

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: LBN34751
Country: Lebanon
Date: 5 May 2009

Keywords: Lebanon – Minieh – Syria – May 2009 elections – Future Party – Hezbollah – Political violence

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Questions

- 1. What conflict has occurred in the lead up to the May 2009 elections and has there been intimidation of Future Party candidates?**
- 2. What outcomes are expected in this election?**
- 3. What is the current line-up of Future Party candidates in the government?**
- 4. What is the political situation in the Menieh area, or is it regarded as part of broader Tripoli?**
- 5. How strong are Hezbollah and the pro-Syrian forces in this area?**
- 6. Is there information about Syrian spies operating there or in Tripoli?**
- 7. Do you have any information on current objectives of the Future Party?**

RESPONSE

Note: There are several variant spellings of Menieh, including Minieh, Miniye, Minnieh, Minye and Minniyeh. The spelling used in this response is as per source material.

Note: The Lebanese parliamentary elections are scheduled for 7 June 2009.

1. What conflict has occurred in the lead up to the May 2009 elections and has there been intimidation of Future Party candidates?

It would not appear that any Future Party (most often referred to as the Future Movement, and sometimes as the Future Current (*Tayyar Mustaqbal*)) leaders or members have been attacked in the lead-up to the June elections; there have, however, been attacks on members of parties that are contesting the election with the Future Movement as part of the March 14 Alliance. In the most serious incident, a member of the predominantly Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), part of the March 14 Alliance, was stabbed to death in Beirut on 14 February, allegedly by Hezbollah followers, although Hezbollah deny the PSP's claim that

they were involved in the incident. The only report involving the Future Movement came from the party's official website on 3 April, in which a claim was made of an attempted firebombing of the home of one of the party's MPs in Beirut. On 20 February, *Deutsche Presse Agentur* reported grenade attacks on offices of the Lebanese Forces and the Phalangist party, both part of the March 14 Alliance, and on 27 February *The Daily Star* reported clashes between supporters of rival Maronite parties Lebanese Forces and al-Marada (aligned with the opposition March 8 Alliance) in the northern coastal town of Chekka. Finally, in a report on 20 April by *NOW Lebanon*, claims were aired from the Lebanese Option Gathering, a Shia party not aligned with either of the dominant Shia parties Hezbollah or Amal, that one of its members was assaulted by Amal supporters in Beirut (for the murder of the PSP member, see: 'Lebanese party: member dead after attacks following Hariri rally' 2009, *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 15 February – Attachment 3; for the attempted firebombing in Beirut, see: 'Vandals attack Bassem al-Sabaa's residence', Future Movement (Lebanon), 3 April – Attachment 7; for the grenade attacks on the Lebanese Forces and the Phalangist party, see: 'Christian leader calls for calm after grenade attacks' 2009, *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 20 February – Attachment 4; for the violence between the Lebanese Forces and al-Marada parties, see: Kimbrell, N. 2009, 'Army arrests 16 suspects after armed clashes break out in Chekka', *The Daily Star*, 27 February – Attachment 5; and for the alleged assault on the Lebanese Option Gathering member, see: 'LOG accuses Amal supporters of attacking a party member' 2009, *Now Lebanon*, 20 April – Attachment 6).

A survey of sources suggests that there has been relatively little conflict in Lebanon in recent months, and that leaders of political parties have been calling on their followers to avoid violence. There have been isolated incidents of violence reported, but nothing on the scale of the May 2008 violence in Beirut between government and opposition supporters, or the mid-late 2008 clashes between Sunni and Alawite militias in Tripoli (these events have been covered by previous research responses; please see the section on previous [research responses](#) below for more information). A 12 March report from *Reuters* claimed that any electoral "trouble is unlikely to be on the scale of Lebanon's all-out civil war last May", and noted the "conciliatory tone among Lebanese leaders". An 8 April report, also from *Reuters* and by the same author, claims that political pressures have eased in Lebanon in the wake of a "thaw in ties between Syria and Saudi Arabia and overtures from the new U.S. administration towards Damascus", and that the "[d]etente between rival Arab states has eased political pressures in Lebanon". On 29 April, *The Daily Star* reported on the sixth "national dialogue session" held by the "14 leaders of the country's major political parties", at which the leaders agreed "to hold the June 7 parliamentary elections in a calm and democratic manner" (Perry, T. 2009, 'Lebanese cool political heat, but tensions simmer', *Reuters*, 12 March – Attachment 2; Perry, T. 2009, 'Arab detente raises hopes for smooth Lebanon vote', *Reuters*, 8 April – Attachment 1; Sfeir, T. 2009, 'Lebanese leaders vow to maintain calm during polls', *The Daily Star*, 29 April http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=101477# – Accessed 30 April 2009 – Attachment 9).

Nonetheless, it is also claimed by some commentators that clan- and religion-based political groupings in Lebanon rely on sectarian division and animosity to motivate their members, and as was evident from the events of 2008, it may be difficult to maintain the currently prevailing peace. The abovementioned 12 March *Reuters* report qualifies its analysis of the present calm in Lebanon by stating that "politicians whose power base is sectarian will need to tread carefully if they are to rally their voters for the election without stirring communal tensions and more bloodshed". The 20 April *Now Lebanon* report on the assault on a

Lebanese Option Gathering member quotes a party source who claims that “the escalating attacks were a failed attempt to terrify the free Shia, force them to stop their political work and perhaps curtail their rights to vote”. Finally, on 27 April, UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon released a UN report on Lebanon which claims that: “The threat that armed groups and militias pose to the sovereignty and stability of the Lebanese state cannot be overstated”; and that “[i]t creates an atmosphere of intimidation in the context of the upcoming parliamentary elections” (Perry, T. 2009, ‘Lebanese cool political heat, but tensions simmer’, *Reuters*, 12 March – Attachment 2; ‘LOG accuses Amal supporters of attacking a party member’ 2009, *Now Lebanon*, 20 April – Attachment 6; for the UN report, see: ‘UN chief raps “intimidation” by Lebanon militias’ 2009, *IC Publications*, (source: *AFP*), 27 April <http://www.africasia.com/services/news/newsitem.php?area=mideast&item=090427225254.6bcj9p4x.php#> – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 8).

Extended detail from these reports follow below.

A *Reuters* report from 8 April 2009 claims that political pressures have eased in Lebanon in the wake of a “thaw in ties between Syria and Saudi Arabia and overtures from the new U.S. administration towards Damascus”. The report also claims that political “[l]eaders who rarely left their homes for fear of assassination now move more freely”, and that “[i]t has been seven months since a Lebanese politician was killed”:

Detente between rival Arab states has eased political pressures in Lebanon, lowering the stakes for a June general election which is likely to produce another broad government grouping rival factions.

The thaw in ties between Syria and Saudi Arabia and overtures from the new U.S. administration towards Damascus have taken the sting out of a Lebanese political conflict fuelled by regional tensions over the past four years.

Rival Lebanese alliances whose power struggle reached the brink of civil war last year will contest the June 7 parliamentary election by fielding opposing candidate lists across the Arab country, which last went to the polls in 2005.

The anti-Syrian “March 14” alliance, led by Saudi-backed Sunni politician Saad al-Hariri, aims to defend its majority from the “March 8” coalition, which includes the Iran- and Syria-backed Shi’ite group Hezbollah.

...Leaders who rarely left their homes for fear of assassination now move more freely. It has been seven months since a Lebanese politician was killed (Perry, T. 2009, ‘Arab detente raises hopes for smooth Lebanon vote’, *Reuters*, 8 April – Attachment 1).

An article printed in *The Daily Star* on 29 April 2009 reports that “[t]he 14 leaders of the country’s major political parties met” for a “national dialogue session”, the sixth such meeting, at which “they called for maintaining calm during the polls”. A seventh session is set for June 1, “six days ahead the elections”:

Top Lebanese leaders agreed during a national dialogue session on Tuesday to hold the June 7 parliamentary elections in a calm and democratic atmosphere. The 14 leaders of the country’s major political parties met for the sixth dialogue session at the Baabda Palace, where they called for maintaining calm during the polls and for abiding by decisions made during previous sessions.

They also decided to hold a seventh session on June 1, six days ahead the elections.

At the beginning of the session, President Michel Sleiman urged the Lebanese to unify ranks and to preserve a calm atmosphere in the political arena and the media.

He also called on the leaders to speed up the administrative appointments as the parliamentary elections get closer.

