders and some religious anti-war personalities – as well as from within DPOs. The movement launched a blood donation campaign as a demonstration of solidarity among all Lebanese. In October 1985, supported by the Lebanese Red Cross, a tent where people could give blood was erected on a main highway in the Dowra area of eastern Beirut. But despite enthusiasm from the Lebanese public to donate, an hour after the tent was assembled local militia forced the organisers to close it down.

The anti-war rationale of the disability movement was twofold. First, with the state paralysed and the country in turmoil because of the war, it could not demand particular rights for disabled people but had to join with other forces to struggle for the rights of all Lebanese for peace and security. Second, Lebanese civil society was not taking the lead in opposing militia forces, and so the Lebanese disabled community needed to show the way as the most vivid reminder of the war and as proof that persons with disabilities are key national and social actors, equal to other groups in the country.

Later in 1985, in response to the sabotage of the blood campaign, DPOs, with the support of the non-violence movement, decided to organise twin marches by disabled people, from East and West Beirut to meet in the centre of the capital and demand the end of the war. The March was planned for Independence Day on 22 November. However, as the march got underway the two main militias controlling West Beirut started fighting each other in the streets and the marchers were caught in the crossfire.

In October 1987 the disability movement organised another anti-war march, this time across the country from north to south as a civil challenge to the militia order. Although it was led once again by persons with disabilities, Lebanese CSOs joined them to strengthen the popular impact of the demonstration. This also helped disability become a prominent national cause and gain significant support across a range of sectors in civil society.

The success of the march further encouraged other CSOs to protest the violence. By late October 1987 the teachers' union called for a general strike against the war and on 9 November the national trade union organised the largest anti-war gathering yet in central Beirut, involving an estimated 300,000 people. Building on these successes, from 1987–89 the Lebanese disability movement began organising a series of camps and seminars to promote



human rights, non-violence and disability rights, as well as blood donation campaigns and sit-ins.

## Post-war

After the official end of the war in 1989, DPOs developed a new strategy based on two pillars: 1) to consolidate disability rights by lobbying for a new disability law; and 2) to maintain the disability movement as an avant garde social force working to strengthen social peace and reconciliation in the country and to push for reform.

DPOs' rights-based approach was opposed by traditional institutions, which are based on charitable and care models and work largely in conjunction with established political society. But achieving a new disability law would require active lobbying of the new post-war political establishment. The fact that disabled peoples' active engagement in peace campaigns during the war had gained popular support gave DPOs confidence. DPOs began lobbying the first post-war national coalition government after its establishment in 1991. This resulted in the formation in 1992 of the first National Council on Disability, a government-appointed council with a single objective: to develop an official disability policy. This campaign culminated in the launch of a disability registration card and the adoption by parliament of law 220/2000 on disability.

Meanwhile the disability movement continued its efforts to consolidate social peace in Lebanon, working in alliance with human rights and civil society organisations. Between 1992 and 2006 Lebanon witnessed a series of international and internal violent clashes as a result of the ongoing confrontation between the Lebanese resistance and Israel. The Lebanese disability movement was very active in responding to humanitarian challenges related to the displacement of Lebanese from the south to Beirut and other Lebanese areas as a result of the Israeli military interventions in 1993, 1996 and 2006. This included blood donation campaigns and the provision of equipment and shelter for displaced persons with disabilities, in particular in the 2006 Lebanese-Israeli war.

## The situation today: civil solidarity for social and political change?

The anti-war and anti-violence movement has lost momentum and strength since the official end of the civil war, despite the fact that hostilities in Lebanon (domestic and international) are still going on today. Campaigns to

consolidate reforms and push for the rule of law have been diffuse and have proved ineffective.

Post-war, the disability movement has been almost left alone in its attempt to transform disability into a rights-based issue. Today, CSO discourse, including those working for women, children and human rights, rarely include disability as a key issue. DPOs have had only limited success in securing greater participation for disabled people in elections, to convert their constituency into a political force for change. People with disabilities have had some success at the local level in getting elected to municipal boards in selected Lebanese regions, but they have yet to gain access to national parliament.

Lebanese CSOs have also failed to become a strong political force. A rights-based approach in all issues – women, children, environment – is not having the desired impact, due to sectarian divisions and the lack of a rights-based culture in influential Arab countries like Syria and Saudi Arabia. It remains to be seen what impact the 'Arab Spring' may have. Laws on disability and environmental protection are still far from being implemented. Proposed laws and regulations regarding violence against women face major resistance from Islamic religious institutions.

In fact, every part of Lebanese civil society is working independently from each other. For example, women's and human rights organisations do not coordinate to strengthen their lobbying capabilities. One reason for this is that women's organisations are not prepared to adopt a sufficiently radical feminist discourse that might pit them against powerful Lebanese religious institutions. Many CSOs are also wary of antagonising political society, at the risk of losing the financial and political support that the state and politicians provide. Many CSO leaders also harbour political ambitions themselves.

To make a real difference, Lebanese civil society needs to join together, to adopt a holistic approach in dealing with all issues – as the Lebanese disability movement did during the war – turn the fight for one into a fight for all.

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## Section 3

# Reforming the state



Lebanese teachers demonstrate near the government palace in Beirut to demand a better raise in their salaries on 15 December 2011 // © JOSEPH EID/AFP/Getty Images

# The Taif Agreement

## New order, old framework

Karam Karam

The Taif Agreement brought a formal end to the Lebanese civil war (1975–1990). It was an internal Lebanese agreement that was discussed, negotiated and concluded in the town of Taif, Saudi Arabia, in 1989, under the auspices of Riyadh and the Arab League, with the support of the US and the direct supervision of Syria.

The task of implementing the Agreement was totally assumed by the Syrian regime as a result of its emergent role as a leading power in the region and its post-war military presence in Lebanon. In 1990 Syria imposed the agreement by force – namely by the exclusion of its Lebanese detractors, essentially important Christian leaders – and subsequently dominated the implementation process.

The Agreement centred on two axes: the first, which constitutes three quarters of the document, deals with internal reforms including power-sharing, participation, identity, political and socio-economic reform, sovereignty and internal security; the second is devoted to external relations relating to the Arab-Palestinian-Israeli conflict and to Lebanese-Syrian relations.

The first axis is divided into three parts and formed the main source of the revised Constitution – Taif introduced more than thirty constitutional amendments, which were approved in September 1990. The first part, stating *general principles*, has been adopted as the preamble to the Constitution, relating mainly to national identity, the nature of the political system, public liberties, the economic system and territorial integrity.

The second part has been integrated directly into relevant Constitutional articles. It covers issues of political reform and power-sharing: primarily the redistribution of prerogatives between the President of the Republic, the Speaker and the Prime Minister, as well as the abolition of political sectarianism. The third part deals with ‘other

reforms’, concerning administrative decentralisation, the courts (ie the creation of a Constitutional Council), legislative electoral law, the creation of an Economic and Social Council for Development, education, information and the reorganisation of media. Some of these reforms have been directly integrated in Constitutional articles; others have been translated into laws.

### Balancing power

The rationale behind the Taif Agreement reflects a twofold ambition for Lebanese society and polity. On the one hand it symbolises reconciliation objectives, responding to the needs of a society that had been searching for effective tools to end the war and to reinforce national cohesion, supported by a desire to ‘live together’. On the other hand it introduces reforms to support the consolidation of the Lebanese state and national institutions.

In reality Taif reconfirmed power sharing among religious communities that had been in force in Lebanon since the adoption of the Constitution of 1926 – albeit amended by reworking the power balance and by the amendments to the prerogatives of the ruling Troika in the distribution of executive and legislative powers. An important component of the prerogatives and functions of the President, a Maronite, was transferred to the Council of Ministers, which is presided over by a Prime Minister from the Sunni community. The prerogatives and role of the Speaker, from the Shiite community, were strengthened and the Prime Minister was made accountable to parliament.

In accordance with constitutional reforms adopted in September 1990, parliamentary seats and high-ranking posts in government and the public sector were now shared equally between Muslims and Christians. The Taif Agreement introduced a new power sharing formula: modifying the 55:45 Christian-Muslim ratio of parliamentary seats to an even 50:50 and increasing the number of seats from 99 to 108 – and eventually to 128; and

changing the 6:5 Christian-Muslim ratio in high-ranking posts to 5:5.

With Taif, the Lebanese political system shifted from a semi-presidential system with strong prerogatives for the Christian President, to a more parliamentary system. The impact of this change is reflected in the difficulties experienced by the executive in dissolving parliament, which now requires agreement between the President and the Council of Ministers, as stipulated in Article 55 of the Constitution.

Selective implementation of the Taif Agreement has belied the essence of its stated objectives. Arbitrary and partial application of reforms that have been initiated by Lebanese ruling elites under Syrian tutelage between 1990 and 2005 have in fact exacerbated confessional tension and competition, and have generated new imbalances in the post-war political system. Together, these developments have undermined the operation of Lebanon's consociational political system and of its institutions, which could be described as quasi-dysfunctional.

More than two decades after Taif, following Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2000 and Syrian withdrawal in 2005, many major political reforms are yet to be implemented, including relating to electoral law, to decentralisation and to the plan to gradually abolish sectarianism.

### **Implementing Taif: a lack of moral authority**

The Taif negotiations in 1989 involved primarily members of the 1972 Lebanese parliament. The mandate of this parliament was renewed eight times between 1972 and 1992 due to interruptions in legislative elections as a result of the war. Nevertheless it was considered the only constitutional institution that could demonstrate any kind of 'unity and legality'. However, the contested representativeness of the parliament did not prevent 62 of its deputies – 73 of who were still alive from 99 elected in 1972 – from negotiating, developing and signing the document.

Syrian tutelage over Lebanon until 2005 limited the room for manoeuvre for Lebanon's ruling elite and dominated its political conduct. It further set limits as to what was considered politically legitimate or illegitimate, or even possible or impossible.

Through patronage and co-option, the Syrian regime substituted – first by nomination in 1991 and then through successive elections – the political leaders who had signed Taif with a 'new' ruling elite. This new leadership had not been part of the Taif negotiations and consequently

lacked a sound basis of 'moral authority' to implement the Agreement's reforms.

## **“ More than two decades after Taif, following Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2000 and Syrian withdrawal in 2005, many major political reforms are yet to be implemented”**

The post-Taif political leadership in Lebanon has been dominated by two types of elite: a *warlords' elite*, resulting from the transformation and demobilisation of the militia system; and *newcomers' elite*, following the arrival of 'reconstruction man' and subsequently Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. Hariri paved the way for other businesspeople and entrepreneurs to enter the world of politics. Lebanon's post-Taif leadership has been more concerned with assuring its own divergent interests within state institutions than taking up the reformist spirit of the Agreement.

### **Political reforms at a standstill**

Post-war policies adopted by the Syrian-sponsored political establishment in Beirut to 'reconstruct' the state have established Lebanon as an 'allotment state' (*Dawlat al-muhâsasa*). This kind of state extends the concept of power-sharing by quota, whereby political and high-ranking positions in the state and public administration are allocated to different confessional groups, by further applying clientelistic and sectarian logic to the distribution of lower-level positions and business opportunities to deliver public and social services. This practice emptied the bulk of Taif's reform projects of all substance, and even diverted their spirit. Reforms have subsequently remained at a standstill for two main reasons: 1) the absence of an arbiter; and 2) the compromise mentality of governance.

Within a context of rigid political cleavages and competition over control of state institutions, Lebanese political leaders since 1990 have engaged in contradictory interpretations of legal texts and of the Constitution. After the withdrawal of Syria Lebanon's ruling elite took advantage of the country's dysfunctional institutional mechanisms and the absence of a guarantor of the Taif rules, to lead an unruly struggle for power.

The functioning of Lebanon's ruling 'Troika' illustrates the effects of power-sharing according to sectarian criteria and decision-making through compromise. The limitations placed on the three elements of the Troika through Taif has





Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nassrallah (R), Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri (C) and Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora (L) attend a session of the National Dialogue in Beirut, 27 March 2006 // © Jamal Saidi/ AFP/ Getty Images

led them to embark on a system of personal negotiations, under the supervision of Damascus, which have guaranteed continuity and static equilibrium in Lebanon's political system.

After 2005 this delicate stability was suddenly transformed into severe polarisation between two multi-confessional coalitions, 8 and 14 March, which compounded the paralysis of Lebanon's constitutional institutions and entrenched political stalemate – for instance the governmental deadlock of 2006 following the resignation of Shiite Ministers, or the six-month presidential vacancy in 2008. This reshuffling of the political balance led to the formation of 'national *entente*' governments, which formally respected the Taif principles of 'living together' and 'confessional equality' – although independently of democratic political choices expressed through elections. Each confessional group of ministers can hold the government hostage by exercising their right to veto in the name of the sectarian group they claim to represent, overriding the interests of the electorate that brought them to power.

Lebanon's post-war political system has, after the Syrian withdrawal, been unable to find an impartial 'arbiter' to help unlock the impasse or defuse political crises. The Troika, rather than acting as a mechanism for managing conflict, has rather led to the personalisation of power and to bickering among its three components. Instead of creating a system of checks and balances on power and securing participation and the right to veto for different groups, the Troika led to the appropriation of public institutions as private communitarian preserves (*chasse gardée*). Meanwhile the nature of national *entente* governments, intended to secure solid support for the executive authority, has in fact transposed political

competition from the political arena and parliament to the government, which has led to the creation of opposing factions within government itself.

Since Taif's modification of the prerogative of the president deprived the office of the role of arbiter, political power in Lebanon does not reside exclusively in representative institutions of parliament and government, but is diluted through parallel decision making forums and continuous negotiations among communitarian leaders including clerics, clan chiefs and party leaders outside of the constitutional institutions. In situations of deadlock, internal political dynamics are often superseded by a larger regional circle of decision makers, as was the case in the Doha Agreement in 2008 facilitated by the US, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Syria and the Arab League.

Additional reforms presented in Taif were either put in place without effective power – such as the Constitutional Council or the Economic and Social Council – or have yet to be created at all – such as the Senate or the Commission for Abolition of Political Sectarianism.

### **Compromise and consensus: the lowest common denominator?**

Post-Taif governance is not based on the expression of the will of the majority, but on consensus between political elites representing major 'communities' and partisan formations. This is why consensus democracy has prioritised managing successive crises over realising reforms. Electoral reform was only tackled from a perspective of inter-confessional balance and interest. Decentralisation was discussed at best incompletely, and in reality during the post-war period no draft-laws on decentralisation have been adopted, even though the drafts

were more likely to maintain a de-concentrated than a decentralised form of power. Meanwhile the constitutional commitment to the abolition of confessionalism has been entirely marginalised.

Policies for post-war reconstruction in Lebanon have been based on a neo-liberal model. These were briefly contested but were subsequently rapidly presented as the only way to revive the country's battered economy. Today, in a context where Lebanon no longer plays the role of regional commercial and banking hub, these policies have been revived under an aggravated form of the 'Merchant Republic', brushing aside any question of social and economic rights – social security, public transportation, public health and education system. Reconstruction in Lebanon has been conducted with a clear effort to sideline concerned parties, civil society or labour unions, favouring instead the entrepreneurial class and their Syrian partners. Reconstruction has, therefore, compounded the marginalisation of social issues in post-war Lebanon.

## Conclusion

With the end of the 'uncivil' war, Taif's proponents depicted the Agreement as the cornerstone of peace, stability and prosperity to Lebanon. Questions remain, however, why it has not yet succeeded in realising its proclaimed objectives, and why the country continues to suffer from a volatile political situation two decades later?

There were three main flaws in Taif. First, the text was deliberately ambiguous, thereby paving the way for different interpretations of key issues – eg Lebanese-Syrian relations, decentralisation and deconfessionalisation. Second, the content contradicted the core philosophy of Lebanon's power sharing formula by paving the way for the establishment of the Troika: this opposes the concept of political participation, as the Troika acts like a private club to exclude anti-establishment groups; let alone the principle of power separation, as Lebanese politics contains no mechanisms for checks and balances, while the justice system remains under political control. Third, implementing Taif has been primarily guided by the urge to stop bloodshed and guarantee sharing of power among warlords, rather than to ensure an effective mechanism for peaceful and well-grounded reconciliation and state-building.

Taif has succeeded, partially, in stopping the war. But peace has remained vulnerable, threatened by distinct but recurrent tensions that can escalate into violence whenever the situation is favourable – such as in May 2008. Nevertheless, Taif could have contributed more to realising lasting peace had the implementation of reforms been both adequate and coherent with a post-war transition strategy to revitalise the social contract between state and society.

The main distortion of the 'Taif Republic' in Lebanon is embodied in the ruling elite, which has successfully managed to detach the Agreement from its spirit – under the patronage of Syria on the one hand, and assured in its ability to maintain power through manipulating state institutions and reforms on the other. In view of Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon and the ruling elite's extensive autonomy, the history of governance in Lebanon post-2005 clearly shows that the distortions of Taif have neither been necessarily nor exclusively the result of Syrian tutelage and patronage, but rather of the Lebanese mentality of clientelism and sectarianism.

In the spirit of Taif and reconstructing state institutions, key to successful change in Lebanon lies in tackling reforms as an integrated whole and maintaining complementarity, compatibility and balance among them. Such an approach would help to offset resistance by various groups that feel threatened by change.

For instance, administrative decentralisation through the creation of local elected councils at *caza*-level (district) should be mindful of the size of legislative electoral constituencies, which would need to be larger in order to distinguish clearly between national and local competencies. Similarly, resistance by some politicians to a proportional electoral system with larger constituencies might be dissipated if their concerns or fears were alleviated by relevant reforms for administrative decentralisation, ensuring regional development and adequate representation of both individuals (ie citizens) and groups (religious sects) within the state.

The creation of a confessional Senate to represent religious sects at the national level could compensate de-confessionalised parliamentary elections no longer conditioned by sectarian affiliation and regional representation of interests. In this context, decentralisation provides the broad framework for reform, as it entails redefining the relationship between central and local authorities, and re-thinking key issues of representation, participation, accountability, local development and ultimately, the political system.

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## Priorities for peace in Lebanon: opposing outlooks from 8 & 14 March Alliances

Conversations with two prominent Lebanese figures associated with 8 and 14 March Alliances, respectively.



### Ali Fayyad (8 March Alliance/Hezbollah MP)

#### Key sources of tension in Lebanon: internal and external

Unlike other countries in the region, Lebanon has

been unable to accommodate contradictory influences within a viable constitutional framework. The Lebanese government has not taken into account recent socio-political changes. These elements have led to a series of crises that have endangered the country's security and political stability.

Foreign crises and disagreements on key strategic questions have become internal conflicts that have engaged all Lebanese factions, threatening both their own stability and the country's institutions. The Lebanese crisis has become a mixture of internal and external factors, made up of intertwining political, constitutional and confessional elements.

There are three major areas of tension. First, resistance against Israel should be established as a condition for national sovereignty and accepted as a fundamental Lebanese characteristic that will endure as long as the threat from Israel remains. Resistance must be part of any accord between elements of Lebanese society. This does not forbid other elements from the right to express their concerns. In fact, this subject should be discussed within the framework of the National Dialogue [launched in 2006 to tackle the differences between March 8 and March 14 Alliances]. This should seek to establish guarantees that resistance serves the interests of all Lebanese people and poses a threat to none of them.

Second, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) is unconstitutional and illegal. It undermines Lebanese judicial sovereignty and puts Lebanon at the mercy of foreign influences. And it is exacerbating internal divisions. It must be shut down.

Third, the relationship between Lebanon and Syria must be respected as an essential bond. The two countries are linked by a common history and a mutual border. Syria is Lebanon's economic driver and our main pillar of support against Israel. No Lebanese party must be implicated in violence or civil war in Syria, as this would spill over into Lebanon. The future of the Syrian political system is a matter for Syrians to handle.

#### The Taif Agreement and the stability of Lebanon's political system

The Taif Agreement is almost dead in the water. It is no longer able to manage relations among Lebanese people. Despite including mechanisms to promote due process, it has been unable to overcome Christian or Muslim confessional obstacles and has proven too inflexible: Christians have rejected the abolition of political confessionalism; while Sunnis wish to stick with the Agreement in its current form. There may be a desire to see political reform among certain elements, but to see this desire take shape Sunnis, Shia, Christians and Druze would all have to agree. Any reform ignoring these elements would create a crisis and cause more instability.

#### Responses to internal and external challenges: developing the social contract

Hezbollah's relations with Iran and allegiance to the *Wilâyat al-Faqîh* [rule of the Muslim Jurist] are part of our religious, cultural and social customs, as enshrined in the Constitution. These do not challenge our political engagement with the Lebanese social contract. Acts of resistance are linked to the defence of the Lebanese people. They are a necessity and are not part of a confessional identity. They could have been developed outside the Shiite faith.

Our Constitution calls Lebanon a 'final homeland'. But it does not exclude that its identity will evolve. This identity began as a mixture of Arabic and Lebanese elements; of freedom and coexistence. To this we must now add resistance and openness. All of these values respond to Lebanon's geopolitical situation.

#### Priorities for building peace

We have two choices before us: either the creation of a democratic state based on citizenship, with the abolition of confessionalism and the protection of community rights through the establishment of a Senate; or broadening the concept of consensual democracy.

The first option implies a centralised state and a president elected by universal suffrage. This would enable him to overcome confessional power. This option seems difficult given the refusal of Christians to contemplate the end of confessionalism.

The second option seems more realistic. It appears feasible and calls for serious reflection. But the principles of such a consensus would have to be defined. I believe in four such principles: 1) creating a proportional voting system; 2) granting veto power to communities; 3) ensuring a major push for administrative decentralisation; and 4) the formation of large coalitions.



## **Samir Frangieh (member of the General Secretariat of 14 March Alliance and a former MP)**

### **Key sources of tension in Lebanon: internal and external**

Regional factors are vital.

The foundation of the state of Israel encouraged the rise of military dictatorships in the region and exacerbated problems for minorities. Regional instability has threatened Lebanon especially due to the inability of the Lebanese people to found an autonomous state.

Since the signing of the National Pact in 1943, the state of Lebanon has been seen as a power-sharing agreement between different communities. In my opinion, however, Lebanon is much more than this: it has delivered a strong message to all those wanting a union with Syria or a return to the French mandate, that Lebanese people wish to live together.

### **The Taif Agreement and the stability of Lebanon's political system**

The Taif Agreement rests on two principles:

- » that it is impossible for the Lebanese to live for long while at war
- » that it is impossible for the warring parties to live separately, each according to its own rules

The difference between the National Pact and the Taif Agreement is that Taif was not shaped by political forces. It emerged from the failure of previous attempts such as the 1976 Constitutional Document of President Frangieh and the 1985 Tripartite Agreement between militias under Syrian sponsorship. It was essentially devised by three men: Rafiq al-Hariri [businessman and future Prime Minister]; Hussein Husseini [speaker of parliament and a major Shiite figure]; and Mar Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir [the Maronite Patriarch]. But the political culture at the time of Taif remained communal, while Syrian support for Taif prioritised its own immediate interests.

Although the Taif Agreement ended the war, it did not promote any efforts to address collective memory or dialogue between the parties. Taif designed a mechanism to establish a state that would provide rights to citizens and guarantees to communities. This required a senate to represent the communities along with a parliament to

represent the citizens. Taif put on the national agenda the reform of the public administration which had become the door through which communities could permeate the state through patronage. It called for the adoption of an electoral law based on large constituencies encompassing mixed (Christian and Muslim) electorates, and freezing out radical elements.

### **Responses to internal and external challenges: developing the social contract**

Today, community interests subsume general interests in Lebanon. But civil society has been developed and deserves support. On 14 March 2005, one month after the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri, people took to the streets spontaneously in numbers far beyond the expectations of the political leaders who had called for protests. It is this popular strength, shared by all parties, which must be called upon to start a dialogue.

We are seeing the end of an era. The Arab Spring did not conform to the Iranian project to represent the Muslim world on the global stage. Consequently, it will also bring about the end of the Hezbollah project. The Arab Spring dealt a body blow to Israel, too, as Tel Aviv no longer has a monopoly on democracy in the region. In Lebanon, we must focus on issues that can bridge the gap between proponents and opponents of the Iranian project, such as the campaigns to protest violence, or to support environmental protection or the abolition of confessionalism.

### **Priorities for building peace**

Building peace is our responsibility. This is what Saad al-Hariri had attempted to do by inviting Hezbollah to return to the National Dialogue in the summer of 2011, saying: your project is failing, join us in building the state together. If we can avoid war between Sunnis and Shiites, we will have overcome this difficult period and will become a model for progress in the region.

The Arab Spring has brought Sunnis to power: they must now show their peaceful intentions. The overarching challenge is to channel Islamist currents into Muslim democracies based on the Christian democratic model in Europe. It is time to show that extremism is behind us.

Saad al-Hariri's proposal must therefore become a concrete plan for dialogue, initiated either by the President of the Republic or by civil society. Once started, this tide will be unstoppable.

*Interviews by Scarlett Haddad, journalist at L'Orient-Le Jour in Lebanon*

# Consensus democracy and representation in Lebanon

## Between agony and electoral reform

Ziad Majed

What is the potential impact of electoral reform on political representation in Lebanon? This article argues that the reinforcement of proportional representation combined with reforms to weaken confessionalism might allow the 'agonising' consociational system to endure in Lebanon, at least until more radical reforms are possible.

### Agonising consociationalism

Consociationalism is a model of democratic government designed for plural and divided societies. It emphasises consensus rather than opposition, and inclusion rather than exclusion. It aims to guarantee the participation of all groups or communities in state institutions, and is often referred to as a power-sharing model of government.

According to Arend Lijphart, consociational democracies have two primary and two secondary characteristics: grand coalition and segmental autonomy; and proportionality and minority veto. Proportionality is the basic consociational standard for the political representation of the different groups, civil service appointments and the allocation of public funds.

Since the declaration of the Lebanese Republic in 1926, Lebanon's political system has featured segmental autonomy and proportional representation of confessional groups, reflecting the confessional organisation of society. These features have led to the formation of grand coalitions in government and confessional proportionality in public administration as dictated by article 95.3.b of the Constitution. In Lebanon, moreover, administrative districts

(*muhâfazât*) that have often acted as electoral districts are mixed in their confessional constituency. This leads to the formation of lists with multi-confessional alliances: ie large coalitions.

“ Since the declaration of the Lebanese Republic in 1926, Lebanon's political system has featured segmental autonomy and proportional representation of confessional groups, reflecting the confessional organisation of society”

The National Pact of 1943 introduced the 'minority veto', meaning that no confessional segment in the country could impose anything on another. Constitutional reforms arising from the 1989 Taif Agreement stated that important government decisions would require the support of two-thirds of the cabinet, thereby providing a grouping of 'one third plus one' of government ministers with veto power.

The initial success of consensus democracy in Lebanon was based on the ability of 'traditional' elites (notables and political bosses) to accommodate compromises and avoid

large-scale confrontations. But the war and its militias, the Syrian hegemony and the emergence of Hezbollah, as well as the growing role of foreign actors in local issues ended this, paving the way for militant elites to take the lead as powerful representatives of their communities prepared to fight to impose their priorities – or at least hamper the functioning of institutions if their choices were not accepted. These factors have combined to make consociationalism an agonising system for Lebanon.

### Frozen politics versus evolving society

Consociationalism in Lebanon is an inert formula that has proved incapable of dealing with important transformations in society. The 1926 Constitution and electoral law and the 1943 National Pact provided for a governing formula and official prerogatives that gave the Maronite President much more authority than the Sunni Prime Minister, and applied a 6:5 Christian-Muslim ratio in parliament and government as well as fixed confessional quotas based on the 1922 and 1932 censuses – the only ones ever conducted in Lebanon.

