



Parliamentary Elections 2018

European Union Election Observation Mission to the Republic of Lebanon 2018





LEBANON

FINAL REPORT Parliamentary elections 2018

EUROPEAN UNION ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

www.eueom-lebanon2018.eu

This report has been produced by the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to Lebanon 2018 and contains the conclusions of its observation of the parliamentary elections on 6 May. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Union.

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I. Executive summary

The parliamentary elections in Lebanon in 2018 saw the introduction of innovations such as a new proportional system, voting by expatriates and increased voter secrecy. All were recommended by the EU EOM in 2009 and had the effect of widening the fields of competition and choice for the electorate. Stronger campaign finance regulations and capacity to implement them, in a country where campaign spending is high, are needed to support a level playing field, particularly for a new generation of independents and women. There was a remarkable increase in the number of female candidates standing. However, only six were elected and women remain severely under-represented in politics. The adoption of temporary special measures could accelerate women's political participation in line with Lebanon's international obligations. Unequal access to the media, which favoured those with the largest campaign funds, could be addressed.

Political background

The last parliamentary elections to take place in Lebanon before 2018 were in 2009. They were based on an electoral system in operation since the 1960 Electoral Law that used a majoritarian block vote in multiple-member constituencies. After those elections, discussion of a number of electoral reforms was re-launched. There were two issues at the core of a new draft law: the nature of the future electoral system and district boundary delimitation. No agreement was reached.

The following eight years were marked by successive coalition governments, three extensions of parliament's term and more than two years of a vacant presidency, the result mostly of resignations, deadlocks over appointments and disagreement over reforms. In the end the Lebanese parliament passed a new electoral law in June 2017 with the agreement of almost all political parties. For the first time proportional representation, which was recommended by the EU EOM in 2009, and preferential voting were introduced. Both had the effect of opening some fresh fields of electoral contest previously confined to just a few constituencies.

Two new factors were at play in the 2018 elections, showing the degree to which Lebanon's political architecture had changed. With wider competition came a level of uncertainty unknown in most areas of the country. Parties were forced to build ad hoc alliances with a broad, moveable set of partners, established district by district. At the same time, the lines between Lebanon's two big blocs, the March 8 and March 14 alliances¹, were gradually blurring. There were numerous cases of new alliances crossing traditional lines, but also of competition for marginal seats between long-term allies. Another new feature was the appearance of candidates from civil society entering national parliamentary politics for the first time after their emergence in the 2016 municipal elections.

Legal framework

The legal framework constitutes an adequate basis for holding democratic elections, although it falls short of the relevant international standards in some areas, such as the principle of equality between men and women and the right of certain categories of citizen to vote. Lebanon has ratified the major international and regional legal instruments covering electoral rights.

Beyond the introduction of proportionality, the new electoral law ushered in other major improvements highlighted by the EU EOM following the 2009 elections, including official printed ballots, which enhanced secrecy of the vote, and the implementation of out-of-country voting

¹ Both alliances were formed in the aftermath of the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005. The March 8 Alliance led by Hezbollah includes the Amal movement, Free Patriotic Movement, Marada Party, Syrian Social Nationalist Party and other parties or blocs in Parliament. The March 14 alliance led by the Future Movement includes the Lebanese Forces and Kataeb.

(OCV) for Lebanon's substantial expatriate community. To a lesser extent, slightly expanded competences were assigned to the Supervisory Commission for Elections (SCE), although not in a way that allowed it to fully carry out its remit to monitor campaign financing and the media's compliance with campaign regulations.

Some important reforms previously recommended by the EU EOM were not adopted, most important among them discriminatory provisions regarding women, such as the automatic transfer of their voter registration, once married, to their husband's place of registration and the absence of a woman's right to pass her Lebanese citizenship to her children. The law also did not introduce any special measures to improve women's access to parliament. Furthermore, for certain categories of Lebanese citizens the right to vote is severely restricted. The law disenfranchises serving military personnel of all ranks. Although not disenfranchised by law, pre-trial detainees cannot vote as there are no measures in place for the exercise of their right.

Electoral system

In accordance with the Constitution, the electoral system remains founded on confessional power-sharing, by which 128 seats in Parliament are equally divided between the two main confessional groups, Muslim and Christian. The seats are further sub-divided into 11 confessional branches, including one seat for other Christian minorities. The new law also modified the delineation of constituency boundaries and the number of districts. The system has exposed notable discrepancies in the number of votes needed to get a seat, due to the constitutionally-mandated fixed allocation of confessional seats, which is not matched by the changing demographics of the different districts. It is important to note that the Constitution establishes the long-term aim of building a non-confessional system. The EU EOM considers that the idea of gradually reducing the emphasis on confessionalism in the electoral system deserves to be pursued, so long as it is through complete consensus and it continues to protect all Lebanese communities.

Electoral administration

The administration of the election is a government function. The election management body is the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM). It has extensive powers over most aspects of the electoral process, including voter and candidate registration, logistics, administration and conduct of polling, and the management and announcement of results. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the judiciary play leading roles in the area of voter registration claims and objections and results management, executed through Primary Registration Committees (PRCs) and Higher Registration Committees (HRCs). These are headed by judges and composed of civil servants. All play a role in the election administration and dispute resolution. All layers of the electoral administration generally conducted their work in an effective and impartial manner.

The elections law established the Supervisory Commission for Elections (SCE), a monitoring and regulatory body mandated to supervise the elections independently while remaining in coordination with the MoIM. Its main tasks are the supervision of campaign finance and of the media's compliance with campaign regulations. However, the commission remains financially dependent on the government and has no powers to investigate, adjudicate or sanction breaches. A limited mandate, some loopholes, unclear provisions in the law and a delayed allocation of its budget undermined the SCE's capacity to fulfil its role effectively. A strong reinforcement of the SCE's mandate, independence and financial resources is recommended to allow it to fulfil its role and increase public trust in the institution.

Voter registration

Confidence in the inclusiveness and transparency of the voter list was widespread among political forces and other interlocutors. Voters had the opportunity to challenge the preliminary voter list or ask for corrections during a reasonably long public consultation period. The list included 3,746,675 voters, an increase of 15 per cent since 2009, which is feasible demographically given that the last parliamentary election was held nine years earlier.

A voter's voting place is the paternal ancestral village, which leads to massive movements of people around every election day. It would be advisable to implement a system that allows voters to cast their ballots in a place where they actually reside.

Candidate and list registration

The law regulates the grounds for disqualification from running for membership of the parliament, which are generally in line with Lebanon's international obligations. They are however circumscribed by the country's confessional system, as candidates have to be of the same confession as the seat they contest. The new electoral law raised the non-reimbursable candidate nomination fee from two million Lebanese pounds to eight million, a high amount which can be considered an obstacle for those candidates with limited financial resources.

976 candidates were registered and only one was rejected, with no appeals. Of these, 597 (including 86 women) joined 77 lists that involved a set of variable alliances with parties making calculated deals to improve their chances of winning seats. The rest of the candidates either withdrew or did not succeed in forming a list. No list was rejected and all parliamentary seats were contested.

Campaign

Throughout the three-month campaign period parties and candidates generally enjoyed freedom of speech, movement and assembly. However, in some districts, independent candidates reported to observers they had been denied the right to canvass or hold events in neighbourhoods "held" by another party. On the whole the campaign was peaceful, if occasionally marred by isolated incidents which were quickly defused by the internal security forces and Lebanese army. Party leaders also worked quickly to de-escalate tensions.

One consequence of a new architecture of alliances based mainly on a pragmatic approach to seat-winning was that political actors often shied away from direct debate so as not to jeopardise their fragile, often temporary, arrangements. This was in stark contrast to the 2005 and 2009 electoral campaigns, when regional developments were paramount issues in a more polarised Lebanon. In 2018 candidates fought around broad internal topics, such as the strengthening of state institutions, unemployment, environmental management, delivery of public services and the fight against corruption. Party slogans were aimed at rallying support through general feel-good evocations of hope, change, protection, the future and strength, while themes commonly used in the past, such as resistance, sovereignty and Arabism, were used as identity markers by the political parties for their traditional electoral base. Civil society aspirants attempted to engage voters by calling for the end of the sectarian system, as well as greater gender equality and civil rights.

The combination of high campaign spending ceilings and prices for appearing in the media and for the broadcast of election spots distorted the level playing field. This was compounded by the cost of billboards, recruitment of candidate agents and transportation of voters, which is permitted under the law, but which could be considered as a way of influencing the will of voters. In this regard, shortcomings were exposed in the SCE, which lacked the capacity to monitor campaign finance efficiently due to a restricted mandate, insufficient resources and a very short timeframe within which to audit the financial reports of candidates. The SCE also did not have the powers to investigate, adjudicate or sanction breaches. It would be advisable for the law to include effective sanctions against candidates and lists which fail to comply with the regulations, as well as to reinforce the SCE's investigative powers and extend significantly the one month currently allowed for it to carry out its auditing functions.

Out-of-country voting

Outside of Lebanon, out-of-country voting (OCV) was implemented for the first time for Lebanese expatriates, as recommended by the 2009 EU EOM. The total number of registered voters was relatively low, 82,965 out of a diaspora estimated to be much bigger. The Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that 59 per cent of the registered expatriates voted in 39 countries on 27 and 29 April.

The EU EOM observed the European part of the OCV on 29 April in nine EU countries and Switzerland. They assessed it as generally well organised and conducted, orderly and without serious incident. The transport and storage of the pouches containing OCV ballots was efficiently conducted by MoFA personnel in the presence of the media. On 6 May, the EU EOM observed the sorting of out-of-country ballots and verified that the integrity of the seals was preserved. However, the procedures adopted for the counting of the ballots cast abroad did not always respect the secrecy of voting.

Polling

Voting on 6 May in Lebanon was generally peaceful, although there were a number of confrontations between party supporters, which were swiftly defused by the internal security forces and the army. Overall, the observers' assessment of the opening and polling was positive. Observers received a few credible reports of allegations of vote-buying. Vote-buying was often cited by candidates who filed complaints to the Constitutional Council requesting the invalidation of results in several districts, for example in Beirut 2, Bekaa 1, Bekaa 2 and North Lebanon 2. All EU EOM observers were able to observe the polling process without obstruction. The presence of candidates and list agents across the political spectrum, which is an essential component of transparency, was widespread.

This transparency was enhanced during the counting with the use of overhead projection-style systems in the polling stations, in which the ballots were captured and shown as they were counted. However, observers reported that procedures for the reconciliation of ballots cast against signatures in the voter list was not always properly conducted and that polling staff had difficulty in filling the polling station reports in a quarter of the observed cases. This slightly delayed finalisation of counting procedures.

Tabulation and publication of results

The tabulation of results in the Primary Registration Committees, which are headed by judges, was also carried out in the presence of candidate agents and observers in a secure environment. Observers reported that due to the absence of detailed procedures for the counting of out-of-country ballots and the tabulation of results the judges worked in different ways across the country.

In the Higher Registration Committees, the process concerned mainly the aggregation of all results that had already been tabulated in the Primary Registration Committees. Observers evaluated this stage as less transparent and less organized than the tabulation in the PRCs. Training to familiarise judges with the software and to include a simulation exercise is recommended to speed up the tabulation process and enhance its transparency and integrity.

After election day, the MoIM published the official results by major district on its website, using files that explained to the public how the electoral quotient and allocation of seats were calculated. In addition, the MoIM published the results disaggregated by polling station. These are important steps for the transparency and the traceability of votes. The MoIM published the final official turnout figure as 49.7 per cent. Based on the official results announced by the ministry on 7 and 8 May, 105 representatives of political parties and 23 independent candidates were elected to Parliament. Nearly half of them were newcomers.

