

## Parliamentary 2022 Elections in Lebanon

*By Alessandro RICCI*

**Executive summary:** *On the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2022, new parliamentary elections will be held in Lebanon. The last four years have been particularly critical for the Country that experienced an unprecedented economic crisis that followed the explosion of the Beirut Port that provoked harsh protests and the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. These elections may represent a turning point for Lebanon through the possibility to come out of its crisis period, but only if certain conditions will be met by the new political class. The future Parliament will also vote for the next President of the Republic, which will replace Michael Aoun who has been in charge since 2016.*

### The Lebanese political structure

The political structure of Lebanon represents a peculiar case, given its unique social and political landscape. This condition has given life to a singular system with no matches in the entire Middle East. Officially, the Country is a presidential Republic but it is, in fact, a consociated State<sup>1</sup> where the power is shared between the most important religious communities. This particular division of power was firstly designed by the National Pact in 1943 and was then institutionalized with the Taif Agreement in 1989.

The National Pact (ar. *Al-mithaq al-watani*) was an unwritten agreement between the Sunni élite and the Catholic counterparts stipulated soon

after the achievement of the independence of Lebanon from French colonialism. The aim of the Pact was to find an equilibrium of power among all the religious communities in the Country. Following the religious census of the time, a political role was assigned to every constitutionally recognized confession: the Presidency of the Republic remained to the Christians, as it was during the French mandate; the Presidency of the minister Council was assigned to the Sunni community while the Speaker of the Parliament was, instead, to be elected among the Shia. The Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces was, instead, to be chosen from the Druze. Moreover, with the National

Pact, also the seats in the Parliament were divided following the census of the confessions, and the proportions of the eligible members of Parliament were decided at 6:5 between Christians and Muslims<sup>2</sup>.

The National Reconciliation Agreement (ar. *Wathiqat al-wafaq al-watani*), more commonly known as the Taif Agreement, on the other hand, is a written treaty signed in the Saudi city of Taif that helped to put an end to the Civil War in 1989. All the actors that sought to put an end to the Lebanese Civil War agreed on a reconfiguration of the previous political structure. Notwithstanding this objective, the multiconfessional system instituted with the National Pact not only remained intact but also was truly institutionalized by amending the Constitution. Based on these assumptions, the political positions remained divided as proposed with the National Pact, trying to establish at the same time, a system of *check and balance* between the communities. The decisional power over the most important aspect of the political life of the Country was given therefore to a collegial institution, formed by all ministers, in a condition of equality among all the confessions<sup>3</sup>. On the other side, the real political power was now given to the hand of a “*troika*” – formed by the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, and the Speaker of the

Parliament – which caused fragmentation of political power, general confusion over the responsibility of administration and a reiteration of the sectarian paradigm<sup>4</sup>.

Moreover, with the Taif Agreement, the proportion between the Muslim and the Christian communities of eligible members of Parliament was revised to balance the new demography of the Country and it was determined to 5:5<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, the number of the seats was increased and today, of the 128 seats of the Parliament, 64 are destined for the different Christian communities and the other half is to be divided amongst the Muslim communities comprising of the Druze and Alawites.

The members of Parliament are elected in 15 different electoral districts, in which the territory of Lebanon is divided, following the Doha Agreements of 2009 (Table 1). Each electoral district is assigned a certain number of seats divided per sect, following the religious demography of the area. However, not all districts follow an accurate assignment of the seats because of practices such as malapportionment and gerrymandering. This juggling, in fact, has been used by the political establishment – without any differences among the communities – to take advantage of the sectarian division of the Country and manipulate the election results<sup>6</sup>.

Elections are held every 4 years and the voting is open to everyone in a regime of universal suffrage; the electoral system is proportional representation using party lists and it is possible to express a preference, always maintaining a sectarian balance. As it can be seen, the Lebanese electoral law is based on sectarian preconditions, which help to reiterate the sectarian landscape of the Country. It is also worth noting, however, that, independently from the personal confession, article 2 of the electoral law imposes to vote only for candidates expressed in that given constituency.

After being elected, the National Assembly nominate the Speaker of Parliament for a 4-year term from the deputies of Shiite faith – currently, this position is covered by Nabih Berri, who has continuously been reelected for this position since 1993 – and the President of the Republic, whose election is to being held every 6 years.