The demographic balance probably shifted from the late 1950s in favour of Muslim communities, leading to calls for a greater Muslim share in institutions. But the quota was not changed until 1990 by which time Lebanon’s social demography was no longer reflected accurately in the political system. In addition, the rapid depopulation of rural provinces – as people left for the suburbs of Beirut in the 1960s or the Arab Gulf states in the 1970s – brought about important changes in socio-economic relations between citizens and political representatives

in both urban and rural areas. Exploitative and limited industrialisation failed to absorb urbanised landless peasants and created volatile social inequalities. All of this imposed severe pressures on political leaders, who nonetheless remained impervious to reform or to other adjustments to accommodate changes.

It took the end of the civil war to see more fundamental reforms adopted as part of the drafting of the Taif agreement: a 5:5 ratio, and a more equitable balance of power between the Christian President and Sunni-led government, although parliamentary seats were still allocated according to fixed confessional quotas. Although administrative decentralisation and socio-economic development were also addressed in Taif, no measures were taken to strengthen municipalities or to implement important projects in the Lebanese *muhâfazât* to allow fair and balanced development between Beirut, Mount Lebanon and the rest of the country.

### Representation: confessional hegemony and foreign influence

From the early 1970s, the political representation of confessional communities began to overlap with political/military forces and leaders. In the Christian community – particularly the Maronites – this began with Bachir Gemayel from 1976–82 and continued with Michel Aoun after 1988. In the Shiite community, this was led by the Amal Movement (from 1969) and then Hezbollah (from 1985). Much later, the Sunni community was led by Rafiq al-Hariri (1992–2005), and then his heir Saad. The Jumblatt family dominated

**Table 1: Percentages of parliamentary seats allocated by community**

Community	1932		1992	
	Share of population <sup>1</sup>	Parliamentary seats	Share of population <sup>2</sup>	Parliamentary seats
Maronites	28.7		22.19	34
Greek Orthodox	9.7		7.9	14
Greek Catholics	5.9		5.2	8
Christian Minorities	5.7		2.14	2
Armenians			3.7	6
Other Minorities	1.3			
<i>Total Christians</i>		14		64
Sunni	22.4		26.44	
Shiites	19.6		26.04	
Druze	6.7		5.6	
Alawites			0.8	
<i>Total Muslims</i>		11		64

1. From the General Census (1932)

2. Among the 3,007,927 voters in the first post-war election (1992)

leadership of the Druze community, especially after 'The War of the Mountain' in 1983.

Sectarian division occurred in several Lebanese regions and facilitated political and cultural hegemony within various religious communities. Powerful militarised elites' territorial control over confessional groups has been a feature of all crises in Lebanon, including recent ones, and has primarily manifested as aggressive confessional mobilisation rather than political exchange.

The progressive transformation of political into confessional divisions in Lebanon is partly a consequence of consociational inertia. Sectarian conflict hampers the functioning of constitutional institutions and deepens societal divisions. The Lebanese political system, with its rigidity and frozen formulas, cannot respond to an evolving society. Still, no one has been able to change it or introduce amendments beyond the mere distribution of political allocations and the Christian-Muslim 'parity' adopted in Taif.

In many Lebanese crises, domestic tensions pertaining to power-sharing have been exacerbated by foreign factors linked to Lebanon's position in the region, its alliances, its involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict, its internal divisions over the Palestinian cause, and recently its relations with the Syrian regime and its place in Iranian and Saudi plans. Since the 1958 crisis these have prompted sectarian splits, which have then clashed with the consensus system and infiltrated its institutions, hampering them or making it impossible to resolve crises through legal channels.

As external influences have further increased the pressure on the Lebanese formula, consociationalism's complicated set of rules have become increasingly hard to manage, and with each crisis, Lebanon's leadership looked to a foreign referee to prevent things from escalating – if not to provide more profound solutions. The 2008 Doha Accord between the 8 and 14 March coalitions endeavoured to bring about a formula for participation in power that would temporarily please warring parties, even as it failed to address underlying institutional problems.

Following the end of Damascus's hegemony in Lebanon and the withdrawal of Syrian troops in April 2005, major changes that had been unfolding in Lebanese political society in the post-war era came to the fore. First, confessional polarisation had been greatly exacerbated and challenged the rationale underlying the National Pact of 1943 as an agreement between Muslims and Christians; some Lebanese called for a tripartite (Sunni-Shiite-Christian) distribution of power to replace the existing 50/50 (Muslim-Christian) split. Second, relations between foreign

and local parties had been consolidated, exposing Lebanon to the conflicts of the Middle East. And third, Hezbollah had emerged as a major political power.

### **Electoral reform in practice: the Boutros Commission**

Electoral reform is potentially a means to address the challenges of representation outlined above. Lebanon has long suffered from electoral gerrymandering; combined with simple majority representation rule for each constituency (sometimes with very low voter turn-out), this has facilitated the recycling of political elites who have monopolised the affairs of their sectarian groups.

The Boutros Commission – named after its Chair, former foreign minister Fouad Boutros – was formed in late 2005 under the government of Fouad Siniora to recommend electoral reforms for Lebanon. The May 2006 Draft Law presented by the Commission proposed a 'mixed system', combining first-past-the-post rule in small constituencies to decide 51 of Lebanon's 128 MPs, and proportional and list rule in larger constituencies for the remaining 77 MPs. Elections for both would be held on the same day, instead of on four successive Sundays as it had before, in order to reflect the political choices of different regions and confessions simultaneously, distinct from confessional or geographical considerations.

The work of the Boutros Commission was one of the most serious efforts to reform the electoral system in Lebanon since the 1926 Constitution had declared the quota distribution of parliamentary seats provisional (Article 95). While adoption of proportional or majority rule was a recurrent demand by insurgents during the civil war and the subsequent Taif Agreement (II A 5) prescribed 'an election law free of sectarian restriction' the situation has remained frozen. The draft law included clauses related to electoral expenditure, media campaigns, managing and monitoring elections, voting age and gender quotas.

However, this project has stayed in the government drawer. Attempts to discuss it in the executive and legislative bodies between June and December 2006 were resisted by majority and opposition politicians. The government, led by a 14 March majority, was deemed 'unconstitutional' by the 8 March opposition because pro-Hezbollah Shiite ministers had resigned. Parliament was then closed until May 2008. Nabih Berri – its 8 March Speaker – insisted that the 'unconstitutional government' did not have the right to propose any law to parliament. In the end, the 2008 Election Law introduced only marginal improvements to the legal framework. These included attempts at setting campaign spending limits and regulations on media coverage in order to help create a fair and competitive political environment

in a context where money and the private media had played decisive roles in previous elections.

### **Alleviating the agony**

The principles governing electoral reform in Lebanon must relate to ensuring the fair representation of all political forces, weakening monopolies of confessional representation and allowing new elites to emerge – whether inside confessional constituencies or as trans-sectarian movements.

Transforming confessional proportionality into political proportionality – so that different political movements and alliances can be represented according to their level of popular support – is the key to restoring popular legitimacy to political life. Lowering the minimum voting age from 21 to 18 would encourage young people's involvement in public life (and would also increase the Muslim proportion of the electorate). Other necessary measures include the introduction of standardised ballots and gender quotas, and establishment of an Independent Election Commission.

The Lebanese diaspora, who still retain Lebanese nationality, could be allowed to vote at foreign embassies and consulates. This is not only a right of citizenship, but in terms of confessional balance would also probably increase the proportion of Christian voters. Finally, a law to establish a senate, with seats distributed proportionally among confessions, could accompany a gradual de-confessionalisation of parliament as stressed in the Taif Agreement. The senate would be in charge of issues of Lebanese sovereignty and other important questions where communities have historically requested guarantees. At the same time it would allow parliament to focus more on legislation and government scrutiny.

### **Conclusion**

Four years on from the 2008 political crisis, and after the 2009 legislative elections that were organised according to traditional rules, there is talk of revisiting the recommendations of the Boutros Commission. But serious debate on reform is likely to continue to be resisted by most political elites and constrained by regional developments affecting Lebanon's political stability. A first attempt by the government of Najib Mikati in 2011 showed that the positions of major political forces have not changed when it comes to de-confessionalisation, to the voting age, to the political participation of Lebanese living abroad and to the principle of proportional representation.

Consociationalism in Lebanon is agonising. Moderate electoral reform based on proportional representation and administrative decentralisation could, if adopted, sustain the system in the short-term by allowing new elites, new alliances and new discourses to evolve in the political scene. This would make it more democratic, and probably allow for deeper reforms in the future. But this would not resolve Lebanon's fundamental political problems, change the balance of power between its large confessional blocs, or create national consensus over regional dynamics and clashes. Only measures and approaches leading, in the long-term, to the secularisation of the political and social spheres, and allowing for citizenship to replace confessional identities, might address these problems.

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# Displacement, return and reconciliation in Mount Lebanon

Aïda Kanafani-Zahar

During Lebanon's fifteen-year civil war between 600,000 and 800,000 people were displaced. Where displacement occurred as people sought to escape insecurity, especially in the areas demarcating east (Christian) and west (Muslim) Beirut, families made their own decisions to flee. But in many cases people were forcibly moved for confessional or political reasons as militias sought to systematically divide the country into confessional zones. This happened on a massive scale, and in some cases it was implemented through massacres: for example in 1976 at Karantîna, a camp inhabited by Palestinian refugees, Kurds and Lebanese; at Damour, a Christian village in Chouf district; and in a Palestinian refugee camp at Tell el-Za'tar. Massacres were perpetrated to propagate terror and succeeded in coalescing confessional groups territorially.

Israeli military invasions in March 1978 and June 1982 provoked the exodus of hundreds of thousands of people from south Lebanon to Beirut and its suburbs. In September 1983, the withdrawal of the Israeli army triggered the 'War of the Mountain' between the Christian Lebanese Forces, and the Druze forces of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and their allies. This led to the massacre of Druze and Christians, where perpetrators often lived in the same village as their victims. It also included the mass forced transfer of the Christian population, estimated at about 160,000 people in the Aley and Chouf districts alone. Houses belonging to both Christians and Druze were destroyed, burned or plundered; emblems of religious identity were devastated, places of worship destroyed, cemeteries desecrated, and fields and orchards demolished. Further violence was perpetrated on the property of Christians after they left.

The Taif Agreement of 1989 stipulated unity "of the territory, the people and the institutions". In a context where national territory, under militia authority, was fragmented on a confessional basis, in some areas with aspirations for secession, this was highly symbolic. In confirming the "Sovereignty of the Lebanese State over the totality of its territory", Taif granted all Lebanese the "right to reside in any part of [the] territory under the protection of the law" (Article I.H. in the first part) and the right "of the displaced Lebanese to return to the place from which they were displaced" (Article D in second part).

A ministry and a fund for the displaced were created in 1992. Their mandate is to ensure the return of all displaced people and to pay indemnities to them as applicable – although since 1994 return to the provinces of the south and of Nabatiyeh has been managed by the Council of South Lebanon.

## Official returnee policy in Mount Lebanon

Mount Lebanon, a rural area in the centre of the country, is considered the cradle of the modern Lebanese state. The War of the Mountain represented a recurrence of violence as part of the civil war, after a long history of Christian-Druze conflict in the region.

After the war, the state sought to pacify and reconstruct the massacre-scarred region, and facilitate the return of Christian villagers. An event in September 1991 was to have a major influence on official returnee policy: seeking to avenge the killing of several family members, a Christian from the Druzo-Christian village of Ma'asir al-Chouf killed several Druze, including children. The political authorities

were concerned to avoid further cyclic, vindictive violence between villagers – a practice that still structures social relations in some regions. This convinced the Ministry of the Displaced (MD) to include ‘reconciliation’ in national returnee policy.

National returnee policy distinguished between two types of situation in Mount Lebanon. First, the return of displaced people to exclusively Christian villages situated in a Druzo-Christian region, which were not, according to the ministry, the theatre for massacres. Returns to these villages started in late 1992 without recourse to reconciliation. For example, in seven villages of the Harf region in Chouf district, inhabitants returned after re-establishing more or less formal relations with Druze in neighbouring villages, through committees set up to encourage Druze and Christian villagers to participate in each others’ rites of passage, in particular funerals. Each village was also represented at the MD by its own committee. Meetings with officials – the minister, the director and technical experts – were aimed at establishing lists of Christian and Druze whose houses had been destroyed or damaged and who would receive indemnities. Druze who occupied Christians’ houses because their own had been destroyed received evacuation indemnities. The ministry promulgated decrees of “return and collective evacuation”.

The second category concerned Druzo-Christian villages in which massacres were perpetrated. Approximately twenty villages were specifically identified by the MD as “villages of reconciliation”. Christian and Druze villagers were represented through committees reflecting their political and familial diversity. The process involved “the formation of a common committee constituted from the Ministry of the Displaced, the Fund of the Displaced and a representative of the committee of returnees [Christian] and a representative of the committee of residents [Druze]”. Discussions around litigious issues – individual responsibilities during massacres, violations of property, indemnities – were to end with the signing of a reconciliation agreement, the terms of which effectively left the MD with responsibility for settling cases relating to violations of property. The signed agreement would exclude resort to courts, as it would come “with no conditions or suits”. This posed a problem in cases where the intended beneficiaries did not receive payments specified in agreements. In the 1990s frictions between former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, who had authority over the fund, and Walid Jumblatt, Minister of the Displaced, led to the suspension of payments.

Linking reconciliation to reconstruction of village infrastructure and public services (for instance roads, lights and water pipes) has posed a problem for those Druze who were not displaced. The MD contributes to reconstruction

only after a reconciliation agreement has been reached. Ramzi (not his real name) from Abay, a village where reconciliation is not yet concluded, told the author in 2003: “It is as if we have to accept reconciliation in order to receive our rights. This takes the form of a pressure”. His wife also deplored this situation: “If reconciliation is achieved on these grounds, it will be temporary. It must be based on fair foundations. Reconciling is not an exchange”.

### **Return and reconciliation: communal versus individual**

The logic of reconciliation for returnees in Lebanon was based on ‘community equalisation’, which denies distinction between aggressor and victim. Traditional reconciliation inspired by Arab customs is generally based on three key elements – all of which were absent from initiatives in Mount Lebanon: identification of the aggressor; acknowledgement of the wrong; and the aggressor’s request for forgiveness from the victim’s family or its representative.

The MD instead prioritised a communitarian logic. The withdrawal of (a very limited number of) legal complaints filed by families of victims at the time of the events was presented as a necessary step for reconciliation. According to former Minister Marwan Hamadé (2000–03), legal suits “perpetuate conflict” and could threaten the climate of concession.

**“ We have to accept reconciliation in order to receive our rights ... If reconciliation is achieved on these grounds, it will be temporary. It must be based on fair foundations. Reconciling is not an exchange”**

Therefore the ‘group’ – in this case the Druze or Christian communities – rather than the individual, became the focus for reconciliation. Ministry officials did not distinguish between parties as perpetrators or victims of violence. Khalid Abd al-Samad, former director of the MD, said in an interview with the author on the occasion of the signing of the reconciliation agreement for the village of Majdlaya in 2000: “We all have committed errors. We must all recognise our errors, come back to ourselves and forgive one another”. The consequence of this communitarian logic is to put individual responsibilities aside. This leaves no place for forgiveness, a fundamentally personal act. The indemnity paid by the state to victims’ families is not therefore the result of the recognition of a wrong or of the victim by the person responsible.

Communitarian logic did not pervade all processes of return and reconciliation. National allegiance was also used to encourage villagers to reconcile – Christians to agree to return and Druze to accept their return. Khalid Abd al-Samad explained that “the great national decision” is one argument used to achieve this aim: “We say to the villagers, ‘we are here to apply a national decision, we all carry this responsibility’”.

Another policy linked reconciliation to pacification in “the superior interest of the state”, as Khalid Abd al-Samad put it. Pacification constitutes the first clause of the reconciliation agreement for the village of Bmaryam of May 2002, which stipulates that the objective of reconciliation is to “permit all to find stability and unity in the village under the banner of civil peace”. Khalid Abd al-Samad stated: “We cannot say that with this return to Majdlaya, we solved all contradictions, conflicts and problems. No. But we achieved what is in our opinion fundamental. We said: ‘We have different points of view but within the frame of peace and peaceful dialogue. Violence is forbidden’”. Policy has also referred to the need to enhance religious pluralism as a national institution and a pillar of the Constitution.

## Conclusion

To ensure the safety of both Druze and Christian villagers, the MD adopted a form of reconciliation modified from traditional procedures for resolving the problem of revenge, in a way that embodied the political will for pacification, unity of territory and religious pluralism. But victims were largely excluded from MD discussions. Hamadé asserted that “their presence is not necessary. It is not a condition. It is easier to reach solutions without them. Sometimes families of victims play a positive role and sometimes negative, retarding reconciliation”.

Even if the instituted process allowed no space for their memories and their testimony, victims nevertheless expressed a strong need to remember in order to, avoid

relapse, to learn from the past, and to research the reasons that led to the war and social disintegration. This need is clearly put forth in narratives of bereaved families collected in the Chouf and Aley area. As a child, Ramzi lost his father, mother and grandmother in the massacre that occurred in his village, Abay. He found it very difficult to put his wounds into words, but expressed that it was impossible to forget, and his profound hope that the war would not happen again. He projected his memory in a peaceful and secular future, the only future that he could envisage for his daughter and his son.

The major benefit of reconciliation in relation to displaced people is to neutralise cycles of vengeance and to make it possible for them to return. In practice, however, return is also conditioned by economic conditions and the rural exodus that long preceded Lebanon’s war.

The major paradox of reconciliation in Mount Lebanon lies in the fact that it promotes national allegiance to Lebanon, while simultaneously elaborating a communitarian logic to the reconciliation process. Because post-war settlement was characterised by a blanket amnesty, reconciliation in Mount Lebanon followed this rationale even though traditional reconciliation processes do not. Reconciliation is local as far as the rules conceived by the MD are applied, with villages ‘reconciled’ on a case-by-case basis. Its local specificity, its logic of mediation and compensation, and the process itself have all proceeded from a stated objective of facilitating the return of the displaced and averting cycles of revenge. But ultimately, reconciliation for the displaced has been governed by power relationships at the national level.

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# The Special Tribunal for Lebanon

## Promoting justice or prolonging conflict?

Chandra Lekha Sriram

The Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) was created as an internationalised criminal court to investigate the politically-charged assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri in February 2005, after an international inquiry assessed that the Lebanese judiciary would need significant international assistance to investigate, and the 14 March-led government of Lebanon requested the creation of an internationalised tribunal. Its advocates have suggested that as a court with international participation, it could serve a symbolic and exemplary function to promote the rule of law domestically, as is commonly expected of international and internationalised trials. Enhancing the rule of law is in turn expected to support wider changes in the justice and security environment.

However, Lebanon's tribunal, like its transition from conflict, is unique. Its operation to date has prompted cabinet crises and exacerbated political divides. Two decades after the end of the civil war in Lebanon, is the STL likely to contribute to peace or risk promoting conflict should any prosecutions go forward?

### **Establishment of the STL: aims and mission**

Following Hariri's assassination the UN Security Council established the mandate of an International Independent Investigative Commission (IIIC) in April 2005. The IIIC concluded that the assassination was carried out by a group with "extensive organisation" and indicated that some evidence pointed to both Lebanese and Syrian involvement. It transmitted evidence to Lebanese judicial authorities and stated that further investigations be undertaken by domestic judicial and security forces.

The IIIC pointed to weaknesses in Lebanon's judiciary. Not only was the post-war Lebanese judiciary technically

incapable of handling alone such an inquiry, it remained highly politicised and sensitive to Syrian influence as well as to instrumentalisation by pro-Syrian constituencies in Lebanon. This was especially apparent after the IIIC named Syrian officials among the alleged sponsors of the crime and recommended the arrest in August 2005 of four Lebanese generals suspected to be involved. Neither the Lebanese judiciary nor the 14 March-led government, formed after an electoral deal with Hezbollah in the Legislative election of May 2005, was able to impose a Lebanese criminal court.

The UN Secretary-General's report of 21 March 2006 (S/2006/1636) advocated a mixed Lebanese-international tribunal as necessary due to bias and corruption in the domestic judiciary. On 29 March UN Security Council Resolution 1664 called for the Secretary-General to negotiate an agreement with the Lebanese government aimed at establishing a mixed criminal tribunal to prosecute individuals responsible for the Hariri assassination and 22 related killings – directly, or as accomplices, contributors or superiors.

Advocates of the STL emphasise their hopes for a wider legacy for domestic rule of law. For instance the International Center for Transitional Justice in 2008 expressed the hope that the fact that the tribunal would apply international standards of due process and would respect the rights of defendants more generally had the potential to enhance domestic rule of law in Lebanon by demonstration. These arguments have been echoed by the 14 March alliance.

Some argue that the tribunal could serve as an example of impartial justice in operation, and could result in justice for

political crimes, both rarities in Lebanon. Advocates of this position point to the case of the four Lebanese generals, imprisoned for four years by the Lebanese government on behalf of the tribunal, and released when the prosecutor indicated they were not of interest following the revelation of false witness statements.

## Legal Status

### *Domestic legal status: the constitutional issues*

Under the Lebanese constitution, parliamentary approval was needed for the creation of the STL. However, due to opposition by the 8 March Alliance, the parliament did not vote to ratify the agreement. Instead the UN Security Council passed resolution 1757 on 30 May 2007 decreeing that the agreement, included as an annex, would enter into force. The Council sought to bypass the need for parliamentary approval by invoking Chapter VII of the UN Charter, albeit with the reassurance of the government that a majority in parliament backed the tribunal, as 72 of Lebanon's 128 MPs belonged to the 14 March Alliance. The STL officially began functioning in March 2009 and the trial chamber presented a first series of indictments in June 2011.

Nonetheless, while 14 March strongly supported the STL, Hezbollah and its 8 March allies strongly opposed it, triggering parliamentary and cabinet crises and several months of hostile popular protest in front of the Prime Minister's office when in November 2006 Shiite members of the cabinet suspended participation to protest the government bypassing the parliamentary blockade and its signature of the draft agreement. Today, legal scholars remain divided as to the constitutionality of the tribunal.

### *International legal status: the creation of what?*

The mode of creation of the tribunal meant its legal status is also murky internationally. Despite the absence of parliamentary approval, Security Council Resolution 1757 purported to simply give effect to the agreement to establish the STL. The Council could have created a tribunal exercising its Chapter VII powers, as it had done with the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. It did not do this in Lebanon, however. In fact, the 14 March majority opposed such a choice for fear of undermining its commitment to national sovereignty. The Council is not empowered to compel any state to accept a treaty obligation.

The STL's international legal status is disputed in another way: it is often referred to as an internationalised or hybrid criminal tribunal, in that it employs a mixture of domestic and international judges and staff, is internationally-mandated and in part supported financially by the international community. Generally, hybrid tribunals share

a number of common features: they are located in the country affected by the violence or conflict to be addressed; they use international and domestic judges, lawyers and other court staff; and they prosecute international crimes, but may also include some domestic crimes within their remit. Initially, the STL shared few of these characteristics: it was supposed to apply domestic law pertaining to domestic crimes of terrorism and murder, rather than international law crimes such as crimes against humanity or war crimes; and it is located outside Lebanon, close to The Hague and other international criminal tribunals such as the International Criminal Court and the ad hoc tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

A ruling in January 2011 by the appeals chamber of the STL that domestic Lebanese law on terrorism should be interpreted alongside Lebanese obligations with respect to terrorism in international law means that the tribunal now applies international law, contrary to the facial terms of its mandate. Finally, distinct from other internationalised criminal tribunals and potentially in conflict with international human rights standards, the tribunal can try accused *in absentia* if they refuse to appear and cannot be arrested, which will most probably be the case.

## Indictments and political divisions

Many countries emerging from war have sought to try individuals for serious violations of international law, or have used other measures such as vetting, commissions of inquiry, reparations and memorials. In Lebanon, prosecuting disappearances, crimes against humanity or war crimes is impossible because Lebanon's Amnesty Law of 1991 (law 94/91) includes all crimes except political assassination. The tribunal is controversial because it is only designed to address a limited set of crimes, even though numerous other assassinations occurred both during and after the end of the civil war. Some civil society and human rights activists also see the tribunal as politicised and unable to deliver accountability; others that promote the idea of some form of transitional justice or reckoning with the past do not support the tribunal because of its limited scope.

The tribunal has been divisive politically. Since 2006 it has been the main bone of contention between the 14 March alliance, which wants to see the murderers of Rafiq al-Hariri discovered and sentenced, and the 8 March, for whom it serves the goals of Saad al-Hariri, Rafiq's son and heir, and is intended primarily to isolate Syria and Hezbollah on the international scene.

While Syrian officials close to Bashar al-Assad were at the forefront of the pending accusation until 2008, intense domestic political tension including Sunni-Shia fighting in





Saad al-Hariri (centre) arrives in downtown Beirut to mark the third anniversary of the assassination of his father, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, 14 February 2008 // © Marwan Naamani/AFP/Getty Images

the streets of Beirut in May 2008 raised speculation about possible political compromise by Hariri, either requesting the closure of the tribunal or distancing the government from the tribunal without closing it.

In June 2011 four individuals linked to Hezbollah were indicted by the tribunal and the Lebanese justice system was given 30 days to execute arrest warrants. Reaction to the indictment was divided along political lines; 14 March politicians, including Hariri, called on Hezbollah to cooperate with the tribunal; Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah claimed the indictment included no real proof of Hezbollah involvement, launching violent accusations against alleged Israeli collaborators among Lebanese security forces and asserting in July 2011 that the 'Party of God' was "prepared to confront the issue of the Tribunal".

Cooperation by the Lebanese judiciary with the STL has been further jeopardised since the change of government in June 2011. Hezbollah and Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement, who are members of the 8 March government of Najib Mikati, advocate boycotting the STL and refusing any renewal of its mandate. In November 2011, in a creative compromise, Mikati resolved neither to confirm nor comment on the renewal of the STL mandate, but to comply with international resolutions. He arranged for Lebanon's annual share of the STL budget to be paid through the Higher Relief Committee attached to the PM's office. Then in March 2012, the STL mandate was renewed for another three years according to Security Council resolution 1757, after minimal consultation with the Lebanese government. It remains that nothing consistent has emerged from the international inquiry or the STL after six years of intense domestic and international strife.

## Conclusion

The STL remains controversial for political and legal reasons. In a country that has experienced serious human

rights abuses, disappearances and assassinations both during and after the civil war for which very few have been held accountable, and also suffers a wider culture of impunity and weak rule of law, the very existence of the STL might be hailed as a symbolic victory, one which might help promote wider accountability and discussion of the legacy of the past.

However, the tribunal has provoked political and legal disputes – internal, regional and international – over its creation, constitutionality and place amongst internationalised criminal tribunals globally, which have meant that any positive impact on impunity in Lebanon has so far been muted at best. At the same time, the operation of the tribunal has been politically destabilising, generating parliamentary stand-offs and government collapse.

Despite its superficial resemblance to a common transitional justice mechanism, the internationalised criminal tribunal, the STL is unique, and not evidently designed to enable a transitional process which confronts the legacy of the civil war. Indeed, the effect of the STL has been not to promote reconciliation but to generate political instability, all before the formal initiation of any trials. It remains to be seen what will happen once trials begin, either with the defendants present at the trials or *in absentia*.

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# Reconstruction and peace in Lebanon

## Post-war economic policy

A conversation with Sami Atallah

*Sami Atallah is Executive Director of the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies*

### Post-war economic reconstruction policies

Lebanon's post-war economic performance has achieved only modest economic growth, averaging around 4.4 per cent over the last 20 years. This is comparatively weak for a country emerging from a 15-year civil war during which GDP dropped by half.