Disputes

The election results were accepted broadly by the political parties, as well as by most independent candidates. The deadline for submitting complaints against the election results was 6 June 2018, no more than 30 days after the official announcement. Seventeen appeals against the results were filed with the Constitutional Council by candidates and lists from eight major districts. Thirteen of them were filed by individual candidates, the other four by groups of candidates belonging to lists. At the moment of drafting this report the cases were still being examined by the Constitutional Council.

According to the law, from the publication of results to the declaration of a decision as many as five months can pass. This is excessively long, giving room for uncertainty over the electoral results while cases are still being determined. A shorter timeframe for deciding on complaints related to election results could be provided by law to ensure effective and timely remedy.

Women's participation

Historically, women face significant social and financial barriers and their participation in Lebanese political life has been minimal. The 2018 elections saw a remarkable increase in the number of women candidates, but only six of them were elected. Despite increased social demands and various law proposals, the 2017 electoral law failed to include any measures to improve women's political representation, as recommended by the EU EOM in 2009. In light of Lebanon's international obligations and political commitments, the under-representation of women in political life could be addressed through the adoption of temporary special measures, for example a quota for women on the candidate lists. This could be extended to greater women's representation in the main decision-making bodies.

Persons with Disabilities

The new electoral law includes some measures aimed at improving the inclusion of people with disabilities (PWD), such as the possibility of assisted voting by any voter of their choice. Nevertheless, this option was not strictly enforced so all undue influence on voters would be avoided.

Only 47 per cent of the polling stations observed by EU EOM observers were accessible to PWD. The mission also observed that voter education was not inclusive, that there were no specimen tactile ballots, and that the media coverage of campaign and other election events did not include sign language. Responsibility for the needs of PWD and facilitating their right to vote falls to the MoIM. Consideration should be given to the implementation of inclusive measures to ensure their full participation in the electoral processes and to allow PWD to exercise their right to vote freely and independently.

Voter education

The MoIM conducted a voter information campaign through traditional media and social networks. Although it started later than the complexities of the new system might have warranted, overall the campaign was of good quality. The rate of invalid ballots was lower than expected. Very importantly, most media made a significant effort to explain the new system. Observers also reported that candidates devoted a lot of their campaign efforts to explaining the system to voters. On election day, observers rated voters' understanding of procedures as 'good' and 'very good' in 95 per cent of observed cases.

The media

Lebanon enjoys a diverse and plural media environment, and freedom of the media to cover events was generally respected during the campaign period. However, the partisan alignment of some media outlets and unclear provisions in the elections law led to generally unbalanced election coverage and to uneven access to the media for all contestants. The absence of legal clarity allowed broadcasters, for example, to offer paid-for coverage across all programme formats, irrespective of the distinction between editorial and advertising. The situation was compounded by shortcomings of the SCE in overseeing the media's compliance with the law. The elections law could be amended to further clarify the distinction between free-of-charge editorial coverage, including news and political talk shows, and paid-for access to private media, to avoid misinterpretation of the elections law. Clear regulations and guidelines could be issued by the SCE on this matter.

Post-election environment

The post-election environment remained calm in Lebanon with only a few exceptions. In Aley, an armed clash between supporters of the Progressive Socialist Party and Lebanese Democratic Party

supporters resulted in one death. Religious and political leaders of Druze parties intervened to prevent an escalation.

Priority recommendations

These recommendations are offered with a view to further enhance the conduct of elections in Lebanon and to support efforts to bring them fully in line with international obligations and standards for democratic elections. They are made for the consideration of the newly elected Parliament, the new government, the Supervisory Commission for Elections (SCE) and Lebanese society. Priority recommendations include:

- 1. In order to address the severe under-representation of women in Parliament, the mission considers it advisable to adopt temporary special measures, for example a quota, accompanied by enforcement mechanisms.**
- 2. For the sake of the principles of equality and non-discrimination, an amendment of the nationality law could be considered to allow women to confer their Lebanese citizenship on their children on the same basis as men.**
- 3. To allocate voters to polling stations without confessional and gender-based separations.**
- 4. The mission considers it important to grant the SCE full financial and administrative autonomy from the Ministry of Interior, as well as the financial and human resources it needs to carry out its duties. It would be also advisable to enhance the SCE's remit to fully investigate any cases of non-compliance with campaign regulations, and that the law establishes an effective set of sanctions for these cases.**
- 5. In addition, it is recommended that the election law be amended to extend significantly the timeframe the SCE has to audit the financial reports submitted by candidates and lists.**
- 6. The elections law could also be amended to establish a clear distinction between free-of-charge editorial coverage, including news and political talk shows, and candidate's paid-for access to private media. This recommendation derives from citizens' right to genuine information so as to make informed choices.**

II. Introduction

The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) was present in Lebanon from 27 March 2018 following an invitation from the Lebanese authorities. The Mission was led by Chief Observer, Elena Valenciano, Member of the European Parliament (Spain). In total, the EU EOM deployed 132 observers from the 28 EU Member States, as well as Norway and Switzerland across the country to assess the whole electoral process against Lebanon's international obligations and commitments for democratic elections as well as against its own laws.

A delegation of seven members of the European Parliament, led by José Ignacio Salafranca MEP (Spain), joined the mission. On the 6 May election day, observers visited over 525 polling stations in all 15 major districts and 26 minor districts of Lebanon to observe voting and counting. The mission published a preliminary statement on 8 May. The EU EOM remained in Lebanon until June 7, a day after the deadline for the filing of any complaints to the Constitutional Council, to observe post-electoral disputes process.

The EU EOM Lebanon 2018 is independent, including from governments, and strictly neutral, with no vested interest in the outcome of the election. The EU EOM followed an established methodology and adheres to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation endorsed at the United Nations in October 2005.

III. Political background

The last parliamentary elections in Lebanon before 2018 took place in 2009 and were based on an electoral system² in operation since the 1960 Electoral Law, using a majoritarian block vote in multiple-member constituencies. After those elections, discussion of a number of electoral reforms was re-ignited but no agreement was reached. Two issues were at the core of a new draft law: the future electoral system and district boundary delimitation.

At the expiry of parliament's mandate³ following the 2009 poll, fresh elections were scheduled to take place in June 2013 but were cancelled two weeks earlier. At the same time Parliament extended its mandate until 20 November 2014 because of its failure to pass a new electoral law. Then, on 11 November, a new extension⁴ of two years and seven months was passed by Parliament, which justified its action by citing the exceptional circumstances caused by the war in neighbouring Syria. Parliament's election of Michel Aoun as President on 31 October 2016, following 29 months of presidential vacuum⁵, brought new momentum to the debate surrounding electoral reform.

President Aoun, for the first time, used Article 59 of the Constitution to adjourn Parliament's session for four weeks, blocking the possibility of another extension of its mandate during that period and thereby giving more time for a compromise to be reached between the political parties. A new electoral law, which introduced proportionality for the first time within redefined constituencies, was agreed in June 2017⁶ and was followed by a third extension of parliament. The law was the result of negotiations among the country's political forces and highlighted the pre-eminence of a strongly rooted culture of agreement based on consensus.

Notwithstanding this breakthrough, the new electoral system presents challenges for the voters and for political parties. Its complexities are compounded when incorporated into the confession-based composition of the parliament⁷.

In the past, the majoritarian "winner-takes-all" system guaranteed a secure return of MPs to the leading confessional parties in their strongholds. This was particularly true for the Shi'a alliance of Hezbollah and Amal, as well as Prime Minister Saad Hariri's Future Movement in the predominantly Sunni areas. The same was also true for Walid Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party in the Druze stronghold of Chouf-Aley. The element of competition was almost entirely confined to the predominantly Christian constituencies, where Samy Geagea's Lebanese Forces and Gemayel's Kataeb (14 March) contested against President Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement and Frangieh's Marada (8 March).

The new electoral system introduced for the first time wider competition and a level of uncertainty previously unknown in most areas of the country. This has altered the political architecture, forcing

² This system was considered by many analysts to be unrepresentative. One fundamental grievance of the Christians in Lebanon was the issue of Muslim-elected Christian MPs, whereby in the districts where Muslims are the majority the seats reserved for the Christians were actually determined by Muslim voters.

³ The 4-year duration of Parliament's mandate is not established by the Constitution but by the electoral law.

⁴ Appeals were filed in the Constitutional Council (CC) against the two extensions of Parliament's mandate. The lack of a quorum prevented the CC from taking a decision regarding the first extension. In the second case, it rejected the appeal so as to avoid an institutional vacuum, acknowledging nevertheless that the extension of the mandate was unconstitutional.

⁵ The mandate of former President Michel Suleiman expired on 24 May 2014.

⁶ The Electoral Law was agreed on June 14 by the Council of Ministers, promulgated by Parliament on 16 June and published in the Official Journal on 17 June.

⁷ The 128 seats of the Majlis al-Nuwwab (Parliament) are divided by confession (64 for Christians, 64 for Muslims, respectively divided among seven Christian and four Muslim sects). While 18 sects, or confessions, are recognised in Lebanon, only 11 of them enjoy political representation in parliament.

parties to build ad hoc alliances with a broad, moveable set of partners, established district by district. It has come as the lines between Lebanon's two big blocs, the March 8 and March 14 alliances⁸, have gradually blurred. The most notable examples of alliances that crossed the camps were between President Aoun's FPM party and the Future Movement of Saad Hariri (in South III and Bekaa I). Another example of the evolution of pragmatic alliances between former contenders in larger constituencies was the one between the March 14 MP Boutros Harb and the traditionally pro-Syrian Marada party.

One further pattern to observe is that the new proportional system has opened space for competition for marginal seats between long-term allies, as in the case of Hezbollah running for seats against FPM allies in four districts, while they stayed allied in two. However, some red lines remained. Long-time allies Hezbollah and Amal⁹ would only build a coalition with members of the March 8 bloc¹⁰, while the Lebanese Forces only with the March 14 bloc.

Several civil society-based lists contested the 2018 elections. The most prominent among them was Kulluna Watani (*We all are my country*), whose candidates were activists of the main social movements to emerge in the 2015-16 garbage protests and who entered the political arena in the 2016 municipal elections. This explicitly non-confessional list, which fielded candidates in constituencies across the country, did not form alliances with any traditional party.

The appearance in the voter register of massive numbers of first-time voters (around 20 per cent of the electorate¹¹) also increased the level of uncertainty and unpredictability in voting intentions.

IV. Implementation of previous EOM recommendations

After Lebanon's elections in 2009, the EU EOM presented a set of recommendations aimed at improving the electoral process in the country. Some important recommendations were incorporated in the new elections law agreed in June 2017 and were implemented for the 2018 parliamentary elections.

The key innovation was the adoption of a proportional electoral system that opened some new fields of electoral contest previously confined to a few constituencies. Other major improvements concerned the introduction of official printed ballots and the implementation of out-of-country voting (OCV). To a lesser extent, slightly enhanced competences were assigned to the Supervisory Commission for Elections (SCE), although not in a way that allowed it to fully carry out its remit to monitor campaign financing and the media's compliance with campaign regulations. Free airtime for candidates on state-owned media was introduced for the first time. In addition, for the 2018 elections, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities published on its website election-related decisions as well as the final results broken down by polling station, which is an essential component of transparency.