### **The Lebanese political landscape**

Having given the legal and operational framework of the electoral system in Lebanon, we will now move toward the analysis of the main political parties in Lebanon. It must be remembered that, given the history and the high degree of division inside the Country, Lebanese political parties have always acted as representational structures of the confessions more

than being expressions of political ideologies<sup>7</sup>. This aspect is particularly clear when examining the parties' main websites looking for their political stances and programs. As a matter of fact, little material can be found on their websites and/or the main channel of information about their political agenda on points such as healthcare, economy, education, and so on. Parties' official websites take usually the form of a newspaper with only a section that focuses on the party, which rarely shares the political visions or programs of the party. These sections mostly focus on the history of the party and share the last news about their leaders or members. This circumstance also contributes to explaining the difficulty that Lebanese politics have faced to find concrete answers to the numerous problems that Lebanon has faced during its history.

Looking at the current Parliament, the political scenery is divided into two main groups: the March 8<sup>th</sup> Alliance – mostly formed by the Maronite Free Patriotic Movement, as well as the Shiite Hezbollah and Amal – and the March 14<sup>th</sup> Alliance – principally composed of the main Sunni party, the Future Movement, and other Maronite parties such as the Lebanese Forces and the Phalanges. This is the result of the so-called “Cedar Revolution” in 2005, when parties took different stances on the internal and external

politics of the Country, mostly regarding the role of Syria. Civil and political society, split among those who wanted Syria's interference out of Lebanon (the March 14 Alliance) and those who were in favor of the Syrian presence in the Country (the March 8 Alliance).

Moreover, it is worth highlighting that many of the leaders that now form the political cadres of the main parties covered important roles during the Civil War as militia leaders. With the Taif Agreement, the non-state armed groups were dismantled and many key figures of that period entered in politics eventually<sup>8</sup>. Many of them – among them, Michael Aoun, Hassan Nasrallah, Samir Geagea, Walid Jumblatt, and, indirectly, Saad Hariri – are still protagonists of the actual Lebanese political scene.

### **The March 14<sup>th</sup> Alliance**

#### **Future Movement** (ar. *Tayyar al-Mustaqbal*)

The strongest party of the March 14<sup>th</sup> Alliance is also the main Sunni party in Lebanon. The Future Movement is led by Saad Hariri who has been one of the most important, albeit controversial, political figures in the Country, as he has covered the position of Prime Minister different times in the last decades, stepping down last time from the position in 2019, after the protests that struck the Country in October of that year. Son

of the former Prime Minister, Rafiq, whose killing sparked the revolution in 2005, he has been Prime Minister in 2009 and 2016, during a period when the March 14<sup>th</sup> Alliance had the majority at the National Assembly. He also tried to form a new government during the 13 months stall that followed the resignation of Hassan Diab's government in August 2020 following the Beirut explosion and September 2021, when eventually a new government – the actual one – was formed under the leadership of Najib Mikati.

Hariri has recently released a statement that he would not participate in the next elections because “[...] there is no room for any positive opportunities to Lebanon due to the Iranian influence, our indecisiveness with the international community, internal divisions, and sectarian divisions” requesting, at the same time, to the entire Future Movement to boycott the elections<sup>9</sup>. These declarations have caused other Sunni important exponents, such as Fouad Siniora, former Prime Minister and President of the Republic *ad interim* between 2007 and 2008, to criticize the decision saying that the boycott would instead strengthen Hezbollah<sup>10</sup>. Some analysts have also pointed out that Hariri's decision and the disintegration of the Sunni side can even cause a delay in the elections<sup>11</sup>.

Saad Hariri's strong bond with the Sunni monarchies of the Gulf makes the Future Movement heavily rely on external aid and support. In fact, Saudi Arabia supports the entire March 14<sup>th</sup> Alliance mostly through support to the Movement. On the other side of the medal, this condition causes a situation of subjection mostly to the Saudi crown that could influence the political agenda of the Alliance<sup>12</sup>. As elections approach, Saudi Arabia seems to be interested in the results and willing to strengthen the Alliance even without the Future Movement, relying on the other allies he has in the Country, such as the Siniora wing, and the Progressive Socialist Party and the Lebanese Forces<sup>13</sup>.

In the current Parliament, the Future Movement comprises 20 members, but it has only two ministers in the cabinet: Public Health and Environment.

### **The Lebanese Forces** (ar. *al-Quwwat al-Lubnaniyah*)

The Lebanese Forces (LF) are the second strongest party of the March 14<sup>th</sup> Alliance. They are Christian-Maronite and its leader, Samir Geagea, is one of the most important figures in the Country, mostly because of his important role during the Civil War. Bashir Gemayel in fact originally founded the party during the Civil War years and Samir Geagea rules it since the end of the 80s. On the official website of the party, the Lebanese

Forces stress their roots in “the political expression of the Lebanese resistance movement” while describing itself as “a resistance and a force for change, an incubator of principles”<sup>14</sup>.