Growth rates differ across economic sectors: banking, real estate and tourism are doing relatively well, whilst agriculture and industry have been left behind. Job creation has been poor, especially with regard to the aspirations of Lebanese youth, and this has led to high levels of emigration to the Gulf and Europe. Lebanon needs to generate about 17,000 jobs a year, but creates only 3–4,000. Poverty is around 30 per cent. Despite initial improvements in the early 1990s, infrastructure is now in decline. There has not been 24-hour supply of electricity across the whole country since the eve of the war in 1974–75.

### Monetary policy

Post-war monetary policy was aimed at stabilising Lebanon's currency and ending the period of hyperinflation between 1987–93. This was seen as an essential component of establishing a sustainable economy. Lebanon was initially quite successful in pursuing this strategy and was able to attract foreign capital, a process supported by the rapid recovery of the banking sector.

The architects of Lebanon's post-civil war economy recognised the importance of making the most of this, and Lebanon's 'banking secrecy law', which provides comprehensive guarantees for client confidentiality,

ensured Lebanon became a haven for capitalism. The government also sold off treasury bills (T-bills), which were very attractive for investors. Money was coming in both from foreign sources, and from Lebanese based abroad through family remittances.

However, too much foreign capital was spent on consumption than on investment. This drove up prices in non-tradable goods, which many Lebanese saw as profitable – opening restaurants, hairdressers, as well as schools and universities. Lebanon also has a very narrow market structure. It is not a market economy with a broad and open private sector. Instead a small number of companies dominate their respective sectors, rendering them uncompetitive, pushing up prices, making it harder to compete internationally, and reducing the purchasing power of citizens at home.

So while post-war monetary policy may have succeeded in stabilising the currency and boosting capital flow into Lebanon, it benefitted only a few, and this had negative repercussions for specific sectors and for many people's wellbeing.

### Fiscal policy

Fiscal policy has also been inequitable, benefitting the rich and hurting the poor, while public spending has also been highly inefficient. After the war the top band of income tax was reduced from 45 per cent (at its highest) to as low as 10 per cent; it currently stands at around 15 per cent, and in fact few rich Lebanese even pay that. Self-employment is high and because of the bank secrecy

law it is very hard to assess under-reporting or real earnings. Many rich Lebanese avoid inheritance tax by setting up holding companies. To boost public income, governments have increased indirect taxes – VAT, tax on vehicles and passports – which tend to hurt the poor disproportionately.

Public spending has been high over the last 20 years and some of this has gone on infrastructure – electricity, water, bridges and telecommunications. But there are major discrepancies between reported infrastructure investment by the government and the relevant public debt incurred. The question remains, therefore, what has happened to the difference? In the early 1990s there was a lot of waste in public spending, primarily in investment projects: roads costing many times more than they should have; over-charging for garbage collection; scandals in the port or in telecommunications; the government cancelling contracts and paying millions in compensation to companies with links to politicians' families.

### **Clientelism, public administration, citizenship and accountability**

A lot of public money has been spent – for instance on education, health and public sector salaries. But Lebanon has a bloated bureaucracy in which many people are hired for clientelistic reasons that support sectarianism. For instance, if you want to build a new school in a Sunni town, you will probably have to build schools in Shia or Maronite towns as well. Money is spent not according to need but to maintain sectarian balance – or so that sectarian leaders can demonstrate benefits for their own community.

Clientelism essentially means that money, goods or services are provided in return for political loyalty: 'vote for me and you get something'. Public servants become assets of the politicians who appoint them; their role is to distribute all sorts of privileges to the politicians' constituencies. These relationships become much more important in election years. The public administration has not been reformed because there is no incentive for politicians to change it.

All this explains poor services in Lebanon. There is no accountability: public servants report to politicians rather than the state, and certainly not to the citizens who are left requiring political connections to get any services beyond the most basic. While this encourages people to seek access to the state through politicians, it comes with a cost – of relinquishing political choice.

This problem has worsened since the war, illustrated by the numerous funds that have been set up. The Fund for the Displaced was put in the hands of Walid Jumblatt, the

head of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), while the Council for Reconstruction and Development was managed by former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. The leadership of the 'Council of the South' is allotted to the Speaker of the House, who becomes a kind of patron of southern Lebanon. All leaders want to show their constituents that they are able to negotiate hard with other sects and extract a bigger piece of the pie, but many also benefit personally.

Efforts to professionalise the civil service or institute more competitive recruitment processes are also political. All parties have to agree to respect the public administration. In the longer term this could be achieved through electoral reform to dilute political parties' monopoly on power, introducing new parties and so increasing political competition. Recent positive developments include much deeper public scrutiny of the budget over the last couple of years by the Parliamentary Budget Committee, which helps to counter inefficiency or embezzlement in government spending.

### **Reconstruction and peace in Lebanon: the role of the international community**

It is up to the Lebanese to change the system. International partners could explore ways to engage with Lebanese citizenry more directly. But major international initiatives like the Paris I, II and III assistance conferences for Lebanon, which pledged billions of dollars to Lebanon linked to economic reform, in fact have essentially helped to endorse and sustain the existing system. The solution to Lebanon's problems does not lie in importing political ideas from Europe. We have our own ideas and we understand our own system; the rules of the game are different in Lebanon.

The main question is how to create a 'critical political mass' that can say 'enough is enough'. This is very hard, but Lebanese people care, are interested and can develop useful initiatives. There is now an NGO to create public spaces, like the public park in Beirut which is currently only open to foreigners. Micro-initiatives such as this are perhaps the best way to build momentum and create a public desire for reform, in order to try to access the macro-level in Lebanon that is currently mired in multiple vested interests.

Lebanese society is divided vertically. Sectarian leaders are central to people's political decisions, including resort to violence. Lebanese people need to revolt against their own leaders! The joke in Lebanon is that we do not have an Arab Spring here because there are seven dictators to revolt against, not just one, and so coordinating across all these groups is much harder!

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Interview by Aaron Griffiths



## Section 4

# Realising sovereignty

Lebanese citizens wave the Lebanese flag during a rally in support of the army in Beirut's northern suburb of Dora on 22 May 2012. The Lebanese army is considered a rare symbol of national unity // © Joseph Eid/AFP/Getty Images

# Internal choice or external fate?

## Recasting the debate on Lebanon's vulnerability

Marie-Joëlle Zahar

Lebanon's instability is frequently explained by the country's vulnerability to its external environment. Interestingly, before the country descended into civil war, its particular brand of consociational power sharing, a political system based on the proportional representation of the major societal groups in government, was hailed as a successful experiment in democracy, one that was held up as an example for other deeply-divided societies. The view of Lebanon's conflicts, described by the Lebanese journalist, diplomat and scholar Ghassan Tuéni, as 'wars of others on Lebanese soil', sees the Lebanese as victims situated at the heart of a conflict-zone, who cannot but feel deeply the reverberations of regional shock waves.

### Explaining the mechanisms of vulnerability

What accounts for the vulnerability of Lebanese politics? This is intrinsically related to two characteristics of Lebanese state formation. The state is weak relative to society. The state is also soft; its boundaries are permeable to foreign influences.

In Lebanon, the state is weak by design. The balance of power between state and society has been crafted to give communal groups the upper hand. Lebanon's consociational system is founded on the proportional representation of all major Lebanese confessions (religious groups) in state institutions. The country's Personal Status Regime (*nizam al-ahwal al-shakhsiyya*) gives religious tribunals the legislative and executive authority over the personal status of their flocks. Further, transnational dynamics have historically traversed Lebanese state-society relations. Transnational appeals – Nasserist Arab nationalism in the 1950s, the Palestinian cause in the 1970s, Shia Islamism in the 2000s – have resonated in the Lebanese political scene.

Lebanon's weakness and softness are related; the first has been described as facilitating the emergence of the second. Together, the state's weakness and the society's permeability cause the country's vulnerability.

### Wars of others on Lebanon's soil?

There are two standard readings of the entanglement between Lebanon's domestic politics and external dynamics. The first and most widespread account begins with the external environment. It argues that the key to the stability of Lebanon's power sharing resides in the ability and willingness of external actors to bring coercive pressure to bear on internal factions. According to this analysis of a century and a half of Lebanon's history, external guarantors have been able to bring about stability, but only when interested foreign powers agreed not to draw the country into their regional power struggles.

The second account starts from within. It focuses on the manner in which insiders draw outside powers into their 'games'. The scholar Bassel Salloukh suggests that this begins with the premise that local actors use transnational ideologies or bandwagon with external actors to strengthen their positions in domestic struggles. This account, therefore, begins with state weakness.

One of the major consequences of weak states is the lack of a credible deterrent. Weak states have a tenuous monopoly over the use of force. They do not have the wherewithal to prevent sub-state groups from using violence. This is the history of Lebanon's army, continuously threatened with implosion along communal lines and therefore incapable or unwilling to forcefully step in to prevent groups from using violence. In the 1958 civil war, Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) Commander General Fouad Chehab refused to involve the



military in the conflict fearing its implosion. During the war, the Lebanese military establishment stood on the sidelines as militias fought one another. Ultimately, some army units split to fight alongside their co-religionists. In 2008, the LAF also stood by as 8 March and 14 March combatants took their disagreements violently to the streets.

Nor can a weak state credibly provide assurances to internal groups that, if they comply with the rules of the game, no other group will take advantage of them. That, in many ways, is the quandary of the Lebanese state as it seeks to address the fact that Hezbollah remains the only legally armed militia in the country, with other groups fearing that the 'Party of God' will use its weapons not simply against Israel but also against internal opponents. Weak states are particularly likely to be captured by private interests in which case the state can be seen as a threat by groups that do not share the orientations of those in power. In 1958, anti-status quo forces felt very strongly that President Camille Chamoun did not have the interests of all Lebanese equally at heart, and that his decision to join the US-sponsored Baghdad Pact coalition of states was an attempt to orient Lebanon's foreign policy in ways that would protect, privilege and give precedence to Christian interests over Muslim ones.

These situations contain the seeds of a 'credible commitment' problem. A state that fails to deter and assure cannot credibly commit to protect sub-national communities. When the latter feel threatened, they can feel they have two options: build up their own military strength, or enter into alliances with stronger (ie external) powers that can protect them. This second option provides a window into an alternative understanding of the entanglement of domestic Lebanese politics with the regional and international environment.

### **The debate on Lebanon's vulnerability**

Lebanese factions do not simply suffer the reverberations of regional events. They have influence over their country's fate and have historically sometimes provoked and invited foreign intervention into their domestic affairs. During the 1975–90 civil war, Lebanese politicians sought out Syrian and Israeli intervention. It was Lebanon's Maronite President, Suleiman Frangieh, who invited Syria to send troops to Lebanon to change the balance of power between the protagonists of the war, at a time when pro-status quo (mostly Christian) forces were facing the prospect of defeat at the hands of anti-status quo forces (mostly Muslims). In the late 1970s, Christian politicians looked to Israel for military assistance and political support.

The trend continues to this day. When the civil war ended with the signing of the Taif Agreement, Lebanese

leaders repeatedly called upon Damascus to help them settle their internal disputes. This does not deny Syria's intentional influence on, and indeed manipulation of, Lebanese politics during the 1990s until 2005 (some would argue even beyond). But Syrian officials were also drawn into the morass of Lebanon's confessional politics from within, as Lebanese politicians used Syrian interests in neighbourhood stability to gain relative advantage over one another.

Anti-Syrian Lebanese factions similarly drew the West into Lebanese politics in the 1990s, particularly the US and France. Their intention was clear. They were attempting to redress the internal balance of power, skewed because of the unchecked weight of Syria and its allies in deciding how to go about interpreting and implementing the Taif Agreement. After 9/11 opponents of Syria skillfully manipulated Western counter-terrorism concerns about the regime in Damascus to make their voices heard. While it would be a mistake to believe that the passing of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 in 2004, intended to try to reclaim Lebanon's sovereignty and expel 'foreign forces', was the direct result of these efforts, it would equally be wrong-headed to deny Lebanese factions and politicians' own role in increasing their country's dependence on the outside world.

### **Looking ahead**

Where does this leave us? Lebanon's vulnerability to insecurity is not simply a passive matter of fate, determined outside its borders. It is also the result of active choices that the Lebanese have made as they have sought internal protection from one another. Much of the problem resides with the proverbial weakness of the Lebanese state. Although this weakness might arguably have been designed to maintain the strength and autonomy of the many Lebanese communities, it has also become a source of vulnerability. A stronger state would help to protect Lebanon from the vagaries of the outside world, as it would decrease the need of Lebanese communities to draw outsiders into domestic politics.

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# Armed groups and sovereignty

## Domestic and regional agendas for war and peace in Lebanon

Joseph Bahout

The divisions between internal and external agendas in Lebanon are not clear-cut. Ambiguity extends to the war, its causes and dynamics. Is it a civil war featuring Muslim and leftist demands for participation and social justice, respectively, versus Christian or rightist resistance to change? Or an external war fought on Lebanese soil: the projection of the Arab-Israeli conflict or of the Palestinian question? This debate is as political as it is conceptual, as the choice of analysis immediately favours one or other party to the conflict.

The internal and external dimensions of Lebanon's protracted war are intertwined and it is vital to disentangle them in relation to the political and armed forces still operating in the country.

The Taif Agreement put an end to Lebanon's militia phenomena in very specific ('Lebanese') ways. First, the terms for demobilising and transforming paramilitary forces granted them priority access to the political system, achieved in practice through an amnesty law. Second, it gave Syria tutelage over the Lebanese political system. Third, Taif provided the Lebanese army with an internal police function on condition that it 'coordinate' closely with Syria's security and military apparatus, including its infamous intelligence agency, *Mukhabarat*.

Taif also implicitly allowed Hezbollah to keep its weapons, provided that its actions were framed according to Syria's strategy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. This concession was granted in deference to Israel's occupation of the south, as well as Hezbollah's strategic ties with Syria and Iran and the West's desire to keep Syria in the process. This situation remained static until the political 'explosion' of 2005: the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and Syria's subsequent withdrawal from Lebanon.

### Hezbollah and Syria

The roots of the crisis of 2005 can be traced back to 9/11 and the resultant shift in US and Western interests and policy. After the invasion of Iraq in 2003 Syria felt increasingly encircled by American physical and political presence in the region. Washington exerted strong pressure on the Syrian leadership to disarm Hezbollah and cease all ties with Hamas – in other words, to break away from Iran's orbit. UN Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004), sponsored by France and the US, demanded the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon, disarmament of all militia, and free and fair elections.

Damascus's decision to stick with the 'axis of resistance' eliminated any rapprochement between Syria and the West and the Arab Gulf powers. Hariri's assassination was a culmination of mounting tension and removed the ambiguity over Hezbollah's role as Lebanon's remaining armed militia and its ostensible official legitimacy. Intense debate began over its weapons and Lebanon's national defence strategy, leading to discussions on the 'Lebanonisation' of Hezbollah.

This debate occurs both outside Lebanon – in Iran, Israel, Syria and the international community – and within the new post-Hariri power structure. After 2005, Lebanese government majority lay in the hands of a coalition of pro-Western Sunnis and Christians, which faced a minority opposition of Christians and Shia dominated by Hezbollah. This new governing structure has been trying to build legitimacy based on state sovereignty and the ousting of Syrian forces. Therefore, part of the debate over Hezbollah and its weapons now takes place in a changed context, where the aim is to build an independent Lebanon with a state monopoly of force, and to which Hezbollah must

surrender its weapons and become an integral part of the national defence strategy.

Hezbollah is naturally suspicious that this new discourse is designed to convince it to disarm and give the West and Israel a comparative advantage, primarily as a means to stop the resistance movement in the Middle East – in relation to Hamas, to the Palestinian issue more generally and to Iraq. It has persisted in its refusal to hand over its weapons. The 2006 July war dramatically revised this debate: Israel wanted to disarm Hezbollah aggressively, while Hezbollah was able to display its resistance credentials. The Syrian crisis provides yet another new dimension: will Hezbollah be forced to give up its weapons if the Assad regime in Damascus falls?

The outlook for Syria is the most urgent question for the future of both Hezbollah and Lebanon. Hezbollah needs to be prepared for three possible outcomes: 1) Syria is plunged into protracted civil war; 2) the regime survives but is severely weakened and constrained; or 3) the regime falls and is replaced by one that is more hostile to Hezbollah and Iran. Hezbollah is very aware that channelling weapons through Syria from Iran will be at best severely inhibited, or more likely will become impossible. It is not obvious how Hezbollah will cope with this situation militarily in the long term, but it already has enough arms stockpiled to endure protracted guerrilla warfare with Israel, for instance.

But Hezbollah is more than its military wing. Deprived of a regional alliance, Hezbollah still has some comparative domestic advantages over its Lebanese adversaries in terms of demography and its popular and cohesive support. It can also mobilise alliances with other Lebanese sects that fear Sunni supremacy in both Lebanon and Syria. While these advantages are changeable and are likely to erode over time, they give Hezbollah breathing space to find alternative strategies and to wait for more favourable regional conditions.

### **Lebanonising Hezbollah?**

Hezbollah has maintained the Assad regime's depiction of the uprising in Syria as a foreign plot to detach Syria from the Iranian axis. Persisting in this analysis is likely at some point to undermine Hezbollah's domestic popularity. Hezbollah's credibility relies to a large extent on its support for disenfranchised people in their struggle against injustice. It welcomed revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia and cannot survive if it fails to condemn the plight of people suffering in Syria.

Hezbollah will also have to draw increasingly on resources from within Lebanon, focusing more on domestic issues of economics, justice and development and less on the

external sphere. To date Hezbollah's record on these issues has been quite weak. Hezbollah has less experience and fewer skills for domestic politics, and is less familiar with navigating domestic social and political constraints such as sectarianism and power sharing.

To what extent will Hezbollah be able to be an autonomous political actor if the Syrian regime falls, and if (or when) Iran strikes a deal with the west? Some see Hezbollah as a creation of Syria and Iran and their interests in Lebanon. This is partly true: Hezbollah was formed as a result of Syrian and Iranian political engineering in Lebanon after the Iranian revolution. But it was also constructed from a deeply rooted Lebanese Shia reality. Hezbollah has enough 'Lebanese genes' to be relatively independent from Syria, although perhaps less from Iran because of theological and ideological links. It is also very conscious of its Lebanese constituency, and aware that it has to take care of this community, and so is prepared to be a more 'pure' Lebanese political actor.

Some agreements have been reached between Hezbollah and the Aounist Christian community, as well as alliances cultivated with sections of other communities. However, as long as sectarian considerations remain prominent and sects remain focused on security and self-preservation it will be difficult for Hezbollah to reach far outside its own community.

### **Sunni and Christian political forces**

Growing polarisation between Sunni and Shia sects is becoming a danger to the sovereignty of the state. This is related to a long-standing but implicit competition between the two communities. It was triggered in the 1990s but was managed at that time by Syria. Since Syria's withdrawal in 2005 competition has become open and sometimes violent. It has also taken a further and very dramatic turn with current events in Syria. If there is a change in the Damascus regime from Alawite to Sunni, Sunnis in Lebanon will feel increasingly emboldened vis-à-vis Hezbollah. Fear of Hezbollah's power and weaponry will erode, giving radical political Sunnis the impetus to go on the offensive.

Since 2005 Saad al-Hariri's 'moderate' Sunni Future Movement has tried to mobilise the Sunni community using more radical Islamic rhetoric. However, many Lebanese Sunnis have become much more radical than the Future Movement anticipated and Hariri's party therefore not only risks being sidelined in favour of more extreme forces, but also cannot abandon radicalism for fear of being left politically 'naked'.

Taif presented the Christian community with the opportunity to act as a bridge-builder and moderator

between Muslim sects. But during the period of Syrian tutelage the Christian groups became politically apathetic and after 2005 they themselves split allegiance between the two Muslim sects: Michel Aoun and his constituency aligned with Shia interests, and Sami Geagea with Sunni. Today Christians fuel Muslim division. Their diminishing political power can, therefore, be traced partly to the civil war and the Taif Agreement, but also to their alignment with antagonistic Muslim forces. Centrifugal forces currently at play within the Christian community offer little hope that such polarisation will change in the foreseeable future.

## The Lebanese Army

After the war, and especially since 2005, the independence of the Lebanese Army has been constrained by three key factors. First, its 'Lebanese' structure means it has to take into account equilibrium between political forces and communities. What is referred to in Lebanon as 'security by consensus' – a semi-official motto – is in fact a major problem. The army is not above other political or armed forces in the country, but is dependent on consensus among them. When there is no consensus, the army is either paralysed or threatened with implosion, as happened several times during the war.

Second, even after Syrian withdrawal in 2005 the army is still tied to the Syrian military leadership as a result of various treaties and agreements, through personal links between some senior officers, and because of the role of security services. Coordination with the Syrian military security structure is very visible in the border regions with Syria, where the Lebanese army clearly cannot take actions that could antagonise Damascus – for example, the demarcation commission sponsored by the EU since 2007 has been paralysed. Third, the army is reliant on links with Western donors, such as the US and France, through funding, equipment and training.

Lebanon's army, therefore, reflects precisely its politics and, due to the reciprocal veto power of domestic political forces, can only manoeuvre within the narrow limitations allowed by consensus. In May 2008, for instance, when pro-Syrian militias and Hezbollah stormed west Beirut, the army was neither willing nor able to act, as any response would have exposed internal splits, individual units would most likely have aligned factionally, and the overall military leadership would have been stripped of authority.

The army cannot act to prevent incidents from occurring. It can repair damage in certain situations, provided the political forces permit. If political forces disagree fundamentally, the army would come under severe stress again. The army effectively acts like a peacekeeping force. Except in isolated cases, these constraints have prevented

the army from operating like other Arab militaries with a clear political appetite.

## Dialogue and identity and sovereignty

The extent of the impact of the National Dialogue regarding Lebanon's national defence strategy – in reality a forum to discuss Hezbollah's weapons – will remain elusive as long as Syria is unstable. Hezbollah is betting that the Syrian regime will ultimately prevail more or less intact and that no one in Lebanon will be able to challenge its status. The 14 March coalition is betting that the Syrian regime will collapse in a few months, leaving Hezbollah no choice but to negotiate an honourable exit: a quid pro quo of disarming and having a legitimate place in the political system. Both camps are betting on winning a zero sum game. The war in Syria could well be protracted and very bloody. A change in the current balance is probably a long way off, but one way or another would probably convince both sides to agree to sit around the negotiating table.

The issue of Lebanese identity – a very broad concept – has been challenged since 2005, and is now taking a very dramatic turn in light of the current Syrian and Arab revolutions. The Arab Spring has brought back to the table the question of minorities, self-definition, identity, Arab nationalism, and the place of Islam in society – issues which have been frozen in the Arab world for several decades. This raises extraordinary challenges for Lebanese identity – the construction of internal consensus, of cohesion, peace and coexistence and the socio-political arrangements between communities are very difficult issues to address. With all communities under stress and political parties struggling for survival it is difficult to envisage the construction of trans-sectarian links and alliances.

For the international community, maintaining communication with Hezbollah is especially important. Europe has done well to keep channels open and not list Hezbollah as a proscribed terrorist organisation, as the US has. Hezbollah is a highly pragmatic, multi-faceted organisation. It is not just a militia or an armed force, an Iranian projection or a Syrian client. It represents a significant Lebanese community that feels disenfranchised and is looking for its place in the Lebanese system. It also has a 'spoiling' capacity and can damage the process of political construction if it is not part of it. All of these factors have to be taken into account when engaging Hezbollah. Dialogue may at times seem hypocritical and will probably not lead anywhere quickly, but it is important to keep talking and at least to keep the thread alive.

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# Negative external intervention and peace in Lebanon

## A question of power?

Michael Kerr

The search for peace and stability in Lebanon has consistently been hampered by a lack of positive external support for the implementation of a power-sharing system.

A 'unity of purpose' among those intervening in Lebanon's political process – with a clear intent to support its powersharing arrangements and encourage lasting peaceful coexistence amongst its communities as an interest in and of itself – is key to helping this deeply divided society break free of the same cycle of violence that led it to civil war in 1975.

### Independence

Lebanon remains unconsolidated. The 1943 National Pact – an unwritten powersharing arrangement between its dominant Maronite Christian and Sunni Muslim elites, which helped deliver independence – established the state of Lebanon upon the fault lines of the French mandate system.

Lebanon gained its first constitution in 1926, a document that recognised and institutionalised existing political and cultural divisions, accommodating Lebanon's ethnicised communities by guaranteeing their place in government. But Lebanon was no stranger to consociational arrangements, for its constitution built upon a power sharing system known as the *Règlement Organique*. Agreed in 1861, this governmental framework granted Christian-Druze autonomous rule to Mount Lebanon under the Ottoman system. Therefore, the logic of Lebanon's

National Pact is rooted in Mount Lebanon's long history and culture of power sharing. However, divisions within and between communities over the nature of the state were a consequence of the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and Lebanon's subsequent partition from Syria. To regulate these divisions, the National Pact was premised on the negation of two contradictory national aspirations: Arab Nationalists, who were predominantly Sunni, set aside their desire to be part of a greater Syrian state; Lebanese nationalists, who were predominantly Maronite, set aside their desire for the establishment of a smaller Western-orientated Christian state.

Under the National Pact, which built upon the 1926 constitution, the Maronites held the presidency, the Sunnis the premiership and the Shia the less influential position of parliamentary speaker, with Christians and Muslims represented by a 6:5 ratio in parliament.

The political process that brought about independence was the outcome of external competition for influence in the Middle East during the Second World War. Under pressure from their British allies, the 'Free French' reluctantly fulfilled their mandate commitment to grant Lebanon independence. External competition for influence in Lebanon has since been a defining feature of its politics, increasingly so as Lebanon became strategically important in the Arab-Israeli conflict after 1967, the Cold War, and the post-Cold War struggle for the Middle East – shaped to a large extent by US determination to resist the rise of revolutionary Iran.



## Civil war

The pre-civil war nationalist conflict over the Lebanese state was resolved through the 1989 Taif Agreement, bringing fifteen years of consumptive violence to an end with the principle of power sharing accepted by all confessional groups. Yet Lebanon remains divided today: the US/Saudi-backed 14 March movement composed of Sunni-Maronite factions is allied to the West; whereas the 8 March Shia-Maronite alliance is part of the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah axis.

The National Pact was premised on foreign policy neutrality – Lebanon became a Western-orientated state with an Arab face. This worked well enough when there were no great external pressures placed upon the Lebanese to take sides in the Arab-Israel conflict or the Cold War. Lebanon's 1958 civil war was sparked by President Camille Chamoun's decision to align the state with the West at the height of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's pan-Arab movement, which culminated in the short-lived United Arab Republic (UAR) of Egypt and Syria (1958–61). US intervention helped restore the National Pact and Lebanon survived as a state, with President Fouad Chehab negotiating its independence from, and good relations with, the UAR. Nevertheless, this episode exposed Lebanon's susceptibility to destabilising external forces.

Although Lebanon enjoyed a period of economic prosperity in the 1950s and 1960s, its government failed to modernise politically or adjust its powersharing arrangements to meet escalating domestic pressures for constitutional reform. It took an external catalyst, however, to provoke the collapse of the pact and with it the state of Lebanon.

Following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War the presence of Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) fighters in Lebanon exacerbated existing tensions within government. Muslim ministers needed to be seen to support the Palestinian cause in Lebanon. In contrast, Christian leaders did not want the PLO furthering its cause at Lebanon's expense, nor prompting Israeli reprisals against Lebanon.

The 1969 Cairo Agreement, which Nasser brokered between Lebanon and the PLO, sought to regulate the PLO's presence in Lebanon. In truth it marked a significant erosion of Lebanese sovereignty by recognising and legitimising the PLO's powerbase in Beirut. After King Hussein of Jordan expelled Palestinian *fedayeen* in 1970–71, southern Lebanon became the front line in the PLO struggle for Palestine and against Israel, and by the early 1970s the PLO was operating virtually as a 'state within a state'. The Lebanese National Movement (LNM), a coalition of leftist opposition groups, joined forces with the PLO whose presence tested the National Pact to breaking point and civil war broke out in 1975.