The session was attended by Speaker Nabih Berri, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, Future Movement leader MP Saad Hariri, Economy and Trade Minister Mohammed Safadi, Free Patriotic Movement leader MP Michel Aoun, Progressive Socialist Party leader MP Walid Jumblatt, MP Boutros Harb, MP Hagop Pakradounian, MP Mohammad Raad, MP Michel Murr, Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea, MP Ghassan Tuani and former President Amin Gemayel (Sfeir, T. 2009, 'Lebanese leaders vow to maintain calm during polls', *The Daily Star*, 29 April

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=101477# – Accessed 30 April 2009 – Attachment 9).

A 15 February 2009 report from *Deutsche Presse Agentur* provides details of an attack allegedly perpetrated “by supporters of the pro- Syrian Hezbollah party” which left a member of the (predominantly Druze) Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) dead. The attack occurred after a rally to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Hezbollah reportedly denied that their members were involved in the murder:

A member of Lebanon’s Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) died Sunday after an attack Saturday by supporters of the pro- Syrian Hezbollah party, the PSP reported. The PSP, made up primarily of representatives from Lebanon’s Druze population, said Lutfi Zeineddine died from injuries sustained in the attack. The attack occurred shortly after a massive rally Saturday in downtown Beirut to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the assassination of former premier Rafik Hariri.

The PSP and Hezbollah currently work together in a national unity government. But tensions remain, as Hezbollah advocates closer ties to Syria than the PSP would prefer.

According to reports, several participants in Saturday’s rally were attacked throughout Beirut. Several cars were smashed as participants drove home. At least ten people were injured in various attacks.

Hundreds of thousands attended Saturday’s rally. Hariri, a five- time premier, was killed in a massive bomb blast on Fenruay [*sic*] 14, 2005. His assassination was widely blamed on Syria and its allies in Lebanon. Damascus has so far denied any involvement.

The Lebanese army, in a statement, confirmed Zeineddine’s death.

“The army is tracking down several suspects in order to arrest them and hand them over to the judicial authorities,” the statement said.

Hezbollah meanwhile denied any involvement in the clashes.

“Hezbollah was not involved in the trouble that broke out in Beirut on Saturday,” Lebanese radio quoted Hezbollah sources as saying.

Shortly after the death of Zeineddine, several of his relatives blocked a major highway linking Beirut with Damascus. Angry men were seen blocking traffic and smashing cars they believed belonged to Hezbollah supporters (‘Lebanese party: member dead after attacks following Hariri rally’ 2009, *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 15 February – Attachment 3).

A *Reuters* report from 12 March 2009 indicates that tensions were high in the Druze community following the murder, but that PSP leader Walid Jumblatt attempted to keep the peace. This source suggests that this scenario “demonstrates the depth of communal hostility generated by political conflict in Lebanon, but also shows that the country’s leaders have, for now at least, decided to keep tensions in check as a June 7 election approaches”. The report notes a “conciliatory tone” in the rhetoric of the leaders of Lebanon’s various political organisations, but also that “politicians whose power base is sectarian will need to tread carefully if they are to rally their voters for the election without stirring communal tensions and more bloodshed”:

Lebanese leader Walid Jumblatt is forced to raise his voice to calm followers demanding revenge for the killing of a member of their Druze community.

“We have no enemies in Lebanon,” Jumblatt screams at his supporters, trying to avoid a bloody reprisal for the killing of 58-year-old Lutfi Zeineddin, who was stabbed to death in Beirut after a Feb. 14 political rally.

Followers of the leading anti-Syrian politician are not convinced. “We are losing martyrs!” responds one, his comments echoed by others in a heated exchange captured on amateur video and broadcast recently on Lebanese channel New TV.

The footage demonstrates the depth of communal hostility generated by political conflict in Lebanon, but also shows that the country’s leaders have, for now at least, decided to keep tensions in check as a June 7 election approaches.

With the vote seen as tight contest between the “March 14” parliamentary majority coalition and a rival alliance led by Shi’ite Hezbollah, no one is ruling out scattered violence.

But any trouble is unlikely to be on the scale of Lebanon’s brush with all-out civil war last May, when Hezbollah and its allies routed followers of Jumblatt and Sunni politician Saad al-Hariri, leader of the March 14 coalition.

The conciliatory tone among Lebanese leaders mirrors talk of rapprochement and dialogue across the Middle East between rival states which have backed the country’s competing factions.

...But politicians whose power base is sectarian will need to tread carefully if they are to rally their voters for the election without stirring communal tensions and more bloodshed.

Dozens of people have been killed over the past two years in political violence, keeping alive the potential for flare-ups in sectarian tensions that fuelled the 1975-90 civil war.

“They (politicians) want to mobilise and at the same time they want to control the street. This is something very difficult in Lebanon,” said Nabil Boumonsef, a commentator with an-Nahar newspaper. “I personally don’t think they will succeed because the tension in the street is so very great.”

The political struggle in Lebanon, governed according to a sectarian power-sharing system, has poisoned ties between Sunni Muslims loyal to Hariri and Shi’ite Muslims who back his rivals. Druze-Shi’ite relations have also suffered and old animosities between rival Christian groups have resurfaced.

...”No matter what we say, there is paranoia, fear between groups,” said Samir Khalaf, a professor of sociology at the American University of Beirut and author of “Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon”.

“We mobilise people, then we rush to contain them,” he said, describing “bubbles” of sectarian and communal hostility. “These bubbles could very easily become ignitable” (Perry, T. 2009, ‘Lebanese cool political heat, but tensions simmer’, *Reuters*, 12 March – Attachment 2).

A 20 February 2009 article from *Deutsche Presse Agentur* reports grenade attacks on two offices of the Lebanese Forces (LF) (part of the incumbent March 14 Alliance) in Kfour, northeast of Beirut, and the discovery of grenades near the offices of the Phalangist party, also from the March 14 Alliance. No one was killed in the attacks, and LF leader Samir Geagea is quoted calling for calm from LF members. The report also mentions the 14 February murder of a government supporter in Beirut:

The leader of the anti-Syrian Christian Lebanese Forces (LF), Samir Geagea, called Friday on his followers to exert self-restraint after grenade attacks on his movement’s offices. “We call on all friends and supporters to maintain full calm following the grenade attacks on our offices Thursday night, because this could be an attempt to drag the LF into irresponsible responses,” he said at a press conference at his residence north-east of Beirut.

Two grenades were tossed overnight at two offices that belong to the LF in the town of Kfour, northeast of Beirut, causing only material damage.

Two other grenades were also found near the offices of the Christian Phalangist party, which is headed by former president Amin Gemayel, and who is also an ally of Geagea.

“Someone is trying to ignite a civil strife in this country and we have to be very careful,” Geagea added.

Geagea and Gemayel, both Christian leaders and outspoken critics of Syria, support the Western-backed majority headed by Saad Hariri. The two Christian leaders are forming a close alliance with Hariri in various sectors of Lebanon to compete in the upcoming parliamentary elections, which is due in June.

But former General Michel Aoun, a prominent Christian leader as well, is siding with the pro-Syrian Hezbollah-led opposition.

Incidents targeting followers of the anti-Syrian camp have been registered in the country since last week.

On February 14, and shortly after a massive rally to mark the fourth anniversary of the killing of former premier Rafik Hariri, followers believed to be from the Hezbollah-led opposition stabbed a member of the ruling majority to death.

The tensions come in the buildup to the June 7 elections to elect a new Lebanese parliament, in a race expected to be very close between the ruling majority and the opposition (‘Christian leader calls for calm after grenade attacks’ 2009, *Deutsche Presse Agentur*, 20 February – Attachment 4).

On 27 February 2009, a report in *The Daily Star* noted conflict between the Christian parties al-Marada and Lebanese Forces (aligned with the March 8 and March 14 coalitions, respectively) in the northern coastal town of Chekka (Kimbrell, N. 2009, ‘Army arrests 16

suspects after armed clashes break out in Chekka', *The Daily Star*, 27 February – Attachment 5).

A 20 April 2009 report from *Now Lebanon* notes claims from the Lebanese Option Gathering, a Shia political group not aligned with Hizbullah or Amal, that one of its members was attacked by Amal supporters in Dahiyeh, in south Beirut. According to this report: "The Lebanese Option Gathering said the style of the attacks against the party have become more brazen and now occur 'openly' and in public in the middle of the day":

Lebanese Option Gathering issued a statement on Monday saying Amal Movement members attacked one of its activists, Khalil Atwi, in al-Maamoura area in Dahiyeh on Sunday. The statement noted that Atwi sustained serious head injuries.

The attackers broke his car windows after he was transferred to hospital, the statement read. After this incident, the same group went to the house of another Lebanese Option Gathering official Ahmad Hijazi and insulted his family, it continued.

Atwi, who hosted the ceremony announcing the Lebanese Option Gathering's candidates at the beginning of April, has also previously been attacked and his car was burned on April 7. More than 12 cars belonging to members of the party have been torched at night in recent months.