The party is a harsh detractor of the March 8<sup>th</sup> Alliance, particularly towards Hezbollah. As a matter of fact, the Lebanese Forces have been involved in the events of the Tayouneh neighborhood, in October 2021, when six members of Hezbollah died during a protest organized by the Party of God and its ally Amal, allegedly shot of men of the LF<sup>15</sup>.

The Lebanese Forces have elected 12 deputies in the Parliament, making them the second-largest Christian party in the National Assembly. However, they have no minister in the cabinet of the Mikati government.

### **Kataeb**

The last major party forming the March 14<sup>th</sup> Alliance is the Kataeb party, also known as Phalanges. The leadership of the party is detained by the Gemayel family, a historic and important family of Lebanon. It is in fact led by Samy Gemayel, son of Amine, former President of the Republic between 1982 and 1988, nephew of Bashir, also President of the Republic in 1982 before being assassinated, and grandson of Pierre, original founder of the Phalanges party in the 30's.

On the official website, the Phalangists present a list of 10 points that describe their political stance and the main objectives of their political action. Most interestingly is the fourth point that expresses the political stance of the party: “the Phalangists embrace social democracy as a system that guarantees personal freedom such as freedom of belief, opinion of expression, assembly, forming associations and parties, demonstrating, picketing, and striking in accordance with the conditions stipulated by the Bill of Human Rights. Social democracy also guarantees a free economic system, private property, free education, social justice, human rights, equal opportunities, and equal rights and duties”. On point number 5, the character of parliamentary democracy is underlined while the sixth confirms the Arab character of the party and the intention to collaborate with other Arab Countries and the Arab League<sup>16</sup>.

Three Kataebists were originally elected to the Parliament, however, they resigned after the Beirut Port explosion in opposition to the March 8<sup>th</sup> Alliance-led government<sup>17</sup>. They do not have any ministers in the current cabinet.

## **The March 8<sup>th</sup> Alliance**

### **Hezbollah**

The main party of the March 8<sup>th</sup> Alliance is one of the most important actors in Lebanon and the Middle East in general, Hezbollah. Its relevance to the geopolitics of the region is due to its social and political activities both inside the Country and outside Lebanon. It must also be remembered that the “party of God” also possesses an armed wing that, not only controls a part of the territory of Lebanon but also was able to wage and win a war against Israel in 2006 and take control of Beirut in 2008.

Hezbollah emerged as a political actor in 1982 during the days of the Civil War after the invasion of the Country by the Israeli forces. Many members of what was the only Shiite party in the Country – the Amal Movement – converged into this new formation, looking for an alternative to the panorama. In fact, the Hezbollah cadres dissented with Amal, mostly regarding the non-strong religious character of the party, as it was not – and still not is – headed by a cleric<sup>18</sup>. Today, the leader of the party is Hassan Nasrallah who leads the formation since 1992.

The military growth of the party was helped by the Islamic Republic of Iran, of which Hezbollah represents today the most important ally in the Region. Such a strong relationship has

influenced the political vision of the party, whose main points on the agenda resemble the one of Iran, namely the opposition to Israel. Originally, one of the main objectives of the party was to create an Iran-like system in Lebanon; however, the project was abandoned after the Taif Agreement<sup>19</sup>. The bond between Hezbollah and Iran has been used, more often than not, against the party both from inside and outside the Country, as has already been seen in the case of the Future Movement. The United States and its allies – some European States and several Arab Countries – regard Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

Notwithstanding its political and geopolitical importance, it has barely 13 members elected in the Parliament and only two ministers in the current cabinet: Culture and Public Works.

#### **Amal Movement** (ar. *Harakat Amal*)

Even if Hezbollah usually hits the first pages of international newspapers, the first Shia party in the Parliament is the Amal Movement. Its popular support can be explained by its history and its prestige in the Country. It is almost a decade older than Hezbollah as it was founded by the Imam Musa as-Sadr in 1974 as the “Movement of Dispossessed”.

Since the 80s, the leader of the Movement is Nabih Berri, the actual Speaker of the Parliament, which

assumed power during the Civil War when the Movement of Dispossessed became Amal, constituting as an armed group. The main interests of the militia lay in defending the interests of the Shia populations in Lebanon. Actually, during the war it fought against the Palestinians, Israel, the Druze, and Hezbollah indiscriminately<sup>20</sup>.