## Attempts to end the civil war

The modifications to the 1926 and 1943 power sharing formula that ended Lebanon's civil war in 1989 as part of the Taif Agreement had largely been negotiated by Lebanese elites in 1976, under a Syrian-sponsored peace agreement known as the Constitutional Document. Facing defeat by the PLO-LNM alliance, the Christian leadership invited Syrian military intervention to save themselves and the pre-eminent position that the National Pact guaranteed them. Syrian President Hafez al-Assad fell out with his Soviet backers as US, Israeli and Syrian interests in Lebanon momentarily converged.

US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger saw a Cold War opportunity in Lebanon's collapse. He sought to bring Syria into the Western sphere of influence as the peace process between Egypt and Israel took shape, and at a time when both Israel and Syria wanted to reduce the PLO's influence in Lebanon. The US brokered an informal agreement by which Syria would militarily intervene in Lebanon to prevent a Christian collapse by reigning in the PLO, without provoking an Israeli military response.

Lebanon's Christian and Muslim elites agreed that some of the Maronite president's executive prerogatives would be devolved to the cabinet and parliamentary seats would be allocated equally between Christians and Muslims, ending the existing 6:5 Christian-Muslim ratio. Lebanese Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt rejected the agreement as it provided no opening for him to attain high office, as did leftist, secular and Arab nationalist figures who advocated de-confessionalisation and the establishment of majority rule.

Syria's occupation of Lebanon was internationally legitimised, Kissinger's détente with Assad came to nothing and the war continued. But the US had set a precedent by accepting a Syrian solution to the Lebanon conflict, while Assad had furthered Syria's claim to Lebanon, which he sought to control along with the PLO in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The next US 'initiative' to end the war was the 17 May 1983 Agreement, a US brokered Lebanese-Israeli accord which President Amin Gemayel felt forced to negotiate in efforts to restore Lebanon's sovereignty and consolidate his government. Israel and Syria would both withdraw to certain positions in Lebanon, and the Lebanese government would normalise relations with Israel.

The previous year, with the support of *Lebanese Forces* militia leader Bachir Gemayel, Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon set in motion plans to militarily remove the PLO from Beirut by invading Lebanon. Israel routed Syrian forces en

route to the capital, which its army subsequently besieged. In August 1982 the PLO was evacuated from Beirut by sea, an operation which was overseen by a multinational peacekeeping force that included US and French contingents. But the alignment between Gemayel and Sharon came unstuck when the former was assassinated the following month. The Soviet Union rearmed Syria, which in turn rearmed Lebanese Druze fighters. A partial Israeli withdrawal exacerbated a Christian-Druze conflict in Lebanon's Chouf region, which forced the US to reconsider its position in Lebanon. The US then abandoned the 17 May Agreement altogether after pro-Iranian Shia militants devastated American and French military barracks outside Beirut in twin suicide bomb attacks.

“ **Lebanese negotiators at Taif hoped that the Agreement would mark the beginning of the restoration of sovereignty that their state had lost in the late 1960s and early 1970s**”

In 1984 national dialogue conferences were held in Geneva and Lausanne in efforts to restore peace, and the following year Syria attempted to negotiate a Tripartite Agreement between Christian, Druze and Shia militias, which excluded Gemayel's dysfunctional government. This approach, which was a reversal of the 17 May Agreement, illustrated Assad's restored confidence in Lebanon, but the accord also lacked either internal or external consensus.

### **1989: agreement at Taif**

Towards the end of the Cold War in October 1989, Lebanon's pre-war elites reached a power sharing agreement at Taif in Saudi Arabia, along the lines of the 1976 Constitutional Document. The US and Saudi Arabia sought to 'Arabise' the solution to Lebanon's civil war, and to limit Syria's control over Lebanon. As the only military force capable of ending the war, Assad's position remained that there would be no solution to the conflict that did not first and foremost suit Syrian interests, which were to exercise as much control over Lebanon as possible. Agreement was reached that Lebanon would return to its old system of power sharing government, this time under Syrian control.

Building on the 1926 Constitution and the National Pact, Taif defined Lebanon as an Arab state and legalised Syria's political and military ascendancy. Internally, the Maronite community's power was reduced with executive presidential prerogatives transferred to the council of ministers. Muslim communities gained a greater proportion of parliamentary

seats with equal representation for Christians and Muslims. The Maronite president's role became something of a grand mediator between the executive and the parliament, with the positions of Sunni prime minister and Shia speaker enhanced.

Sections of the agreement dealt with Lebanon's sovereignty and security, which were adopted following Syria's approval. Syria would "assist Lebanon" in the restoration of state sovereignty, re-establishing the state's territorial integrity, disarming its militias and restructuring the army. There was only conditional reference in the agreement as to when Syria would militarily withdraw from Lebanon and, in 1991, the Lebanese government signed a Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination with Syria, which bound it to political and security cooperation at the highest levels.

### **Post-Taif**

Lebanese negotiators at Taif hoped that the Agreement would mark the beginning of the restoration of sovereignty that their state had lost in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

When Syria joined the anti-Saddam coalition following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, providing much needed Arab legitimacy to Western intervention, pressure on President Assad to fully implement the Agreement was turned down – if not off. Following Taif, Syria quickly excluded those parties whose aim, in accepting the agreement, had been the re-establishment of Lebanon's sovereignty. Assad had no intention of allowing Lebanon to return to its pre-war foreign policy ambiguity in the Middle East, regardless of the fact that the departure from this principle had precipitated the collapse of the state. Thus Lebanon did not regain its lost sovereignty in 1989, and the form of power sharing which it experienced until the withdrawal of Syrian troops in 2005 amounted to little more than government by proxy from Damascus.

### **2005: Syrian withdrawal**

After the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri in 2005, Lebanon experienced the region's first significant popular uprising since the second Palestinian intifada, leading to the withdrawal of Syrian forces. While this marked an end to institutionalised Syrian hegemonic control in Lebanon, it was not long before the 2005 'Cedar Revolution' was reversed. During the Arab Spring six years later, despite the fact that the Syrian government was facing its greatest domestic challenge since the Muslim Brotherhood's 1982 uprising in Hama, a pro-Syrian/Iranian government took office in Lebanon in 2011.

The Hezbollah-Israeli war of 2006 illustrates how stuck Lebanon remains politically, and how deeply divided it

is between the external forces vying for influence in the region. In the fallout from the war, internal conflict erupted with government forces backing down during a bloody clash with Hezbollah in 2008. This led to the Doha Accords, an internationally-brokered conflict regulation mechanism that ended an 18-month stand-off between the 8 March and 14 March factions and re-adjusted Lebanon's power sharing arrangements between the majority and opposition. However, it had come about as a consequence of the Lebanese government's defeat on the streets of Beirut by Hezbollah, who demonstrated that they are prepared to use force to bring about changes to Lebanon's power-sharing system.

### **External interests and Lebanon's future**

So how can Lebanon's history of negative external intervention inform policymakers, and what does it mean for future peacebuilding efforts in this divided society?

Lebanon has rarely experienced external intervention motivated by the restoration of democratic power sharing. More often than not external powers have seen intervention as an opportunity to further selfish strategic interests. In times of crisis, Lebanon's confessional leaders have eagerly harnessed their communities to competing foreign powers.

Fulfilling and building upon the promise of Taif is closely linked to the establishment of a regional accord to promote peaceful coexistence in Lebanon as an interest in and of

itself. There is presently no power capable of imposing this, nor does a regional balance of power exist which might deliver an equilibrium that is beneficial to Lebanon.

**“ External powers have seen intervention as an opportunity to further selfish strategic interests. In times of crisis, Lebanon's confessional leaders have eagerly harnessed their communities to competing foreign powers”**

At the time of writing the outcome of events in Syria are uncertain and the escalation of tensions between Israel and Iran remain a constant destabilising variable. Lebanon faces an external environment that is more likely than not to create further instability than support a lasting solution to the divisions that have left it in limbo since 2005.

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# Militant Islam and jihad in Lebanon

Bernard Rougier

There are two main forms of militant Islam in Lebanon. The first, embodied in the Shia militia group Hezbollah (the 'Party of God'), is highly integrated socially and politically, at grassroots and regional levels. The second, embodied by Sunni transnational radical networks, operates covertly, mainly among disfranchised segments of Lebanese society.

Lebanon today can appear as the focal point of two axes of crisis that have shaped the main features of radical Islam globally: Iran; and Afghanistan-Pakistan. Security and peacebuilding interventions in Lebanon need to bear in mind the different paths through which these two expressions of Islamist radicalism have evolved. In a sectarian society such as Lebanon, militant Islam – which essentially prioritises Divine Law over collective Muslim affiliation, in contradiction to traditional Islam – has had a very different impact among Sunni and Shia constituencies.

## Radical Shia: Hezbollah, Syria and Iran

In a polity where Shia have felt both socially despised and politically marginalised, radical Islam has helped many Lebanese to enhance their sectarian collective identity in relation to other Lebanese sects.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 boosted Shia communal empowerment in southern Lebanon, the Beqaa Valley and the southern suburbs of Beirut. Key figures in the new Iranian leadership had spent many years in the highly politicised Lebanon of the 1970s. One month after Israel invaded Lebanon in June 1982, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (*Pasdaran*) set up the first training camp for the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon in the Beqaa. Future Hezbollah leaders were enlisted at the camp, such as Abbas al-Musâwi, its first Secretary-General, and Hassan Nasrallah, al-Musâwi's close friend and replacement after the former's assassination by the Israeli army in 1992.

Hezbollah was born through its military wing in 1982, before its existence was publicly acknowledged in 1985. In 1983 it claimed responsibility for terrorist action against the Multinational Force – deployed to oversee the withdrawal of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and comprising American as well as British, French and Italian troops. This chronology points to the organic relationship between the hard line of the Iranian regime and the military institutions of the 'Party of God'. Subsequently, Hezbollah was able to supplant other leftist and Palestinian organizations in Lebanon and establish itself as the only able player to fight Israeli occupation.

The regional alliance built at the beginning of the 1980s between Hafez al-Assad's Syria and Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran meant that Hezbollah came to be seen by Damascus as a useful tool both to frustrate Western influence in Lebanon and to force Israel to accept Syria's role as a legitimate regional power. From the mid-1980s the Syrian regime enabled Hezbollah to reinforce its military capacity, while at the same time trying to convince the West that only Syria had influence over it.

In post-war Lebanon Hezbollah successfully consolidated its position, both within its confessional constituency and abroad. From 1992 the Party decided to take part in legislative and municipal elections, establishing through the polls a large parliamentary group and control over two-thirds of predominantly Shia municipalities. It masked its jihadist agenda to the benefit of a more widely acceptable 'resistance' rhetoric, to justify its armed struggle against Israeli occupation in the south. This allowed it to remain the only heavily armed group in post-war Lebanon, contrary to the terms of the Taif Agreement that ended the civil war.

Hezbollah steadily expanded its influence within the state intelligence apparatus and the army. After the Qana

massacre by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) during Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996, the Israeli-Lebanese Ceasefire Understanding that sought to regulate ongoing fighting between Israel and Hezbollah in south Lebanon provided the Party with international recognition.

## **Radical Sunni: Afghanistan, Pakistan and the *Ummah***

Whilst the dynamic Shia revolution in Tehran projected its influence towards the eastern Mediterranean seaboard, most radical Sunni Islamists invested their hopes in a more remote jihad in Afghanistan. In countries such as Egypt or Syria, Islamic Sunni radicalism was denied access to power because it lacked support among the most influential parts of society. In Egypt, Islamist Sunnis who followed Sayyid Qotb's radical stance condemned their fellow Muslims for not abiding to their own vision of the Divine Law. In Syria, the Muslim Brotherhood, who fought Hafez al-Assad's regime, was not able to control more radical groups, while the Sunni Muslim community's fear of civil war eclipsed its hostility to the regime.

The Sunni ideology that developed in Peshawar in Pakistan in the late 1980s, as theorized by the jihadist Palestinian Sheikh Abdallah Azzam, promoted a privatized jihad: in the absence of 'true Muslim states', jihad becomes a personal duty (*fard 'ayn*) as opposed to a collective obligation (*fard kifâya*) related to an official authority. It also saw jihad as democratized: rather than demonstrating a long scholastic religious curriculum, 'true Muslims' need only believe in the 'holy fight for the sake of God'. Finally, it demonized the international system and regional institutions, asserting that no positive solution could arise from them.

In viewing jihad as an end in itself, this ideology relieves militants of the need to access state power and frees their religious commitment from strategic or territorial belonging. Indeed, isolation from politics is proof of religious purity. The true believer is supposed to act on behalf of the *Ummah* – the global Muslim community – an ideological construct that is remote from many Muslim societies.

## **Jihad in Lebanon**

Jihadist ideology evolved in Lebanon in the 1990s among disenfranchised groups in places such as Palestinian camps, popular districts in Sidon, Beirut or Tripoli, or in remote villages in Akkar or Western Beqaa. In the Palestinian camp of Ayn al-Helweh, radical preachers undertook to resocialise impoverished youth deprived of professional prospects in post-war Lebanon. Ayn al-Helweh became a haven for foreign jihadist militants who had fled their respective countries, and some al-Qaeda representatives also established themselves there from the mid-1990s.

Due to its Sunni demographic importance, northern Lebanon became a communal centre for Sunni militants and religious Sunni clerics in the 1990s, comparable to Mount Lebanon for Christian Maronites and south Lebanon for the Shia. The northern city of Tripoli had been the scene of armed resistance against Syrian forces in the 1980s. In this Sunni demographic hub – historically linked to Syrian cities such as Homs or Aleppo – Salafi preachers urged their followers to remain detached from politics, which they considered illegitimate. Conversely, Lebanon's main civil Sunni leader, Rafiq al-Hariri, was prohibited from establishing a political Sunni constituency in Tripoli, which was closely managed by Syrian intelligence services.

In December 1999, a violent clash in northern Lebanon between a Salafi jihadist guerrilla movement and the Lebanese Army left 35 dead. Lebanon's official resistance ideology at that time, propagated by Hezbollah and backed by President Lahoud, welcomed 'good' jihad – resistance against Israeli occupation – but denigrated other 'bad' versions as essentially self-destructive. Sunni jihadist militants took the opposite view: that Hezbollah was hijacking the southern Lebanese front for its own communal and regional purposes, leaving Sunni jihadists no other choice but to defend the *Ummah* against its foes, as was happening in places like Bosnia, Chechnya or Afghanistan.

## **Hezbollah's resilience**

Hezbollah's regional and national reputation has ensured its survival. Following the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000, Hezbollah defied challenges to its military status and managed to turn the controversial Chebaa Farms – a tiny territory still claimed by Lebanon but occupied by Israel – into a national Lebanese cause to justify continued armed struggle. Hezbollah was also able to resist huge demonstrations condemning Syria's role in Lebanon in the wake of Hariri's assassination in February 2005.

In summer 2006, Israel launched a major attack on Lebanon following a Hezbollah operation across the international border. The Party refused to bear any responsibility for provoking the Israeli reaction, arguing that Tel Aviv had already been planning the invasion. The scale of destruction caused by the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon provided the Hezbollah leadership with an additional justification to maintain the Party's military capacity.

Hezbollah also managed to circumvent UN Security Council Resolution 1701 that sanctioned the Israeli withdrawal and the reinforcement of UN forces in the south, replenishing its stock of rockets and missiles in areas located south of the Litani River.



## Sunni dissonance

After Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005 the new anti-Syrian and pro-Western Sunni leadership – the main component of the 14 March coalition – sought the cooperation of quietist Salafi clerics in northern Lebanon in order to protect the cohesiveness of the Sunni community. Quietist control over the Salafi corpus was intended to legitimize the rule of the civil Sunni representatives – MP Fouad Siniora and Rafiq's heir Saad al-Hariri.

But pro-Syrian and pro-Hezbollah Sunni Islamists stressed the lack of Islamic legitimacy of Hariri's leadership, accusing it of furthering Western designs by implementing UNSC resolutions in the Middle East. In yet another attempt to control Sunni Islam, al-Qaeda's Egyptian ideologue Ayman al-Zawahiri issued two statements on 20 December 2006 and 13 February 2007 urging Lebanese Muslims to oppose UNSC Resolution 1701.

In November 2006, jihadist fighters from Iraq established the *Fatah al-Islam* radical Sunni Islamist group in the Nahr al-Bared Palestinian camp in northern Lebanon. Its leader, Shaker al-Absi, a Palestinian from Syria, recruited volunteers to support his cause to 'liberate Palestine by fighting the Western Zionist Crusaders'. In an attempt to win over Hezbollah and its allies, Shaker al-Absi stressed his resistance credentials, focusing on opposition to UNSC resolution 1559 which called for the disarmament of all militias on Lebanese soil.

*Fatah al-Islam* was involved in several anti-civilian terrorist attacks and also targeted the UN presence in Lebanon. In May 2007 Lebanese Internal Security Forces (FSI), who are closely aligned to the 14 March coalition, launched an attack against *Fatah al-Islam*. This triggered a war between the group and the Lebanese Army in Nahr al-Bared, which lasted more than three months and resulted in 163 military and 222 jihadist casualties.

Divisions among Islamist militant groups, regardless of nationalist or religious affiliations, continue to fuel ongoing political violence between 8 and 14 March alliances. On 7 May 2008 Hezbollah turned its guns on 14 March Sunni institutions in Beirut, under the guise of protecting its military activities against the Israeli army.

Sunni Salafi clerics reacted by setting their followers against the 'Shia Iranian threat'. The civil Sunni leadership in Lebanon, whether opposed to the Syrian regime (Saad al-Hariri) or close to it (Najib Mikati), faces a dilemma. It is weakened from within each time a Lebanese Sunni jihadist movement canvasses support in the Sunni constituency, which involves prioritising Divine Law over community politics; but in order to demonstrate its Islamic legitimacy, it also has to acknowledge the importance of Sunni religious appeals.

## Conclusion

Hezbollah and its Sunni Islamist allies are backing the Syrian regime – for both strategic and ideological purposes, including the need for a continuing supply of arms in the name of regional resistance. At the same time, they cannot risk military action in northern Lebanon to curb Sunni militants helping Syrian insurgents there, as such a move could unleash internal war between Shia and Sunni factions.

The 14 March Alliance is hoping for the fall of the regime in Damascus, which might enhance its own position within the Lebanese political system. But its main Sunni component also fears proliferation of Sunni Islamist militias should the situation in Syria continue to deteriorate.

For Iranian leaders, support for the Syrian regime is necessary in order to maximise Hezbollah's role as a deterrent in south Lebanon. According to such views, the Shia organisation should be able to act both against the UN peacekeeping force and the Israeli army in the event of a military attack on Iranian nuclear installations. Against this background, Jihadi Sunni networks could exploit regional turmoil by continuing to target UN peacekeepers in the south.

So what is needed to consolidate peace and security? A direct channel of communication between Lebanon's main national Sunni and Shia leaders – starting with Saad al-Hariri (14 March) and Hassan Nasrallah (8 March/Hezbollah) – would help to protect peace in Lebanon. Hezbollah is currently politically ascendant, both inside and outside state institutions, and the Shia organisation should be encouraged to resist outside pressures that might embroil Lebanon in a new cycle of destruction.

By the same token, Lebanon could also welcome Syrian refugees providing they do not threaten public security, and Lebanon's security apparatus could stop handing over Syrian dissidents to the Syrian state – a practice that leads many to question Beirut's neutrality. Sunni Lebanese militants could also restrict their humanitarian commitment towards their Syrian comrades. Increased UN interest in internal peace and stability in Lebanon could raise the profile and significance among Lebanese citizens of national perceptions of regional developments.

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# Palestinians in Lebanon

## Status, governance and security

Sari Hanafi

Palestinians in Lebanon have been ‘protracted’ refugees for over 60 years. They are often deprived of their socio-economic and civil rights, such as the right to work or practice professions, run businesses and own property. The majority are confined to camps or segregated settlements where they are partially dependent on humanitarian assistance and often live in poverty.

During the 1948 Israeli-Arab war some 100,000 Palestinians fled to Lebanon. Most refugees gathered in camps, and some intended as transit camps subsequently became permanent. The leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) relocated to Lebanon after it was expelled from Jordan in 1970, and the Lebanese refugee camps became the centre for Palestinian resistance.

**“Palestinians have been discriminated against by the Lebanese state for decades, and there are few signs that this will improve”**

Around 450,000 Palestinian refugees are currently registered with the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Lebanon, which supports them through education, health care, relief, camp infrastructure and emergency response. However, a 2010 Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon by UNRWA and the American University in Beirut (AUB) and funded by the EU estimated that only 260–280,000 are actually resident in the country – 62 per cent of whom live in twelve camps across Lebanon, and the remaining 38 per cent in ‘gatherings’, largely in

the vicinity of camps. Many Palestinian refugees have left Lebanon, especially after the 1982 Israeli invasion and the ‘War of the Camps’.

Two thirds of Palestinian refugees are poor, which equates to an estimated 160,000 individuals; 6.6 per cent spend less than the monetary equivalent necessary to cover their basic daily food needs and live in extreme poverty.

### Legal and institutional discrimination

Palestinians have been discriminated against by the Lebanese state for decades, and there are few signs that this will improve. To take one example, a new law approved by the Lebanese parliament in 2010 to facilitate the employment of Palestinian refugees, in fact further institutionalised discrimination by prohibiting Palestinians from more than 30 ‘liberal’ professions – including medicine, law and engineering.

Owning property is also a major issue. Until 2001 non-Lebanese, including Palestinians, had the right to own property up to a certain size. However, in that year the Parliament adopted amendment 296 to the existing Presidential Decree 11614. This amendment, originally intended to encourage foreign investment, excludes individuals who do not have a recognised nationality from owning property. The new law also prevents Palestinian refugees from bequeathing their property, even if the property was acquired before 2001.

The naturalisation of Palestinians (*Tawteen*) is particularly controversial and potentially destabilizing for an already fragile country. Many Lebanese from all denominations oppose it. The majority of Christian Palestinian refugees were in fact naturalised in the 1950s. However, most



A Palestinian refugee shows her UNRWA card near the town of Tyre 2009 // © Julio Etchart/Panos

Agreement between Lebanon and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) facilitated the PLO presence in Lebanon. This provided the framework for the establishment of Palestinian popular committees to promote governance within the Palestinian camps. This was to take place under the umbrella of the PLO, which was at that time the federative structure of all Palestinian political parties, armed groups and social institutions in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Before this, camps in Lebanon had been managed according to the state of emergency policy.

Until 1982 the police were not allowed to enter camps without negotiating with the popular committees. The Palestinian resistance accommodated traditional authority structures by building upon customary procedures of dispute settlement. The camps witnessed the emergence of a new elite, whose legitimacy was based on the Palestinian national struggle under the leadership of the PLO. However, this situation changed after 1982 with the departure from Lebanon of PLO cadres and militants, such that participation in the national struggle was no longer sufficient to establish someone as a powerbroker.

After 1982, PLO popular and security committees were forced to dismantle almost entirely, except in the south. These were replaced by committees that were seen by camp populations as weaker and significantly pro-Syrian. This perception was cemented by their lack of financial resources and their lack of legitimacy due to the fact that they were not made up of elected members (as they had previously been), nor were they recognised by the Lebanese authorities. Camp residents instead looked to different actors like imams, local notables and local security leaders to resolve quarrels or problems before going to the police. Refugee camps no longer enjoyed harmonious communitarian structures, while social tensions were aggravated by rapid urbanisation and forced migration.

After the end of the civil war Palestinian armed groups and militias were kept out of the disarmament process. There has been a tacit Palestinian-Lebanese agreement since 1991 that neither the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) nor the Internal Security Forces (ISF) will enter the camps – although they are de facto present through informants and occasionally enter camps, while also controlling entry into the camps. As 'extra-territorial' spaces the refugee camps provide shelter for Lebanese and foreign criminals and extremist Islamist groups. In 1999 members of a Sunni radical group based in the Ain al-Hilweh camp killed four judges in the city of Sidon before escaping back to the camp.

Today there is a real crisis of governance in camps. Each is home to dozens of factions: PLO groups, pro-Syrian

Palestinians in Lebanon are Sunni, and their naturalisation would threaten the country's confessional balance. Meanwhile, Lebanese across confessions accuse Palestinians of involvement in crimes and destruction of property during the civil war. They hold them collectively responsible for the war. Indeed, reaction to discrimination against the Palestinians combined with tension over the autonomy of the Palestinian military vis-à-vis the Lebanese national army were major triggers for the war.

*Tawteen* is also strongly rejected by Palestinians, who insist on their right to return to Palestine. The 1993 Oslo Accords failed to secure the return of refugees, while Israel refused to let Palestinians originating from territories that are now a legal part of its state to return or enter the West Bank and Gaza. Some international initiatives have proposed to facilitate emigration of some Palestinians from Lebanon and the settlement of the remainder in Lebanon.

## Governance in camps

Governance of the camps has also provided sources of tension – between Lebanese and Palestinians, but also among Palestinians themselves. The 1969 Cairo

factions and Islamist militant groups. Popular and security committees seek to govern each camp under the supervision of the PLO or through coalitions of factions. They include appointed representatives from each faction, and are expected to keep the peace, solve internal disputes, provide security, interact with the Lebanese government and aid agencies, and generally administer the camp in coordination with UNRWA.

Popular committees are seen by many Palestinians as unable to, either agree on important issues, coordinate their activities, or protect their constituents from harassment by Lebanese security forces. They are also viewed as doing more to enable factional infighting and bolster patron-client politics than promoting Palestinian unity. Popular committees have scarce resources which hinder them from fulfilling their municipal functions. They lack skilled technical experts on urban regulations, water, sanitation and electricity and neither women nor youth are represented.

## Conclusion

Post-2005, what impact might the divergent attitudes of the 8 and 14 March coalitions have on the future of the Palestinians, such as their right to work or own property? While 14 March parties from all denominations oppose granting Palestinians the right to work and own property, resentment against Palestinians is also felt among Christian and Shia constituencies of 8 March parties who are likely to keep using the Palestinian issue for populist ends.

Allowing Palestinians in Lebanon to centralise and strengthen their own political and security authorities may increase their capacity to help the Lebanese state prevent outbreaks of violence linked to the camps – such as that which took place between Fatah al-Islam Sunni militants and the Lebanese army in the northern refugee camp of Nahr al-Bared in 2007. Many refugees believe that popular committees and the political and military factions, in their present form, do not represent the best interests of Palestinians in Lebanon. This situation pushes many to be politically disillusioned, and a minority toward radicalisation.

Between December 2006 and March 2007, in the months leading up to the conflict in Nahr al-Bared, residents of the camp tried repeatedly to excise Fatah al-Islam members from their midst, and to this end the PLO even engaged in armed clashes with the Islamist militants. The outcome of these clashes, however, was inconclusive, and was dismissed by the Lebanese authorities as ‘routine’ Palestinian infighting, in spite of the fact that Fatah al-Islam was made up largely of non-Palestinians. The security committee of Nahr al-Bared and the PLO lacked both the resources and mandate to deal with Fatah al-Islam on their own.

This crisis of camp governance may be aggravated in the future. Recent uprisings in Syria have resulted in new flows of Syrian refugees across the Lebanese-Syrian border, and these new regional developments have threatened the uneasy truce between PLO and pro-Syrian factions. Weakened Syrian influence in Lebanon (a likely result of the Arab uprisings) could provoke renegotiations of power and authority in the refugee camps (especially in the Beddawi, Nahr al-Bared, Burj al-Barajneh, and Ain al-Hilweh camps), as opposing factions, including the PLO, seek greater influence at Syrian expense. History suggests that these sorts of renegotiations of power and authority in the camps by the factions generate conflict and often result in armed violence.