The Lebanese Option Gathering said the style of the attacks against the party have become more brazen and now occur "openly" and in public in the middle of the day, "which constitutes a rude challenge to the law and freedom, and downplays the importance of the Internal Security Forces."

The statement added that the escalating attacks were a failed attempt to terrify the free Shia, force them to stop their political work and perhaps curtail their rights to vote.

The Lebanese Option Gathering stressed the danger of such activity, which it said threatened the lives of its activists and officials. The party called on the ISF to carry out its duties, protect people's safety and property in order to uphold freedom of expression ('LOG accuses Amal supporters of attacking a party member' 2009, *Now Lebanon*, 20 April – Attachment 6).

A 3 April 2009 report sourced from the official website of the Future Movement reports the attempted firebombing of a March 14 Alliance MP in Beirut:

Unidentified assailant hurled flammable materials at March 14 MP Bassem al-Sabaa residence on Friday in Western Beirut area.

According to security reports vandals set fire to al-Sabaa billboards erected in the region. The reports said that motorcycles combed the area in the overnight of the accident.

The latest attack against a March 14 deputy threatens to bring a fresh bout of violence before the elections on June 7 ('Vandals attack Bassem al-Sabaa's residence', Future Movement (Lebanon), 3 April – Attachment 7).

On 27 April 2009, an article sourced from *AFP* quoted a report released by "UN chief Ban Ki-moon", who claims that: "The threat that armed groups and militias pose to the sovereignty and stability of the Lebanese state cannot be overstated"; and that "[i]t creates an atmosphere of intimidation in the context of the upcoming parliamentary elections":

Hezbollah and other armed militias in Lebanon are fostering instability and intimidation as elections near, UN chief Ban Ki-moon warned in a report published Monday.

“The threat that armed groups and militias pose to the sovereignty and stability of the Lebanese state cannot be overstated,” Ban wrote in a document addressed to the United Nations Security Council.

“It creates an atmosphere of intimidation in the context of the upcoming parliamentary elections. It also undermines the stability of the region, and is incompatible with the objectives of Resolution 1559.”

Adopted in 2004, the Security Council resolution called for the “disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias.”

Hezbollah’s arsenal, which includes an autonomous telecommunication network, “is a direct challenge to the sovereignty of the Lebanese state and an obstacle for the conduct of the normal democratic process in the country,” Ban said, warning that the Shiite movement maintains a “substantial” para-military capacity (‘UN chief raps “intimidation” by Lebanon militias’ 2009, *IC Publications*, (source: *AFP*), 27 April <http://www.africasia.com/services/news/newsitem.php?area=mideast&item=090427225254.6bcj9p4x.php#> – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 8).

Previous research responses

Three previous research responses provide details of the violence in Beirut and in Tripoli in 2008, and in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp near Minieh in 2007:

- *Research Response LBN33661* provides a comprehensive overview of conflict in North Lebanon up to September 2008. Questions 1 and 2 of this response addresses whether Future Movement members are at risk of harm from Hezbollah (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response LBN33661*, 9 September – Attachment 10).
- *Research Response LBN33578*, of 2 September 2008, provides information on the fighting in Tripoli between Sunni and Alawite militias in mid-late 2008 (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response LBN33578*, 2 September – Attachment 11).
- Questions 3 and 4 of *Research Response LBN33576*, of 29 August 2008, provide information on the conflict between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Sunni militant group Fatah al-Islam at the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp between May and September 2007 (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response LBN33576*, 29 August – Attachment 12).

2. What outcomes are expected in this election?

The contestants

The election is primarily a two-way contest between the incumbent majority governing coalition, known as the March 14 Alliance, and the opposition coalition, the March 8 Alliance, both taking their names from (anti- and pro-Syrian, respectively) mass street demonstrations held in early 2005. The March 14 Alliance is made up of the Sunni Future

Movement (*Tayyar Mustaqbal*), headed by Saad Hariri, the Druze Progressive Socialist Party of Walid Jumblatt, the Maronite Lebanese Forces led by Samir Geagea, the Kataeb Party of Amin Gemayel, and several other smaller Christian and Sunni parties. The March 8 coalition is composed of the Shia groups Hizbullah and Amal (led by Hassan Nasrallah and Nabih Berri, respectively), the Maronite Free Patriotic Movement of Michel Aoun, the Maronite Marada Party of Suleiman Frangieh, and other small Sunni, Alawite, Druze and Christian groups (for background information on the March 14 Alliance, see Question 3 of RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response LBN33272*, 12 May – Attachment 13; for an overview of the March 8 Alliance, see: ‘March 8 + FPM’ (undated), *NOW Lebanon* <http://www.nowlebanon.com/Sub.aspx?ID=164&MID=30&PID=25&FParentID=23&FFParentID=3> – Accessed 1 May 2009 – Attachment 14).

Election procedures and laws

The forthcoming elections in Lebanon will be the first held under new electoral laws passed by the Lebanese Parliament in October 2008. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) provides a useful background briefing paper on the upcoming parliamentary elections, to be held on 7 June 2009. According to IFES, the “paper provides background material on the electoral districts and the electoral system that will be used, as well as outlining some of the key issues relating to the electoral process, including the issues of electoral lists and ballot papers”. The paper provides an overview of the confessional allocation of parliamentary seats, the electoral districts of Lebanon, the “distribution of parliamentary seats by confession and district”, and the “core elements of the Lebanese Electoral System”. In addition, it provides examples of how the Lebanese electoral system works in practice, using the example of the seat of Baabda, and examines the use of electoral lists and prepared ballots (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 2009, ‘Lebanon’s 2009 Parliamentary Elections – The Lebanese Electoral System’, IFES website, March http://www.ifes.org/publication/56c0cdaa64aa2cad85b3f5996e37cb4c/IFES_Lebanon_ESB_Paper030209.pdf – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 15).

The full text of the October 2008 Lebanon election law is provided as Attachment 16 (Republic of Lebanon 2008, *Law No. 25: Parliamentary Elections Law*, Elections 2009 website, 8 October http://www.elections.gov.lb/Legal-Framework/Election-Law/LAW-EN_unofficialTranslation.aspx – Accessed 1 May 2009 – Attachment 16).

An opinion piece written by Doreen Khoury from the Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform (CCER) (a coalition of 58 Lebanese NGOs) from *The Daily Star*, from October 2008, provides detail on the reforms to electoral laws which come into play in the June 2009 elections. The reforms were not as comprehensive as the CCER desired, but they have introduced “campaign finance regulation, media regulation, elections in one day, out-of-country voting (albeit delayed until 2013), and abolition of the voting card”. Nonetheless, this report states that “[t]he failure to lower the voting age to 18 years and endorse a quota for women in Parliament has angered youth and women’s groups”; and that “unwillingness on the part of parliamentarians to set up an independent electoral commission and reform voting procedures to include an officially printed ballot has disappointed activists”:

Soon after Lebanon’s Parliament passed the new electoral law on September 29, Interior Minister Ziad Baroud, a long-time advocate of electoral reform, described the final version as a “cup half full.” Baroud was referring to the fact that although the law contained some of the reforms included in the Butros election proposal such as campaign finance regulation and elections media and advertising regulation, parliamentarians also chose to forego other crucial

reforms such as establishing an independent electoral commission, using an officially printed ballot, and lowering the voting age to 18 years.

The Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform (CCER), a coalition of 58 Lebanese NGOs, has worked tirelessly since the National Commission for a New Electoral Law (commonly known as the Butros commission) submitted its draft electoral law proposal to the Cabinet in June 2006. The draft law included reforms that civil society organisations had been demanding for a decade. Lebanon's antiquated electoral process, in which campaign spending is unchecked and procedures violate voting secrecy and can lead to voter intimidation, was badly in need of a complete overhaul. Since the end of the Civil War and the signing of the Taif Accord, Lebanon's record on transparency and fairness in elections has been abysmal. Elections were, and remain, an opportunity for Lebanon's political class to renew its grip on power, hence its tendency to ride roughshod over the basic electoral rights of citizens.

...Following the 2005 elections, it was clear to civil society organisations that this situation could not prevail for the 2009 elections. With the increasing political polarisation in the country, and ongoing skirmishes between the two broad Lebanese political alignments (which eventually erupted in violence last May), Lebanon could not afford anymore to have an electoral process which failed to regulate competition between the two main political alignments.

