

LEBANON

Date of Elections: April 16, 23 and 30, 1972

Reason for Elections

Elections were held to renew all the members of the Chamber of Deputies on the normal expiration of their mandate.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Lebanese Parliament, the Chamber of Deputies, consists of 99 Deputies elected for 4 years. The number of seats for each religious community is fixed by law, and the division among them, according to the 1960 Electoral Law, is as follows:

Sunni Muslims	20
Shi'i Muslims.	19
Druses.	6
Maronite Christians.	30
Greek Catholics.	6
Greek Orthodox.	11
Protestant	1
Armenian Catholic.	1
Armenian Orthodox.	4
Other.	1
	99

Electoral System

All Lebanese of either sex, aged 21 years and over, and regularly registered on electoral lists are eligible to vote. Persons deprived of their civil rights or their right to hold public offices, persons convicted for ignominious offenses, persons under judicial interdiction, bankrupts, persons under certain graver sentences, members or employees of the armed forces or the police, and persons arrested or placed in mental institutions are not entitled to vote.

The electoral list of each constituency is revised annually. It contains the names of all electors who have, for at least 6 months, had their legal or actual residence in that constituency. Voting is compulsory; those abstaining without justification are, in theory, liable to a fine but, in practice, rarely required to pay.

All Lebanese at least 25 years of age who enjoy full civil rights and who can read and write are eligible for election to Parliament. Naturalized citizens

must have been naturalized for at least 10 years to be so qualified. Members or employees of the armed forces or the police, certain public officials, or certain other officials assimilated to public officials cannot present their candidature.

A candidate may stand for election in only one constituency. Declarations of candidatures must be presented at least 15 days before the election date and must be accompanied by the sum of 3000 Lebanese pounds. The deposit is refunded if the candidate obtains at least 25 % of the valid votes.

There are 26 constituencies altogether. In each of them citizens vote for lists which take into account the pre-established distribution of seats among the religious communities. A candidate is elected who obtains the simple plurality of valid votes by not only the same confessional group as himself but by all the voters in that constituency. Vote-splitting is allowed, but this is only possible within the same community: e.g., the name of a Maronite candidate can only be replaced by that of a Maronite candidate belonging to another list. Electors may further strike out as many names as they wish from the ballot, ultimately voting for only one candidate. Multi-confessional representation depends on the size of the constituency; the larger it is, the more chance of its encompassing varied confessions.

A by-election, within 60 days, is held to fill a seat which becomes vacant between general elections, unless the vacancy occurs within 6 months before the expiration of the term of Parliament.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The electoral campaign was marked by the heavy participation, for the first time, of the Communist Party — legalized in August 1970 — and other parties of the left. This was especially the case in Tripoli, the second largest city and reputed as the " ideological laboratory of the Arab world ". The opposing right-wing groups, as heterogeneous as the left, included coalitions of old families and interest groups. Local issues, to which most Lebanese are more responsive, were once again emphasized, as well as Arab unity versus Israel and the " defense of democratic freedoms ".

In contrast to both sides' threats of violence during the campaign, and 4 deaths resulting from embattled partisan groups, the authorities' strict neutrality vis-a-vis the candidates encouraged freedom of political expression. Relative calm pervaded the first election day, which was highlighted by the victory of the 8 candidates of the Phalange-National Liberal-Tachnag parties' coalition list in Beyrouth.

Among the 99 members were 39 elected for the first time, 46 incumbents and 14 former Deputies. The large turnover — an unprecedented 39 % — was

remarkable in that it evidenced the willingness of the religious communities, hitherto a conservative force, to change also.

Of the parties, the Centre group proved the most successful, winning 29 seats versus its former 16, while the left registered more votes than ever before. While the Communists received more than 20,000 votes, although no seats, the *Baath* party (pan-Arab socialist movement) is initially represented in Parliament.

A new Government, headed by Prime Minister Saeb Salam, was formed on May 27, 1972.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies*

Number of registered voters. 1,321,346

Political Group	Number of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies	Number of Seats won in Previous Election	Number of Seats on Eve of Election
National Liberal Party	11	15	11
<i>Tachnag</i>	6	4	4
<i>Kabaeb</i> (Phalangists)	7	it	9
Centre group	29	14	14
— <i>Skaff Bloc</i>	8	4	4
— <i>Salam Bloc</i>	3	2	4
— <i>Frangie Bloc</i>	9	6	
— <i>El Assaad Bloc</i>	9	4	6
National Struggle Front	8	C	7
Parliamentary Democratic Front			
— <i>Karame</i>	7	13	27
<i>Arslane Bloc</i>	4	3	3
<i>Hamade</i> "Bloc	6		
National Bloc	4		
Nasserian	1		
<i>Baath</i>	1		
<i>Destour</i>		3	3
<i>Najjade</i> "		1	1
No affiliation	16	J9	14
	"99	"99	"99

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men	99
Women	—
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