Camps in Lebanon comprise a complex tapestry of multiple and partial sovereignties: the Lebanese government; the PLO and other factions; as well as UNRWA and other humanitarian agencies. The only rational-legal act these ‘sovereigns’ can agree together is the imposition of temporary or emergency powers. A more constructive approach to governance and rights for Palestinians – inside and outside camps – would help to both clarify Lebanese sovereignty and bolster its security.

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## Palestinian Islamism and Lebanese militancy

### A conversation with Suhail Natour

Suhail Natour is the Executive Manager of al-Hamaei Human Rights Center in Beirut.

### The relationship between Islamism and Palestinian mobilisation – in Lebanon and the region

Palestinian resistance in Lebanon has always been more political and national than religious. The Palestinian movement in Lebanon is not based on confessional or sectarian divisions. All Palestinians face the same dilemma, and Islamism was not prominent at the time of the first intifada. Most Palestinians are Muslims, but the national cause unites all Palestinians – Muslims and Christians. However, the emergence of Hamas signaled a change, and Hamas has infused Islamism into Palestinian political militancy.

There are no inherent links between Palestinians and al-Qaeda or the Taliban. Many Palestinians who joined the opposition to the occupation of Iraq were caught up in general Muslim enthusiasm to resist the invasion of a major Islamic state. But Palestinian society in Lebanon was not involved collectively.

### Palestinians, national integration and citizenship in Lebanon

Palestinians in Lebanon consider themselves a national community that is seeking the right to return to Palestine. They do not want to be naturalised or integrated into Lebanon. Palestinians in Lebanon therefore demand universal human rights: that these be acknowledged and respected. But they are being denied by all political leaderships in Lebanon – Sunni, Shia and Christian. When Sunnis confronted Shia during violence in Lebanon on 8 May 2008, Palestinians – seen by many as the Sunni ‘military wing’ in Lebanon – did not get involved, showing that they do not have a factional or confessional bias regarding Sunni, Shia or Christian leaderships in Lebanon.

### Young Islamist, militant Palestinians in Lebanon

Hamas and Islamic Jihad are trying hard to recruit young Lebanese Palestinians. But militant Islamist youth are not a major force in Palestinian camps. Rather, there are small groups in specific camps. Those who are involved are motivated by repeated broken promises to uphold their human rights. Palestinian refugees are not inherently anti-establishment. Palestinian communities in Lebanon and Syria do not want to be political pawns, used by either the regime or the opposition. They have learned from the heavy price they paid when Yasser Arafat supported Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait and hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were ejected from Kuwait and other Gulf states.

Lebanese Islamist groups do not recruit Palestinians: they persuade Palestinian Islamists to join Hamas or Islamic Jihad. They do not want to be seen to be exploiting Palestinians for their own battles. And Palestinians have had minimal assistance from these groups. Common interests such as resistance to Israel and Palestinian prisoners are more Palestinian than Lebanese concerns.

There are some elements among the refugees who have joined Islamist groups and share their political ambitions. But they are comparatively rare and have little influence to create a broader climate of extremism. In fact, at least until now, Palestinians in Lebanon in general neither advocated religious extremism nor overtly took sides in Lebanese internal affairs. Most adopt a neutral stance, concentrating on efforts to reconcile all Palestinian factions in order to adopt a common strategy of struggle.

*Interview by Alexander Ramsbotham*



# Lebanon and Syria

## Separation without estrangement?

Nahla Chahal

In response to unfolding events in Syria, the Lebanese have demonstrated apparently paradoxical positions: on the one hand fearing serious implications for stability, on the other hoping that events may develop in ways that best suit particular domestic interests.

This situation is not entirely new. Lebanon and Syria have historically been entangled – in issues of peace and war, but also economically, politically and socially. As part of the Ottoman Empire, what was known as ‘Small Lebanon’ (Jabal Druze and Mount Lebanon) enjoyed limited autonomy under political arrangements known as the *Qaimaqamiyah* (1842–60) and *Mutasarrifiyya* (1861–1915). Other regions that constitute modern Lebanon and Syria were organised in *wilayas* (districts). After Ottoman collapse France was granted a League of Nations mandate over Syria and Lebanon. From this it created ‘Greater Lebanon’, the precedent to the present-day state, by adding a number of coastal regions and *wilayas* to Mount Lebanon.

Throughout the French mandate the economies of Lebanon and Syria were explicitly linked through a common central bank (*Banque de Syrie et du Liban*) and currency (the ‘Syrian-Lebanese lira’). This association ended in 1948 after both countries gained independence. Following the 1947–48 Palestine War and the emergence of Israel, the Lebanese recognised that conflict with Israel meant their small country would have to rely on Syria to engage with much of the region. As a result, events in Syria also had consequences for Lebanon. A recent reminder was the Syrian threat to close its borders with Lebanon following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

The 1989 Taif Peace Agreement for Lebanon did not end entanglement, but was followed by a series of cooperation treaties intended to ‘organise’ the bilateral relationship within the terms of the agreement. This included the 1991 Treaty of Cooperation, but also treaties in various sectors such as commerce and education, as well as

the establishment of a Joint Coordination Council. The relationship is often seen as asymmetrically favouring Syria, but Lebanon has in fact benefited at least as much.

### Political and structural ties

Political developments in Lebanon have often taken pragmatic (and seemingly contradictory) approaches to Syria. The continuing popularity of General Michel Aoun among Lebanese Christians exemplifies this. General Aoun acted as interim Prime Minister after the failure to agree a replacement for President Amine Gemayel in 1988. He rejected the Taif Agreement and in 1989–90 embarked on a failed attempt to cut ties with Syria. In October 1990, Syrian troops put an end to Aoun’s rebellion, forcing him to flee the presidential palace and go into exile in Paris. When, fifteen years later, Aoun returned to Lebanon, he reconsidered his position in light of important regional changes including the occupation of Iraq and the death of Hafez al-Assad in Syria. General Aoun concluded an alliance with Hezbollah, after which he was received in Syria as a ‘great leader’ in 2008.

Aoun’s deal with Hezbollah is reminiscent of Lebanon’s 1943 National Pact: a compromise between the Sunni, acting in the name of Muslims in general and also defending their economic interests at that time, and Maronite leaders, acting on behalf of Christians. The National Pact provided the foundation for independence. It allowed Sunni Muslims to adhere to the idea of a Lebanese state separate from Syria, in return for guarantees by Christians to acknowledge Lebanon as part of the Arab world and to steer its foreign policy accordingly. It was the Pact, therefore, that permitted the real and effective emergence of the state of Lebanon, rather than the declaration of Greater Lebanon by the French in 1920.

The Lebanese civil war severely strained the terms of the National Pact, which by this time no longer reflected demographic realities. Since the war Lebanon has witnessed important structural changes, most notably

the rise in the status and role of the Shia community. Beginning with the Movement of the Dispossessed under the leadership of Imam Musa al-Sadr in the 1970s, and ending with the establishment of Hezbollah in the mid-1980s, Lebanese Shia have emerged as important political, economic and cultural players. Hezbollah includes many of Lebanon's poorest social groups. It is also a significant regional actor that has held out in armed encounters with Israel, reversing a wider Arab trend of military defeat by the Israeli Defence Forces.

There have also been changes within the Christian community. The civil war saw a revision in the ranks of Maronite leaders, particularly after the death of Bachir Gemayel in 1982, beyond the traditional and narrow recruitment from the core of the Maronite region and through familial ties, as illustrated by the rise of Samir Geagea as leader of the Lebanese Forces.

When Aoun reached an alliance with Hezbollah, he explicitly addressed Christians, and Maronites in particular, claiming that he had assured their position and role within a dynamic and emerging movement in Lebanon and the region. However, given the current regional turmoil, the alliance has in fact made Aoun dependent on the fate of Iran and Syria. Meanwhile his Maronite rivals are equally dependent on the fate of the opposing axis, led regionally by Saudi Arabia and locally by the Hariri family, who oppose the current Syrian regime.

The relationship between Syria and Lebanon is controversial and has led to divisions within the country, as shown by mass demonstrations (labeled *milionât* – 'million people') after the assassination of Hariri in 2005. Similar divisions had characterised the Mandate period and in the late 1950s when Syria and Egypt briefly united to form the United Arab Republic.

Beyond the emergence of political alliances and counter-alliances, the entanglement of Syria and Lebanon also has structural aspects. Syrian hegemony over Lebanon was symbolically emphasised by Hafez al-Assad, who described the nations as 'one people in two states'. Syria was a major player in developments during the Lebanese civil war; from 1976 until the withdrawal of its troops in 2005, it had a continuous military presence in the country.

Syrian military leadership was particularly powerful in Lebanon during this period. The status of Lebanese political leaders from all factions was dependent on good relations with Syrian military officers and with Damascus. This influence pervaded other aspects of society; for example prospects for senior employment in universities. Syrian military would 'tax' illicit and licit cross-border commerce

such as smuggling, with the complicity of Lebanese businessmen who also found it advantageous.

## Looking ahead: Lebanon and the Syrian crisis

Implications of the Syrian crisis include the escalation of existing tensions and clashes, which might particularly affect border areas like Beqaa and other parts of the north, whose populations have relatives or allies across the border, and where some local political forces have developed long-term alliances with the Syrian regime. Violence in the administrative capital of northern Lebanon, Tripoli, and in parts of Beirut in May 2012 have further exacerbated tensions. Assumptions that the current Syrian regime will fall and that this will lead to the demise of Hezbollah ignore the reality of a range of potential scenarios. Protracted conflict in Syria could result in a regional 'explosion', the repercussions of which are far from clear. Nor is it inevitable that Hezbollah would disappear if the Syrian regime collapsed.

Since Hafez al-Assad came to power in 1970, Syria has been stable for more than four decades. However, this was due to Assad's uncanny ability to position Syria strategically within shifting regional dynamics by crafting internal and external alliances as the situation demanded, keeping communication lines open and displaying a willingness to accommodate various factions. For instance, when Syrian troops entered Lebanon in 1976–77 with American agreement, they fought a war against Syria's former allies, the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) and the Palestinian resistance, paving the way for the assassination of Progressive Socialist Party leader and LNM head, Kamal Jumblatt.

Historically, instability in Syria has not always been bad for the Lebanese. But prudence is being shown in the current situation as many Lebanese acknowledge that instability in Syria has ramifications far beyond relations between Beirut and Damascus. This may provide an opportunity for *détente* between Lebanon and Syria. Compromise and inter-sectarian balance is part of Lebanon's *raison d'être*, which has historically been held as an example of the value and strength of diversity. Prioritising this path would allow the Lebanon to renew and reinforce its regional role as a model for the value of diversity – especially for its neighbour in turmoil.

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# Israel and peace in Lebanon

## A Lebanese perspective

Ghassan El Ezzi

Beginning with the 1948 war in Palestine, Lebanon has suffered from the repercussions of Arab-Israeli wars as well as Israeli attacks and occupation of Lebanese territory. Lebanon did not participate in either the 1967 or 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, but its attempt to avoid the conflict was doomed to failure after 1970 when it became a battleground for Israeli military forces and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was one of the longest and most destructive episodes of the wider Arab-Israeli conflict. The Israeli army occupied the Lebanese capital after a long blockade and bombings.

Lebanon's room for decision-making is limited both by the presence of Palestinian refugees, whose destiny remains undetermined, and its entrenchment in the strategic Israel–Lebanon–Syria triangle. These constraints affect the domestic political scene, and create divisions between those who favour ending hostilities with Israel, and the allies of Syria and Iran. Those same constraints prevent Lebanon from securing peace and progress through the delimitation of its frontiers to the south and the use of its water resources, despite the active intervention of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

### Arab solidarity and Palestinian refugees

Lebanon has avoided direct political or diplomatic contact with Israel. Any departure from this rule is not only opposed by neighbouring Arab countries but is also seen as a national betrayal by Lebanese of all religious affiliations. This has been demonstrated on several occasions, including in response to the contacts made by President Émile Eddé with Israel in the 1940s, to the collaboration of the Christian militia, the Lebanese Forces, with Israeli Defence Forces between 1976 and 1985, as well as the stillborn bilateral treaty signed by President Amin Gemayel

on 17 May 1983. Even today, the Lebanese abide by the boycott set by the Arab League more than other Arab states.

Another reason that Lebanon has rejected negotiations with Israel is to avoid turning Palestinian refugees in Lebanon into permanent settlers. If these refugees became permanent residents in Lebanon, Lebanon's demographic balance would tip in favour of the Sunnis. The official position of Lebanon is therefore the same as that of the PLO: there should be no agreement with Israel that would consecrate the settlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

The civil war was fought between those who showed solidarity with the armed Palestinian organisations that found refuge in Lebanon after they were expelled from Jordan, and those who saw their presence as a demographic threat, a violation of sovereignty and an obstacle to the rebirth of the state. Israel's interventions in 1978 and 1982 only reinforced these differences. Further, since the PLO left Lebanon in August 1982 after its defeat by the Israeli army, no solution has been found for the humanitarian, social, political or security-related problems of refugees living in impoverished camps.

### Israel-Syria-Lebanon: a strategic triangle

Lebanon's dependence on the regional context is particularly strong with regard to its larger neighbour Syria, which has presented itself as the spearhead of resistance to Israel ever since the latter's signing of peace agreements with Egypt, Jordan and the PLO. Hafez al-Assad (Syrian President from 1970–2000) continuously subjugated Lebanon and the PLO in order to dominate the northern part of the Arab-Israeli front. Between 1976, when its troops entered Lebanon, and 2005, when they left, Syria



A badly damaged building in Dhahiyye, the southern suburb of Beirut. The area was largely destroyed by Israeli bombings during the 2006 conflict // © Sabrina Mervin, 2006

controlled nine-tenths of the country while Israel occupied the south.

Instead of fighting in the Golan Heights, seized by Israel from Syria in 1967, Damascus and Tel Aviv have waged their wars in Lebanon through the various Lebanese parties. During the long and burdensome years of Syrian tutelage in Lebanon, the mere mention of a 'peace treaty with the Zionist enemy' was taboo. When Lebanon participated in the peace process in Madrid in 1991–94, it was under the suspicious eye of Damascus, and only as long as the Syrian file was moving forward.

Syrian tutelage became formal when the Taif Agreement was signed in 1989, and lasted until the aftermath of the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri in 2005. However, Lebanon's subservience to Damascus has not diminished and is now combined with having to heed Iran's strategic interests in the Levant. By helping to found Hezbollah in the 1980s and supporting it militarily and financially, especially in its 2006 war against Israel, Iran has become a Mediterranean power.

Syrian tutelage and Iranian interests have weighed heavily in Lebanon's decision not to negotiate peace with Israel. Israel itself has done little to foster trust, having imposed *faits accomplis* following military victories over its Arab neighbours in 1967. Its refusal to withdraw from occupied Palestinian territories and comply with UN resolutions weakens the position of the 'moderate' Arabs who favour negotiations.

## Lebanese reconciliation

Lebanon, torn by internal divisions, is unable to make the important choice of signing a bilateral peace treaty with Israel. Nor could it bear the repercussions if it did so.

Since independence, Lebanon's political history has consisted of a succession of crises and a devastating civil war. Irrespective of the 1943 National Pact between Christian and Muslim elites, the inherent tension between Arab solidarity and Western protection endures.

The assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri reignited the country's divisions, creating two camps: the 14 March Alliance backed by the West and 'moderate' Arab states on the one hand, and the 8 March Alliance aligned with the Iranian–Syrian axis on the other. The latter relies on the military power of Hezbollah, which has several thousand trained fighters equipped with advanced military equipment. Hezbollah and its allies are opposed to any kind of negotiations or peace treaty with Israel. The July 2006 war where they confronted the Israeli army, which withdrew from Lebanon without achieving any of its core objectives, is a source of pride for Hezbollah. On the 14 March side there is no clearly stated position in favour of negotiating a peace treaty, but it can be assumed that its pro-American stance would imply favouring negotiations.

In the meantime, any Prime Minister from either alliance feels compelled to pay tribute to the famous triad of State–Resistance–People, which legitimises, if unwillingly, the refusal of any peace negotiations with Israel.

## Land, water and border demarcation

There can be no peace between Lebanon and Israel without an agreement on border demarcation and water sharing. Lebanese people, regardless of affiliation, see Israel as a military power with designs on Lebanese land and water.

It was not until 2000 that the Israelis abided by Security Council Resolution 425 of 1978, which called for their withdrawal from Lebanese territory, when the military struggle waged by Hezbollah had become too costly for them. The Blue Line, a temporary demarcation border defined by the UN, allows them to retain control over territorial enclaves claimed by Lebanon: the Chebaa Farms, the hamlets of Kfar-Shuba and half the village of Ghajar. For Israel, these occupied territories of 1967 belong to Syria, but Syria has declared them Lebanese. It is noteworthy that Damascus has consistently refused to provide the UN with documentation that the territories are Lebanese. It is in Syria's interest to entertain this ambiguity in order to keep the tension on the border between Lebanon and Israel alive and to prevent bilateral negotiations. This occupation also serves as an excuse for Hezbollah, supported by Syria and Iran, to claim that Lebanon has not been liberated in its entirety and that armed struggle must continue.

Lebanon and Israel's differences over border delineation also reflect a bitter struggle for control of river water (the Hasbani and Wazzani rivers) and subterranean water (the Chebaa aquifer) from Mount Hermon, which overlooks Israel, Lebanon and Syria. The battle for water that started in 1923 when the mandated powers drew the borders continues to sharpen with increasing drought problems and demographic pressure.

While the 14 March Alliance has no formal declared position on potential negotiations, it believes that Lebanon's fate should not be dependent on these territories and that diplomacy rather than weapons will ensure their liberation. It accuses Hezbollah of serving foreign interests, namely Iran's and Syria's, and putting the country at risk.

The 8 March Alliance's response is to argue that diplomacy has never helped liberate an occupied territory. With its 'victory' over Israel in July 2006, Hezbollah was able to convince many Lebanese of the indispensability of its weapons in stopping Israel from attacking Lebanon with impunity, although Israeli flights over Lebanon continued after the passing of Security Council Resolution 1701

(2006). Hezbollah refuses to disarm as long as Lebanese territories remain occupied and no agreement has been reached between the Lebanese over a defence strategy capable of safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

An Israeli withdrawal to the armistice lines of 1949 accompanied by a proposal on equitable sharing of waters in accordance with international law, however, could deprive Hezbollah of its pretext and strengthen the position of those calling for Lebanon's neutrality vis-à-vis the regional conflict.

UNIFIL has managed to defuse border tensions, including very serious ones; without UNIFIL, there would be no security on the Lebanese-Israeli border. But its action is limited to writing reports and taking account of violations of Lebanon's maritime, airspace, and territorial sovereignty. UNIFIL's first intervention in southern Lebanon in March 1978 helped ensure a minimum level of security in its areas of deployment, but it could not stop Israel from invading again in 1982. The second UNIFIL, which deployed in 2006 pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1701, has encouraged the deployment of the Lebanese army in the south for the first time since the 1970s.

## Conclusion

The Lebanese population is weary of conflict and ideological rhetoric and slogans. Civil society is concerned with addressing issues related to domestic, political and social life (such as the fight for secularism) rather than promoting a possible peace with Israel. Today, more than at any other time, Lebanon is unable to negotiate (let alone sign) a peace treaty with Israel without Syria's consent.

With the Arab Spring we can expect a disruption of the regional strategic landscape. The Syrian crisis may either strengthen the advocates of peace negotiations or set Lebanon ablaze. Either way, Lebanon will not be able to move towards a just and lasting peace with Israel unless the latter shows, through its acts and deeds, its commitment to real peace and complies with UN resolutions and international law.

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## An Israeli perspective on war and peace in Lebanon

Oren Barak



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***Institution in a Divided Society* (State University of New York Press, 2009).**

Contrary to the popular image of Israeli-Lebanese relations as being essentially volatile and conflict-ridden, the two states have known periods of relative stability along their mutual border. What factors contributed to the more tranquil periods in the two states' relations in the past? And what can be learnt from them regarding the present situation?

The border between Greater Lebanon and Mandatory Palestine, drawn by French and British officials in 1923, was from a local perspective somewhat arbitrary – although its delineation had been the result of serious international negotiations – as Lebanon (then under French rule) kept several villages in Western Galilee, while Palestine (ruled by Great Britain) secured greater control of Upper Jordan.

### Relative calm

Lebanon and Israel largely respected the border from their independence until the late 1960s. In the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948, Lebanon participated on the Arab side but its army was restricted to a largely defensive role – while Israel captured over a dozen Lebanese villages in south Lebanon in October that year. In 1949 Israel and Lebanon signed an Armistice Agreement which expressed both sides' recognition of the Mandatory border, albeit with unresolved differences between them.

Four years later, a confidential Israeli report stated: "There is nothing to say about Lebanon. The situation in the border with Lebanon is generally adequate ... relations with Lebanon are generally not our utmost concern". Indeed, relations remained stable until 1967, especially compared to Israel's dealings with Egypt, Syria and Jordan. In this period, problems were dealt with mostly by the Israeli-Lebanese Mixed Armistice Commission (ILMAC), which included representatives of both armies and a UN observer. As a result, Israel generally practised restraint towards Lebanon.

### Deteriorating relations

From the mid-1960s Israeli-Lebanese relations began to deteriorate after Palestinian armed factions arrived

in southern Lebanon and launched cross-border attacks against Israel. Israel retaliated militarily, in order to try to compel Lebanon to subdue the Palestinians, and subsequently to address Israel's security concerns unilaterally – ultimately invading south Lebanon in 1978 and establishing a military buffer zone.

Lebanon's civil war (1975–90) seemed to offer Israel an opportunity to fundamentally change its relations with Lebanon. Israel collaborated with Lebanese Christian militias in the border area from the start of the war and later forged ties with other Lebanese Christian militias in the north. But Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon only managed to drive the Palestinian factions out of the country. It did not succeed in establishing a pro-Israeli government in Beirut, nor in guaranteeing the agreement signed between the two states in 1983, which collapsed a year later. Moreover, between 1982–85, the Israeli army, which occupied substantial parts of Lebanon, began to encounter guerrilla attacks, this time also by Lebanese militias, most notably Hezbollah.

In 1985, Israel decided to establish a formal 'Security Zone' in south Lebanon, regulated by a pro-Israeli militia, the South Lebanese Army. But as an Israeli military commander asserts, the result of this development was that "Hezbollah transformed from a rejected terrorist organisation, which acts against the wish of the central government in Lebanon, into a legitimate resistance movement of the Lebanese people to the Israeli occupation". Israel suffered heavy military losses in its struggle against Hezbollah, and subsequent Israeli military operations (*Accountability* in 1993 and *Grapes of Wrath* in 1996) failed to tilt the situation in its favour.

Only in 2000, almost a decade after the end of the Lebanese conflict, did Israel decide to cut its losses and withdraw from Lebanon. Even during the war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006 the Israeli army did not return.

### What could Israel do now?

What can be done to stop the vicious cycle of conflict in Israeli-Lebanese relations? The comparatively tranquil period from 1949–67 suggests a number of lessons.

First, a stable Lebanese state that can restrain armed non-state actors operating from the Lebanese-Israeli border area is in Israel's best interest. Therefore, Israel should respect Lebanon's sovereignty, including by refraining from violating its airspace – which it does today on an almost daily basis.

Second, Israel must try to find a solution to contentious border issues such as the Chebaa Farms – a small area that was part of Lebanon – that was under de facto Syrian control until the 1967 war, after which it was occupied by Israel. Non-state actors such as Hezbollah use this to justify their 'Resistance'.

Third, Israel should build a barrier on the 'Blue Line', the post-2000 border with Lebanon marked by the UN after Israel's withdrawal. This barrier will signal to both states where the current border lies and make cross-border infiltration more difficult. Both Israel and Lebanon have reservations about the demarcation of the Blue Line, but

both have confirmed they will respect it until a permanent border is agreed.

Finally, Israel and Lebanon would benefit from renewing the activities of ILMAC, which has thus far been the most effective way to bring about quiet and stability on the Israeli-Lebanese border and in Israeli-Lebanese relations generally, even in the absence of a peace process between the two states. It does, however, seem worthwhile to keep UNIFIL (which was enlarged and strengthened in 2006) in the Israeli-Lebanese border area, in view of its stabilising role there.



A man inspects the damage to his apartment in Kiryat Shmona, Israel, after it was hit by a Katyusha rocket fired by Hezbollah // © Ahikam Seri/Panos

# Boundaries and demarcation

## Delimiting and securing Lebanon's borders

A conversation with General Nizar Abdel-Kader

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### Failure to demarcate Lebanon's boundaries

Article 1 of Lebanon's Constitution asserts that it is "an independent, indivisible, and sovereign state." It describes its frontiers to the north, east and south – as well as the Mediterranean to the west. Nonetheless, Lebanon's borders with Israel and Syria are in fact neither resolved on the ground nor agreed legally.

The history of efforts to demarcate Lebanon's borders is confused. On 23 December 1920 British and French authorities in Palestine and Lebanon established a joint border committee, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Newcomb (Britain) and Paulet (France), which agreed in February 1922 the demarcation of Lebanon's borders with Palestine fixing 71 points on the ground. The French Mandate over Syria and Lebanon also undertook to delimit the boundaries between Lebanon and Syria, but only completed around 80 per cent of the demarcation.

Following Lebanese independence in the 1940s, Beirut and Damascus failed to take steps to jointly demarcate their common border. Today, discussions over Lebanon's border with Israel refer to three different historical boundaries: the 1922 line; the 1949 'Green Line' – part of the Truce agreement reached between Israel and its neighbours following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war; and the 2000 'Blue Line' – determined by the UN in relation to Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon.

Following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, then Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban declared that Israel would not be bound by any conditions of the 1949 Truce. In 1978 Israel

occupied part of southern Lebanon, declaring it a "security zone". It did not vacate it for the next 22 years, rejecting the requirement of UN Security Resolution (UNSCR) 425 (1978) to withdraw to Lebanon's "internationally recognised boundaries." When Israel finally did pull out in May 2000, the new UN Blue Line did not correspond either to Newcomb-Paulet or to the 1949 Truce.

Consideration of Lebanon's borders must include the northern part of the village of Ghajar, which sits on the Syrian-Lebanese border, the Kfar-Shuba Hills and the Chebaa Farms, key areas along Lebanon's border which remain disputed with Israel and are points of friction between Lebanon, Israel and Syria. Today, there are thirty-six points of disagreement between Syria and Lebanon concerning the border, the most significant of which is in the central zone around Deir al-Ashayer.

These ambiguities over Lebanon's borders with Israel and Syria mean that Lebanese sovereignty has always been violated, leading to border disputes and violent clashes – not least the 2006 war.

### Lebanon's borders with Israel

The Blue Line did not end the territorial dispute between Lebanon and Israel, but included several points of contention. Beirut insists that Israel has not fully complied with UNSCR 425. After expelling Lebanese farmers from the Chebaa Farms during the 1967 war, Israel did not acknowledge that it had invaded de facto Lebanese territory. Since 1978, Israeli forces have transformed the occupied farms into a buffer zone along the border. Tel

Aviv ostensibly waits for Syria's official renunciation of the Chebaa Farms, knowing that Syria will not do this before recovering the occupied Golan Heights, thereby enabling Israel to maintain a strategic observatory, and control over abundant Mount Hermon water resources.

## “ Following Lebanese independence in the 1940s, Beirut and Damascus failed to take steps to jointly demarcate their common border”

Hezbollah is also exploiting this occupation to validate its continued armament until all parts of Lebanon are liberated. This situation distorts the domestic political balance in Lebanon, as Hezbollah's role as an armed 'Resistance' has secured for it inflated influence, and the party has been able to dominate the current government of Najib Mikati. Syria also plays a negative role in supporting Hezbollah's resistance and in addition to refusing to accept the demarcation of the border, especially in the Chebaa Farms.