Despite these important improvements to the legal framework, the electoral reform did not include some important EU EOM recommendations from 2009. Most importantly, the legal framework still

⁸ Both alliances were formed in the aftermath of the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005. The March 8 Alliance led by Hezbollah includes the Amal movement, Free Patriotic Movement, Marada Party, Syrian Social Nationalist Party and other parties or blocs in Parliament. The March 14 alliance led by the Future Movement includes the Lebanese Forces and Kataeb.

⁹ The Hezbollah-Amal alliance functions in the nine constituencies where one or both of them fielded candidates, in the seven districts hosting Shi'a seats and in two constituencies where Amal was running for Sunni seats.

¹⁰ The FPM of President Aoun and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party.

¹¹ Around 650,000 people.

contains discriminatory provisions regarding women, such as the automatic transfer of their voter registration, once married, to their husband's place of registration. They are also still not allowed to pass their Lebanese citizenship to their children. The law did not introduce any special measures to improve women's political representation and electoral participation. None of the electoral campaign-related recommendations or those concerning voter registration was adopted. Important recommendations relating to the improvement of the regulatory framework for the media sector were also not adopted. It is important to note that the Constitution establishes the long-term aim of building a non-confessional system. The EU EOM considers that the idea of gradually reducing the emphasis on confessionalism in the electoral system deserves to be pursued, so long as it is through complete consensus and it continues to protect all Lebanese communities.

V. Legal framework

An improved legal framework introduces for the first time proportional representation and official printed ballots, but further reforms could be considered. Although inequalities in representation between constituencies have been slightly reduced in the new elections law, large disparities remain.

International principles and commitments

The legal framework constitutes an adequate basis for holding democratic elections, although it falls short of the relevant international standards in some areas, such as the principle of equality between men and women and the right of certain categories of citizen to vote. Lebanon has ratified the major international and regional legal instruments covering electoral rights, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)¹², the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (CPRW), the Arab Charter of Human Rights. Lebanon has signed, but not yet ratified, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. According to the preamble of the Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the principles enshrined in the Charter are binding upon Lebanon and the "*Government shall embody these principles in all fields and areas without exception*". The Lebanese Constitution also provides that the Lebanese shall be equal before the law and enjoy civil and political rights without discrimination.

Lebanon ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), albeit with reservations¹³. These deny to women the right to pass their Lebanese citizenship to their children and to have equal marriage rights, as mentioned above, and constitute a breach of the cornerstone principle of non-discrimination¹⁴.

Electoral legislation

Lebanon's legal framework relating to the 2018 parliamentary elections is based on the Lebanese Constitution of 1926 (with its amendments), the National Pact of 1943, the Taif Accord of 1989, the Doha Agreement of 2008, the Law 250/1993 on the establishment of the Constitutional Council (CC), the new elections Law 44/17 adopted in June 2017, as well as other relevant laws and regulations.

¹² However, Lebanon did not ratify the Optional Protocol related to individual complaints to the UN Human Rights Committee, nor the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW.

¹³ Lebanon expressed reservations concerning Article 9.2 ("*States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children*") and Article 16 (on marriage and family) of the CEDAW.

¹⁴ UN, ICCPR, Arts.2, 3 and 26 enshrine the principles of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex, equality between women and men and equality before the law respectively.

Electoral reform brought important improvements to the legal framework and integrated several key recommendations¹⁵ proposed by civil society and previous EU election observation missions. The law maintained the confessional allocation of seats as mandated by the Constitution, but it adopted for the first time a proportional system based on open lists and one preferential vote, replacing the majoritarian system that has governed the country's election since independence. Another milestone was the introduction of official, printed ballots, an essential safeguard for the secrecy of the vote and a potential counter-measure to vote buying. For the first time, Lebanese nationals living abroad were able to exercise their right to vote.

Notwithstanding the positive breakthroughs, the new electoral law falls short of international standards in several respects. Most significant among these are the discriminatory provisions concerning the automatic transfer of a woman's registration to her husband's registration place¹⁶ and the absence of special measures to improve women's political representation and participation at all levels of the electoral process¹⁷.

For certain categories of Lebanese citizens, the right to vote is severely restricted. The law disenfranchises serving military personnel¹⁸ of all ranks and divisions, whereas naturalized citizens can only vote or run for office ten years after their naturalization¹⁹. Pre-trial detainees, although not disenfranchised by law, cannot vote as there are no measures in place for the exercise of their right²⁰. In addition, Lebanon is one of the few countries²¹ in the world where the voting age is 21, whereas the age of majority is 18. Despite an initial step being taken in 2009 by the parliament, which unanimously voted a constitutional law to reduce the voting age to 18, further steps needed for the adoption of this constitutional amendment were not taken.

According to Lebanon's international obligations²² voting should be open to every adult citizen, and any conditions that apply to the exercise of this right should be based on objective and reasonable criteria²³. Consideration could be given to ensure the right to vote for all the above-mentioned categories of citizens.

¹⁵ More than 20 electoral law proposals were drafted by civil society organizations, the Boutros Commission 2006 and most of the political parties. Recommendations were also included in the EU EOM Lebanon 2009 final report.

¹⁶ UN, ICCPR, Art.3, *"The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant"*.

¹⁷ The only advancement was limited to the consideration of gender representation with regard to the members of the SCE.

¹⁸ UN, ICCPR, Art.25 *"Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without unreasonable restrictions: ^(b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections"*.

¹⁹ UN, ICCPR, Art.25(b) protects the rights and freedoms of every "citizen" and no distinctions are permitted; UN, Human Right Committee (HRC CCPR), General Comment (GC) 25, para. 3, *"Distinctions between those who are entitled to citizenship by birth and those who acquire it by naturalization may raise questions of compatibility with article 25"*.

²⁰ UN, HRC CCPR, GC No.25, para. 11, *"States must take effective measures to ensure that all persons entitled to vote are able to exercise that right"*. UN General Assembly Resolution on *Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners (28/03/1991)*, *"except for those limitations that are demonstrably necessitated by the fact of incarceration, all prisoners shall retain the human rights and fundamental freedoms"*.

²¹ The minimum voting age is 21 in only nine countries around the world (Lebanon, Cameroon, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Tonga).

²² Ibid 8.

²³ UN, HRC CCPR, GC No.25, para. 4, *"Any conditions which apply to the exercise of the rights protected by article 25 should be based on objective and reasonable criteria. The exercise of these rights by citizens may not be suspended or excluded except on grounds which are established by law and which are objective and reasonable. For example, established mental incapacity may be a ground for denying a person the right to vote or to hold office."* According to international practice the "objective and reasonable" standard requires States to justify the decision to exclude all children under the age of 18 from the electorate.

EU EOM recommendations:

To give serving military personnel the right to vote.

To provide for the immediate right to vote and to stand for elections to all persons granted citizenship by the Lebanese State.

To ensure that voting facilities and/or voting systems are in place for all those prisoners eligible to vote.

To consider lowering the voting age from 21 to 18.

The elections law suffers from some inconsistencies and omissions, which it is recommended to review before future election processes. For example, election day complaints relating to irregularities at the level of polling station are not clearly regulated and in practice were rarely raised. The electoral law does not impose a complete ban on electoral campaigning on election day, referring only to the prohibition of various electoral activities inside, at the gates or near the polling center, without strictly defining these terms. Campaign activities and materials were observed in the close vicinity of 19.4 per cent of the polling stations where EU EOM observers were present on 6 May. The provisions concerning the presence and the number of the agents of candidates and lists on the election day during the voting, counting and tabulation of results could be clarified and disseminated in advance to all parties by the relevant authorities. In addition, the law does not specify the conditions under which a recount of ballots should be conducted by the Primary Registration Committees.

Some provisions introduced by the new electoral law, such as the reserved seats for out-of-country voting (OCV), the geographical area of the single constituency for the OCV and the use of electronic magnetic voters' cards, have not been implemented for these elections. If they are to be applied for future electoral processes, procedural clarification would be necessary.

Election system and boundaries delimitation

The key innovation of the new elections law was the introduction of a degree of proportionality in the electoral system, as recommended by the 2009 EU EOM. Lebanon switched from a plurality-majority system with the block vote and the *panachage* (in which voters were allowed to split their preferences between multiple lists), to a proportional electoral system with open lists. In accordance with the Constitution, the electoral system remains founded on confessional power-sharing, by which 128 seats in Parliament are equally divided between the two main confessional groups, Muslim and Christian²⁴. The seats are further sub-divided into 11 confessional branches (four within Islam and seven within Christianity, including one seat for other Christian minorities)²⁵.

The new law also modifies the delineation of constituency boundaries and the number of districts. From the 26 electoral districts outlined in the 2008 law, the 2017 law provides for 15 newly delimited major districts comprising 26 minor districts, which loosely reflect the administrative boundaries of the *qadas*²⁶, albeit with certain exceptions²⁷. The distinction between major and minor

²⁴ Furthermore, the President has to be a Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunni and the Speaker of the Parliament a Shi'a.

²⁵ The 128 seats are distributed in the following way: 27 Sunni, 27 Shi'a, 8 Druze, 2 Alawite, 34 Maronite, 14 Greek Orthodox, 8 Greek Catholic, 5 Armenian Orthodox, 1 Armenian Catholic, 1 Evangelical and 1 Minorities.

²⁶ Sub-governorates.

²⁷ Beirut has been divided in two major districts, instead of one unique *qada*. Saida and Saida villages (Zahrani) are administratively under the same *qada*. Baalbek and Hermel are considered administratively as two different *qadas* but they are a unique major district, without a minor district.

district has been introduced because voters vote for one list in a major district and have a preferential vote for one candidate from the same list running in the voter's minor district.

It is important to note that the delimitation of constituencies has traditionally been a crucial and highly controversial element of discussion of successive Lebanese election laws and their modifications prior to each election. The 2017 law was no exception. As such, and despite being approved by an overwhelming majority in parliament and almost all political parties, the creation of new constituencies was subject to strong criticism, notably but not exclusively by civil society groups, who considered that the development was based on tactical advantages for the main confessional parties, rather than on fixed objective criteria.

Seats are distributed using the 'Hare quota largest remainder' formula²⁸, dividing the number of total valid votes, including blank votes, by the number of seats to be allocated in the major district. The lists that do not reach the quotient, which can vary considerably between constituencies²⁹, are disqualified. The Hare quota is then calculated for a second time to define how many seats are obtained by the lists that have passed the quotient, or threshold. This double electoral quotient slightly dilutes the proportional effects of the election system. In fact, in eight districts, the votes obtained by some lists that did not reach the threshold would have been sufficient to get a marginal seat with the largest remainder. Finally, seats are attributed by confession on the basis of preferential votes obtained by each candidate running in the minor districts.

The new elections law has slightly reduced inequalities in representation between constituencies. Nonetheless, there remain notable discrepancies in the number of votes needed to get a seat, due to the constitutionally-mandated fixed allocation of confessional seats, which is not matched by the changing demographics of the different districts. For example, a member of the Parliament elected in Bint Jbeil constituency in southern Lebanon will represent three times more voters than one elected in Beirut 1.

The use of the official printed ballot paper

The introduction of the official printed ballot paper represents a milestone innovation for Lebanon, where it was previous practice for political parties to supply voters with self-printed or handwritten ballot papers, thus compromising the secrecy of voting. The MoIM contracted the ballot design and printing to Inkript, a private Lebanese printing company³⁰. The ballot paper contained six security features making forgery or duplication extremely difficult.

VI. Election Administration

All layers of the electoral administration conducted their work in a generally efficient and impartial manner. However, a limited mandate and lack of resources hinder the Supervisory Commission for Elections from fulfilling its monitoring and regulatory roles.