Today, however, it is allied with both Hezbollah – with which shares most of the political views related to the internal politics of the Country as they usually share their instances and demands – and the Druze. It has 16 deputies in the National Assembly, three more than Hezbollah, and three ministers in the cabinet: Agriculture, Finance, and Labor.

#### **Free Patriotic Movement** (ar. *Al-Tayyar Al-Watani Al-Hurr*)

The Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) is the main Christian-Maronite party in the Country. It is the party of the current President of the Republic, Michael Aoun, who also founded the Movement after his comeback from a 15-year long exile after the end of the Civil War and the Taif Agreement. The leadership, however, is currently held by the son-in-law of the President, Gibran Bassil.

Even if the strongest party in the Alliance, the political position of the party is difficult to define. During the last elections the FPM formed

numerous and diverse alliances even with members of the March 14<sup>th</sup> Alliance such as the Future Movement and the Lebanese Forces. This could be explained by the fact that Aoun during the Civil War was one of the most important figures that opposed Syria, and whose exile ended only when he changed his stance. Joseph Helou (2020) identifies the Presidential elections of Aoun in 2016 as the “end of bipolar politics”<sup>21</sup>, as he was able to bring the March 14<sup>th</sup> parties to collaborate with the FPM more than once.

Notwithstanding the fact that it is the party of the President of the Republic, the FPM is currently the strongest party in the Parliament. The list “Strong Lebanon” with which it run during the elections, won 29 seats, becoming the political party with the most seats in the Parliament. Moreover, the cabinet of Najib Mikati has a relative majority with six ministers: Defense, Justice, Foreign Affairs, Tourism, Social Affairs, and Energy.

### **Armenian Revolutionary Federation/Tashnagh**

The Tashnagh party is the official Armenian party in the Country. It is a historical party as its roots can be traced back to the Ottoman Empire. It is part of a global federation that gathers the Armenian diaspora worldwide while considering

Lebanese the diaspora the most important.

They have elected 3 of the 6 seats reserved for the Armenian community and in the current cabinet, they are represented by the Ministry of Industry.

### **Other Parties**

#### **Progressive Socialist Party** (ar. *al-Hizb al-Taquadummi al-Ishtiraki*)

Among the parties that put themselves outside the two alliances, the most important is undoubtedly the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP). This is a historic party in Lebanon and it is the expression of the Druze community of the Country.

The party has changed its political stance at different times in recent history: its leader, Walid Jumblatt, one of the main figures in contemporary Lebanon, during the “Cedar Revolution” shared the view that Syria should leave the Country siding with the March 14<sup>th</sup> Alliance. In 2009, however, he left this bloc and positioned in the political center, supporting, more often than not, the political requests of the March 8<sup>th</sup> Alliance. As a demonstration of its political transformism, the new elections approach, the PSP has recently decided to strengthen an electoral alliance with the Lebanese Forces against Hezbollah<sup>22</sup>.

Today, the PSP has 11 members elected in Parliament. The party is



represented in the government by the Minister of Education in the person of Abbas Halabi, who has also acted as Minister of Information until March 2022.

### **Azm Movement**

The Azm Movement is a Sunni Party, whose leader is the Prime Minister, Najib Mikati. It poses itself on the political center, not siding with either Alliance. In the current Parliament, it can count only on three deputies. However, it has also two important ministers in the Cabinet – Interior and Economy – in addition to the Prime Minister.

### **Conclusions: the current Parliament and future prospects**

Since 2019, the Lebanese pound has experienced a sharp decline in its value – losing almost the 90% of its original price<sup>23</sup>. Poverty has been raising all over the Country, worsened also by the recent Russia-Ukraine war, which has caused a shortage of goods such as oil and wheat<sup>24</sup>. The necessity for Lebanon to have a political class, which can act with the complete legitimization of the polls, is of the utmost importance, given the problematic situation that the Country is facing. Therefore, it is fundamental to monitor the results of the next elections, as the impact they will have on Lebanon from the day after will be tangible.

These elections can prove important also because foreign aid for the reconstruction of the Country is gated behind a series of structural reforms such as the energetic and anti-corruption. The next political establishment needs to work on the modifications required to unlock the funds that the International Monetary Fund has allocated for the Country and that would give resources to rebuild the Country<sup>25</sup>. The actions that the new political class will undertake in order to resolve socio-economic problems are, however, only one of the many reasons why these elections can prove fundamental for Lebanon and the Lebanese people.