...The draft law was approved on September 29 by Parliament. The CCER's activists attended all sessions of the parliamentary debate and lobbied for the reforms until the last minute. The final law approved has drawn mixed reactions from civil society activists. The failure to lower the voting age to 18 years and endorse a quota for women in Parliament has angered youth and women's groups. Crucially, unwillingness on the part of parliamentarians to set up an independent electoral commission and reform voting procedures to include an officially printed ballot has disappointed activists. The reforms that did pass, campaign finance regulation, media regulation, elections in one day, out-of-country voting (albeit delayed until 2013), and abolition of the voting card, represented a significant departure from previous electoral laws. However they are weakened by not being accompanied by the reforms turned down.

...The reluctance of the Lebanese ruling class to endorse total reform of the electoral process was revealed during the vote on the pre-printed ballot. Since the parliamentary sessions were not being shown live on television, citizens missed the debate on the ballot, in particular the chance to identify parliamentarians who defended the reform, then later voted against it. The pre-printed ballot would have preserved the secrecy of the vote and freed voters from the threat of intimidation from agents of the political leaders. Another worrying factor is that vote-counting will continue to take place in polling stations, further jeopardising secrecy (Khoury, D. 2008, 'Lebanon's election law: a cup half full', *Al Arabiya*, (source: *The Daily Star*), 10 October http://www.alarabiya.net/save_print.php?save=1&cont_id=58015&lang=en – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 17).

Predictions for the 2009 elections

As the 2009 elections will be run under the confessional seat allocation system, sources indicate that the result in many seats is a foregone conclusion, as the majority confession in each district will simply elect its confession's candidates. The districts likely to be competitive in the election are the Christian districts, in which candidates from the Christian parties aligned with the March 14 Alliance compete with candidates from the Christian parties aligned with the March 8 Alliance. A 7 April report from *Agence France Presse* suggests that the "predominantly Christian districts north and east of Beirut as well as the town of Zahleh in the Bekaa" are likely to be crucial to the outcome of polling. A 13 October 2008 report from the *Middle East Times* concurs, reporting claims that "the real electoral

battle will be in seven constituencies: Metn, Zahle, Beirut, Koura, Saida, Batroun, [and] West Bekaa” (Zablitz, J. 2009, ‘Lebanese parties sharpen knives ahead of vote’, *Agence France Presse*, 7 April – Attachment 19; Massoud, A. 2008, ‘Lebanon’s New Electoral Law Will Impact Christians’, *Middle East Times*, 13 October http://www.metimes.com/International/2008/10/13/lebanons_new_electoral_law_will_impact_christians/5266/ – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 18).

The key feature of the new electoral laws, according an October 2008 report from the *Middle East Times*, is that “[t]he new law overrides the standing 1960 electoral act and mandates the redrawing of electoral boundaries into smaller voting districts – a major concession to the opposition which they believe will entitle a bigger representation for the Christian community”. The report quotes Nadim Shehadi, “Lebanon expert at the London-based Chatham House”, who claims that “the real electoral battle will be in seven constituencies: Metn, Zahle, Beirut, Koura, Saida, Batroun, [and] West Bekaa”. According to Shehadi: “Nineteen out of the 26 constituencies are considered ‘safe’ with predictable results. It is in the other seven, mainly in the Christian dominated constituencies, that will determine the next parliamentary majority”:

Lebanon’s new electoral law could define the role of the country’s Christian electorate and directly impact the ongoing Sunni-Shia power struggle, experts say.

“The Christians can flip the balance one way or another. Because the Shiites are attached to Iran and Syria and the Sunnis to Saudi Arabia, so as to lessen the attachments, the Christians can balance it out in the national interest of the country,” said former Lebanese ambassador to Washington, Abdullah Bouhabib.

Adoption of the new election law – which is still pending approval of parliament – is the final element of the Qatari-mediated deal between rival pro- and anti-Syrian factions in Lebanon after prolonged wrangling brought the country to the brink of civil war.

The new law overrides the standing 1960 electoral act and mandates the redrawing of electoral boundaries into smaller voting districts – a major concession to the opposition which they believe will entitle a bigger representation for the Christian community.

...Marada leader Suleiman Franjeh said the new election law is the beginning of the rights of the Christians:

“We now need our deputies to be elected by the Christians themselves.”

Inexplicable alliances have long been a tradition of Lebanese politics, defined by short-sighted tactical partnerships rooted in the intense rivalry of opposing parties, communities and political families.

Such alliances have played a key role in the struggle for power among the various Christian factions.

Lebanon’s former President Amin Gemayel, head of the Christian Phalangist Party and one of the stalwarts of the anti-Syrian coalition believes the outcome of the elections will depend mainly on political alliances.

...According to Nadim Shehadi, Lebanon expert at the London-based Chatham House, the real electoral battle will be in seven constituencies: Metn, Zahle, Beirut, Koura, Saida, Batroun, West Bekaa.

“Nineteen out of the 26 constituencies are considered ‘safe’ with predictable results. It is in the other seven, mainly in the Christian dominated constituencies, that will determine the next parliamentary majority.”

Free Patriotic Movement leader Michel Aoun, is currently the frontrunner in the Christian dominated areas, elections expert Kamal Feghali says.

The former general who won one-third of the popular vote in the 2005 parliamentary elections, claims the support of 50 percent of Lebanon’s Christians, and “looks set to win the majority of the Christian votes in 2009” he added.

But Aoun’s alliance with Hezbollah has many Christians worried about their future (Massoud, A. 2008, ‘Lebanon’s New Electoral Law Will Impact Christians’, *Middle East Times*, 13 October

http://www.metimes.com/International/2008/10/13/lebanons_new_electoral_law_will_impact_christians/5266/ – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 18).

A 7 April 2009 report from *Agence France Presse* anticipates a tight election result, “as the outcome for most of the seats, which are equally divided along confessional lines, is predictable and settled in advance”. This report also suggests that the “predominantly Christian districts north and east of Beirut as well as the town of Zahleh in the Bekaa” are likely to be crucial to the outcome of polling:

No side is expected to win a landslide as the outcome for most of the seats, which are equally divided along confessional lines, is predictable and settled in advance.

However all eyes will be on a number of predominantly Christian districts north and east of Beirut as well as the town of Zahleh in the Bekaa, where the race is expected to be tight between candidates from the rival political camps.

Whoever wins in those districts could tip the balance for control of parliament – the mainly Sunni ruling majority or the mainly Shiite opposition – and in turn influence the formation of the government.

“These elections represent a football match,” said Fawaz Trabulsi, a political science professor at the American University of Beirut and Lebanese American University.

“Most of the MPs have been assigned their posts and the only surprise will come as concerns 10 to 15 percent of the candidacies.”

Trabulsi and other analysts said that although the main parties have in past weeks presented their electoral programme, the race is more about political figures than policy issues.

“What strikes me is the glaring absence of an effective political party system,” said Paul Salem, director of the Beirut-based Carnegie Middle East Centre. “In most countries the candidate is secondary to the party.

“In Lebanon, it’s the leader, the zaim (in Arabic), who formally or informally heads a kind of group or semi-party and who chooses candidates and makes deals with other bosses,” Salem added.

“It’s really a competition among bosses for dominance and shares of power in parliament.”

Analysts say the race will also reflect the regional power play between Lebanon’s former powerbroker Syria and Iran on the one hand and Saudi Arabia and Egypt on the other.

“Two years ago, the region and the world was deeply divided ... and it very much affected Lebanon,” Salem told AFP, referring to former US president George W. Bush’s aggressive policies in the Middle East.

“The regional environment now is much more cooperative,” he added. “The US will be talking to Syria, the US will be trying to open up to Iran and Saudi Arabia and Syria have improved their relations.

“So all of this helps and encourages Lebanon’s (political parties) to accommodate, to be in coalitions and to get along.”

The ruling parliamentary majority headed by Saad Hariri, son and political heir of slain ex-premier Rafiq Hariri, is running on a platform which emphasises the state’s sovereignty and independence.

The Hezbollah-led alliance for its part advocates resistance against Israel and the Shiite militant movement’s right to bear arms to defend the country, a thorny issue in Lebanon.

Hezbollah is also insisting on a national unity government with a blocking minority whatever the outcome of the vote, a scenario rejected by the current majority (Zablit, J. 2009, ‘Lebanese parties sharpen knives ahead of vote’, *Agence France Presse*, 7 April – Attachment 19).

A *Reuters* report from 8 April 2009 forecasts a tight election result, with the likelihood of “only a slim majority either way”, and with the election of “most of the main players a foregone conclusion”. The report also quotes a Lebanese political analyst who claims that “foreign governments which have interfered in Lebanon have defied local expectations by not pumping in large sums of electoral cash, or by orchestrating security incidents to affect the outcome”:

The anti-Syrian “March 14” alliance, led by Saudi-backed Sunni politician Saad al-Hariri, aims to defend its majority from the “March 8” coalition, which includes the Iran- and Syria-backed Shi’ite group Hezbollah.