Structure and composition of the Election administration

The administration of the election is a government function. The election management body is the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM). Through its Directorate General of Political Affairs

²⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Largest_remainder_method; <http://aceproject.org/main/english/es/esc06.htm>

²⁹ The threshold varies between 20 per cent in South Lebanon 1 (Saida-Jezzine) and 7.7 per cent in Mount Lebanon 4 (Chouf-Aley). Please see table in the annex for the thresholds in each major district.

³⁰ Inkript has provided ballot papers to several countries such as Mali, Mauritania and Iraq.

and Refugees (DGPARG) and the Directorate General for Personal Status (DGPS) the ministry has extensive powers over most aspects of the electoral process, including voter and candidate registration, logistics, administration and conduct of polling, and management and announcement of results. For issues that are not detailed in the law, the ministry has the power to adopt regulations, circulars and procedures. On the ground, governors, sub-governors and civil servants manage election operations.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the judiciary play a leading role in the area of voter registration claims and objections and results management, executed through 162 Primary Registration Committees (PRCs) and 30 Higher Registration Committees (HRCs). These committees are headed by judges and comprise civil servants, who are temporarily appointed through a joint decree by the MoIM and the MoJ. HRCs and PRCs both play a role in election administration and dispute resolution. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants (MoFA) has organisational responsibility for the out-of-country voting (OCV). Although numerous concerns and criticisms were raised by civil society and candidates about the candidatures of the Ministers of Interior and Foreign Affairs³¹, all layers of the electoral administration generally conducted their work in an effective and impartial manner. Their recent experience in managing the 2016 municipal elections was of additional value.

Administration of elections

The communication flow from the MoIM to the governors and sub-governors was not always well-timed, but on a technical level the election administration organized the elections efficiently and according to its mandate, meeting all the legal and operational deadlines, including the training of polling staff, printing of electoral documents and ballot papers and delivery of sensitive and non-sensitive material in-country and abroad. The institutional communication of the MoIM was generally good during the pre-election period, thanks to a continuous updating of the elections portal. However, the portal was not updated at all between 3 May and 8 May and some important changes relating to list agents allowed in polling stations (PS) after 7pm were not widely announced. Although the last-minute approval of a circular³² increasing the number of agents allowed in the polling stations created some confusion and inconsistencies in its implementation, it did not affect the presence of agents in them. In fact, EU EOM observers met party agents in all the PS they observed on election day.

EU EOM recommendation: to define clear internal communication between the MoIM and election officials in the field and improve coordination with them. All decisions, decrees and circulars issued by the MoIM could be communicated in a timely and widespread fashion and by a variety of means.

³¹ 16 ministers were standing for election.

³² Circular 20, issued on 27 April, provided that from 7am to 7pm each candidate can have one agent per PS, plus one mobile list agent for every two PS in the villages, and one for every three PS in the cities, as stated in Art.90 of the elections law. Moreover, as stated in Art.100 of the elections law, Circular 20 provided that after 7pm each list can have one fixed and/or one mobile agent in each PS. No candidates' agents were foreseen at this stage. Circular 21, issued on 3 May, gave candidates' agents (in addition to list agents) access to the PS and the PRCs after 7pm. The second circular increased the number of agents in the PS compared to the previous one, improving their access and enhancing the transparency of the process.

The Supervisory Commission for Elections (SCE)

The new elections law established the Supervisory Commission for Elections (SCE), a monitoring and regulatory body composed of eleven members nominated by the Council of Ministers on the recommendation of different state institutions and independent professional bodies³³.

Previously called the Supervisory Commission for Electoral Campaign (SCEC), in 2009 the commission was responsible for supervising the compliance of the media with the electoral law and regulations, and for monitoring electoral spending and auditing the financial statements of candidates. The 2017 elections law slightly enhances the SCE's role. It now has a mandate to investigate the accuracy of financial statements submitted by candidates and to ask the MoIM to impose sanctions when they are not accurate, or when candidates exceed the spending limit. Moreover, the SCE has more responsibility over the enforcement of regulations on opinion polls and over the accreditation of national and international observers. The delayed disbursement of its budget led to delays in the SCE launching some of its activities, including its media monitoring. Nonetheless it was able to fulfil part of this remit, detecting several media violations concerning libel and defamation, paid-for material not labelled as such and breaches of the silence period.

The 2017 elections law makes two important changes relating to the independence and permanence of the commission. It states that the SCE should supervise the elections independently while in coordination with the MoIM, and it defines the SCE as a permanent body. However, the commission remains financially dependent on the government and in most cases has no powers to investigate, adjudicate or sanction breaches. Moreover, the law is silent on the activities the commission should conduct between elections and vague on the term of office of its members.

A limited mandate, some loopholes and unclear provisions in the elections law and a delayed allocation of its budget undermined the SCE's capacity to fulfil its role effectively (*see also Campaign Finance and Media sections*). The SCE made determinations and clarifications on some, but not all, issues relating to the accreditation of observers, the conduct of the campaign and the media. It did not systematically communicate with the public on its activities and this weakened its impact on the process.

Strong reinforcement of the mandate and independence of the SCE is recommended to allow it to fulfil its monitoring and regulatory role and to increase public trust in the institution.

EU EOM recommendations:

To grant the SCE full financial and administrative autonomy from the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM), as well as sufficient financial and human resources to carry out its legal duties.

To enhance the SCE's remit to fully investigate and sanction any instances of non-compliance with campaign regulations.

³³ They are the Supreme Judicial Council, State Council, Court of Auditors, Beirut and Tripoli Bar Associations, Association of Certified Public Accountants, Press Syndicate and civil society organisations. The MoIM has the right to nominate two members. The member representing civil society resigned two weeks before the elections to express the discontent of civil society against the SCE's lack of independence. Civil society organisations did not nominate a replacement. However, this did not affect the work of the commission as its meetings need a quorum of seven members to be valid. A new eleventh member has been nominated by the MoIM following the elections.

VII. Voter registration

An inclusive list that enjoyed the confidence of political and other actors.

The elections law stipulates that all Lebanese, including non-residents, who have reached the voting age of 21 and who enjoy civil and political rights, have the right to vote. Voter registration is passive. The law outlines the mechanism for extracting annual voter lists from Lebanon’s permanent Personal Status Register (PSR), which is maintained by the Directorate General for Personal Status (DGPS) at the MoIM. There are civil registry offices across Lebanon and they record births, deaths, marriages and address changes. The offices are not networked via a central database and most of them keep records manually. However, confidence in the inclusiveness and transparency of the voter list among political forces and other interlocutors was widespread.

The PSR captures Lebanese citizens regardless of the place where they reside or are born. Since the adoption of Personal Status legislation in 1924, a voter’s voting place is the paternal ancestral village, which leads to massive movements of people around every election day. According to the 1924 and 1951 Laws on Civil Registry Records, an application for a transfer of registration location may be made, but the procedure is extremely cumbersome (requiring final approval by the Council of Ministers), not socially accepted and consequently barely used. It is also perceived as something which could jeopardise the delicate confessional status quo in Lebanon. It would be advisable to implement a system that allows voters to cast ballots in a place where they actually reside. The process by which voters may transfer registration location could also be simplified and shortened.

EU EOM recommendations:

To implement a system that allows voters to cast their ballot in the place where they reside.

To simplify and shorten the process by which voters may transfer their registration location to where they actually reside.

As provided for in the law, voters had the opportunity to challenge the preliminary voter lists or ask for corrections during a reasonably long public consultation period³⁴. PRCs and HRCs were the responsible bodies for this process. The appointment of these committees only six days after the beginning of the public consultation period did not have a detrimental impact on the process. The MoIM made available the final voter lists in the form of purchasable CDs³⁵ at the end of March. The list includes 3,746,675 voters. This represents an increase of 15 per cent since 2009, a figure which is feasible demographically given that the last parliamentary election was held nine years ago. The final voter register is valid for one year and it contains Lebanese voters who have reached the voting age of 21 on or before 30 March 2018, which was the legal deadline for the finalization of the voter list. First-time registered voters represented 19 per cent of the total, while the gender distribution between men and women in the final list is balanced, with the share of women reaching 51 percent.

The list of polling stations is created on the basis of the voter register. The allocation of voters to polling stations depends on the ID numbers in the voter register. Given the way ID numbers include reference to confessions and gender alongside other information, allocation to polling stations tends to reflect these demographic characteristics. Thus, particularly in densely-populated areas, voters tend to be grouped in polling stations by these characteristics, making many polling stations

³⁴ The public consultation period took place between 1 February and 10 March. During this period, the lists were available for verification at the locations of PRCs (usually the *Serail*) and online.

³⁵ The CDs contain the name, date of birth, gender, religious group, district, ancestral village and father’s name. The MoIM sold around 2,000 CDs.

effectively just for one gender and confession. Less than a quarter (23.7%) of observed polling stations were mixed. This effective separation can reinforce confessional identification of vote trends, and possible exceptions to those trends, leading to an infringement on secrecy of vote on the basis of a polling station's results. For the same reasons, there may be diminished protection against vote-buying attempts.

EU EOM recommendation: to allocate voters to polling stations without confessional and gender-based separations.

A few weeks before the elections, the MoIM made available an online consultation tool to check where to vote in-country and abroad. This webpage was not widely advertised and although this did not affect the in-country voting, some voters abroad were not informed of the location of their polling station. The EU EOM took note of the fact that voter lists were posted in all observed polling stations.

VIII. Registration of candidates and political parties

Registration of candidates and lists of candidates

A smooth and widely accepted process, but a discriminatory registration fee is levied.

The law regulates the grounds for disqualification from running for membership of the parliament, which are generally in line with Lebanon's international obligations. They are however circumscribed by the country's confessional system, as candidates have to be of the same confession as the seat they contest³⁶. The new electoral law raised the non-reimbursable candidate nomination fee from two million Lebanese pounds to eight million³⁷, a high amount which can be considered an obstacle³⁸ for those candidates with limited financial resources. This high registration fee could also be particularly prohibitive for some women, as they may face financial constraints.

EU EOM recommendation: to reduce the candidate nomination fee.

The law provides for a two-stage registration process. Firstly, between 5 February and 6 March candidates running for election had to submit their applications to the MoIM, specifying the confessional seat and district they wanted to run in. The registration process went smoothly, with 976 candidates registered and only one rejected, and with no appeal to the State Council, the administrative body in charge of the resolution of complaints relating to candidate and list registration. As a second step, registered candidates had until 26 March to form lists to be able to run for election. 597 candidates, including 86 women, formed 77 lists that involved a set of variable alliances, with parties making calculated deals to improve their chances of winning seats under the new system. The 86 women were included in 50 out of the 77 lists³⁹. The rest of the candidates

³⁶ UN Human Rights Committee CCPR/C/79/Add. 78, Lebanon (1997), "The Committee notes with concern that every Lebanese citizen must belong to one of the religious denominations officially recognized by the Government, and that this is a requirement in order to be eligible to run for public office. This practice does not, in the Committee's opinion, comply with the requirements of article 25 of the ICCPR."

³⁷ Equivalent of approximately €1,100 and €4,300 respectively.

³⁸ UN, HRC CCPR, GC No.25, para. 16, "fees or deposits should be reasonable and not discriminatory".

³⁹ One list in Akkar, "The Women of Akkar", comprised women exclusively. It did not pass the threshold for seat allocation.

either withdrew or did not succeed in forming a list. No list was rejected and all parliamentary seats were contested.