### **Natural gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean**

Recent discoveries of huge natural gas reserves off the coast of Haifa have presented another thorny border issue regarding the delineation of Israel's and Lebanon's maritime boundaries. The 2000 Blue Line did not establish a maritime boundary, which at that time did not seem important before the discovery of the gas reserves. Beirut and Tel Aviv have responded to disagreement over natural gas with militaristic rhetoric and bravado.

In 2011 the Lebanese parliament agreed to a new draft law to delineate Lebanon's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and its maritime boundaries. The UN rejected a request from Lebanon to help in this demarcation due to the difficulties it had experienced trying to delineate the Blue Line.

Without UN involvement, the eastern Mediterranean could become another theatre for war between Hezbollah and Israel. Hezbollah is rumoured to have been developing a specialist unit for underwater sabotage and amphibious warfare for use against Israeli gas fields. The Israeli navy, at a cost of US \$70 million, has developed a maritime security plan to defend these.

Negotiations, however, are taking place to respond to this disputed area of about 800 km<sup>2</sup>. Beirut has shared new maps drawn up by Lebanese experts to delineate

maritime boundaries with the UN Secretary-General. It is also discussing the matter with Cyprus. The experienced US Diplomat Frederic Hof has been trying to help Lebanon and Israel reach an agreement. External technical expertise or UN mediation could be used to help settle the disagreement.

As Lebanese-Israeli relations are still effectively on a war footing, achieving agreement on maritime boundary delineation is very difficult. Meanwhile, increased tensions between Israel and Lebanon, or Hezbollah, are to be expected over gas or some other matter. Consequently, the potential for escalation could easily become imminent.

### **Lebanon's border with Syria**

Lebanese-Syrian relations have been marked by political conflict and instability since their independence from the French Mandate in the mid-1940s, while families, towns and populations span and intermingle across the border. Syria has always considered Lebanon one of its 'lost territories'. Frequent border closures by Damascus and military occupation over 30 years have prevented Lebanon from achieving security and political stability.

Following Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, new efforts were made by Lebanon and the international community to convince Damascus to demarcate their 360 km common border. All of these efforts were futile. In October 2008, Lebanon's historic decision to establish formal diplomatic relations with Syria created a new opportunity to demarcate the border.

The border as set out under the French mandate has been blurred by Syrian action. Visitors to the border will not see Lebanese army units, but they will see Syrian border guards almost everywhere. Lebanese officials have not pushed hard to make progress on demarcation and Damascus has no interest in accomplishing this. The former president Hafez al-Assad and his son Bashar have repeatedly described Lebanon as a strategic extension of Syria.

As part of the October 2008 rapprochement, Lebanon and Syria signed an agreement on demarcation. However, this stressed that the process would begin from the north, postponing demarcation at the Shebaa Farms – with Syria claiming that the area is still under Israeli occupation, and that demarcation is not possible before Israeli withdrawal from the whole of the Golan Heights.

### **Border security**

Following the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel, Syria refused any international efforts to deploy UN observers along its own border. Beirut missed this opportunity to pressure Damascus over demarcation and to benefit from

international support for Lebanon's sovereignty. The only international involvement was a German technical support team that began a project to help Lebanon improve its border security in the north.

Despite this project, the popular uprising in Syria today shows that the border is not secure, due to a lack of both expertise and political will. Current tensions along the border and the commitment of the Lebanese government to the 'Resistance' against Israeli occupation make it unlikely that any serious moves towards border demarcation will take place in the near future.

Under current conditions, Lebanese security cannot curb smuggling and the realisation of arms shipments to

Hezbollah. Lack of Syrian and Israeli will to address the key issues of the Chebaa Farms, Kfar-Shuba and Ghajar means that these areas will remain potential flashpoints between Hezbollah and Israel. After Israel's withdrawals in 2000 and in the 2006 war, Hezbollah has increasingly looked to the Chebaa Farms as a focus for its resistance. Lebanese officials have failed to support repeated claims to the Chebaa Farms with documentary evidence. Syria has used the ongoing disagreement over the farms between Lebanon and Israel to defer progress on demarcating its own border.

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Interview by Alexander Ramsbotham

#### BOX 8

### UNIFIL's contribution to peace in Lebanon

#### A conversation with Timur Goksel



Timur Goksel is a former spokesperson and senior advisor to UNIFIL. He currently teaches in the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration at the American University of Beirut.

#### What have been the main changes between UNIFIL I (1978) and UNIFIL II (2006)?

The revision of the UNIFIL mandate in 2006 by the UN Security Council meant a major expansion in terms of force strength, and of breadth of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). In particular, powerful European Union (EU) Member States, such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain, agreed to provide personnel. The 2006 expansion therefore enhanced UNIFIL's political authority, and local and international credibility. High profile EU interest raised the political stakes for the parties.

But political benefits of expansion were balanced by military and practical trade-offs, in particular operational challenges. UNIFIL's 12,000-strong military contingent (as at August 2011) comprises troops from 37 different countries, with divergent command and control and other logistical priorities, as each TCC tries to balance international obligations with national interests, and answers to national capitals as much as mission headquarters.

#### Does UNIFIL offer Lebanon better protection from Israel?

When UNIFIL was first deployed in 1978, Israel occupied south Lebanon. Israeli cross-border incursions at that time

were therefore comparatively inconspicuous. But following the Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon in 2000, Israeli troop movements across the border have been more apparent – and more controversial.

Ultimately, UNIFIL is a peacekeeping mission: it can defend itself, but it is not mandated to fight a war. Member States contributing troops to UNIFIL are not prepared for aggressive action. In relation to border security, UNIFIL is there to observe and report, and to promote dialogue. This latter function is very important and UNIFIL fulfils a vital role.

But it is important to acknowledge what the mission is there for. Local people in south Lebanon understand UNIFIL's role well: its strengths, weaknesses and limitations. But politicians in Beirut are less well-informed – or see UNIFIL as an easy political target – and make impractical demands on the mission.

#### How can UNIFIL support border security in south Lebanon, in view of challenges of both regional conflict and internal tensions?

Although UNIFIL primarily comprises military personnel, its main advantage is political. A vital function is to act as a neutral third party link between Lebanese and Israeli militaries. UNIFIL legitimacy comes from its UN Security Council mandate; but in practice its legitimacy has latterly (post-2006) been strengthened by the international breadth of participation in the mission, and by increased resources and capacity.

UNIFIL's international status allows it a level of neutrality. It has used this to promote dialogue between the parties across the border. A tripartite mechanism between the





Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), and facilitated by UNIFIL, promotes dialogue between Lebanese and Israeli militaries.

It is important to acknowledge the extent of the impact of this dialogue: these conversations are not going to deliver peace in Lebanon; but they are a major contribution to stability in circumstances where cross-border communication is very limited.

### **What is UNIFIL's contribution to the returning of state sovereignty in" south Lebanon, especially through cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces?**

UNIFIL's original 1978 mandate required the mission to "[assist] the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority". This was wholly unrealistic at a time when Lebanon was beset by multiple civil wars, and was also a theatre for transnational conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. In south Lebanon in particular, there was at that time no national Lebanese military or police presence. And UNIFIL was neither mandated nor resourced for such a role.

After the Palestine Liberation Organisation left Lebanon in the early 1980s, Lebanese from the south began to return

home: the population swelled from 15,000 to 400,000. Increased civilian presence supported greater governance and accountability.

Enabling this return was a major achievement for UNIFIL. Lack of state presence in the south – either security or service provision – meant local people looked to the UN to uphold their day-to-day security and welfare. Since then, Beirut has failed to provide services to the south, which remains detached from state authority.

In terms of the border, after the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, Syrian influence meant that LAF troops failed to deploy as far as the Israeli border and did not deal with border security, despite major international pressure. This has meant there is a continued emphasis on UNIFIL's role.

Hezbollah's subsequent dominance along the border has caused significant problems for UNIFIL, not least in terms of its relations with Tel Aviv, Beirut and New York.

### **Is UNIFIL II a tool for peacebuilding in southern Lebanon?**

UNIFIL's direct contact with communities in South Lebanon has, in fact, diminished since the withdrawal of the Israelis and the arrival of the LAF in 2000, as the LAF has since become an interlocutor between UNIFIL and local communities.

UNIFIL's main focus is conflict-management. UNIFIL supports local development initiatives, such as helping to build water distribution facilities. And it provides employment opportunities in areas where it is operational. But its peacebuilding function is indirect. The most essential peacebuilding function for UNIFIL is to prevent or defuse potentially explosive tensions across the border.

*Interview by Alexander Ramsbotham*

# International peacebuilding in Lebanon

## What role for the EU?

Duccio Bandini

Implementing a coherent approach to peacebuilding in Lebanon has proved challenging for the international community. First, efforts targeting civil peace have repeatedly been affected by, and mixed up with, broader regional dynamics. Second, cycles of violence in Lebanon have diverted international support away from longer-term needs aimed at dealing with the root causes of Lebanon's internal fragmentation, to more immediate post-conflict reconstruction and recovery.

**“ If Lebanon is to overcome its political fragility and social fragmentation, longer-term efforts and processes, aimed specifically at building sustainable peace and fostering reconciliation, are needed”**

Today the European Union (EU), in conjunction with international and Lebanese partners, is focusing more on conflict prevention and peacebuilding tools geared towards conflict mitigation and analysis, and dialogue and reconciliation – specifically through the efforts of its Instrument for Stability.

### EU Policy framework

The Barcelona Process, launched in 1995, provided the framework for the EU to manage relations with post-

war Lebanon, both bilateral and regional. It sought to promote a common area of peace and stability around the Mediterranean, underpinned by sustainable development, the rule of law, democracy and human rights. It was only with the adoption of the Goteborg Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts in 2001 that the EU made a first step towards improving the effectiveness and coherence of its external action in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

The introduction of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004 meant that EU relations with Mediterranean partners began to be managed through Association Agreements. The Lebanon Agreement was signed in 2007 with a strong emphasis on political, economic and social reform, but perhaps paying less attention to the legacy of the country's violent past and fragmented social fabric. Since 2006 the EU has become a major actor in spearheading the efforts of the international community to consolidate Lebanon's stability while reinforcing its sovereignty and to support the country along a much-needed path of reform.

The war with Israel in 2006 caused major disruption to international and European engagement, as it diverted large amounts of assistance to reconstruction and economic recovery needs. As well as the humanitarian assistance provided through the European Commission's Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the EC adopted several assistance packages worth more than €46 million. A similar amount was managed by the UN through the Lebanon Recovery Fund, which included donations from EU Member States.

At the time, the priority of the international community was to support a stable, sovereign and democratic Lebanon at peace with its neighbours. The rationale was that an unstable security situation would prevent the country from embarking on a path of reform that was, and still is, urgently needed to address its many political, economic and social cleavages. A number of international interventions can be seen in light of this, in particular UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (11 August 2006), and the assistance given to Lebanon's security sector – including projects to support the development of modern and accountable security institutions, to promote the integrated management of Lebanon's borders, and renewed backing for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

It was hoped that more competent and legitimate state armed forces, capable of enforcing the rule of law, could act as a main driver for national cohesion and stabilisation. Similarly, the presence of UNIFIL as a buffer between Lebanon and Israel, and the revision of its mandate, was also important. Although the mission has not been aimed at brokering a peace deal between the two countries, it has provided neutral interlocution and channels for dialogue to address tensions arising at Lebanon's southern border.

Subsequently, the need to strengthen the Lebanese state and increase the population's trust in its governing institutions has been the basis for EU engagement. This has focused on economic, social and institutional reforms to which the Lebanese government committed itself in July 2005 after the Syrian withdrawal, and again at an international donor conference in Paris in January 2007 (Paris III). Among these, electoral reform remains a priority for the EU. This has involved multiple election observation missions in 2005 and 2009, and technical assistance teams deployed to review and recommend electoral reforms (including the introduction of pre-printed ballots, gender quotas, out of country voting, and an independent electoral commission, amongst others) and to facilitate their adoption and implementation. Smooth and transparent elections are a key factor for stability in any country. However, in Lebanon respect for international standards of free and fair elections is also essential for increasing the credibility, accountability and legitimacy of its governing institutions and its political class. And so, for the EU electoral reform is a vital element for tackling sectarian fragmentation.

### **Consensus building, dialogue and mediation**

The EC Delegation in Lebanon organised three discussions as part of an Inter-Lebanese Forum on Economic and Social Development – in May 2007, and April and October 2008. These were intended to promote inclusive dialogue on the need for, and shape of, reforms for less controversial

subjects: economic and social development, social policy and stimulating enterprise and competition.

The forums included representatives from all major Lebanese political forces, as well as from professional associations, civil society and independent experts – demonstrating that such dialogue is feasible even under difficult political circumstances. The forums proved fairly successful in building trust and consensus, and facilitating the shaping of a greater shared vision on elements of reform in the education and health sectors, and on reforms aimed at making the economy more competitive for the benefit of all Lebanese.

Alongside this, a spectrum of Lebanese NGOs were supported by the international community to try and build grass roots capacity for conflict mediation and resolution. These civil society driven initiatives have adopted an implicit peacebuilding approach, primarily aimed at bringing together divided communities on developmental issues, and prioritising an apolitical approach rather than tackling core conflict-related issues more directly. However, lack of coordination prevented the development of significant momentum, or the establishment of links between changes at the individual or local community level, and the macro-social and – political level.

Promoting stability through major long-term reform has so far failed to produce many dividends, either in terms of peacebuilding or impact on social, political or economic drivers of conflict. Deep seated sectarian animosities persist, increasing the potential for political instability and civil strife if left unaddressed, and leaving Lebanon still vulnerable to violence – with periods of stability masking underlying inter-communal tensions that can easily fracture the fragile political balance. Lebanon's recent past has highlighted a series of conflict dynamics with potential for larger violent conflict: the proliferation of arms; increasing demonstration of violence; emerging 'front lines' in divided urban public spaces that increase the likelihood of violent street clashes (such as those that broke out in Beirut in May 2008, and in both Tripoli and Beirut more recently), and other sectarian confrontations that have occurred in mixed neighbourhoods.

### **The EU Instrument for Stability: focus on peacebuilding and reconciliation**

If Lebanon is to overcome its political fragility and social fragmentation, longer-term efforts and processes, aimed specifically at building sustainable peace and fostering reconciliation, are needed.

Lebanon is vulnerable to fluctuating regional and international developments, which bear a direct impact on

domestic security both in border areas and more centrally. However, the country's fragmented societal and political fabric, combined with weak state institutions, is not able to buffer these fluctuations. Against a domestic background of intra-Lebanese sectarian animosities and their instrumentalisation by political elites, the EU has joined efforts with UN agencies and national and international NGOs to promote activities aimed more explicitly at strengthening civil peace and reconciliation, based on participatory conflict analysis, and strengthening citizens' sense of national identity and state capacity for managing social diversity.

To date international engagement has largely prioritised 'post-conflict recovery' activities: humanitarian aid, local development, security sector reform and the rule of law, the reconstruction of infrastructure, public administration reform, political stabilisation, and human rights and gender issues. But to be effective, these need to be supplemented with post-conflict prevention and peacebuilding tools geared towards conflict mitigation and analysis, and dialogue and reconciliation. The international community needs to, not only mainstream these throughout the spectrum of development cooperation with Lebanon, but also to deploy them as part of a more explicit approach to peacebuilding. This has been the aim, as outlined below, of the new approach adopted by the EU – the Instrument for Stability (IfS).

Expanding local capacity for civil peace and dialogue: The challenge is to build on existing capacities and foster greater national awareness and momentum for the consolidation of a domestic peace supported by all Lebanese. Efforts to achieve this include: improving participatory conflict-analysis skills; supporting development and implementation of locally-tailored, multi-stakeholder peacebuilding strategies to mitigate tensions in a few pre-selected conflict-prone parts of the country (focusing on youth and providing alternatives to mobilisation along sectarian lines); supporting the establishment of a coherent civil society platform and mechanism for advocacy, agenda-setting and coalition-building on issues related to civil peace, dialogue and reconciliation; and supporting civil society in 'Track II' initiatives to complement the National Dialogue, and to broaden the basis for consensus-building on key reform agenda items and peace and reconciliation efforts. This work is implemented in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) through the 'Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon' project, and involves several national NGOs and relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities.

Reducing sectarian and confessional divides: Existing intra-Lebanese cleavages coupled with intolerant attitudes

and mistrust of the 'other' can quickly trigger increased instability, and even develop into violent conflict. To tackle these challenges, IfS is currently promoting initiatives in collaboration with UNDP, the Lebanese NGO UMAM D&R and the international NGO Search for Common Ground, in collaboration with relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

These initiatives include: supporting the development of a collective memory, so as to provide a common reference and stimulate reflection on shared experiences – although not necessarily leading to shared interpretations; integrating peacebuilding into formal and non-formal educational channels; and the use of alternative media, such as children's TV series, and university magazines and blogs, in order to reduce stereotypes, as well as training for journalists to promote unbiased and conflict-sensitive reporting.

Building consensus among key stakeholders on appropriate mechanisms for addressing the legacy of a violent past: Peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts that have taken place in Lebanon in the past twenty years have largely ignored the legacies of abuse and violence left by various conflicts. The legacy of the 15-year civil war is an important factor in the country's path to stability, and needs to be openly addressed.

This approach would facilitate a process of healthy self-criticism by all parties involved, and help rebuild trust amongst communities, and between people and state institutions. This includes activities geared towards assessing citizens' expectations, supporting the formulation of options to 'deal with the past', and facilitating consensus building among key parties: eg victims and other NGOs, government and political parties. This work is being promoted along with national and international NGO partners such as the International Centre for Transitional Justice, the *Centre Libanais des Droits Humains*, the Permanent Peace Movement and *L'Association Libanaise pour l'Éducation et la Formation*.

There is greater engagement with areas or groups at greater risk, such as marginalised regions and poorer neighbourhoods, where potential factors for instability, tension and grievance are more difficult to address and could quickly escalate. Furthermore, EU humanitarian assistance and relief work in Palestinian refugee camps is now being complemented by greater attention to governance dynamics in the camps, as well as improving the effectiveness of existing mechanisms for Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue – which focus on promoting fundamental socio-economic rights as essential conditions

for refugees to live with dignity. The EU is also supporting outreach efforts for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) to facilitate greater public understanding of its function and work.

## Conclusions

International support for government efforts aimed at political, social and economic reform is maintained through traditional cooperation channels, as a way to assist the country in its path to stabilisation, and as an indirect approach to deal with root causes of tension and conflict. Nevertheless, experience shows that the EU and the international community need to deal more explicitly with conflict-related issues for these efforts to be effective.

There are several areas for improvement. Increased use of participatory conflict-analysis can be more actively promoted in order to better identify and understand key actors, conflict drivers and dynamics, and how they interact. This would facilitate more targeted actions to address reforms relevant to peacebuilding and reconciliation, and to improve their linkages with, and effect upon, macro-social and political levels. It would also allow better assessment of the impact of donor policies and programmes on both actual and potential conflicts, and the extent to which national policies are conflict-sensitive and actively contribute to peacebuilding. Finally, international assistance to peacebuilding should ensure that implementation time frames allow continued support, in order to build trust and establish more beneficial dialogue.

Questions remain over whether there should be greater emphasis on the autonomy and accountability of the state:

which state administration should be encouraged and which needs to be consolidated or reformed first? And should external support be made more conditional on local responsibility and the involvement of non-state actors in policy dialogue?

Recent approaches adopted by the EU and its partners show greater coherence in interventions, and they are more closely aligned with EU policy priorities and overall support to Lebanon. The EU also promotes the prioritisation of an independent civil society throughout the different phases of support to state-building, in order to counter the marginalisation of less dominant groups and as part of an inclusive process to rebuild trust and peace.

It is hoped that this approach also represents an opportunity to ensure that broader lessons learned so far from the Arab Spring movements and their associated demands are incorporated into international responses to both crises and transitions from war to peace, incorporating peacebuilding and reconciliation tools as essential ingredients to support democratic transformation and institution-building processes.

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## Section 5

# Conclusion

Building peace and  
resilience for Lebanon



Representatives of Lebanon's religious communities stand with protesters behind a banner reading 'We only have each other' as they take part in a demonstration against the possibility of renewed civil war outside the National Museum of Beirut on 31 May 2012 // © JOSEPH EID/AFP/GettyImages



# Conclusion

## Building peace and resilience for Lebanon

Elizabeth Picard and Alexander Ramsbotham

How the Lebanese people perceive their nation, state and fellow citizens; their frustrations and expectations; and their priorities in terms of identity and security: all these issues are vital to determine an equitable and viable Lebanese state, free from ideological prejudices and imposed external interests. Individuals, trans-sectarian civil associations and NGOs, as well as organised groups such as political parties and unions, need to be encouraged and supported to engage in dialogue, share knowledge and build trust on core issues for peace and stability. To achieve this, they need to be guaranteed freedom of expression.

### Looking back to move forward

The government's refusal to deal with the past (the infamous 'state-sponsored amnesia') places even more importance on civil initiatives to promote memory and reconciliation – many examples of which are highlighted in this publication. These demonstrate popular desire and innovation to address the psychosocial legacy of the war.

But at present civil efforts are largely restricted to Beirut intelligentsia. To be effective, these need to be much more inclusive and extended beyond urban and intellectual elites in order to incorporate peripheral districts and grassroots. Structures exist in Lebanon to help realise this. Established, elder-led rural traditions and norms for peaceful mediation, which combine civil law and tribal codes within local justice systems, could provide channels for national reconciliation processes to reach marginalised and remote populations.

Lebanese history is taught in ways that can be sectarian, confining memory of the war to partisan perspectives, sustaining divisions between communities and fuelling distrust. The Ministry of Education should resume efforts to review and revise history curricula for schools. Rather than develop an amalgam or official history, however, it should create space for narratives of the war that better

accommodate and acknowledge different views, and so improve understanding of the 'other'.

It is the responsibility of Lebanese religious clerics of all denominations as well as secular intellectuals to connect with each other in peaceful debate on shared humanitarian, ethical and spiritual values, which can underpin national political life and state policies across all constituencies. Clerics can also reach out to engage extremists from within their own confessions.

Post-war demobilisation, demilitarisation and reintegration of militias has been piecemeal and selective – with Hezbollah the most obvious example. Significant sectors of society remain armed and ready for violent mobilisation, including post-war generations. Flawed reintegration policies have led to the militarisation of politics rather than the civilianisation of militias, as quasi-operative militia fighters have been incorporated into partisan national institutions by political leaders, many of whom are themselves former warlords. Although the armed forces have been rehabilitated and reorganised, sectarian tensions and conflicting political priorities have weakened its role, limiting its operation to strict confines agreed between powerful elites.

State-led return and reconciliation programmes for thousands of Lebanese displaced by the war have either not been completed, or have reinforced social and political segregation. They have variously ignored local traditions, customs and other common reconciliation approaches based on acknowledgement and forgiveness, or have misguidedly been underpinned by a communal rather than an individual rationale. Victims have been explicitly excluded from discussions on returnee policy, while some reparations have been made conditional on recipients accepting official 'reconciliation agreements'.

Lebanon has a history of social mobilisation to press for political change – from before, during and after the war.

Grassroots mobilisation in the late 1990s around common rights succeeded in making a political impact. Anti-confessional demonstrations in Lebanon in 2011 – inspired by the Arab Spring – illustrate popular (particularly youth) dissatisfaction with the current political setup. But the ability of 8 and 14 March Alliances rapidly to divide and co-opt demonstrators exposes the weakness and disunity of Lebanese civil society. The potential of the Lebanese people to affect positive change needs to be supported rather than dismissed.

## Honouring the social contract

Ultimately, engineering real and lasting peace is the responsibility of Lebanon's political class; to build a meaningful social contract so that all Lebanese can trust the state to provide (at least in part) security, political freedom and social justice, rather than looking to confessional and sectarian communities either inside or outside Lebanon's borders.

This requires root and branch political reform to transform Lebanon's 'cosmetic democracy' – in which human rights are flouted, most obviously for Palestinian refugees and migrant workers, gender equality is denied, and confessional leaders and state institutions are prone to authoritarianism. The confessional political system with the executive 'Troika' at its summit is at best ineffectual, and at worst a catalyst for conflict.

A concerted and gradualist strategy is required that both acknowledges the realities of confessionalism and leads clearly towards genuine and inclusive representation. This would allow people to see progress in a functioning political process. A starting point could be an audit of the process of reform of public administration – promised at Taif, inscribed on the agenda of every subsequent government and heavily supported by international institutions and Western partners.

Three domains should be prioritised – as these provoke unanimous criticism among Lebanese and are crucial for the legitimacy of the state:

1. reduction of tensions around economic and social inequality: ensure investment in key infrastructure; and address socio-economic welfare and extreme poverty, in particular serving the needs of marginalised and peripheral populations
2. legal disentanglement of public and private sectors in order to ensure fair and efficient access to essential services such as fresh water, electricity and telephone
3. effective political decentralisation, to restore public confidence in state institutions and facilitate political

participation of peripheral, marginalised and younger groups

Legitimising the state would offer a solid basis for the government to start implementing political reforms, ongoing delays of which accrue risk of a return to civil war. There is widespread consensus that the Taif power sharing formula reinforces unfair representation in terms of age, gender and region – not to forget sect.

Confessional belonging hampers the freedom of individual social and political choice and blurs state-citizen relations. Many Lebanese, especially youth and women, question the democracy of the Lebanese power sharing formula and trust neither their leaders' capacity nor inclination to bring about reform. Only social justice (to respond to deepening frustration) and political distancing from confessionalism (to defuse sectarian strife) can alleviate violence and enmity.

Lebanese leaders should not delay reform policies but should look to adopt and implement them as early as possible – for example as part of the 2013 legislative elections. A good starting point would be electoral reforms suggested by the Butros Commission and accepted in principle by deputies in 2008: lowering voting age to 18, organising the vote of expatriate nationals and facilitating the election of women. They should also reopen National Dialogue negotiations to build minimal consensus on national identity and security policy and prepare for the complete return of the rule of law and state monopoly on the use of force.

Reforms should be negotiated as balanced 'packages' that enable various parties, political blocs and interest groups to compensate losses with benefits – for example realising proposals for a confessional Senate to offset reforms designed to deconfessionalise parliament. As well as empowering small local administrative units, decentralisation could provide a broad framework for reform, helping to redefine the relationship between central and local authorities, and to re-think key issues of representation, participation, accountability, local development and ultimately the political system itself.

## Sovereign resilience

Although Lebanese cannot exercise sole control over it, managing their regional environment is an essential condition for solid and lasting peace. External dangers are real, present and proximate. Lebanon's territorial borders and maritime boundaries are variously disputed and porous. They can provide flashpoints for political violence: despite the presence of UN peacekeepers, clashes between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defence Forces in August 2010 show how the border with Israel remains controversial and unstable. Meanwhile Lebanon's border

with Syria provides a channel for illicit arms transfers in both directions. There is a risk too that Syria's internal conflict could spill further into northern regions of Lebanon – especially Sunni and Alawite neighbourhoods of Tripoli – as well as into Beirut neighbourhoods.

The failure of Lebanon's state institutions to manage internal conflict encourages leaders to look to neighbouring states for protection. Political blocs and associated sectarian communities present external ties as non-negotiable and immutable, for example 8 March Alliance and Hezbollah's links with Syria and Iran; or 14 March Alliance's hostility to Syria and embrace of the West.

As a small and poorly armed country (at least in its official national forces) Lebanon should not feel threatened by unchecked Israeli interventions or by Syrian diktats – not to mention transnational terrorism. The Israeli border has remained peaceful since the 2006 war. Apparent border disputes like the Chebaa Farms are a strategic pretext for violence rather than a territorial issue.

But the most important issue paralysing change in Lebanon today is Hezbollah's arms. This cannot be solved unilaterally without *détente* on the Syrian-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli fronts in conformity with international law. Similarly, the current uprising and state repression in Syria underline the need for Beirut to clarify relations with Damascus and make sure that this is a conversation between two independent and sovereign states.