But with the vote expected to yield only a slim majority either way, many politicians say that a new government grouping most of the main players is a foregone conclusion.

If the climate of regional detente holds, many also expect a shift in the country’s political contours. The existing alliances are seen loosening if not dissolving altogether.

...For now, the two states have decided to respect rather than challenge each others’ interest in Lebanon, said Sateh Nouredin, a political commentator with as-Safir newspaper.

As the election approaches, foreign governments which have interfered in Lebanon have defied local expectations by not pumping in large sums of electoral cash, or by orchestrating security incidents to affect the outcome, he wrote.

“Everyone is making do with observing from afar. They really do want the election campaign to remain calm ... expressing a shared need for Lebanon to emerge from the sphere of confrontation into a spell of reconciliation,” he wrote.

That climate is likely to produce a new government that includes most, if not all, of the main factions. Lebanon’s political system, which parcels out state positions according to sectarian identity, will also enforce broad participation.

“Nothing will change,” another senior Lebanese leader said (Perry, T. 2009, ‘Arab detente raises hopes for smooth Lebanon vote’, *Reuters*, 8 April – Attachment 1).

In contrast, a 23 April 2009 article in *The New York Times* claims that Saudi Arabia, among other regional powers, is pouring money in to Lebanon, and in particular to the March 14 Alliance in order to prevent Hezbollah from winning the election. The report claims that the forthcoming elections are likely to be the most free and competitive that Lebanon has seen in decades, but that it is also may be the most corrupt, as rival candidates are bought off, votes are bought with cash or services, favourable news coverage is purchased, and expatriate Lebanese are paid to fly home to vote. The report also notes the ability of local clan patriarchs to deliver blocs of clan votes in return for cash or services, and the manner in which electoral bribes function as an important source of income for poorer communities, going so far as to claim that “many poorer Lebanese look to the elections as a kind of Christmas, when cash, health-care vouchers, meals and other handouts are abundant”. Finally, the report claims that the confessional distribution of electoral seats in Lebanon “tend to reinforce the essentially feudal power structure of Lebanon, with a network of men from known families providing for each sect and region”:

Lebanon has long been seen as a battleground for regional influence, and now, with no more foreign armies on the ground, Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region are arming their allies here with campaign money in place of weapons. The result is a race that is widely seen as the freest and most competitive to be held here in decades, with a record number of candidates taking part. But it may also be the most corrupt.

Votes are being bought with cash or in-kind services. Candidates pay their competitors huge sums to withdraw. The price of favourable TV news coverage is rising, and thousands of expatriate Lebanese are being flown home, free, to vote in contested districts. The payments, according to voters, election monitors and various past and current candidates interviewed for this article, nurture a deep popular cynicism about politics in Lebanon, which is nominally perhaps the most democratic Arab state but in practice is largely governed through patronage and sectarian and clan loyalty.

Despite the vast amounts being spent, many Lebanese see the race — which pits Hezbollah and its allies against a fractious coalition of more West-friendly political groups — as almost irrelevant. Lebanon’s sectarian political structure virtually guarantees a continuation of the current “national unity” government, in which the winning coalition in the 128-seat Parliament grants the loser veto powers to preserve civil peace.

Still, even a narrow win by Hezbollah and its allies, now in the parliamentary opposition, would be seen as a victory for Iran — which has financed Hezbollah for decades — and a blow to American allies in the region, especially Saudi Arabia and Egypt. So the money flows.

“We are putting a lot into this,” said one adviser to the Saudi government, who added that the Saudi contribution was likely to reach hundreds of millions of dollars in a country of only four million people. “We’re supporting candidates running against Hezbollah, and we’re going to make Iran feel the pressure.”

...Some voters, especially in competitive districts, receive cold calls offering cash for their vote. But mostly the political machines work through local patriarchs known as “electoral keys,” who can deliver the votes of an entire clan in exchange for money or services — scholarships, a hospital, repaved roads and so on.

In a country where the average public school teacher earns less than \$700 a month, these payments are a significant source of support for many communities. And because each seat in the Lebanese Parliament is designated by religious sect, the elections tend to reinforce the essentially feudal power structure of Lebanon, with a network of men from known families providing for each sect and region.

All the major political groups deny buying votes, which is illegal under Lebanese law, but election monitors acknowledge that it is a routine practice. “Since the 1990s, more money has been coming in,” said Paul Salem, the director of the Carnegie Middle East Center here. “Unfortunately, the system adjusts to that and in a way comes to expect it, especially among the poor.”

In fact, many poorer Lebanese look to the elections as a kind of Christmas, when cash, health-care vouchers, meals and other handouts are abundant (Worth, R. 2009, ‘Foreign Money Seeks to Buy Lebanese Votes’, *The New York Times*, 23 April http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/23/world/middleeast/23lebanon.html?_r=1 – Accessed 30 April 2009 – Attachment 20).

3. What is the current line-up of Future Party candidates in the government?

A full list of current Future Movement MPs is provided on the official Future Movement website:

Abdullah Raouf Hanna – Deputy of North First District, Akkar

Ahmad Chawki Fatfat – Representative of North First District – Parliamentary committees: Parliamentary friendship committee with Japan, Belgium and Cuba. – Former cabinet: minister of Youth & Sport – Election Cycle: 1996/2000/2005

Ahmad Fattouh – Deputy of third district of Bekaa, West Bekaa & Rachayya – Member of the Media Communication Committee

Akob Kasarjian – Representative of Beirut third district – Parliamentary Committees: Chairman of the Committee for Refugee Affairs. Member of the Committee on National Economy, Trade and Industry, Planning

Ammar Omar Al-Houri – Representative for Beirut first District – Member of the Committee on Public Health, Labour and Social Affairs Committee & Youth and Sports Committee

Antoine Andrawos – Representative of Mount Lebanon Third District- Aley – Member of Media & Communication committee. – Decider of the Committee on Finance and Budget

Atef Majdalani – Deputy Beirut Second District – President of Public Health Committee, Labor & Social Affairs

Azzam Dandachi – Deputy of the North First District-Akkar – Member of the Committee of Public Health, Labor & Social Affairs

Bader Kamel Wannous – Representative of North second district-Tripoli – Rapporteur of the committee of Public Works, Transport, Energy & Water, and a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, and the Information Technology Committee.

Bahia Hariri – Representative of the first District of the South-Sidon – Good will ambassador of the UNESCO – President of the Islamic organization for Higher education – Chairperson of the Committee on Education and Higher Education and Culture

Bassem Al Sabeh – Representative of the third district of Mount Lebanon –Baabda – Member of the Environment Committee – Member of the Committee of Justice and Administration

Bassem Ramzi Al Chab – Representative of Beirut first district

Farid Nabil Moukari – A Representative of the North Second District – Deputy House speaker

Ghazi Ali Youssef – 2005 deputy of Beirut Third District – Member of the Committee of Finance & Budget

Ghenwa Jalloul – Representative of Beirut Third District – Rapporteur of the Committee on Information, Communication and a member of the Committee on Women and Children – Election Cycle: 2000/2005

Hadi Fawzi Hbiesh – Deputy of the first district of the North -Akkar – Member of the Administration & Justice committee

Hashem Alameldine – Deputy of the North second district- Al Minieh – Member of the Finance and Budget committee – Member of the Agriculture & Tourism committee – Member of the Media & Communication committee – Member of the Public Works & Transport, Water and Energy committee

Jamal Al Jarrah – Representative of the third district of Bekaa, Western Bekaa & Rachaya

Jean Lotfi Ogasabian – Representative of the third district of Beirut – Member of the Committee of National defence, Interior and Municipal Affairs – Member of the committee of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants. – Member of the Lebanese Tunisian friendship Committee.

Mahmoud Bachir Al Mourad – Representative of the first District North -Akkar – Member of the Committee of Education Higher Education and Culture

Michel Pierre Faroun – Representative of the Beirut first district – Former cabinet: Minister of state for parliamentary affairs (2000/2003) & (2005-2008) – Election cycle: 1996/2000/2005

Mohammad Jamil Qabbani – Deputy for the Sunni seat in Beirut third district. – Chairman of the committee on Public works, Transport, Water, and Energy. – Member of the committee of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants.