Registration of political parties

The Constitution guarantees freedom of association. There is no law on political parties and the only regulation, including registration procedures, is in the Law of Association, which dates back to 1909. Political parties, like other associations, must notify the MoIM, which has to issue an acknowledgement within 30 days of receiving the notification, as proof of an association's legality. Even if the law is old, it is regarded as generally effective and no political party has expressed any dissatisfaction with the registration process. The electoral law puts the emphasis on candidates and the lists of candidates, rather than on political parties, whose names do not appear on the registered lists of candidates.

IX. The election campaign

The campaign was generally peaceful, if occasionally marred by isolated incidents. Throughout the campaign period parties and candidates generally enjoyed freedom of speech, movement and assembly. However, the high campaign spending ceilings and prices for appearing in the media distorted the level playing field.

Throughout the three-month campaign period, parties and candidates generally enjoyed freedom of speech, movement and assembly. However, in some districts, independent and civil society candidates reported to observers they had been denied the right to canvass or hold events in neighbourhoods “held” by another party. A few candidates reported pressure being put on supporters not to participate in their campaign and difficulties in recruiting delegates. Whereas campaign finance and the media are overseen by the Supervisory Commission for Elections, the election law and the circulars regarding campaign activities do not provide a clear and consistent framework regulating the canvassing undertaken by candidates.

The campaign period was generally peaceful. In the run-up to the elections isolated incidents took place, ranging from a physical assault on a candidate resulting in injuries, to roadblocks and scuffles involving opposing political supporters, where the use of arms sometimes led to injuries. The Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces stopped the violence, and political leaders intervened on occasions to de-escalate tensions. The EU EOM urges thorough and prompt investigation of violent incidents by the authorities.

At the beginning of April, when the main parties had already established a visible presence on billboards and banners across the country, most candidates began campaigning at the district level, using as their main strategy face-to-face contact and meetings in open, public spaces⁴⁰. Micro-campaigning, featuring gatherings in private houses and door-to-door canvassing, was a key element of the campaign period, opening the path, according to many EU EOM interlocutors, to money politics and the exchange of favours for loyalty. As a result of the preferential voting system and intra-list competition, campaigning rarely involved joint activities between different partners on lists. All the leaders of the main parties toured the districts to support their candidates and held massive rallies in their strongholds.

⁴⁰ This was usually in the main square of the city or village, or in the grounds of the places of worship – the husseiniyat in Shi'a majority districts, or the courtyard next to a church in Christian areas.

Many parties and candidates put significant resources into posting billboards, posters and other hoardings, as well as paying for media appearances. The combination of high campaign spending ceilings and excessive prices for appearing in the media and for election advertisement spots distorted the level playing field. The vast majority of independent candidates and aspirants from civil society lists and smaller parties lacked such resources and turned instead to intensive use of social networks. Although most female candidates actively campaigned in all districts, only a few were visible on billboards and banners, namely the women candidates fielded by parties and one aspirant from a civil society list.

One consequence of the new architecture of alliances, which were mainly based on a pragmatic approach to seat-winning, was that political actors often shied away from everything but general debate so as not to jeopardise their fragile, often temporary, arrangements. In contrast to the 2005 and 2009 electoral campaigns, when regional developments were paramount issues in a more polarised Lebanon, in 2018 candidates fought around internal topics, such as the strengthening of state institutions, unemployment, environmental management and delivery of public services. The fight against corruption was part of all the political platforms. The contestants often used familiar catch-all themes without broaching concrete proposals.

All the main parties' slogans were aimed at rallying support through general feel-good evocations of hope, change, protection, the future and strength, while themes commonly used in the past, such as resistance (Hezbollah and Amal), sovereignty (most Christian parties) and Arabism (FM), were used as identity markers by the political parties for their traditional electoral base. Civil society aspirants attempted to engage voters by calling for the end of the sectarian system, as well as for greater gender equality and civil rights. Observers noted that women's rights were seldom mentioned in the campaign, and then almost exclusively by female candidates.

No instances of inflammatory language or hate speech against a candidate or a community were reported in the campaign events observed, and inter-confessional relations were not mentioned publicly. Most of the candidates' events observed attracted only members of their own confession, and their messages focused on the defence of communitarian interests. Some events with mixed communities were held by independent candidates and civil society lists which had an explicitly a-confessional stance. Explanations to voters on the use of the new, official printed ballot papers and guidelines on the preferential vote⁴¹ were features of the campaign activities of all the main parties. These activities were often initiated months before the election period.

Campaign Finance

The large financial resources available to several parties and candidates significantly influenced the electoral campaign. The SCE lacked the capacity to monitor campaign finance efficiently due to a restricted mandate, insufficient resources and a very short timeframe to audit the financial reports of candidates.

Campaign finance is regulated by the elections law, which establishes the permitted contributions and expenditures, the financial requirements for contestants, the role of the SCE as the campaign finance monitoring body, and the sanctioning regime. It should be noted that in Lebanon there are no modernised regulations for political party finance. Political parties' activity falls under the Ottoman Associations Law of 1909, which does not contain any provisions on parties' funding or limitations to the contributions they receive. Regulations concern solely financial transactions by

⁴¹ Parties like Hezbollah, Amal, Future Movement and the Lebanese Forces reported to the EU EOM having divided their voters by group and instructed each of them to mark their preferential vote for a specific candidate from their list. This was with a view to maximising their gains in the districts where several seats with the same confessional denomination were being contested (e.g. Beirut II, Tripoli, Tyre, Zgartha, Koura, Bent Jbeil, Nabatiye).

candidates and lists during the campaign period.

Candidates have to open a bank account through which all campaign-related contributions and spending should be channelled and to which the SCE is to be granted unrestricted access⁴². Banking secrecy does not apply to campaign bank accounts⁴³. For those candidates or lists unable to open a bank account in Lebanon, their campaign funds are to be deposited in a public fund established by the Ministry of Finance⁴⁴. They must abide by the same regulations as regular campaign account holders. This provision applies to Hezbollah, whose accounts in Lebanese banks were closed after the US Congress passed the Hezbollah International Financing Prevention (2015), restricting access to international financial markets of banks hosting Hezbollah accounts⁴⁵.

Campaign contributions by Lebanese nationals or legal entities are permitted, regardless of whether they are in Lebanon or abroad. There are no provisions in the law about public contributions to the campaign funds of contestants. Contributions from a single donor must not exceed 50 per cent of the spending limit⁴⁶. The law establishes a ceiling on spending, which for the lists is based on the number of candidates. For the candidates, it is based on the number of registered voters in their constituency⁴⁷.

The maximum permitted spending ranged between €536,000 and €1,531,000 per candidate, depending on the district⁴⁸. Overall, the ceiling was assessed as very high by candidates, election officials and civil society organisations, allowing large differences in spending to emerge that had the potential to distort the playing field. On the ground, EU observers reported significant differences in spending capacity between candidates. The high ceiling led to an appreciable monetisation of the election campaign, seen in particular in heavy spending on advertising in the media and in public places (*see chapter on Media for more detailed information*), in the recruitment and deployment of candidate agents on election day⁴⁹, and in payments for the transportation of voters to polling stations, in particular of those living abroad returning to Lebanon to vote. However, the implementation for the first time of out-of-country voting has partially eliminated the need to come back to the country to vote⁵⁰.

⁴² Article 59 of the elections law (Law 44/2017).

⁴³ According to the Lebanon Banking Secrecy Law, which dates from 1956, banks in Lebanon are committed to absolute secrecy. If a bank breaches its duty of secrecy, it could be liable for common law damages and sued by the customer. It is a defamation to disclose any information or document related to the account of a customer. Banking secrecy can be lifted only in case of bankruptcy, if there is an action by the bank against the customer, when any information relates to credit facilities, or when disclosure is authorized by the Central Bank of Lebanon for purposes of court hearings or cases where money laundering is suspected (as per a regulation passed by the Central Bank of Lebanon in 2016). The Lebanese government allowed these exceptions so as to collaborate with the international institutions fighting money laundering, to facilitate police investigations and to combat malpractice in the banking sector. This follows pressure from the United States to enforce measures designed to block the funding of groups listed as Foreign Terrorist Organizations by the Secretary of State.

⁴⁴ Article 59.6 of the elections law.

⁴⁵ The Lebanese Central Bank issued a directive in 2016 to national banks to close accounts connected to Hezbollah, which affected hundreds of Lebanese bank accounts.

⁴⁶ Article 60.5 of the elections law.

⁴⁷ The ceiling on spending for lists is 150 million Lebanese pounds (LBP) per candidate (around €83,000). It ranges from 450 million LBP (around €273,000) for a 3-candidate list in South Lebanon 1, to 1,800 million LBP (€1,2 million) for a 12-candidate list in Mount Lebanon 4. For candidates, the spending ceiling is 150 million LBP (around €83,000), plus 5,000 LBP (around €3) per registered voter.

⁴⁸ The lowest ceiling per candidate was 912 million LBP (around €536,000) in South Lebanon I, where there are 122,524 registered voters. The highest was 2,302 million LBP (around €1,531,000) in South Lebanon III, with 460,565 registered voters.

⁴⁹ Observers reported that in highly contested districts, prominent candidates raised the level of fees paid to agents in order to recruit as many as they needed to be present in all the polling stations, while candidates with fewer resources could not afford these and relied on volunteers. Their presence in polling stations was consequently significantly lower.

⁵⁰ Transportation of voters was one of the most important spending areas for candidates and lists and imbalances in the playing field on election day were clearly visible. The fact that voters are registered in their ancestral villages instead of

The provision of services and payments to voters is prohibited and falls under the category of bribery, as stated in the penal code⁵¹. However, an exception is made if services and payments have been provided consistently by candidates or institutions owned or managed by candidates or parties for three years prior to the election⁵². These are not subject to campaign spending limits and do not fall under the control of the SCE. Charities, foundations and institutions connected to candidates play a large role in the provision of education, welfare, healthcare and housing services, all of which contributed to driving electoral support and consolidating patronage networks. This may be interpreted as unduly influencing voters and tantamount to vote-buying. It would be advisable to introduce measures to enable the SCE to monitor their contributions to campaigns given their active role in promoting the candidates to whom they are connected⁵³.

EU EOM recommendation: to adopt legislative measures to regulate the contributions of foundations and charities for the campaigns of candidates and lists. These contributions could be included in the calculation of campaign expenses.

The role of the SCE in campaign finance

The SCE is tasked with monitoring campaign finance. Compared to legal provisions for the 2009 elections, the 2017 electoral law slightly enhances the capacity of the SCE to oversee adherence to campaign finance rules by candidates and lists, and includes elements adding transparency to their spending⁵⁴. Overall, the SCE could not efficiently monitor campaign finance due to a restricted mandate, insufficient regulations and the late allocation of resources.

However, the SCE did not have powers to investigate, adjudicate or sanction breaches, which must be referred to Office of the Prosecutor⁵⁵. This is particularly relevant in violations of the campaign finance provisions, which fall under the SCE's remit. In cases of overspending or delays in the submission of financial reports, the SCE is to request the Ministry of Interior to impose a corresponding fine. This results in a limited capacity of the SCE to enforce the law. Furthermore, there are also loopholes concerning any breaches of the requirements on contestants and the media to submit relevant documentation to the SCE. In such cases it has no sanctioning power. No penalty regime has been established should candidates fail to submit their monthly financial reports⁵⁶. The same is true if media outlets fail to submit the list of prices demanded for electoral advertising⁵⁷ or

their actual place of residence results in numerous movements across the country. Historically, parties and candidates pay for the transportation of voters, which is an expenditure permitted under the law. In 2009, the EU EOM pointed to this practice as a way of influencing voters' choices that could in turn lead to vote buying and stressed the need for stricter regulations.

⁵¹ Articles 62.1 and 65.3 of the elections law.