The parallel existence of a large but weak national army and Hezbollah's small but well-armed militia at a time when regional tensions and transnational Islamist militancy threaten national security is a particular challenge to Lebanon's sovereignty.

Today, Lebanon, Israel and Syria need diplomatic and capacity support: to cultivate political will in order to resolve outstanding border and boundary disputes; and to provide technical expertise on demarcation. The international community and the Arab League should end the practice of considering Lebanon a weak state whose fate is best entrusted to external actors, as they have since 1975.

External partners need to be coordinated and consistent. A key challenge for the international community is to show that strategic regional politics do not trump international law: many Lebanese perceive the failure of the UN to follow-up on explicit requirements for Israel to withdraw from areas belonging to Lebanon (ie north Ghajar) as a double standard. In return, Lebanese leaders should face up to their strategic responsibilities and become accountable for national security.

## Addressing Lebanon's conflict system

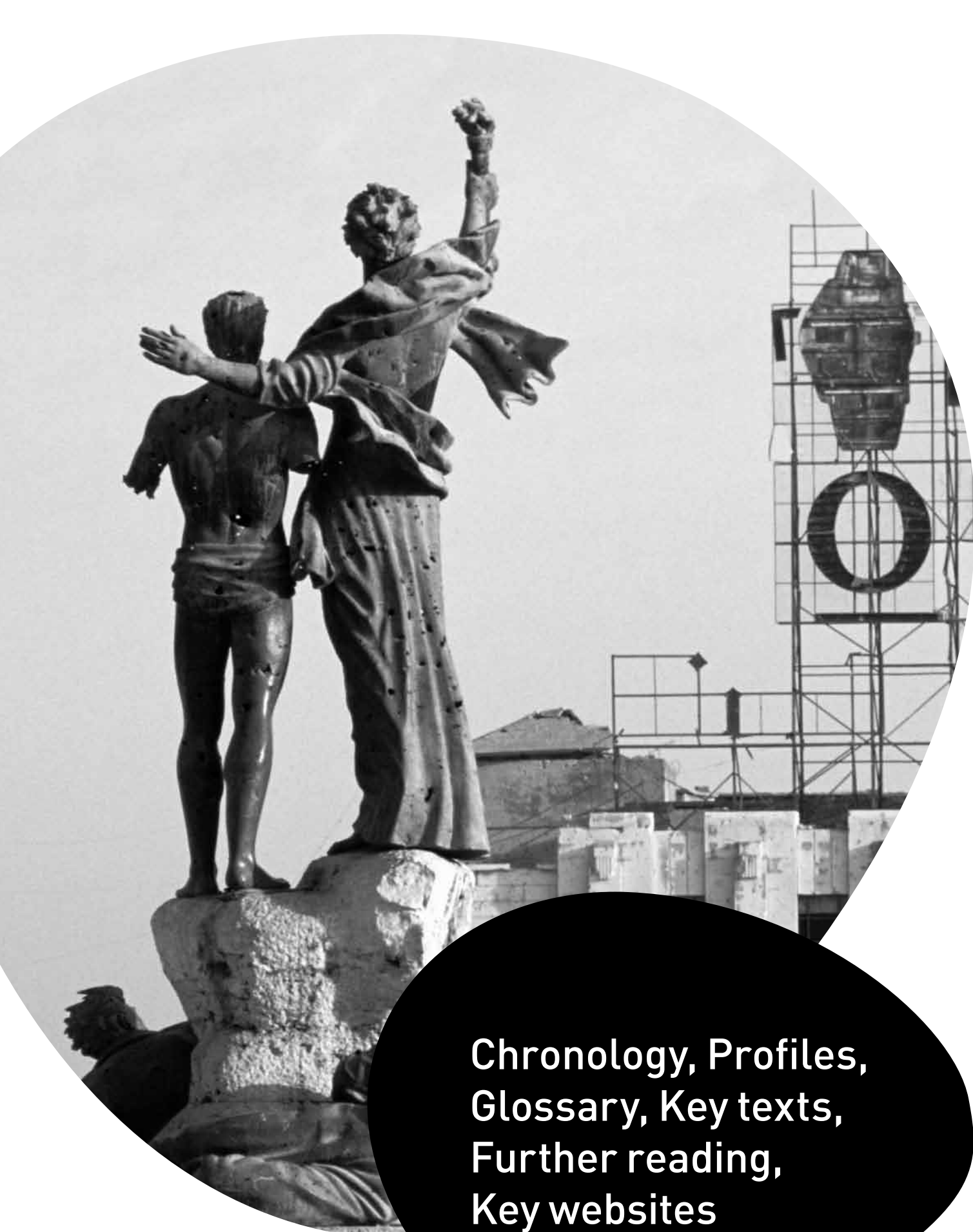
Lebanon's conflict 'system' feeds on complex interaction between *levels* (official and unofficial), and *environments* (internal and external). Long-term projects to build sustainable peace are repeatedly overwhelmed by immediate security emergencies. Reconciliation, reform and national self-determination do not exist in isolation, but should be addressed together. Conflict response strategies need to identify and manipulate leverage points within the system to promote positive change.

Hezbollah's various personae illustrate overlaps between internal and external conflict dynamics in Lebanon: their causes and effects; how perceptions differ according to audience; and the confusion this instils in those claiming to build peace. Is Hezbollah a legitimate domestic political power and champion of disenfranchised Lebanese Shia, to be engaged with and supported? Is it an epitome of resistance to Israeli occupation and belligerence, and an essential and justified regional vanguard of Arab, Muslim and Palestinian emancipation and solidarity? Or is it a proxy of radical regimes in Tehran and Damascus, and as such rightfully proscribed by US and UK anti-terrorist legislation?

It is essential to acknowledge and engage with the complex reality of Lebanon's conflict system. Domestic political reform and national reconciliation are key sources of sovereign resilience to external challenges, to bolster national self-determination and to uphold Lebanese security. Power shifts in Damascus, while risky and unpredictable, could in the longer term free up political space for Lebanese parties – in particular Hezbollah – to focus more on domestic priorities.

Resuming the National Dialogue, started in 2006, could provide an opportunity to refocus internally. The Dialogue brought together leaders of key sectarian groups and political affiliations in the broadest gathering since the civil war, to address issues ranging from the status of the president, assassinations of prominent Lebanese figures, disputed border regions and the disarmament of Hezbollah.

The Dialogue could be a positive step to bring opposing Lebanese positions closer together on the definition of state security and national strategy, based on achievable and incremental objectives and including all Lebanese parties. A key step would be to find ways to extend or 'democratise' dialogue, to include Lebanese people's participation and perspectives so that they are party to any deals reached on their future, and so are part of implementing solutions for positive change.



**Chronology, Profiles,  
Glossary, Key texts,  
Further reading,  
Key websites**

The Martyrs' Statue, commemorating the death of nationalists at the hands of the Ottomans in 1916, facing the sea from Martyrs' Square, Beirut. Riddled with bullet holes from the civil war, the statue has only recently been returned to the square following extensive renovation of the area // © Chris Stowers/Panos

# Chronology

## Seventh century CE

Arab Muslim conquest of Syria. Islamisation of southern tribes while northern ones remain Christian. Maronites split from the Byzantine Church.

## Ninth–eleventh centuries

Spread of Shiism in Lebanese territories.

Maronites pushed south to Mount Lebanon by Byzantine advance.

Development of the Druze sect and its spread in Syria.

## Twelfth–thirteenth centuries

The Pope leads European powers in the Crusades. Maronites split over allegiance to the Pope, leading to a lasting schism.

## Sixteenth century

Ottoman rule begins.

## Nineteenth century

Sectarian conflict builds between Druze and Christians around Mount Lebanon. After the eruption of war in 1860 French troops intervene and a Maronite-dominated autonomous political entity in Mount Lebanon is declared.

## Early twentieth century

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War, the League of Nations grants France a mandate over the empire's northern Arab Levant provinces in 1920. In response to demands from Maronite elites, France creates the State of Greater Lebanon, which includes the former autonomous district of Mount Lebanon as well as the coastal districts of North Lebanon (Tripoli), South Lebanon (Sidon and Tyr) and the Beqaa and Hermel Valley, all historically parts of the Ottoman province of Syria. A Lebanese Republic with its own constitution is declared in 1926, instituting a formula governing the proportional distribution of power.

Independence is obtained on 22 November 1943.

## 1943

The National Pact is agreed. It is an unwritten agreement between the Maronite President and his Sunni Prime Minister constituting a grand bargain among Lebanon's Christians and Muslims. It sets out mutual guarantees in which Christians agree to accept Lebanon's Arab identity and Muslims agree to recognise the legitimacy of the Lebanese state.

## 1948

The state of Israel is declared. The first Arab-Israeli war in 1948–49 provokes the arrival of more than 100,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

## 1958

With growing domestic political tensions exacerbated by external interference, mainly from the Syrian part of the United Arab Republic,

civil war breaks out. President Camille Chamoun asks US troops to re-establish order. The crisis ends with a 'no winner, no loser' agreement. Chamoun is replaced by General Fouad Chehab.

## 1967–69

Lebanon declines to participate in the Six Day War (1967) between Israel and the Arab states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The decisive Israeli victory leads to a further influx of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon. In December 1968, Israel raids Beirut airport in response to Palestinian armed groups using Lebanon as a base. The following year the Cairo Agreement is signed between the Lebanese army and the PLO, legalising Palestinian armed groups' activities in South Lebanon. It also endorses Palestinian self-rule within refugee camps.

## 1970

The PLO relocates its headquarters from Jordan to Lebanon. Over the following years, hostilities between Israel and Lebanon-based Palestinian armed groups worsen, provoking Israeli reprisals and discord within the Lebanese ruling elite. All major groups in the country arm themselves.

## 1975–76

Fighting breaks out pitching Christian conservative forces led by the Kataeb (Phalangists) against Palestinian armed groups and their leftist and Muslim allies grouped under the umbrella of the National Movement. A major spark for the escalation is the killing of some 25 Palestinians by the Kataeb in a Beirut suburb in April 1975. Rounds of shelling and street fighting destroy the capital's centre, business district and harbour. Kataeb's killing of several hundred civilians in December (also known as Black Saturday) ushers in all-out fighting, and massacres by both sides follow in January 1976. As fighting increases, Beirut is divided into sectarian enclaves. 'East Beirut' becomes homogeneously Christian, 'West Beirut' predominantly Muslim.

In February 1976, following a Syrian-mediated ceasefire, President Suleiman Frangieh announces a Constitutional Document stipulating constitutional reforms, including the equal division of parliamentary seats between Christians and Muslims. The National Movement rejects the proposals.

Amidst renewed fighting, Frangieh formally approves the entry of Syrian troops in June. The first phase of intense fighting draws to an end with the defeat of the National Movement and their Palestinian allies. In October, the Arab League formalises the Syrian troop presence in Lebanon as the Arab Deterrent Force.

## 1978

The Christian leadership and the central Christian region revolt against the tutelage of Syrian troops, who bomb East Beirut in retaliation in July and September. Frangieh's Marada militia group sides with Syria and breaks its alliance with the Lebanese Forces.

Israel launches a major military operation in Lebanon in March, occupying the southern areas of the country. The UN Security Council



passes Resolution 425 calling for Israel's withdrawal and establishing the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Israel hands over territory not to UNIFIL but to a proxy militia group called Lebanon's Free Army, which is renamed the South Lebanon Army (SLA) in 1979.

#### **1980**

Syrian troops bombard the town of Zahleh in Beqaa in order to expel Christian militias who have entered the town with Israeli support.

#### **1982**

Israel launches a full-scale invasion of Lebanon in June, defeating the Syrian air force and forcing some 14,000 Palestinian *fidayeen* to withdraw. Its attempt to establish a pro-Israeli government is frustrated when its ally President-elect Bachir Gemayel is assassinated. In response Israeli forces occupy West Beirut; their ally, the Lebanese Forces, massacres hundreds of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Bachir's brother Amin Gemayel is elected President. A multinational peacekeeping force consisting mainly of US, French and Italian troops arrives.

#### **1983**

Israel and Lebanon sign a US-sponsored agreement in May predicated on simultaneous Israeli and Syrian withdrawal and the establishment of a jointly-protected 'security region' in southern Lebanon. Syria rejects the plan, forcing Amin Gemayel's government to renege as well.

The Lebanese Forces militia takes advantage of Israeli occupation and establishes a presence in mixed areas of Mount Lebanon. Conflict with the Druze PSP militia degenerates into the 'War of the Mountain' in September. With Syrian support the PSP defeats the LF and drives a number of Christians out of the Chouf region. At the same time, Amal and its leftist allies defeat the army in West Beirut in spite of US artillery shelling in support of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). In September, the Lebanese government and opposition meet in vain in Geneva for a national reconciliation conference under the auspices of Saudi Arabia and Syria.

The Multinational Force leaves Lebanon after two deadly bomb explosions at their barracks. Islamic Jihad, a branch of the nascent Hezbollah movement, claims responsibility.

#### **1984**

A second national conference for peace and reconciliation is held under Saudi and Syrian auspices in Lausanne in March. It fails to achieve consensus between Amin Gemayel's government and his Muslim, leftist and pro-Syrian opponents on constitutional reforms.

Militias consolidate their control of West Beirut and Amal fights for supremacy.

#### **1985**

In May, heavy fighting erupts between Amal and Palestinian militias for control of refugee camps around Beirut. Amal receives support from Syria and pro-Syrian Palestinian groups, and destroys large parts of several camps.

In December, Amal, the PSP and the LF sign a Tripartite Accord in Damascus to organise militia power sharing under Syrian rule. It never comes into effect as the LF leader, Hobeika, is ousted the following month.

#### **1986**

The 'War of the Camps' reignites with further ferocious fighting between Amal and Palestinian groups supported by pro-Palestinian Sunni militias in May-June. Fighting spreads to Rashidiyye camp in Tyre, and Sidon's Ain al-Helweh camp.

#### **1987**

Fighting spreads throughout West Beirut in February amid Amal's continuing blockade of the camps, which is finally lifted in April.

#### **1988**

With no candidate elected to succeed him, outgoing President Amin Gemayel hands interim power to the Maronite Commander-in-Chief of the army, Michel Aoun. Aoun forms a six-member interim military government in a break with the National Pact. The three Muslims appointed to the council refuse to serve and Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss refuses to step down, leaving Lebanon with two governments: one in West Beirut led by Hoss and backed by Syria; and one in East Beirut, led by Aoun.

#### **1989**

LAF units loyal to Aoun clash with the LF in Christian central Lebanon. Aoun declares a 'war of liberation' against the Syrian presence in March. Heavy artillery exchanges with the Syrian army around Beirut follow.

In October, Lebanese parliamentarians meet in Taif, Saudi Arabia to discuss a Charter of National Reconciliation. The Taif Agreement is signed, reconfiguring the political system to give Muslims equal legislative representation vis a vis Christians, and dividing executive powers between the Maronite President and the Council of Ministers. The agreement also gives Syria political and military tutelage over Lebanon. Aoun rejects the accord on the grounds that it does not lay out a clear timetable for Syrian withdrawal.

In November, President-elect Rene Moawad is assassinated and succeeded by pro-Syrian Elias Hrawi. Aoun is replaced as Commander-in-Chief by General Emile Lahoud but refuses to leave the Presidential palace.

## 1990

Further rounds of fighting between Aounists and the LF, as well as between Amal and Hezbollah competing for control of Shia suburbs in Beirut. Under Syrian air force attacks, Aoun is forced to take refuge in the French embassy in October. He is later exiled to France.

Armed hostilities officially end in October with a ceasefire between Amal and Hezbollah negotiated by Syria and Iran. A Government of National Reconciliation is formed, led by Omar Karami.

## 1991

### March

Parliament orders the dissolution of all militias by 30 April, but Hezbollah is allowed to retain its arms, ostensibly to liberate southern Lebanon from Israeli control.

### May

Lebanon and Syria sign a Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination, which allows Syrian political control over Lebanon.

### June

Law 88 proposes the rehabilitation of 6,000 militiamen into army or security forces and recruits 2,000 into the civil service.

### August

The Amnesty Law offers impunity for all war crimes except 'political crimes' committed before 28 February.

## 1992

### February

Hezbollah leader Sheikh Abbas al-Musawi is killed in an Israeli helicopter gunship attack. Hassan Nasrallah succeeds him.

### August–October

The first parliamentary elections since 1972 are held. Many Christians boycott them in protest of Syrian control of the process. A large majority of pro-Syrian candidates from all denominations are elected. Rafiq al-Hariri becomes Prime Minister.

## 1993

In July, Israel launches attacks on targets in southern Lebanon aimed at quelling Hezbollah ('Operation Accountability'). Hundreds of thousands of civilians are displaced.

## 1995

Under heavy Syrian pressure and in a break with constitutional rule, Elias Hrawi's presidential mandate is extended for three years.

## 1996

Israel again bombs Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, Beirut and the Beqaa Valley. 'Operation Grapes of Wrath' leads to the death of up to 170 civilians and displaces hundreds of thousands more. The US and France negotiate the Israel–Lebanon Ceasefire Understanding between Israel and Hezbollah, signed 26 April. An Israel–Lebanon Monitoring Group is established to monitor the truce.

## 1998

Army Commander-in-Chief Emile Lahoud succeeds Hrawi as president. New Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss leads a cabinet with no militia leaders in it.

## 2000

### May

Israel pulls out of southern Lebanon after its 22-year occupation. The withdrawal provokes the collapse of the SLA and a Hezbollah take-over of Shia border regions. The UN demarcates, and UNIFIL supervises, a provisional Blue Line separating Lebanon from Israel.

### October

Rafiq al-Hariri becomes Prime Minister for a second time after his coalition gains a parliamentary majority in legislative elections in May and June.

## 2003

In December, the US Congress passes the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, calling on Syria to withdraw from Lebanon.

## 2004

On 2 September UN Security Council Resolution 1559 calls for free presidential elections and all foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon. The following day, under Syrian pressure, Parliament votes to extend Lahoud's presidential term by three years. Al-Hariri and his cabinet resign in October. Lahoud appoints Omar Karami as Prime Minister.

## 2005

### February

Former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri is assassinated in a car bomb explosion in Beirut. Syria is widely suspected of being responsible. Karami and his cabinet resign. Over the following weeks, huge demonstrations both against and in support of Syria are held in Beirut; on 8 March in support of Syria and 14 March, signalling Lebanon's 'freedom surge (*intifada*)'.

### April

The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1595, which calls for an investigation into the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri and establishes an 'independent international commission' to do so.

The remaining 14,000 Syrian troops withdraw from Lebanon after 35 years.

Karami steps down after failing to form a government. Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati forms a new government to organise legislative elections.

#### **May-June**

General Aoun and Amin Gemayel return from France. Parliamentary elections are held in three rounds. An electoral alliance between Hariri's block, Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and Hezbollah wins a majority of seats. Fouad Siniora is nominated as Prime Minister-designate.

#### **August**

Four pro-Syrian security chiefs are arrested in connection with the investigation into Hariri's killing.

#### **October**

The first UN investigation's report on Hariri's killing points to Syrian involvement in the assassination. Investigator Detlev Mehlis is criticised for reaching hasty, definitive conclusions.

#### **December**

The Security Council adopts Resolution 1644 asking the Secretary-General to identify the means to bring those responsible before an international tribunal.

#### **2006**

##### **February**

Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) signs a memorandum of understanding with Hezbollah, allying it with the Shia group 'in view of full return of Lebanon's sovereignty and improving bilateral relations with Syria'.

##### **March**

The National Dialogue talks take place between leaders of the main communities and political parties on issues of political reform and national security.

The Security Council adopts Resolution 1664, in which it requests the Secretary-General to negotiate an agreement with the Government of Lebanon aimed at establishing a tribunal.

##### **July-August**

The Israel-Hezbollah war. In response to Hezbollah killing seven Israeli soldiers and capturing two more, Israel launches airstrikes, naval bombardments and troop movements targeting infrastructure all over the country and flattening Beirut's Shia southern suburbs.

UNSC Resolution 1701 calls for an end to hostilities and enlarges UNIFIL's peacekeeping mission across the border.

#### **September**

The first major reinforcement of UN forces arrives and Israel lifts its air and naval blockade.

#### **November**

The cabinet approves the establishment of an international tribunal to bring those responsible for killing Rafiq al-Hariri to justice. President Lahoud and Speaker Nabih Berri announce they will not approve the tribunal, pointing to a lack of Shiite representation (after the withdrawal of Shia ministers) in the cabinet.

#### **December**

Hezbollah launches a mass demonstration against the 'unconstitutional government'. Hezbollah and FPM organise an 18-month sit-in, imposing a blockade on government offices.

#### **2007**

##### **May**

After being the target of deadly attacks in Tripoli by Fatah al-Islam, the LAF launches an all-out attack against the fundamentalist group based inside Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp, near Tripoli. Thousands of Palestinian refugees are displaced to the Beddawi camp. The LAF achieves control of Nahr al-Bared on 2 September after using armed helicopters sent by the US and Gulf countries.

After receiving a formal request from the Prime Minister, UN Security Council Resolution 1757 resolves to establish a Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL).

##### **July**

At France's invitation, 31 representatives from Lebanon's 14 main political parties hold two days of closed-door talks inside the La Celle-Saint-Cloud Château outside Paris. They agree not to resort to political violence to resolve the crisis and to continue dialogue.

##### **November**

The term of President Emile Lahoud comes to an end. With no successor acceptable to both the major groupings, Siniora's cabinet assumes temporary executive powers.

#### **2008**

##### **May**

Fighting breaks out between Muslim factions after Hezbollah announces that the government's decisions to declare the group's private telecommunications network illegal and to sack the head of security at Beirut International Airport (an alleged Hezbollah sympathiser) amounted to a 'declaration of war'. Hezbollah's forces and its pro-Syrian allies soon control West Beirut. The government revokes its decisions.

A Lebanese National Dialogue Conference held in Doha under Qatari and French auspices concludes with the signing of the Doha Agreement. This gives the opposition a greater share of seats in cabinet amounting to veto power.

Parliament elects the LAF commander General Michel Suleiman as President.

### **July**

A 'Unity Government' is formed by Fouad Siniora, as agreed in Doha, with a fragile majority for the 14 March coalition.

### **September**

Sunni and Alawite leaders in Tripoli sign a reconciliation agreement to end fighting that has taken place since June.

### **October**

Lebanon and Syria establish diplomatic relations for the first time.

### **2009**

#### **March**

The STL officially opens in The Hague.

#### **April–May**

The STL advises the Lebanese judiciary to release the four senior Lebanese security officials who had been arrested in 2005 on Mehlis's recommendation.

The German magazine *Der Spiegel* names the suspected Hariri culprits, linking Hezbollah to the crime.

### **June**

In parliamentary elections, the March 14 alliance wins 71 seats and the March 8 bloc 57 seats. The opposition demands a number of cabinet seats, which would give them a veto over key government decisions.

### **November**

Saad al-Hariri forms a new government with 15 members from his March 14 Alliance, 10 from the Hezbollah-led March 8 opposition, and 5 appointed by President Suleiman.

### **December**

The cabinet endorses Hezbollah's right to keep its arsenal of weapons.

### **2010**

#### **March**

Druze leader Walid Jumblatt meets with the Syrian President in a meeting that marks his move away from the anti-Syrian March 14 Alliance.

### **August–September**

Nasrallah criticises the STL and suggests that Israel had a hand in the Hariri killing. The STL calls for Hezbollah to hand over evidence supporting this claim. Saad al-Hariri vows to stay committed to the STL. He withdraws his earlier claim that Syria was behind his father's killing.

### **October**

Iranian President Ahmadinejad's controversial visit to Lebanon culminates in a rally at a Hezbollah stronghold near the Israeli border.

### **November**

The US pledges another \$10 million to the STL.

### **2011**

#### **January**

The Unity Government collapses with the resignation of Hezbollah and March 8 Alliance ministers over the government's refusal to distance itself from the STL.

The UN prosecutor issues a sealed indictment for the murder of Rafiq al-Hariri.

Jumblatt announces he will back Hezbollah's efforts to form a new government and Tripoli businessman Najib Mikati is appointed Prime Minister.

### **June**

Mikati finally succeeds in forming a cabinet. Hezbollah and its allies are given 16 out of 30 seats.

The STL Pre-Trial Judge confirms the indictment against Salim Jamil Ayyash, Mustafa Amine Badreddine, Hussein Hassan Oneissi and Assad Hassan Sabra. The accused are members of Hezbollah, which says it will not allow their arrest. International arrest warrants are issued on 8 July.

### **2012**

#### **February**

The STL Trial Chamber decides to proceed to try the four accused in the Ayyash et al. case in their absence.

# Profiles

## Wartime militias

The early phase of the civil war (1975–77) saw two major groupings emerge: the Arab nationalist, leftist and pro-Palestinian **National Movement** (LNM), led by Druze chief Kamal Jumblatt, and the more conservative, Christian-led **Lebanese Front**, who wanted to disarm the Palestinians in Lebanon and on whose side Syria intervened.

### Progressive Socialist Party

The Druze-supported PSP was a major part of the LNM, with the Druze community fighting behind their chief Kamal Jumblatt. Walid Jumblatt assumed leadership in 1977 after his father was assassinated. The PSP's main adversaries were the Christian Kataeb and the Lebanese Forces. It controlled much of the Chouf region and played a central role in the War of the Mountain in 1983 when it defeated the Lebanese Forces.

### Palestinian militias

The presence and agenda of Palestinian militias was a major factor in the first phase of the civil war. The **Palestinian Liberation Organisation** (PLO) based itself in Lebanon after its expulsion from Jordan in 1970. It challenged the weak Lebanese state by launching guerrilla attacks against Israel and gained control over the southern regions. Israel invaded Lebanese territory in 1978 and 1982 and eventually ousted the PLO leadership from Lebanon.

The main factions in the PLO were PLO leader Yasser Arafat's **Fatah**, the **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine** (PFLP) and the **Palestine Liberation Front** (PLF). The **Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine** (DFLP) was positioned somewhere between pro-Arafat factions and Anti-Arafat 'rejectionists'.

A number of Palestinian factions were co-opted by Syria and at times fought groups aligned with Arafat. The **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command** (PFLP-GC) and **Sa'iqa** (or the Vanguard for the Popular Liberation War), a Palestinian Baathist group controlled by Syria, fought PLO forces in Tripoli in 1983 and inside the refugee camps during the 1980s. The **Fatah Revolutionary Council**, formed by Abu Nidal after a split with the PLO, was held responsible for multiple political assassinations including some in the West.

### Lebanese Forces

Formed in 1976 by Bachir Gemayel, the son of the Kataeb leader, as a coalition of right-wing militias and the main militia for the Lebanese Front. In 1980 it forcefully unified other Christian militias such as the National Liberal Party's **Nummur** and developed into a powerful armed force and autonomous administration in the central Christian regions of Lebanon under Samir Geagea. At different times it fought the LNM, PLO, the Syrian Army, the PSP, and the armed forces led by General Michel Aoun. At the end of the war it became a political party led by Geagea.

### Marada

A conservative Christian militia group based in the north around the city of Zghorta and allied to Syria. It was controlled by Tony Frangieh, son of President Suleiman Frangieh, until his assassination in 1978 by Phalangists.

### Amal

A Shia group that grew in response to the marginalisation of Shiites and their frustration at the domination of Palestinian groups and Israeli attacks. Founded by Musa Sadr in the 1970s as the militia wing of his **Harakat al-Mahrumin** (Movement of the Deprived), Amal became one of the most important militias in the civil war and an ally of Syria. Under the leadership of Nabih Berri, it had notable conflicts with Palestinian groups during the 'Camp War' in 1986–87, and the PSP in Beirut. After the Israeli invasion of 1982, Amal was challenged within the Shia community by Hezbollah and lost control of Beirut's Shia southern suburbs in 1988–90.