Mohammad Qasim Rashid Hajjar – Representative of Mount Lebanon Fourth District – Parliamentary Committees: Public Works, Transport, Energy, and Water committee. National and Higher Education and Culture. – Election cycle: 2000/2005

Mohammed al-Amin Itani – Deputy of the second district- Beirut – Member of the Al Mustaqbal parliamentarian bloc

Moustafa Mohammad Hashem Beik – Deputy of the North first district -Akkar

Moustafa Mohammad Ismail Alloush – Deputy of the second North district -Tripoli – Member of the committee on Refugee Affairs

Nabil de Freij – Representative of the second district of Beirut – Parliamentary committees: Chairman of the Committee on National Economy, Trade and Industry and Planning. Member of the Finance and Budget Committee – Election cycle 2000/2005

Nicolas Fouad Ghoson – Deputy of North second district-Al koura – Member of the Finance and Budget Committee – Member of the committee for the Refugee Affairs

Nicolas Michel Fattouch – Deputy for Al Bekaa second district- Zahle – Member of the Administration and Justice Committee – Member in Environment committee

Riad Nicolas Rahhal – Representative of North Third District – Parliamentary Committees: Committee of Public Health, Work& Social Affairs, Committee of Agriculture, Tourism, and Committee of Informational Technology.

Samir Adnan Al-Jisr – Representative of North Second District -Tripoli – Representative of North Second District -Tripoli

Serge Barge Torsarkician – Representative of Beirut Third District – Parliamentary Committees: Committee of Administration and Justice, Committee of Youth and Sports.

Yaghya Kara bit Jrgian – Representative of Beirut second district. – Member of the committee on Refugee Affairs. – Member of the committee on National Economy, Trade, Industry and planning. – Election Cycle: 1992/1996/2000/2005 ('Future Movement – Key Figures' (undated), Future Movement website <http://www.almustaqbal.org/profile.php?t=10&from=0> – Accessed 5 May 2009 – Attachment 21).

Information on the election of Future Movement members in North Lebanon, or of members of electoral blocs aligned with the March 14 Alliance, was sourced from the European Union Election Observation Mission's final report on the 2005 elections in Lebanon:

- There was one seat in Minieh, allocated under the confessional system to a Sunni. In the 2005 elections, Hachem Alamedine, who was listed as an independent candidate but also as part of the "Hariri bloc" (Saad Hariri leads the Future Movement), was elected.
- In Tripoli, Sunnis were allocated five of eight seats, and two Future Movement members were elected, Samir Jisr and Mustapha Allouch.
- In Dinneyeh, the two seats were both allocated to Sunnis, one of whom, Ahmed Fatfat, was listed as belonging to the Future Movement. The other elected candidate, Kassem Abdul Aziz, is listed as being part of "Hariri's bloc".
- Sunnis were allocated three seats in Akkar, to the immediate north of Minieh-Dinniyeh, and the Future Movement candidates won all three, with Azzam Dandachi, Mustapha Hachem, and Mahmoud Mrad the sitting members. The winner of the seat allocated to Alawites, Mustapha Ali Hussein, is also listed as a Future Movement candidate (European Union Election Observation Mission 2005, *Parliamentary Elections Lebanon 2005 Final Report*, European Union website, pp.32-34 and 64 http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/eu_election_ass_observ/Lebanon/final_report.pdf – Accessed 7 March 2006 – Attachment 22).

The European Union Election Observation Mission's report also provides a summary of events in the 2005 election in North Lebanon, which was swept by the March 14 Alliance 'Reconciliation and Reform' and 'National Unity' lists (in North I and North II Districts, respectively), winning all twenty-eight seats:

In Northern Lebanon, the electoral campaign witnessed mounting political tension linked to the importance given to the outcome of the country's last round of elections. Having already gathered about 45 seats, the Hariri-Jumblatt-Qornet Shehwan-Lebanese Forces alliance was seeking to grab at least 20 out of Northern Lebanon's 28 seats in order to obtain the absolute majority in the coming Parliament. They formed one complete list in each of the region's electoral districts: in North I, 11 candidates ran under the banner of "Reconciliation and reform", while in North II, 17 candidates formed the "National Unity- 14 March" list. The two lists achieved a complete victory, introducing 19 new MPs to the Lebanese Parliament.

They faced two other complete lists backed by General Aoun. In North I, the "People's will" list encompassing many MPs and former MPs was defeated by new candidates belonging to the Lebanese Forces (in the almost exclusively Maronite district of Bsharri) and to the Future Movement (in the mostly Sunni populated sub-districts of Akkar and Denniye). The number of registered voters in Akkar's is twice as big as the other two electoral sub-districts combined, and was crucial in determining the winning list.

In North II, Aoun backed a list that included three of his loyal supporters (his son-in-law, a prominent retired judge and a former colonel who was jailed in Syria) and a varied coalition of important local political figures (Sleiman Franjeh 18 in Zghorta, Abdel Majid al Rifai 19, and Ahmad Karami 20). In this constituency, the predominantly Sunni qada of Tripoli represented by 8 MPs was crucial in determining the victorious list, due to its electoral weight (44.7% of the district's registered voters) (European Union Election Observation Mission 2005, *Parliamentary Elections Lebanon 2005 Final Report*, European Union website, pp.32-34 and 64

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/eu_election_ass_observ/Lebanon/final_report.pdf – Accessed 7 March 2006 – Attachment 22).

According to the YaLibnan.com website's analysis of the 2005 election, "Saad Hariri's impressive victory is a testament to the newcomer's ability to quickly learn how to campaign effectively and win. Hariri won all 28 seats allocated to Northern Lebanon, and dealt a commanding blow to Michel Aoun's return to the political scene". This source provides a list of all winners in all seats of North Lebanon in the 2005 elections ('Official election results for North Lebanon' 2005, Yalibnan.com website, 21 June

http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2005/06/_lebanons_inter.php – Accessed 30 April 2007 – Attachment 23).

As noted in Question 2 above, the 2009 elections in Lebanon will be operated under new electoral laws, and with different electoral districts from the 2005 elections. Richard Chambers, of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, provides a document which maps the electoral districts of Lebanon under the 2008 election laws, confessional allocations, and the number of candidates who have nominated for each seat; this document is provided as Attachment 24 (Chambers, R. 2009, 'The June 2009 Elections – Mapping of Candidates & Lists by District', International Foundation for Electoral Systems website, 8 April

http://www.ifes.org/publication/d43fc99ae34ce89fbe5972324d89b3f5/IFES_Candidate_Regi_stration_Presentation_040809.pdf – Accessed 5 May 2009 – Attachment 24).

A full list of the 703 candidates who nominated to stand in the June 2009 elections, sourced from *Lebanon Wire*, is provided as Attachment 25 ('Candidates Final List' 2009, *Lebanon*

Wire http://www.lebanonwire.com/0904MLN/CandidatesFinalList_07042009.pdf – Accessed 5 May 2009 – Attachment 25).

An April 2009 report from *The Daily Star* names the three Future Movement candidates for the Minnieh-Dinnieh district in the June 2009 parliamentary elections as Ahmad Fatfat, Qassem Abdel-Aziz and Hashem Alameddine:

Hariri had earlier on Wednesday announced the Future Movement’s electoral list for the Minieh-Dinnieh district.

The list includes MPs Ahmad Fatfat, Qassem Abdel-Aziz and Hashem Alameddine.

In a speech in Minieh, Hariri said that “Dinnieh and Minieh complete each other in proving loyalty to the path of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.”

“Every voter knows that this electoral battle is a political battle that can lead to two different directions ... we have chosen to build a strong and sovereign state that spreads its authority over all its territories,” Hariri said.

Hariri added that Tripoli citizens “stood by the [Lebanese Army] in the Nahr al-Bared battles, and the government should compensate you for all the hardship that you endured.”

“On June 7 we will celebrate the victory of the Future Movement and the victory of Ahmad Fatfat, Qassem Abdel-Aziz and Hashem Alameddine,” he said (Sfeir, T. 2009, ‘More parties announce electoral lists as elections race intensifies’, *The Daily Star*, 23 April http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=101262# – Accessed 30 April 2009 – Attachment 27).

4. What is the political situation in the Menieh area, or is it regarded as part of broader Tripoli?

An overview of the confessional demography of North Lebanon is provided in a map sourced from the Lebanon Support website. This map shows the Miniyeih-Danniyeh and Tripoli region to be dominated by Sunni communities, with small areas of mixed-confession occupation (‘Mapping of Vulnerabilities in Lebanon (SE-1)’ 2008, Lebanon Support website, June

[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Sa.nsf/luFullMap/00BD785A71C24C8885257474007067B1/\\$File/ls_SEC_lbn080626.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/fullMaps_Sa.nsf/luFullMap/00BD785A71C24C8885257474007067B1/$File/ls_SEC_lbn080626.pdf) – Accessed 1 September 2008 – Attachment 26).