⁵² Article 62.2 of the elections law.

⁵³ In 2009, the EU EOM to Lebanon highlighted in its Final Report the influence of private foundations and charities connected to candidates during the election campaign, "*While the widespread influence of charities, foundations and networks is culturally deeply-rooted, regulation should be introduced to mitigate the extent to which these organisations can be used to achieve electoral support*" (p.31).

⁵⁴ To the mandate established by the 2008 elections law of receiving and auditing financial statements, the 2017 elections law (44/2017) reinforces the SCE's role by entitling it to carry out the necessary investigations to verify the accuracy of the balance sheets of candidates and lists, to decide on their validity and to reject those found to be inaccurate (Article 64). The SCE should refer these cases to the Constitutional Council, which is in charge of the resolution of electoral disputes.

⁵⁵ The SCE may reject financial statements that are found to be inaccurate or exceeding the spending limit. However, it should inform the Constitutional Council of such cases (Article 64). Where it believes that alleged violations of the provisions of the law can be considered a criminal offense (Article 65), the SCE should refer these to the Public Prosecution Office. Fines are imposed by the Ministry of Interior at the request of the SCE (Article 66).

⁵⁶ According to Article 63 of the elections law, candidates and lists should submit a monthly statement of accounts during the campaign period.

⁵⁷ Article 71.1 of the elections law.

their weekly reports on paid advertising⁵⁸. These documents are essential for the commission to track the spending reported by the contestants. Steps could be taken to redress this to enable more effective monitoring of campaign spending, all the more so given the considerable role financial resources play in the election campaign.

EU EOM recommendation: to include effective sanctions which can be imposed by the SCE on candidates, lists and the media in cases where they do not submit the required documentation to the SCE, as required by the law.

Additionally, the monitoring of campaign finance is limited to transactions conducted from the moment of a candidate's registration and through the official campaign bank accounts. Contributions and spending prior to the nomination, as well as movements channelled through other bank accounts, are not considered as campaign spending and do not need to be recorded for scrutiny by the SCE. It would be advisable to review the legal framework in order to widen the financial transactions monitored by the SCE, thereby making its monitoring effective and adding transparency to campaign finance.

Regulations by the SCE were published late during the campaign period. The general guidelines on reporting on campaign finance for candidates and lists were published just two weeks before the election day⁵⁹. The ceilings for campaign spending were not published. This generated confusion among candidates about their financial obligations. Besides that, the SCE lacked financial independence and due to the late allocation of its budget could not start monitoring campaign spending before election day.

Candidates and lists should submit a final financial report covering all contributions received and the expenses incurred during the campaign period⁶⁰ 30 days after the election for auditing by the SCE during the following 30 days. These audits are among the most important tasks of the SCE, which should rule on their validity. If there is no decision by the SCE during these 30 days, the reports will be deemed approved⁶¹. Given the complexity of the process, the timeframe established by the law is insufficient and it would be advisable to extend it substantially.

EU EOM recommendation: to extend the timeframe the SCE has to audit the financial reports submitted by candidates and lists.

In cases where the SCE rejects the overall financial report of a candidate, it should inform the Speaker of Parliament and the Constitutional Council. However, there is no specific reference in the law to the validity of an election result if the rejected report belongs to an elected candidate. The law does not oblige the SCE to disclose the financial reports submitted by candidates and lists, which is out of step with international standards⁶². Therefore, the EU EOM strongly recommends the inclusion of such a requirement to increase the circulation of information on campaign finance, as well as to enhance public confidence in and transparency of the SCE's activities.

⁵⁸ Article 71.7 of the elections law.

⁵⁹ The SCE published the instructions for reporting on campaign spending in its Announcement 18 on 24 April 2018. The templates for the financial reports were published on 29 and 30 April 2018.

⁶⁰ Article 64 of the elections law.

⁶¹ Article 64.7 of the elections law.

⁶² Article 7.3 of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (ratified by Lebanon on 22 April 2009) states, "Each State Party shall also consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures, consistent with the objectives of this Convention and in accordance with the fundamental principles of its domestic law, to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office and, where applicable, the funding of political parties".

EU recommendation: to reform the law to provide for the public disclosure of financial reports of candidates and lists, the SCE's audit of these, the media's list of prices for paid-for electoral coverage and the related weekly reports.

Voter education

The MoIM conducted a voter information campaign through traditional media and social networks. Although it started late, its effectiveness contributed to a lower-than-expected rate of invalid ballots.

The MoIM launched a voter information programme later than the complexity of the voting system might have warranted, in late March. At that stage, the messages communicated through billboards were not very clear or informative for the voters⁶³. However, the MoIM campaign improved noticeably in the three weeks before the election, particularly in the video and animated spots shown in the traditional media and social networks, which provided practical information to voters on when, where and how to vote. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Lebanese Elections Assistance Project (LEAP), which is mainly funded by the EU, also conducted civic education and voter information campaigns.

Very importantly, most media made a significant effort to explain the new system. Observers also reported that candidates devoted a lot of their campaign efforts to explaining the system to voters. On election day, observers rated voters' understanding of procedures as 'good' and 'very good' in 95 per cent of observed cases.

Because of the complexities of the new elections law and voting system, the use of official printed ballots for the first time and the new voting procedures, the rate of invalid ballots was expected to be high. However, the invalid ballot rate for the 2018 elections was 2.1 per cent nationally. Although this is higher than 2009 (1.2 per cent), it remains lower than expected and well below the regional average⁶⁴.

EU EOM recommendation: to launch public education programmes and voter information campaigns take place at the start of the election campaign.

Out-of-country voting

Out-of-country voting, a long-awaited and positive development, was conducted smoothly, but counting could be improved to assure the secrecy of voting.

Out-of-country voting (OCV) was implemented for the first time for Lebanese citizens living abroad, as recommended by the 2009 EU EOM. Lebanese expatriates appear on in-country voter lists in their respective paternal ancestral villages and vote for the candidates running in the corresponding electoral constituency.

In 2017, the MoFA launched a special website which allowed non-resident Lebanese citizens to register as out-of-country voters. Criteria of eligibility and registration were inclusive, and the

⁶³ In particular, two billboards illustrating ice cream cones and bearing the sentences "you can't mix flavours" and "one vote, one preferential vote" were not clear.

⁶⁴ The EU EOM conducted a comparative study taking into consideration nine countries in Middle East and North Africa, (Lebanon Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Turkey, Israel, Kuwait, Tunisia and Egypt). Its analysis revealed that the regional average rate of invalid ballots is 3.93 per cent. (*Data sources: International IDEA, Voter turnout database*).

instruction provided by the MoIM and the MoFA were exhaustive and translated into several languages. The registration period was open for a reasonable time⁶⁵ and a public inspection period was launched afterwards to correct errors. Even taking into account certain countries where registered out-of-country voters was higher, the total number was quite low, 82,965 out of a diaspora estimated as much larger⁶⁶. These registered expatriates voted in 39 countries on 27 and 29 April, with polling taking place mainly in embassies and consulates.

The EU EOM observed the European part of the OCV on 29 April, with 13 teams observing in 12 cities in nine EU countries and Switzerland. They assessed it as generally well organised and conducted, orderly and without serious incident. They also reported that party, candidate and list agents across the political spectrum were widely present at polling stations, were able to follow the counting using support results sheets, and were able to observe the entire process without undue restrictions. Observers from the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) were also present. EU EOM observers assessed that the opening, voting and closing procedures had been respected and evaluated the whole process as transparent.

The use of static video cameras in all polling stations abroad and live streaming at the MoFA in Beirut contributed to the transparency of the process. Moreover, the use of coded seals, tamper-evident envelopes and other safeguards for the onward transportation of ballots to Lebanon were deemed important factors in guaranteeing the integrity of the process. However, observers reported that a number of voters did not find their name on the list of the polling station they went to, despite having registered correctly. The failure was explained as arising because the assignment of voter to polling station was done by the MoIM, which did not always take into account the voter's place of residence.

The procedures relating to the handling of the ballots abroad and in-country had been approved only a few weeks before the elections. This did not affect the dispatching of materials to embassies; the logistical and operational challenges were successfully met and all materials were available in sufficient quantity in the observed polling stations⁶⁷. However, it did affect the performance of polling staff, particularly in the sealing and packing phases. Observers reported that packing and sealing procedures were not consistently followed, and in some cases the filling in of reports and the packing of materials took more than five hours⁶⁸.

At the end of OCV election day, ballots papers were stored in embassies, under the constant surveillance of static video cameras. After the OCV, many short-term observers travelled on to Lebanon to observe the sorting and counting of OCV ballots in-country. The EU EOM observed the arrival of some pouches at Beirut airport and their transfer to the Central Bank of Lebanon. The entire operation was efficiently conducted by MoFA personnel, in the presence of the media, right up to the moment of their handover to the MoIM in the Central Bank.

On 6 May, the EU EOM observed the sorting of out-of-country and early voting ballot papers in four Higher Registration Committees in Beirut⁶⁹. The delivery and receipt of the electoral materials from

⁶⁵ Between 1 October and 20 November 2017.

⁶⁶ The highest number of registered out-of-country voters were in Australia, Canada, USA, France and Germany, while in other countries, such as Liberia, Benin and the Netherlands, the total was slightly over 200 registered voters, the minimum number needed for an out-of-country vote to take place.

⁶⁷ The MoFA deployed 21 staff from Lebanon to different countries to support embassy staff.

⁶⁸ The elections law prohibits the counting of ballots in diplomatic missions.

⁶⁹ All the OCV ballot boxes were stored at the Central Bank until the morning of 6 May when they were sorted with help from the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and then transported to the four HRCs in Beirut under escort. Working groups were organized at the level of HRC. The ISF opened the OCV pouches only under the guidance of an HRC judge who registered the envelopes found in each ballot box per minor district. The early voting envelopes were assigned to the minor districts

the Central Bank took place in a calm, professional and organised manner. Although some HRCs operated under different procedures, due to the absence of clear instructions, this did not impact the efficiency of the process. Observers cross-checked the integrity of the seals as observed in Europe and during the early voting and verified that their codes matched in all observed cases. Observers rated the operation as transparent and evaluated the performance of the staff involved as efficient and compliant with procedures.

However, in the many cases where only a small number of voters (and often just one voter) cast their ballots in a polling station abroad for lists and candidates in a given minor district in Lebanon, the adopted procedures did not assure the secrecy of voting. Such breaches of secrecy were common across the country and could have been rectified by PRCs counting the ballots together rather than individually, making it more difficult to trace back the identity and the choice of a voter.

EU EOM recommendation: to ensure secrecy of voting during the counting of the ballot papers for the out-of-country voting (OCV). This could be achieved by mixing all ballots cast abroad for a single minor district and counting them together rather than individually.

X. Media and elections

Media environment

Lebanon enjoys a diverse and plural media landscape, reflecting its confessional and sectarian system. But it is also highly partisan. Television is the main source of information, followed by news distributed through social networks.

Lebanon enjoys a lively and pluralistic media environment, which reflects the confessional and sectarian system in place in the country. But it is also a highly partisan environment with many broadcast, print and online media aligning themselves with, or under the direct control of different sides. Television is the main source of information, followed by news spread via social networks. Radio has a minor role and daily newspapers are in a long-standing financial crisis and have seen their circulations contract⁷⁰.

The state-owned TV channel, *Télé Liban*, is considered impartial and balanced but has a limited audience and marginal role compared to the leading private broadcast media. Among the seven national private TV channels, *LBC*, *Al-Jadeed* and *MTV* enjoy the highest viewership. All three claim to be commercial media outlets which do not have political affiliation, unlike the other four, which are openly affiliated: *Al Manar TV* to Hezbollah, *Future TV* to Future Movement, *Orange TV (OTV)* to the Free Patriotic Movement, and *NBN* to Amal Movement.