Not accounting for the importance of these elections for a democratic reason, it will be of great importance for a Country that scores a very low percentage for what concerns the trust towards the government, to meet deadlines, and to go forward with a successful electoral appointment. As it was recorded by Arab Barometer during fieldwork conducted in Lebanon in 2021, almost the totality of the people interviewed said that they do not trust the government, with no significant differences across all the religions<sup>26</sup>.

In 2018, the electoral turnout of the elections stopped approximately at 50% of the people having the right to vote. Notwithstanding the fact that this data is slightly higher than its Arab

counterparts are, it is still 5 points less than the previous 2009 elections. Given the huge protests seen since 2019 and the subsequent economic and health crises, it is not unlikely that many people will decide not to cast their vote in these elections. Parties must do everything they can to ensure political participation.

Another important aspect that needs to be monitored is the women's participation – both active and passive – in this political appointment. It is essential for women to participate in the electoral race and to be elected: of the 128 total members of the actual Parliament, only four of them are women and in the current cabinet of Ministers only one out of 23 is a woman. In this sense, the first data about the candidates for the next elections have shown that only 15% of the total candidates is a woman – a very low number but a 4% higher than in 2018<sup>27</sup>.

Lastly, it must also be remembered that the future Parliament will be also called to elect the next President of the Republic as the successor of Michael Aoun in November 2022, when his mandate will officially end after 8 years of Presidency. For that occasion, the Parliament must come prepared and united to find consensus around a figure that embodies the State and to avoid any political stall that can harm the Country further.

It is worth remembering that there is also the possibility that the elections scheduled for May could also not occur. The 2018 Parliament follows a 9-year period of the political stall without any election being held in the meantime. In fact, the 2009 Parliament remained intact since the 2018 elections because the 2013 elections were not held due to “security reasons” and the Parliament has prolonged its life. It is not impossible, therefore, that a similar scenario will repeat given the critical situation in which Lebanon found itself and the 2013 precedent<sup>28</sup>. As already said, Saad Hariri and the shattering inside the main Sunni faction could also delay the electoral appointment because of the call for a boycott of the elections. It is likely, however, that the parties of the March 8<sup>th</sup> Alliance will do everything they can to prevent any delay in the elections as they will, most certainly, take advantage of this situation.

In conclusion, these elections represent a turning point for the Country for different reasons. Not only for economic reason, but also for the survival of a State which has a very weak social fabric as well as a weak Institution. The most important role of the next political establishment is to avoid social conflicts in order to prevent the Country to fall in to a spiral of violence and hatred.

*Appendix - Table 1. Electoral districts of Lebanon and number of seats divided per sect.*

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## Appendix

**Table 1.** Electoral districts of Lebanon and numbers of seats divided per sect

Electoral district	Seats	Muslim				Christian						
		Sunni	Shia	Druze	Alawite	Maronite	Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Greek Orthodox	Armenian Catholic	Armenian Evangelical	Other Minorities
Beirut I (East)	8					1	1	1	3	1		1
Beirut II (West)	11	6	2	1			1				1	
Bekaa I	7	1	1			1	1	2	1			
Bekaa II	6	2	1	1		1	1					
Bekaa III	10	2	6			1		1				
Mount Lebanon I	8		1			7						
Mount Lebanon II	8					4	2	1	1			
Mount Lebanon III	6		2	1		3						
Mount Lebanon IV	13	2		4		5	1	1				
North I (Akkar)	7	3			1	1	2					
North II (Tripoli-Minnieh-Dennieh)	11	8			1	1	1					
North III (Bcharre-Zghorta-Batroun-Koura)	10					7	3					
South I (Saida-Jezzine)	5	2				2		1				
South II (Zahrany-Tyre)	7		6					1				
South III (Marjaayoun-Nabatieh-Hasbaya-Bint Jbeil)	11	1	8	1			1					
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	27	27	8	2	34	14	8	5	1	1	1

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<sup>1</sup> According to Arend Lijphart (1969, p. 216; 1975, p. 25), a consociational democracy is a State governed by a cartel of leaders. It is usually a solution to transform a weak, highly fragmented democracy into a more stable one.

<sup>2</sup> El-Khazen, F., 1991. The Communal Pact of National Identities: The Making and Politics of the 1943 National Pact. *Papers on Lebanon*, October. Volume 12, pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Hanf, T., 1993. *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*. London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 585-589.