As noted in Question 3 above, in the 2005 elections there was one parliamentary seat in Menieh, and it was allocated under the confessional system to a Sunni. It was won by Hachem Alamedine, who is listed as an independent candidate but also as part of the “Hariri bloc”. As noted in Question 3 above, Alamedine is standing in the 2009 election for Minnieh-Dinnieh District as a Future Movement member (European Union Election Observation Mission 2005, *Parliamentary Elections Lebanon 2005 Final Report*, European Union website, pp.32-34 and 64

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/eu_election_ass_observ/Lebanon/final_report.pdf – Accessed 7 March 2006 – Attachment 22).

Under the new electoral laws (which are referred to as the ‘1960 districts’ because these electoral boundaries were last used in the elections of 1960) the *qada* (administrative district)

of Minnieh-Dinnieh contains three seats, all of which are allocated to Sunnis. Tripoli is a separate *qada* of eight seats, of which five are allocated to Sunnis, and one each to Alawites, Maronites and Greek Orthodox (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 2009, 'Lebanon's 2009 Parliamentary Elections – The Lebanese Electoral System', IFES website, March

http://www.ifes.org/publication/56c0cdaa64aa2cad85b3f5996e37cb4c/IFES_Lebanon_ESB_Paper030209.pdf – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 15).

As noted in Question 4 above, the Future Movement recently released its list of candidates for the Minnieh-Dinnieh District; all three candidates are incumbent members of parliament.

5. How strong are Hezbollah and the pro-Syrian forces in this area?

Sources consulted in previous research responses indicate that Hezbollah does not have a significant presence in North Lebanon. There is a small population of pro-Syrian Alawites in Tripoli, and, as noted in Question 1 above, they clashed with anti-Syrian Sunni groups in Tripoli through 2008.

The issue of Hezbollah's presence in North Lebanon has been addressed in three recent research responses:

- Question 1 of *Research Response LBN33661* addresses the presence of Hezbollah in North Lebanon, including claims made by the Future Movement that Hezbollah was arming and training the Alawite militias fighting Sunni groups in Jabal Mohsen. Sources consulted in the response indicate that Hezbollah is generally thought to have little presence in Northern Lebanon, but that there are some claims of links with certain Sunni Salafist groups in the region. Nonetheless, Hezbollah's operations are generally considered to be confined to the south of Lebanon, the southern suburbs of Beirut, and the Bekaa Valley in the east of Lebanon (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response LBN33661*, 9 September – Attachment 10).
- Sources consulted in Question 2 of *Research Response LBN33578* also indicate a lack of reliable information suggesting that Hezbollah has a meaningful presence in the north of Lebanon (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response LBN33578*, 2 September – Attachment 11).
- Question 1 of *Research Response LBN32202*, of 11 September 2007, quotes sources suggesting that North Lebanon is generally a Sunni-dominated area, and that Hezbollah is unlikely to have a significant presence there (RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response LBN32202*, 11 September – Attachment 28).

The conflict between Sunni and (pro-Syrian) Alawite militia groups in Tripoli has also been addressed in four recent research responses:

- *Research Response LBN34104*, of 9 December 2008, provides the most recent updated information on the 2008 clashes between Syrian-backed Alawites and Sunni groups in the Jebel Mohsen and Bab al-Tabbaneh suburbs of Tripoli (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response LBN34104*, 9 December – Attachment 36).

- Questions 3 and 4 of *Research Response LBN33578* provide information on the conflict between Alawite and Sunni militias in Tripoli up to August 2008, and on the power or influence of the Alawite community in Tripoli (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response LBN33578*, 2 September – Attachment 11).
- *Research Response LBN33419*, of June 2008, provides background to the outbreak of violence between Alawites and Sunnis in Tripoli, and detailed reports of incidents of violence to date (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response LBN33419*, 27 June – Attachment 29).
- Question 1 of *Research Response LBN31663*, of 3 May 2007, provides information on January 2007 violence between Alawites and Sunnis in Tripoli, (RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response LBN31663*, 3 May – Attachment 30).

Hezbollah reportedly has a strong presence in the Bekaa District, to the immediate west of Minieh-Danniyeh. Nonetheless, a recent report from *The Christian Science Monitor* suggests that Shia support for Hezbollah in the Bekaa valley may have been adversely affected by recent events:

The death of a noted drug dealer and the revenge killing of four soldiers have plunged the Lebanese Army into a confrontation with the powerful Shiite clans that rule Lebanon's wild northern Bekaa Valley.

Hundreds of Lebanese special forces backed by helicopters deployed this week into the northern Bekaa, raiding homes and encircling villages in a manhunt for a gang suspected of carrying out an attack on Monday against an Army patrol that left four soldiers dead.

But the clash between the Army and clans in the Bekaa, a Hezbollah stronghold, has placed the powerful Shiite organization in an awkward position.

Long loathe to tangle with the clans from which it derives much grass-roots support, the organization had turned a blind eye to their criminality for years. But when a car thief struck one of its own, Hezbollah signalled its consent to the Army to crack down. Now, some angry clan members are vowing to vote against the Hezbollah-led opposition in June 7 parliamentary elections, shaping up to be the closest in decades.

The tough and close-knit Shiite clans have long held sway in the remote arid plain of the northern Bekaa, an area traditionally ignored by successive Lebanese governments. Some of them earn huge profits from drug trafficking, hashish cultivation, car theft, and counterfeiting.

...But Hezbollah's tolerance of the criminality in the Bekaa snapped a few months ago when thieves stole a car belonging to Jihad Mughniyah, son of Imad Mughniyah, Hezbollah's top military commander who was assassinated last year in Damascus car bombing.

According to a source familiar with the incident, Mughniyah was hunting with friends near Chaat village in the Bekaa when members of the Zeaiter clan snatched his vehicle, apparently unimpressed that its owner was the son of the legendary Mughniyah.

In response, Hezbollah quietly gave a green light to the Army to mount a crackdown on the gangs of car thieves. But the army's round-up expanded to include drug dealers and hashish farmers, infuriating the clans, some of whom are vowing to vote against Hezbollah in the upcoming election (Blanford, N. 2009, 'In Lebanon's wild east, Hezbollah finds itself on left foot', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 15 April – Attachment 31).

6. Is there information about Syrian spies operating there or in Tripoli?

Little recent information was available on the presence of Syrian intelligence officers in the Minieh-Dinneyeh District, or in Tripoli.

In October 2007 the Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada carried out research on the presence of the Syrian intelligence agency (*mukhabarat*) in Lebanon. Sources quoted in this response claim that Syrian intelligence is “monitoring North Lebanon”, and that “Syrian intelligence operates covertly in certain Palestinian camps in Beirut, the suburbs of Tyre, and the Bekaa valley”. The response also quotes a “14 July 2006 document on the website of the Center for Strategic and International Studies”, which claims that: “Syrian forces have officially left Lebanon, but Syria and the Syrian security services still play a major political role in Lebanon”; and that: “Elements of Syrian intelligence stayed in Lebanon despite Syrian declarations otherwise”:

Specific information on the activities, power and organization of the mukhabarat was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, an article in *The Global Politician*, an independent online journal (*Global Politician n.d.*), states that Syrian intelligence operates covertly in certain Palestinian camps in Beirut, the suburbs of Tyre, and the Bekaa valley (*ibid.* 16 Aug. 2007). The same article reports that Syrian intelligence is also monitoring North Lebanon (16 Aug. 2007).

...A professor specialising in the Middle East at the Toledo International Centre for Peace in Madrid provided the following information on how Syria’s withdrawal has affected the mukhabarat:

Syria’s withdrawal did not alter the mukhabarat in Lebanon. It led to a major fragmentation of the [L]ebanese intelligence services. Lebanese intelligence officers with allegiance to Syria still hold key positions especially at the Beirut Airport and the presidential palace in Baabda. In addition, Shia-dominated parties AMAL and Hezbollah share intelligence with both their Iranian and Syrian counterparts. (10 Oct. 2007)

A 14 July 2006 document on the website of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) states the following:

Syrian forces have officially left Lebanon, but Syria and the Syrian security services still play a major political role in Lebanon.

...Elements of Syrian intelligence stayed in Lebanon despite Syrian declarations otherwise.

In an interview with the International Crisis Group (ICG), a Lebanese member of parliament stated that the mukhabarat are still in Lebanon “but they no longer work for the government” (5 Dec. 2005). The CFR states that Syrian intelligence operatives are present in Lebanon and continue to wield influence in many parts of the country (26 Apr. 2006). Middle East Report Online (MERIP) explains that although there were expectations in 2005 that the Syrian security influence in Lebanon would be reduced, by 2006, there was little evidence of change (23 May 2006).