Online media and social networks benefit from high internet penetration in the country and the latter have become an increasingly important source of information⁷¹. *Facebook* is the most popular social network. *WhatsApp* is also widely used to share messages and information⁷². All major

at the same time. At the end of the operation, the envelopes belonging to each minor district were sealed in pouches and sent to the corresponding Primary Registration Committees, again under escort, for counting.

⁷⁰ There are no official figures on the circulation of daily newspapers, but EU EOM interlocutors reported that newspaper circulation and readership have declined in recent years. In 2016, one of Lebanon's main dailies, *As-Safir*, was forced to close. Others are facing financial crisis.

⁷¹ According to [Internet world statistics](#), by June 2017, 4,596,494 Lebanese were internet users with a 76.1 per cent penetration. By June 2017, Facebook had 3,100,000 subscribers, a 51.3 per cent penetration in the country.

⁷² *Instagram*, and particularly *Twitter*, are far less popular.

traditional media outlets have news websites and make use of social networks to spread their content, several have developed their own mobile applications.

Legal framework and freedom of the media

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, but libel and defamation against the President and public officials, as well as insulting the army or flag, are criminal offences.

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, but libel and defamation, especially against the President and public officials, as well as insulting the army or flag, are criminal offences.⁷³ While there have been no cases of imprisonment of journalists following a conviction, before the election campaign started court proceedings were initiated against a prominent journalist and a comedian for alleged defamation of high-ranking public officials. These cases could have had the effect of increasing self-censorship among journalists and of constricting public debate.

Broadcast media are regulated by the 1994 Broadcast Law and print media by the 1962 Press Law. Both laws require media outlets to obtain a specific licence to air or publish news and to cover political affairs. Licences for broadcast and print media are granted not by an independent body but by the Council of Ministers. Licences for broadcast media are granted following a recommendation of the National Audiovisual Council, which is currently inactive⁷⁴, and for print media in coordination with the Ministry of Information. EU EOM interlocutors reported that the licensing system did not present an obstacle to new operators launching media outlets and covering current and political affairs. The big challenge for media outlets is the limited advertising market, making financial self-sufficiency difficult and forcing them to rely mainly on funding from national or international partners, including political actors who may seek to influence their editorial content or line. Online media and social platforms are not regulated, but provisions on libel and defamation also apply to material published via the internet.

Currently, there is a syndicate for editors and reporters created by the 1962 Press Law, which is considered to be inactive. Some organisations exist in Lebanon which actively contribute to the monitoring of violations against press freedom.

Media campaign regulation

The elections law regulates the media during the election campaign. But unclear legal provisions allowed broadcasters to offer paid-for coverage across all programme formats, irrespective of the distinction between editorial and advertising. Financial and operational shortcomings undermined the SCE's capacity to oversee the media's compliance with the law.

The conduct of the media during the election period is regulated primarily by the elections law, which offers sufficient but unclear provisions for the task. The SCE is the supervisory body responsible for issuing detailed media regulations as well as for overseeing the media's compliance with the law, but it is not granted effective sanctioning power. Indeed, its mandate is limited to issuing warnings or referring more serious media violations to the Court of Publications for sanction.⁷⁵

⁷³ Article 13 of the Constitution provides that, "The freedom to express one's opinion orally or in writing, the freedom of the press (...) shall be guaranteed within the limits established by law."

⁷⁴ The mandate of the current commissioners of the National Audiovisual Council has expired and, while they still hold their positions, *de facto* the body is inactive.

⁷⁵ There is an exception for rules on the publication of opinion polls, which should be accompanied by information on the author and methodology of the survey. The publication of opinion polls is not allowed in the last ten days before election day. In case of breaches of these rules, the SCE can impose financial fines on media outlets in addition to issuing warnings.

The elections law provides for some free airtime⁷⁶ for candidates on state-owned broadcast media and regulates the paid-for coverage and advertising on private media. Unclear legal provisions regulating the coverage of candidates by private media opened the space for broadcasters to offer paid-for coverage of contestants across all kinds of programme formats, including news and political talk shows. In addition, the paid-for content was almost never clearly marked as paid-for, as required by the law⁷⁷. The amount of paid-for coverage and advertising was not limited by any ceiling⁷⁸, reducing the space for ensuring fair and balanced coverage of the contestants⁷⁹. Such extensive paid-for access to the media resulted in the opportunity for media outlets to make large profits, while damaging the level playing field for candidates and harming voters' right to genuine information, which is essential for an informed choice.

EU EOM recommendations:

To amend the elections law to further clarify the distinction between free-of-charge editorial coverage, including news and political talk shows, and paid-for access to private media. Clear regulations and guidelines could also be issued by the SCE on this matter.

As required by the elections law, the SCE should issue regulations indicating a ceiling for election-related paid-for content in private media.

To amend the elections law to provide the SCE with appropriate regulatory and sanctioning powers to redress violations concerning paid-for access in the media and unbalanced editorial coverage.

The elections law requires all media outlets offering paid-for coverage to submit a price list to the SCE before the beginning of the election campaign, and thereafter to submit weekly reports on the published or aired paid-for material during the campaign.⁸⁰ The law also requires the media to refrain from any form of slander and hate speech, regulates the publication of opinion polls and foresees a silence period starting 24 hours before the election day⁸¹. The SCE's capacity to oversee media compliance with the law was severely affected by financial constraints, due to the late allocation of its budget. This delayed the launch of its activities, including starting its media monitoring.⁸² Nevertheless, the SCE informed the EU EOM that through its media monitoring it was

⁷⁶ This was a recommendation made by the EU EOM Lebanon 2009.

⁷⁷ Art. 71.4 of the elections law, *"The Media and Advertising outlets shall expressly clarify during their transmission or publication of election advertisements that such advertisements are paid, and shall specify the party that requested their transmission or publication."*

⁷⁸ Art. 71b of the elections law, *"The Commission shall determine the maximum space allowed for every media or advertising outlets to transmit or publish media or advertising programs related to the lists or candidates, and specify the transmission or publication times for such spaces."*

⁷⁹ Art. 72.4 of the elections law, *"The Commission shall ensure equal media appearance among contenders from lists and candidates, in such manner that the Media, when hosting a list representative or a candidate, shall be bound to secure in return the hosting of their contenders under similar conditions in terms of timing, duration and program type."*

⁸⁰ On 23 February 2018, the SCE published a list of media outlets which had asked to offer paid-for coverage and advertising in the election campaign. On it are seven private TV channels, 11 radio stations, nine daily newspapers, two weekly magazines and 19 news websites.

⁸¹ Art. 78 of the elections law forbids the media to publish or broadcast anything that could be deemed as electoral campaigning, starting from 24 hours before the election day until the closure of polling. The silence period applies only to media coverage, while contestants are free to campaign on the eve of and on election day.

⁸² The SCE started its media monitoring on 26 February 2018, while the election campaign began on 5 February. The SCE monitored seven private TV channels, ten radio stations and 13 newspapers. After the 6 May election day, the SCE started to monitor the first part of the election campaign retroactively, from 5 to 25 February 2018, and also initiated a retroactive monitoring of online media.

able to detect several media violations concerning libel and defamation, paid-for material not labelled as such and breaches of the silence period.⁸³ The SCE also informed the EU EOM that media outlets had not submitted weekly reports on their paid-for coverage, in breach of the law. No official media-related complaints were received by the SCE.

The elections law does not require the SCE to publish reports on its media monitoring activity, on media violations, on complaints received or on actions undertaken during the election campaign. The SCE informed the EU EOM that this information would be included in a final report, to be published within six months of the elections, as required by the law. An amendment of the elections law to ensure publication of this information during the election campaign is recommended so as to remind all media of their obligations and to enhance the overall transparency of the process.

EU EOM recommendation: to reform the law to provide for the SCE to publish any detected media violations, complaints received, or the actions undertaken, in a timely manner during the election campaign.

Media Monitoring Findings

Freedom of the media was generally respected during the campaign. However, a partisan media environment and unclear legal provisions led to uneven access to the media for candidates and affected the availability of genuine and balanced information for voters.

Freedom of the media was generally respected during the campaign period. The EU EOM qualitative and quantitative media monitoring showed that the coverage by private broadcast media resulted in an uneven playing field for contestants, and while the overall media environment provided a variety of political views, the coverage offered by each media outlet affected the availability of genuine and balanced information for voters on the different political options.⁸⁴ Broadcast media told the EU EOM of different practices in their election coverage: some of them they charged candidates for any kind of coverage, others did not charge the candidates for some types of coverage such as news, and others still reported that all their coverage, with the exception of paid-for political advertising spots, was free of charge. Several interlocutors complained to the EU EOM about the very high, sometimes negotiable, prices demanded from candidates for access to the media.⁸⁵ Moreover, the EU EOM media monitoring observed that the paid-for coverage was rarely marked as such and almost never had any indication of who had paid for it. This was in breach of the law and blurred the line between editorial coverage and electoral campaigning, harming the supply of genuine information for voters.

In its news bulletins, the state-owned *Télé Liban*, which has lower viewership than the leading private TV channels, covered widely the institutional activities of the President and the members of the government, with 16 and 17 per cent of total coverage respectively. Among political parties, Future Movement benefitted from 18 per cent of the total news coverage, while other major parties received between three and nine per cent. In line with the law, *Télé Liban* offered free airtime to candidates. Even though the allocation of this to candidates was not always systematic or equal, it was inclusive and provided a platform to candidates not able to afford the high prices for access to

⁸³ In the period between 26 February and 4 May 2018, the SCE media monitoring detected 91 media violations which incurred warnings, and referred 22 more serious media violations to the Court of Publications for sanction.

⁸⁴ The EU EOM conducted a quantitative and qualitative media monitoring of eight TV channels from 14 April 2018, daily from 17:00 to 01:00. The sample included the state-owned *Télé Liban* and seven national private TV channels: *MTV*, *Al Jadeed*, *LBC*, *AL Manar*, *Future TV*, *NBN* and *Orange TV (OTV)*.

⁸⁵ EU EOM interlocutors reported different prices. For instance, the price for a half-hour interview ranged from 30,000 to 60,000 USD. Reportedly, some TV channels were also selling packages of media appearances on news, interview slots and political talk shows at up to 250,000 USD. Prices rose even higher towards the end of the election campaign.

private TV channels. However, only a limited number of contestants showed any interest of using this opportunity.⁸⁶

In their news, the private broadcasters *Al Jadeed*, *MTV* and *LBC* covered widely the campaign activities of independent candidates, which together got similar coverage to that of the main parties. Additionally, they offered consistent coverage in the news, and partly in other formats, to FPM, Future Movement and Lebanese Forces. *MTV*, *LBC* and *Al Jadeed* are the private TV channels with the highest audiences in Lebanon and have a diversified viewership. For these reasons they attracted several candidates ready to pay for coverage. As the paid-for coverage was rarely marked as such, including any paid-for coverage in the news, it is difficult to assess to what extent the TV channels' output reflected unbalanced editorial coverage or whether the uneven coverage of candidates was as a result of the amount of paid-for coverage bought by candidates.⁸⁷

Four other private TV channels, *Al Manar*, *Future TV*, *NBN* and *OTV*, were largely biased in their news coverage. *Future TV* offered 68 per cent of its news space to Future Movement. *Al Manar* offered 48 per cent to Hezbollah, *NBN* 47 per cent to Amal Movement and *OTV* 39 per cent to FPM. The same partisan coverage applied to other formats, such as political talk shows, live coverage of campaign events, speeches of party leaders, reportage and documentaries.