<sup>4</sup> Bahout, J., 2016. *The Unraveling of Lebanon's Taif Agreement*, Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, pp. 9-10.

<sup>5</sup> No official census of the community has been done since 1932. However, estimations report that Muslims represent today around almost 66.7% of the total population, while Christian communities account for the remaining 32% of which 4% are Druze (US Department of State, International Religious Freedom Report, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Salloukh, B. et al., 2015. *The Politics of Sectarianism in Postwar Lebanon*. Londra: Pluto Press, pp. 91-92.

<sup>7</sup> Gordon, D. C., 1980. *Lebanon: The Fragmented Nation*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 143.

<sup>8</sup> Rizkallah, A., 2017. *The paradox of power-sharing: stability and fragility in Postwar Lebanon*. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*.

<sup>9</sup> Perry, T. & Bassam, L., (24 January 2022) *Lebanon's Hariri steps away from politics, upending election landscape*. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-hariri-expected-announce-election-boycott-party-members-say-2022-01-24/> Website accessed 18 March 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Chehayeb, K. (2022, January 22). *Lebanon's former PM Saad Hariri suspends political career*. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/24/lebanons-former-pm-saad-hariri-suspends-political-activities> Website accessed 18 March 2022.

<sup>11</sup> <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1293752/hariri-and-siniora-come-to-loggerheads-on-the-sunni-scene.html>

<sup>12</sup> When Hariri stepped down in 2016 as Prime Minister he fled to Saudi Arabia where many analysts and observers believed he was kept in captivity by the Saudi house.

<sup>13</sup> <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1293975/as-elections-approach-saudi-arabia-takes-an-interest-in-lebanon-once-again.html>.

<sup>14</sup>Original in Arabic. Available at: <https://www.lebanese-forces.com/party-1f-about/>.

<sup>15</sup> For a focus on the events, see Ricci, A., 2022. *Lebanon: the Sectarian Narration of the Tayouneh Events*, Middle East Political and Economic Institute (MEPEI), available at: <https://mepei.com/policy-brief-lebanon-the-sectarian-narration-of-the-tayouneh-events/>.

<sup>16</sup> Original in Arabic. Available at: <https://www.lebanesekataeb.com/>.

<sup>17</sup> Reuters. (2020, August 8). *Lebanon's Kataeb Party says its three MPs resigning from parliament in wake of Beirut blast*. Retrieved from Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-lebanon-security-blast-kataeb/lebanons-kataeb-party-says-its-three-mps-resigning-from-parliament-in-wake-of-beirut-blast-idUKKCN2540I3>.

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- <sup>18</sup> Abboud, S. N. & Muller, B. J., 2012. *Rethinking Hizballah: Legitimacy, Authority, Violence*. New York: Routledge, p. 32.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> Hanf, T., 1993. *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- <sup>21</sup> Helou, J. P., 2020. *Activism, Change and Sectarianism in the Free Patriotic Movement in Lebanon*. Beirut: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 164.
- <sup>22</sup> L'Orient le Jour. (2022, March 31). *The LF and PSP join forces against Hezbollah*. Retrieved from L'Orient Today: <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1295404/the-lf-and-psp-join-forces-against-hezbollah.html>.
- <sup>23</sup> Reuters. (2022, January 11). *Lebanon's currency plummets again amid financial crisis and political deadlock*. Retrieved from Reuters: <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-currency-plummets-again-amid-financial-crisis-political-deadlock-2022-01-11>.
- <sup>24</sup> Chehayeb, K. (2022, March 8). *Lebanese fearful as fuel and wheat shortage deepens*. Retrieved from Al Jazeera: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/8/lebanese-fearful-as-fuel-and-wheat-shortage-deepens>.
- <sup>25</sup> <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/LBN/faq>.
- <sup>26</sup> It is possible to see this kind of data and cross it with different variables on the online data tool available at: <https://www.arabbarometer.org/survey-data/data-analysis-tool/>.
- <sup>27</sup> Salame, R., Kanaan, F.-S., Makhouf, K., Chamaa, M. E., & Taleb, W. (2022, March 16). *Who's running in May 2022? Here's the full list of candidates*. Retrieved from L'Orient Today: <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1293892/whos-running-in-may-2022-heres-the-full-list-of-candidates.html>.
- <sup>28</sup> Abi-Nassif, C. (2021, February 19). *The electoral path may not save Lebanon, but its citizens deserve the chance to walk it*. Retrieved March 2022, from Middle East Institute: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/electoral-path-may-not-save-lebanon-its-citizens-deserve-chance-walk-it>.