In contrast, a witness providing evidence before the United Kingdom (UK) Parliament (UK 7 Mar. 2007a) stated that “[t]he rule of the Mukhabarat, the security services, which was continuous in both Lebanon and Syria, has collapsed in Lebanon and remains in Syria” (UK 7 Mar. 2007b) (Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *Lebanon: The mukhabarat*,

including their activities, power and organization; whether they have any ties with Syria; how Syria's withdrawal has changed them, 31 October http://www2.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451546 – Accessed 4 May 2009 – Attachment 32).

Question 6 of *Research Response LBN31663*, of 3 May 2007, provides information about the withdrawal of Syrian intelligence from North Lebanon, with particular reference to Akkar District, to the immediate north of Minieh. According to an *Associated Press* article quoted in this response, by 12 March 2005 the last Syrian troops had left northern Lebanon, but nine Syrian intelligence offices remained, including one in Minye (RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response LBN31663*, 3 May – Attachment 30; Karam, Z. 2005, 'Last Syrian Troops Leave Northern Lebanon', *Associated Press Newswires*, 12 March – Attachment 33).

7. Do you have any information on current objectives of the Future Party?

A document sourced from the website of the Future Movement sets out the “National Principles” of the party, which are reproduced in full below. The document also provides a brief history of the party, and policy statements on political reform, the economy and development, reform and administration, social justice, education and teaching, and the role of youth and human resources.

The Future Movement is an inclusive national movement present across all Lebanese territories and in countries with a Lebanese expatriate presence. It adheres to the following national fundamental principles:

- Lebanon is a sovereign, independent nation and a final home for its citizens, united at the popular, territorial and institutional levels and Arab in identity and allegiance. Lebanon's Arabism is shaped by its uniqueness and its religious and social diversity within a framework of coexistence.
- 'Lebanon is a democratic, parliamentary republic based on the respect of public freedoms, social justice and equality between all Lebanese'. It embodies a deep belief in the free market, the constitution, the law and human rights, and a culture of tolerance conducive to reconciling differences through dialogue and a respect for other viewpoints.
- The memorandum of National Accord, as outlined in Taef, outlines the secure means for preserving civil peace in Lebanon. The memorandum [?] included several political reforms that redistributed political prerogatives within the state, determined Lebanon as Arab in identity and allegiance, underscored parliamentary democracy as the basis of government, and established the primacy of liberties and the free market
- The memorandum of National Accord is not the property of any particular Lebanese faction, nor did it empower any specific group over another. Rather, it is a bridge that we cross together on the path to civil and national peace and a free and egalitarian state.
- Liberal democracy constitutes the basis of the modern Lebanese state. Protecting its system and its civic and constitutional institutions is equivalent to protecting the state and its sovereignty and national unity. Undermining the fundamentals and well-being of liberal democracy is akin to threatening Lebanon's sovereignty and liberty. The Lebanese democratic system is founded on the separation of powers and cooperation and balance between them. Thus, advances by one power at the expense of another constitute a violation

of the constitution and national cohesion and a threat to the role of institutions in implementing the law and guaranteeing equality among citizens.

- The independence of the judiciary and its separation from executive power, as well as the resistance to any intervention, direct or otherwise, in the affairs of the judiciary and related institutions. The judiciary must not under any circumstances become a tool in the hands of political authorities. The executive and legislative branches are responsible for providing the legal basis for the independence of the Lebanese judiciary and its ability to deliver justice free from any intervention. Justice in upholding the law is integral to the pursuit of liberty; there can be no justice without law, and no liberty without justice.
- Lebanon is a founding and active member of the Arab League and adheres to its charter. It plays its role in serving legitimate Arab causes, first and foremost the Palestinian cause and all that implies in terms of nationalism, humanitarianism, morals and culture. The Palestinian cause is the central cause of the Arabs and the focus of their historical struggle and sacrifices for the Palestinian people to establish an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital and secure their right of return.
- Lebanon is a founding and active member of the United Nations and adheres to its charter and a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Islamic Conference Organisation. The Lebanese state embodies the principles of these organisations in all avenues and without exception.
- The Future Movement rejects any partitioning of Lebanon or naturalisation [of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon]. It considers Israel an enemy of Lebanon that has occupied its land and waged war on its people, state and institutions. No peace will be established with Israel until a just solution is reached, based on the peace proposal presented at the Arab League summit in Beirut and the return of occupied Arab lands.
- The Future Movement reaffirms that the view of Lebanon as both a final homeland for its citizens and an Arab country allows a reconciliation between ‘Lebanon-ism’ and ‘Arabism’. It rejects the logic that considers affiliation to Lebanon as isolationism from the Arab world, or that an Arab affiliation is a blow against loyalty to Lebanon. The Future Movement is a key strategic proponent of Arab moderation and seeks to remain a face of modern Arabism and an avenue for genuine reconciliation between the Lebanese identity and Arabism. Thus, ‘Lebanese nationalism’ does not contradict an Arab identity or affiliation, nor does ‘Arabism’ clash with the idea of a sovereign, independent Lebanon.
- The Future Movement is committed to strengthening Lebanon’s relationship with the Arab world, including rectifying relations with Syria, focusing on common interests between the two brotherly peoples and on forming ties based of mutual respect and historic links. The Future Movement supports the role of the Arab League, the improvement of its institutions in the service of relations between the countries, and the establishment of free trade agreements as a means to Arab economic unity and the formation of a cooperative Arab market.
- The Future Movement renounces all extremism, violence, and religious and factional strife and considers pluralism and diversity essentials of Lebanese democracy. An open pluralism leads to national cohesion, diversity and creativity, whereas a closed one leads to division. Diversity is Lebanon’s means to political innovation and evolution and to a deepening of an inclusive nationalism. This is Lebanon’s civilisation message to its Arab homeland and to the world.
- The Future Movement affirms that education plays a central role in improving and renewing Lebanese political life, and that it can only do so through the educated themselves and their organisations and associations. They represent the means to innovation and intellectual and

political liberty and must be protected, under any circumstances and in all fields including teaching, art, literature, theatre, film, media, and audio-visual, written and electronic press as a path to civic and national progress. Lebanon must remain a center of modern Arab thought, a capital of intellectual freedom and an arena for free publication and innovation.

The Future Movement affirms its commitment to a state project for a second Lebanese independence; a modern, just and democratic state, and a civic state that lives up to the principles of religions and does not resort to sectarian strife: a progressive state that protects the individual and collective rights of its citizens.

The Future Movement, arising from the national and political experience of the Lebanese in the March 14 movement and deriving its principles from the path of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, affirms its commitment to 'Lebanon first', a banner of the march towards a comprehensive national vision that reflects the aspirations and dreams of the Lebanese ('National Principles', in 'The Future Movement' (undated), Future Movement website <http://www.almustaqbal.org/admin/PDF/politicsEN.pdf> – Accessed 28 April 2009 – Attachment 34).

A report from the *Ya Libnan* website provides details on the 14 March 2009 launch of the March 14 Coalition's election campaign, the key policy points of which are reproduced below:

- 1- To protect Lebanon against Israeli aggression and regaining Shebaa via UNSCR 1701.
- 2- To impose the authority of the state on all its territories. There should be no arms other than those of the Lebanese state.
- 3 – To end the dispute with Syria and build normal, friendly relations based on the Taef accord, to complete our diplomatic relations, with border control and demarcation, to end the issue of Lebanese detainees.
- 4- To provide harmony between Lebanon and the international community, not to place Lebanon in confrontation with the international community.
- 5- We will work to regain Lebanon's Arab role, commit to supporting the Palestinian people and Authority's struggle in establishing an independent state with its capital Jerusalem.
- 6- we will pursue our strict commitment in not settling Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and adopting a draft law presented by March 14 MPs 6 months ago to amend the constitution on the issue
- 7 – We are committed to state building through the implementation of the Taef accord and securing the free and just presence of all sects.
- 8- To commit to the requirements of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in a manner that guarantees Lebanon's safety and stability.
- 9- To provide the necessary commitments for returning displaced citizens and to finally close this issue once and for all.
- 10 – To protect Lebanon and the Lebanese internally and externally from the ramifications of the international financial crisis, to put in place an effective program regarding our national debt.
- 11- To implement economic, social and development policies.

12 – To secure wider participation of women in Lebanon’s political, economic and social life and in the decision making process

13- To commit to the cause of the Lebanese Diaspora, in securing them with equal rights and duties particularly in their right to vote.

14 – To put an end to the environmental deterioration in Lebanon via a strategy of sustainable development (‘Lebanon’s March 14 alliance launches its 2009 election campaign’ 2009, *Ya Libnan* website, 14 March http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2009/03/lebanons_march_2.php – Accessed 29 April 2009 – Attachment 35).

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