### Hezbollah

A Shia religious group that emerged between 1982 and 1985 to fight Israeli troops' occupation of half of Lebanon, Hezbollah was more closely associated with the 1979 Iranian revolution than Amal, and enjoyed greater support from the more devout elements of Shiite society. Hezbollah organised a powerful and disciplined militia which received training from Iran's Revolutionary Guards and led the anti-Israeli national resistance. After the war's end, this status meant that it was the only militia to legally retain its arms. It changed its name from 'Islamic resistance' to 'National resistance' to stress its primacy on the Lebanese scene.

### South Lebanon Army

Formed in 1979, the SLA was a breakaway group from the **Free Lebanon Army**, which had splintered from the Lebanese Army in the southern region bordering the area occupied by Israel in 1978. The SLA was essentially an Israeli proxy that fought against the PLO, Amal, and Hezbollah. It collapsed in 2000 as Israel withdrew, with some 3,000 SLA members fleeing with them.

## Current political parties

Since 2005 many of Lebanon's political parties have aligned with one of two alliances, the **8 March Alliance** and the **14 March Alliance**. The 14 March Alliance was named for the date of the anti-Syrian street protest in 2005 that prompted Syria's military withdrawal. The 8 March grouping was similarly named after the date of a pro-Syrian demonstration the same month.

### 14 March groups

#### *Future Movement (Mustaqbal)*

The party of Saad al-Hariri, son of assassinated former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. Its outlook is liberal and secular but much of its support comes from the Sunni Muslim community, many elements of which closed ranks behind the movement after Rafiq al-Hariri's death. Originally an urban party based in Beirut and Sidon,



the Future Movement has been reaching out to poor rural Sunni communities in Akkar, Dinniyeh and West Beqaa, attracting religious militant groups whose agenda it has unwillingly boosted. It is the largest member of the March 14 Alliance and has a number of media outlets including Future Television, Radio Orient and *Al-Mustaqbal* daily newspaper.

#### **Lebanese Forces**

Founded as a political party in 1991 by ex-militia leader Samir Geagea, the LF is a right wing, mainly Maronite party, advocating extensive decentralisation and even federalism. An opponent of Syria, Geagea was convicted of murder and imprisoned between 1994 and 2005, but freed after parliament passed an amnesty bill following Syria's withdrawal.

#### **Lebanese Social Democratic Party**

Commonly known as Kataeb or the Phalanges, this is a conservative party formed in 1936 and supported by Maronites and other Christian voters. Its founder, Pierre Gemayel was prominent in the civil war, as was his son Bachir, who founded the Lebanese Forces. Kataeb is currently led by former President Amine Gemayel, who returned from exile in 2000 and won back control of the party after 2005.

#### **Other parties**

The 14 March Alliance include: the **National Liberal Party**, a centre-right, mainly Christian party formed in 1958 by President Camille Chamoun; the **Democratic Left Movement**, a leftist, secular party founded in 2004 by ex-Communist militants who criticised the domination of Hezbollah over the Left; the **Murr Bloc**; the **Social Democrat Hunchakian Party**, the **Armenian Democratic Liberal Party** and a number of independents in the Christian communities. Branches of the Sunni militant group **Jamaa Islamiyya** support the 14 March.

#### **8 March groups**

##### **Free Patriotic Movement**

A political party officially formed in 2005 and led by General Michel Aoun. Aoun was a former army commander (1983–88) and prime minister (1988–90) who declared a 'war of liberation' against Syria in 1989 and was exiled to France between 1991 and 2005. Aounist support is mainly Christian, with a small Shia following. It has maintained an alliance with Hezbollah since 2006, on the basis of a 'memorandum of understanding' about confessional peace, disarming Hezbollah and normalising relations with Syria.

##### **Amal**

Since the end of the war, Amal has been continuously represented in government. Its leader Nabih Berri has been elected Speaker of Parliament on five occasions, most recently in 2009 and enjoys extended patronage powers. Amal has remained close to Syria. In recent years it has cooperated with Hezbollah to enhance the Shia position within state institutions and counter what they consider the Sunni domination of Hariri and Mustaqbal.

#### **Hezbollah**

Led by the charismatic cleric Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah since 1992, Hezbollah is the main Shia party. It enjoys large popular support rooted in religious conviction and its participation in the national power-sharing system since 1992. Hezbollah became part of the 8 March government for the first time in June 2011. Its political power stems primarily from its role as the champion of national resistance against Israel, which allows it to maintain militia forces superior to the national army. It has strong links to both Iran and Syria and has been labelled a terrorist group in some Western countries. Its success in withstanding the Israeli onslaught during the 2006 war led to admiration from the Arab world but reinforced critics and hostility from the 14 March parties who see it as the main obstacle to domestic peace and state sovereignty.

In 2011 four senior Hezbollah members were indicted by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) for involvement in the Hariri assassination, an accusation and judicial process vehemently opposed by the group.

**Other parties** in the 8 March Alliance include: the **Syrian Social Nationalist Party**, a party acting as a proxy for Damascus; the **Baath Party**, the Lebanese branch of the Damascus-based Arab Socialist Baath party; the **Independent Nasserite Movement**, an ex-Sunni militia reformed in 2006; the **Lebanese Democratic Party**, a Druze faction led by Talal al-Arslan; the **Marada Movement**, a right wing Maronite party led by Suleiman Frangieh Jr; the Armenian **Tashnaq Party**; the **Arab Democratic Party**, a pro-Syrian Alawite party based in Tripoli; the **Communist Party**; and two Sunni Islamist Parties: Hizb al-Tahrir (Liberation Party), Tawhid (Islamic Unification Movement in Tripoli).

#### **Progressive Socialist Party**

The predominantly Druze-supported PSP has been led by Walid Jumblatt since 1977, and is akin to a communal organisation under his hereditary chieftaincy. Although not as powerful a party as a militia group, it still plays something of a 'king-making' role on the national scene. A member of the original 14 March Alliance, Jumblatt changed course several times and built bridges with Hezbollah and Syria before returning to his liberal allies. Although a progressive party and a member of the Socialist International, the PSP is opposed to the introduction of proportionality in the electoral system in order to maintain a role greater than its demographic weight.

## **Security forces**

#### **Lebanese Armed Forces**

The Lebanese Armed Forces is an important national institution that has often tried to portray itself as above sectarian politics. In the civil war, however, LAF brigades fragmented along confessional lines. After the war, the sectarian balance of forces has shifted in favour of Muslim sects to more accurately reflect demographic reality. Nonetheless, the post of Commander remains a Maronite Christian preserve.

Like many Lebanese state institutions, the LAF was largely controlled by Syria after the war. It has not engaged external military powers (Israel or Syria) either during or after the war, as it was neither armed nor supported by a unified political leadership to do so. It was largely a bystander in the Israel–Hezbollah war of 2006. Due to its lack of lethal weaponry, and in view of the continuing political strife, its role is confined to domestic peace enforcement and to anti-terrorist action, such as its defeat of the Islamist group Fatah al-Islam in the Palestinian camp of Nahr al-Bared in 2007.

### **Internal Security Forces**

The ISF is the national police and security force of Lebanon. It remained under the control of Syrian security and intelligence forces from 1990 to 2005. It has been the subject of recent reform efforts and special attention from Sunni Prime Ministers.

## **International actors**

### **France**

The former colonial power, while remaining protective of its influence in the Levant, has worked closely with other Western powers (notably through **UNIFIL**) in sponsoring the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty. Under President Jacques Chirac (1995–2007) France had close ties with Rafiq al-Hariri, and along with the US promoted UNSC Resolution 1559 (September 2004) ordering the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon. After Hariri's assassination, it gave strong support to the Siniora government and hosted donor conferences and inter-Lebanese political talks. France (with Qatar) sponsored the Doha Agreement between the 8 and 14 March Alliances.

### **Iran**

Iran has sought to exert influence in Lebanon since long before the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and has maintained close links with the Shia community based on the majority of the sect's submission to *wilāyat al-faqih* rule (the rule of the just cleric lawyer). Iran's interest in the Levant stems from a desire to become a regional power as well as its opposition to the state of Israel. To that effect Palestinian Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah perform the role of proxies for Iranian regional policy. It has provided funding and training to Hezbollah since its creation in 1982, and has sent them technologically sophisticated armaments, especially since after the 2006 war.

### **Israel**

Israel's relationship with Lebanon was seriously damaged by its armed conflict with the PLO after 1970 when the PLO settled in Lebanon. Israel held the Lebanese state responsible for Palestinian attacks from Lebanese territory. It invaded Lebanon in 1978 and 1982, and supported a proxy force in the south, the SLA. It finally withdrew from Southern Lebanon in 2000. Since then its interests in Lebanon have included securing its northern border and preventing Hezbollah attacks. Clashes between Israeli troops and Hezbollah in border areas between 2000 and 2006 escalated into the July 2006 war, in which Israel conducted military operations against targets in Lebanon, and which were condemned by many in the international community.

Issues of water sharing are also of great importance for Israel. Any solution depends heavily on Syrian-Israeli relations.

### **Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia partnered Syria in driving the 1989 Taif Accord, but generally the Saudi stance on Lebanon has been more closely aligned with Western powers and has been increasingly anti-Syrian. Its monarchy sponsored Sunni politician Rafiq al-Hariri, and strongly criticised Syria after his assassination. They maintain much influence with his son Saad al-Hariri. They also shelter and finance Sunni Salafi and Jihadist groups operating in the Levant, using Lebanon as an arena for their competition with Iran.

### **Syria**

With deep historical and social ties to Lebanon, Syria remains the most important external reference point in Lebanese politics. It has only had formal diplomatic relations with Lebanon since 2008, reflecting what many saw as unwillingness to respect Lebanese sovereignty. There is an outstanding question of border demarcation that has yet to be resolved.

Syria was an important player throughout the Lebanese civil war, beginning in the 1975–76 phase when President Hafez al-Assad sided with the Christian rulers against the National Movement. Syrian troops entered Lebanon in 1976 and stayed until 2005. Along with Saudi Arabia, and with the agreement of the US, Syria drove the Taif Accord in 1989. The end of the war was the start of fifteen years of Syrian hegemony in Lebanese affairs. This ended in 2005 after Syria was suspected of the murder of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. It became the target of international isolation and UN-led investigations. When the focus of investigations shifted towards Hezbollah, the establishment of diplomatic ties in 2008 was the first move in a (largely cosmetic) Syrian-Lebanese rapprochement.

Syria backs the 8 March parties. The outcome of the 2011–12 uprising against the Syrian regime will have important ramifications for Lebanese politics.

### **US**

The US has interests in the region beyond preserving Israeli security, including containing Islamist groups and countering Iranian-Syrian influence. The US has a long history of involvement in Lebanon, sending troops to intervene in the 1958 war and in 1982–84. Its interest in Lebanon's sovereignty was awakened in the 2000s with the Bush administration leading the 'war on terror'. In recent years it has strongly supported the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1559, the 14 March coalition and the creation of the STL.

### **The Arab League**

The AL is the regional organisation for Arab states and currently has 22 members. It has been an important forum for negotiating the interests of Arab states at many points in history. The Syrian forces that intervened in Lebanon in 1976 were transformed into a peacekeeping force under AL auspices. The AL's influence in Lebanon is limited as long as Syria and Saudi Arabia support opposing factions.

## European Union

EU countries are the destination for most of Lebanon's exports. Since 2007 support has been channelled through the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument. The EU's work in Lebanon includes supporting reform of the ISF as well as other reforms, and strengthening civil associations and trans-confessional activism.

## United Nations

The UN Security Council has passed a number of resolutions on Lebanon. The US and France have been particularly active in recent years, pushing first for Syrian withdrawal and Hezbollah's disarmament in 2004 (Resolution 1559), and then for the establishment of an international tribunal to investigate Rafiq al-Hariri's assassination.

Two of the most important UN bodies in Lebanon are UNIFIL and UNWRA.

**UNIFIL** (the UN Interim Force in Lebanon) was created by the Security Council in March 1978 to affirm Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, restore international peace and security and assist the Lebanese government in restoring effective authority in the area. Its mandate has been adjusted in response to developments in 1982, 2000 and 2006. Critics have faulted UNIFIL for failing to secure Israeli withdrawal until 2000 and prevent mutual border infringements.

**UNRWA** (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) has assisted and protected registered Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territories since the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. In Lebanon, it cares for more than 200,000 refugees whose future remains uncertain.

## Special Tribunal for Lebanon

Inaugurated in March 2009, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon was established to bring those responsible for the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri to justice. Since its inception, it has been a divisive and potentially explosive factor in Lebanese politics.

The initial UN-led investigation was criticised for rushing to establish Syrian culpability for political reasons. With the adoption of a more low-key approach after that, the supporters of the 14 March Alliance were frustrated by the lack of progress within the Lebanese judicial system and Prime Minister Fouad Siniora requested the establishment of an international tribunal. The UN Secretary General reached a draft agreement with the Lebanese government and UNSC Resolution 1757 established the STL in 2007.

In 2011 members of Hezbollah were indicted and an arrest warrant issued.

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# Glossary

## Alawites

A branch of Shia Islam centred in Syria, Alawites are recognised as one of Lebanon's 18 religious sects. They comprise less than 1 per cent of the population, based mainly in the north and the city of Tripoli.

## Blue Line

A border demarcation between Lebanon and Israel drawn by the UN in June 2000 to determine whether Israel had fully withdrawn from Lebanon. The Blue Line differs from the international border of 1923 and the armistice line of 1949. It is to be replaced by a final border when Israel and Lebanon sign a peace treaty and the disputed territories of the Chebaa farms, Ghajar and Kfar-Shuba are settled.

## Chouf

A historic mountainous region south of Beirut and now an administrative district. The Chouf is the heartland of the Lebanese Druze community. It was inhabited by a Christian majority, most of whom fled their villages during the civil war.

## Confessions

There are 18 recognised confessional groups in Lebanon: 4 Muslim communities, 13 Christian communities, and a Jewish community today limited to a few dozen people. Each community manages its own internal affairs and rules concerning family and education issues.

The individual choice to follow secular rules was stipulated in the Constitution of 1926 but never adopted.

## Confessionalism

The Lebanese form of consociationalism. As a political system, confessionalism distributes political and institutional power according to fixed quotas among religious communities (confessions). It is stipulated in the Constitution, the National Pact (see below) and the 1989 Taif Agreement. The Arabic name is *ta'ifiyya*.

## Consociationalism

A system of government that allocates power between religious or ethnic communities. Its main features are: allocation of political posts among communities in proportion to their share of the population; power-sharing between community leaders in a 'grand coalition'; communal autonomy on affairs such as personal status laws; and mutual veto power, so that any community can vote out decisions it deems disadvantageous.

## Druze

A monotheistic syncretic religious community, found primarily in Syria, Lebanon and Israel. The faith emerged during the eleventh century from a branch of Shia Islam. The Druze were for centuries the main pillar of the Lebanese emirate in the central areas of Mount Lebanon. Today the community remains loyal to its feudal leaders, the Jumblatt and Arslan dynasties. A non-proselyte and endogamic group, they constitute an estimated 5 per cent of the population.

### **Greek-Orthodox**

The largest representatives of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Lebanon, and estimated to constitute around 6 per cent of the population. The Deputy Speaker of Parliament and Deputy Prime Minister are traditionally Greek-Orthodox. These indigenous Christian Arabs live mainly in cities where they mix with Sunnis.

### **Maronites**

This Christian group is central to the history of Lebanon, contributing to the shaping of Lebanese national identity. The Maronites played a major political and economic role in nineteenth century Lebanon and in the newly created state of Greater Lebanon after 1920. They constitute around 18 per cent of the population. Maronites belong to the Maronite Syriac Church of Antioch, which is an Eastern Catholic Church that affirmed its communion with Rome in 1180 CE. The Maronite Patriarch is traditionally seated in Bkerke, north of Beirut. He frequently intervenes in national politics in the name of Lebanese Christians. The Maronites are the only sect eligible for the post of President.

### **Mount Lebanon**

A mountainous area of central Lebanon, Mount Lebanon has great symbolic importance. In 1861 an internationally guaranteed autonomous district of Mount Lebanon was established in the Ottoman system in response to Druze-Maronite fighting. It lasted until 1915.

### **National Pact**

The unwritten agreement in 1943 that made Lebanon's independence possible.

Christians essentially agreed to accept Lebanon's Arab identity and Muslims agreed to recognise the legitimacy of the Lebanese state. It reinforced the sectarian system of government established under the French mandate by formalising the confessional distribution of high-level posts in the government. This was based on the 1932 census's six-to-five ratio favoring Christians over Muslims. The Taif Agreement of 1989 amended this to a 50–50 ratio.

### **Palestinian refugees**

The number of Palestinian refugees, who fled the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars for Lebanon, are estimated at 280,000 as of 2011 by the UN Works and Relief Agency (UNRWA). They do not have Lebanese citizenship and are barred from owning property or from entering certain employment. 60 per cent live in one of 12 official refugee camps across the country. Lebanese authorities refuse to authorise the settlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (*tawtîn*) and have brought the issue in front of the Arab League and international institutions.

### **Shia**

The second largest branch of Islam, which split from the Sunni majority in the early years of Islam over the issue of religious leadership. Shia Muslims constitute over a quarter of the population in Lebanon. A historically rural and disenfranchised community, they are the fastest growing group in Lebanon and are undergoing rapid modernisation. Shias are the only sect eligible for the position of Speaker of Parliament.

### **Sunni**

Belonging to the largest branch of Islam globally, Sunni Muslims are estimated to constitute just over a quarter of the population in Lebanon. They comprise the majority of the population in coastal cities (Beirut, Tripoli and Sidon) and in the interior Beqaa valley, traditionally networking with Sunnis from the Levant (Syria, Jordan and the Palestinian territories). Sunnis are the only sect eligible for the post of Prime Minister.

### **Ummah**

Meaning 'community' or 'nation', it refers to the Arab world in the context of pan-Arabism, and to the community of all Muslim believers in the context of pan-Islamism. In both senses, it runs counter to the concept of a community of citizens in a nation-state.

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# Key texts

**23 May 1926 (amended 21 August 1990). The Lebanese Constitution**  
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**19 March 1978 UNSCR 425 reaffirming the sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon and demanding the withdrawal of all Israeli forces from Lebanese territory**  
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**19 March 1978 UNSCR 426 establishing the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)**  
[www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1978/scres78.htm](http://www.un.org/documents/sc/res/1978/scres78.htm)

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**2 September 2004 UNSCR 1559 supporting free and free presidential elections and calling on remaining foreign forces to withdraw from the country**  
[www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/RES/1559%20\(2004\)](http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/RES/1559%20(2004))

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<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:143:0001:0001:EN:PDF>

**21 March 2006 UN Secretary-General's Report 176 advocating a tribunal of international character to try those found responsible for the death of Rafiq al-Hariri**

[www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=s/2006/176](http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=s/2006/176)

**29 March 2006 UNSCR 1664 requesting the UN Secretary General to consult with the Lebanese government concerning the establishment of an independent tribunal to try those found responsible for the death of Rafiq al-Hariri**

[www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/RES/1664%20\(2006\)](http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/RES/1664%20(2006))

**17 May 2006 UNSCR 1680 encouraging Syria to respond to Lebanon's request for border delineation and full diplomatic relations**

[www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8723.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8723.doc.htm)

**30 May 2007 UNSCR 1757 authorizing the establishment of an independent tribunal to try those found responsible for the death of Rafiq al-Hariri**

[www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/RES/1757%20\(2007\)](http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/RES/1757%20(2007))

**11 August 2006 UNSCR 1701 calling for a full cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon and the expansion of UNIFIL's mandate and capacity**

[www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/RES/1701\(2006\)](http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/RES/1701(2006))

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[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon/press\\_corner/all\\_news/news/2012/20120224\\_2\\_en\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon/press_corner/all_news/news/2012/20120224_2_en_en.htm)

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# Key websites

## **Ashkal Alwan**

[www.ashkalalwan.org/](http://www.ashkalalwan.org/)

## **Association Libanaise pour l'Éducation et la Formation**

[www.alefliban.org/](http://www.alefliban.org/)

## **Badna Naaref**

[www.badnanaaref.org](http://www.badnanaaref.org)

## **Centre Libanaise de Droit Humains**

[www.solida.org/](http://www.solida.org/)

## **Collective for Research and Training on Development Action**

<http://crtda.org.lb/>

## **The Common Space Initiative**

[www.commonspaceinitiative.org](http://www.commonspaceinitiative.org)

## **EU European Neighbourhood Policy**

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm)

## **EU Instrument for Stability**

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/ifs\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/ifs_en.htm)

## **Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights**

[www.fhhrl.org/](http://www.fhhrl.org/)

## **General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (CGTL)**

[www.cgtl-lb.org/Main.aspx](http://www.cgtl-lb.org/Main.aspx) (Arabic only)

## **Greenline**

[www.greenline.org.lb/](http://www.greenline.org.lb/)

## **Hariri Foundation**

[www.hariri-foundation.org/](http://www.hariri-foundation.org/)

## **Helem**

[www.helem.net/](http://www.helem.net/)

## **Institute of Islamic-Christian Studies**

[www.ieic.usj.edu.lb/](http://www.ieic.usj.edu.lb/) (French)

## **Inter-Lebanese Forum on Economic and Social Development (EC)**

[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon/eu\\_lebanon/consensus\\_peace\\_building/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon/eu_lebanon/consensus_peace_building/index_en.htm)

## **International Center for Transitional Justice, Lebanon**

<http://ictj.org/our-work/regions-and-countries/lebanon>

## **Islamic-Christian National Dialogue Committee**

[www.chrislam.org/actions.html](http://www.chrislam.org/actions.html)

## **Lebanese Associations for Democratic Elections (LADE)**

[www.lade.org.lb/Default.aspx?lang=en-US](http://www.lade.org.lb/Default.aspx?lang=en-US)

## **Leftist Assembly for Change**

[www.tymat.org/](http://www.tymat.org/) (Arabic only)

## **Legal Agendas**

[legal-agenda.com](http://legal-agenda.com)

## **Ministry of the Displaced, Government of Lebanon**

[www.ministryofdisplaced.gov.lb/](http://www.ministryofdisplaced.gov.lb/) (Arabic only)

## **Nasawiya**

[www.nasawiya.org/web/](http://www.nasawiya.org/web/)

## **National Commission on Electoral Law (Boutros Commission)**

[www.elections-lebanon.org/elections/docs\\_4\\_3\\_1\\_1\\_e.aspx?lg=en](http://www.elections-lebanon.org/elections/docs_4_3_1_1_e.aspx?lg=en)

## **National Social Security Fund (CNSS)**

[www.cnss.gov.lb/](http://www.cnss.gov.lb/) (Arabic only)

## **Permanent Peace Movement**

[www.ppm-lebanon.org/](http://www.ppm-lebanon.org/)

## **Rene Moawad Foundation**

[www.rmfmf.org.lb/main/main/default.html](http://www.rmfmf.org.lb/main/main/default.html)

## **Solide (Support of Lebanese in Detention or in Exile)**

[www.solida.org/](http://www.solida.org/)

## **Special Tribunal for Lebanon website**

[www.stl-tsl.org/](http://www.stl-tsl.org/)

## **UMAM Documentation and Research**

[www.umam-dr.org/](http://www.umam-dr.org/)

## **Union of Lebanese Democratic Youth**

[www.uldya.org/](http://www.uldya.org/) (Arabic only)

## **UNDP Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR)**

[www.undp-pogar.org/countries/theme.aspx?cid=9&t=2](http://www.undp-pogar.org/countries/theme.aspx?cid=9&t=2)

## **UNIFIL website**

[www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unifil/](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unifil/)

# The Accord series

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A decade after the official end of wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Accord 23 draws on respective societies' experiences and insights to ask what headway has been made to consolidate peace, what challenges lie ahead and what lessons can be learnt. It argues that policy needs to focus on people, on repairing relationships and promoting inclusion, and that traditional mechanisms can play a crucial role.



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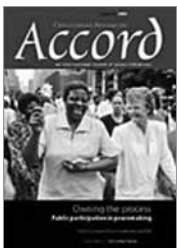
**ISSUE 16 (2005)**  
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**ISSUE 15 (2004)**  
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**Alternatives to war – Colombia's peace processes**  
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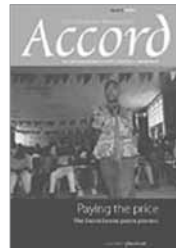
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**Weaving consensus: the Papua New Guinea – Bougainville peace process**  
 This Accord publication documents efforts leading to the Bougainville Peace Agreement of 2001. It describes an indigenous process that drew on the strengths of Melanesian traditions, as well as innovative roles played by international third parties.



**ISSUE 11 (2002)**  
**Protracted conflict, elusive peace initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda**  
 While a meaningful peace process in northern Uganda remains elusive, Accord 11 documents significant peacemaking initiatives undertaken by internal and external actors and analyses their impact on the dynamics of the conflict.



**ISSUE 10 (2001)**  
**Politics of compromise: the Tajikistan peace process**  
 This publication describes the aspirations of the parties to the conflict in Tajikistan. It documents the negotiation process leading to the General Agreement of June 1997, looking at the role of the international community, led by the UN, and of local civil society.



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**ISSUE 8 (1999)**  
**Striking a balance: the Northern Ireland peace process**  
 This publication examines the factors that led to the negotiations resulting in the 1998 Belfast Agreement. It describes the complex underlying forces and the development of an environment for peace. (2003: Supplement Issue – see online index)



**ISSUE 7 (1999)**  
**A question of sovereignty: the Georgia-Abkhazia peace process**  
 This publication explores the background and issues at the heart of the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict, providing a unique insight into a political stalemate and pointing towards possible avenues out of deadlock.



**ISSUE 6 (1999)**

**Compromising on autonomy: Mindanao in transition**

The GRP-MNLF 1996 Peace Agreement was a milestone, as all previous peacemaking attempts over 24 years had failed. Accord 6 analyses elements of peacemaking in Mindanao and examines the challenges of implementation. (2003: Supplement Issue – see online index)



**ISSUE 3 (1998)**

**The Mozambican peace process in perspective**

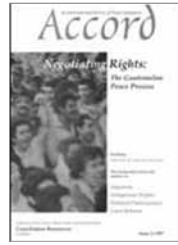
This publication documents the diverse initiatives that drove the parties to a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Mozambique. It further illustrates the impact on the country of changing regional and international political dynamics.



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**ISSUE 1 (1996)**

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Lebanon's model of post-war power sharing and liberal economic growth has been widely praised. But it has failed to deliver for most Lebanese. Repeated outbreaks of political violence since the 1989 Taif Peace Agreement, and today fear of spillover from insecurity in Syria, show that a fundamentally different approach is needed to transform negative and precarious stability in Lebanon into positive and resilient peace.

Peace deficit for the Lebanese is threefold: social, governmental and regional-international. Lebanon's conflict system feeds on complex interaction between *levels* (official and unofficial) and *environments* (internal and external). Peacebuilding responses to promote reconciliation, reform and sovereign resilience demand equal attention and need to be addressed strategically and simultaneously, to identify leverage points within the system to affect positive change.

This 24th publication in Conciliation Resources' Accord series includes more than 30 articles and interviews from diverse perspectives and disciplines: applied and analytical, and from inside and outside the country. Together they show that the Lebanese are not merely passive victims of a violent fate determined beyond their country's borders: many are hungry for change and have been actively exploring opportunities and pushing boundaries to achieve it.

Conciliation Resources is an independent organisation working with people in conflict to prevent violence and build peace. **Conciliation Resources' Accord publication series** informs and strengthens peace processes by documenting and analysing practical lessons and innovations of peacebuilding.



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