Despite the considerable paid-for coverage that characterized the election campaign, the EU EOM observed a generally much smaller use of advertising spots by political parties and candidates. Contestants preferred to invest in direct appearances and interviews on TV channels rather than in short and repeated paid spots, particularly in the last two weeks of the campaign.

Social networks, principally Facebook, were used by broadcast media outlets to further distribute their content. However, the election and political news content posted by the commercial TV channels *MTV* and *LBC* on their own Facebook pages was very limited compared to entertainment topics.⁸⁸ By contrast, the remaining four TV channels, including the commercial TV channel *Al Jadeed*, more consistently covered the elections through Facebook, with the politically affiliated TV channels *Future TV* and *NBN* offering partisan political content. Generally, TV channels used their Facebook pages to post links redirecting visitors to their news websites. Some TV channels indicated they preferred to attract visitors with an interest in election and political information to their news websites or mobile applications, and through them to provide another platform for paid-for access for candidates.

Positively, state and private monitored broadcast media offered extensive space to voter education and information during their news and TV programmes, airing spots produced by the Ministry of Interior, other institutions or by the TV channels themselves. No monitored private TV channels respected the silence period that started 24 hours before the election day, which required them not to cover election campaign topics, events or contestants.

⁸⁶ Several candidates informed the EU EOM they were not interested in using this opportunity because of the very low audience of *Télé Liban*. Others welcomed the opportunity and tried to make the most of it by also posting their *Télé Liban* interviews on social networks.

⁸⁷ See the Annexes for detailed media monitoring results on monitored TV channels.

⁸⁸ The EU EOM conducted a monitoring of the Facebook pages of six TV channels, from 7 April to 4 May 2018. The sample included the Facebook pages of *MTV*, *LBC*, *Al Jadeed*, *Future TV*, *NBN* and *OTV*. The findings are designed to illustrate the election and political information circulating on social networks and do not constitute a full assessment of the activity of traditional media on social networks, which is not regulated.

XI. Participation of women

Despite a dramatic increase in the number of female candidates, women remain severely under-represented in politics. The adoption of temporary special measures could accelerate women’s political participation in line with Lebanon’s international obligations.

Traditionally, women faced significant social and financial barriers in Lebanese politics, and their participation has been minimal⁸⁹. In the last five parliamentary elections the number of women elected ranged from three to at most six, with only four elected in the 2009 elections. This places Lebanon consistently at the bottom of the ranking of women’s parliamentary representation in the Middle East (184th out of 194 in the world⁹⁰). Despite increased social demands and various law proposals⁹¹, the 2017 electoral law failed to include any measures to improve women’s political representation, as recommended by the EU EOM in 2009. Nevertheless, the 2018 elections saw a remarkable increase in the number of women candidates compared to all previous elections, from only 12 in 2009 (1.7 per cent) to 86 in 2018 (14.4 per cent). Most of them ran as independent candidates, as the traditional political parties⁹² nominated only 11 per cent of female candidates in these elections. Despite this increase, only six women⁹³ were elected on 6 May, representing 4.7 per cent of the members of the parliament. Three of them ran on Future Movement lists, one was for Amal, one for the Lebanese Forces and another for Kulluna Watani, although representing the Sabaa party. Four are newcomers.

In light of Lebanon’s international obligations⁹⁴ and political commitments⁹⁵, the under-representation of women in political life could be addressed through the adoption of temporary special measures⁹⁶, for example a quota for women on the candidate lists, accompanied by enforcement mechanisms. These temporary special measures could further be extended to women’s representation in the main decisions-making bodies⁹⁷. Advocacy campaigns, capacity development programmes for women candidates and a reduced candidature fee for women could support the implementation of special measures.

⁸⁹ Women were also largely absent from the Council of Ministers until two female appointments were made in 2014. As of 2015, there has been only one woman in the Council of Ministers (out of 30 ministers). UN, HRC CCPR, Third Periodic Report of Lebanon, 5 April 2018, mentioned that “*despite some progress in the representation of women in political and public life, particularly at local levels, women continue to remain underrepresented in legislative and executive bodies and in decision-making positions.*” (Arts. 2, 3, 25 and 26)

⁹⁰ UN Women in Politics 2017 report, 1 January 2017.

⁹¹ In 2006, the National Commission on Electoral Law recommended a quota of at least 30 per cent for women at list level for three parliamentary elections. In 2011, the MoIM prepared a draft electoral law proposing a similar quota for women.

⁹² In the 2018 elections, Future Movement presented 37 candidates (four women), Free Patriotic Movement put forward 70 candidates (two women), Lebanese Forces presented two women out of 19 candidates, Kataeb nominated one woman out of 18 candidates and Amal presented 16 candidates (one woman). Neither the Progressive Socialist Party nor Hezbollah had any female candidates. Altogether, only ten women were presented by traditional parties. The newly-established Sabaa party had five women among its 21 candidates. The Kulluna Watani list (former civil society activists) had 17 women among its 66 candidates.

⁹³ One on Lebanese Forces list, one on Amal List, one on Kulluna Watani list (Sabaa party) and three on Future Movement lists. Four are Muslim (three Sunni and one Shi’a) and two are Christian (one Maronite and one Armenian Orthodox).

⁹⁴ UN, CEDAW Art.4, para. 1, CEDAW General Recommendation No. 25, on temporary special measures. “*The practice of treaty monitoring bodies, show that the application of temporary special measures is considered mandatory to achieve the purposes of the respective treaties.*”

⁹⁵ UN, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), Strategic goal G1, “*Take measures to ensure women’s equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.*”

⁹⁶ There are two main types of temporary special measures (TSMs) which have been utilized globally to promote women’s representation: (1) reserved seat quotas; and (2) political party or candidate quotas. The UN Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/RES/1990/15) set a global target of 30 percent women in positions of political leadership.

⁹⁷ The CEDAW Committee encourages the State party to take sustained measures, including temporary special measures to accelerate and increase in the representation of women in elected and appointed bodies in all areas of public life.

EU EOM recommendation: to adopt temporary special measures to increase women's representation in the Parliament, for example a quota on the candidates' lists, accompanied by enforcement mechanisms.

The principles of equality, non-discrimination and the right to a nationality are recognized in various human rights instruments that are binding on Lebanon. However, the legal framework has not seen any reform targeting the civil rights of women. They continue to be discriminated against⁹⁸ as a result of the automatic transfer of their voter registration, once married, to their husband's place of registration, which denies women their individual choice.

Furthermore, the nationality law clearly discriminates against women, as it does not allow them to pass on Lebanese citizenship to their children⁹⁹ even if they were born in Lebanon. This undermines women's status as equal citizens and constitutes a serious breach of women's fundamental freedoms and rights. The EU EOM recommends the elimination of such discriminatory provisions against women, in line with the international obligations¹⁰⁰ that Lebanon is bound to.

EU EOM recommendations:

To reform the legal framework in order to give women, after they marry, the right to choose whether to keep their registration place or change it to their husband's.

Consider an amendment of the Nationality Law to allow women to confer their Lebanese nationality to their children on the same basis as men.

XII. Participation of Persons with Disabilities

The electoral process is still not inclusive for People with Disabilities.

Although Lebanon has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and its Optional Protocol, in 2000 it adopted the Law on the Rights of Disabled Persons (Law 220/2000), a major step forward for disability rights in Lebanon and the wider Middle East region. For the first time for the 2018 elections, one of the members of the SCE was a representative of PWD¹⁰¹. The new electoral law includes some measures aimed at improving the inclusion of people with disabilities, such as the possibility of assisted voting by any voter of their choice. Nevertheless, this option was not strictly enforced so all undue influence on voters would be avoided. It was generally not recorded in the polling station reports as required by the law. None of the political parties specifically addressed the needs of people with disabilities in their campaign platforms or employed campaign methods that would reach out effectively to the community. Only 47 per cent of the polling stations observed by EU EOM observers were accessible to PWD¹⁰². The mission also

⁹⁸ UN, CEDAW, Art.7 *"States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies"*

⁹⁹ The nationality law does not allow Lebanese women to pass on their nationality to their spouse or children, even if they were born in Lebanon. The children of a Lebanese woman married to a foreign national cannot obtain Lebanese nationality. Non-Lebanese men married to Lebanese women also cannot get Lebanese citizenship, whereas non-Lebanese women married to Lebanese men can acquire Lebanese nationality after one year of marriage.

¹⁰⁰ UN, HRC CCPR, Third Periodic Report of Lebanon, 5 April 2018, *"Lebanon should amend the nationality act to ensure that women have equal rights with men in the transmission of their nationality to the children and spouses."* The Lebanese Personal Status Laws have also attracted repeated criticism from the CEDAW Committee.

¹⁰¹ Sylvana Lakkis was the representative of civil society organizations. She resigned on 20 April 2018.

¹⁰² According to the UN Universal Periodic Review 2015, 10 per cent of the Lebanese population have physical or mental disabilities.

observed that voter education was not inclusive, that there were no specimen tactile ballots, and that the media coverage of campaign and other election events did not include sign language.

According to the electoral law, responsibility for the needs of PWD and facilitating their right to vote falls to the MoIM. Consideration should be given to the implementation of inclusive measures to ensure the full participation of PWD in the electoral processes and to allow PWD to exercise their right to vote freely and independently.

EU EOM recommendation: to introduce measures to ensure the full participation of PWD in the electoral processes. These measures would include:

- *making polling stations accessible to PWD,*
- *disseminating voter education and electoral information adapted to PWD,*
- *using specimen tactile ballots,*
- *using sign language in media coverage of campaign and other election events.*

XIII. Domestic and international election observation

The elections law gives responsibility for the issuing of accreditation to observers to the SCE¹⁰³. During the pre-election period, the SCE issued some 4,300 accreditations and a code of conduct. LADE is the main national observation group. It observed the campaign and the electoral preparations with some 57 long-term observers and issued several reports during the campaign period. LADE made an important effort in deploying observers for the OCV globally. It also deployed more than 1,300 short-term observers for election day on 6 May, of whom 200 were in all PRCs and HRCs.

The Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA) focused its observation effort on campaign expenditure, monitoring with 40 long-term observers in three districts. The Arab Network for Democratic Elections (ANDE), a small group of mixed national and international observers, deployed a small delegation one week before the election. On election day, EU EOM observers met national observers in 24 per cent of the polling stations observed.

The EU EOM was the only international mission with a long-term presence in the field. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) deployed a high-level delegation composed of 30 short-term observers on election day.

XIV. Polling, counting and tabulation of results

Early voting of polling staff – 3 May

The MoIM organised early voting for polling staff on 3 May in 42 polling stations established in the *Serail* of all districts. The EU EOM observed this stage of the process in 36 polling stations (86 per cent) in 22 minor districts. Observers reported that all opening and voting procedures were generally followed and they evaluated positively the conduct of the voting, the general conditions and the transparency of the voting process. The presence of candidate and list agents was widespread and varied across the political spectrum. EU EOM also observed the packing and sealing of the ballot

¹⁰³ Under the old elections law, this was MoIM's responsibility.

papers and positively evaluated those operations, except for a few cases in which the staff were not aware of the procedures and asked for assistance from the election officials (governors and sub-governors). This arose because the MoIM personnel serving as early voting polling staff was not trained as regular polling staff were. A special session of training could be foreseen for these personnel in the future to support the integrity of this stage of the process.

After they were sealed, the envelopes containing the ballot papers were taken to and stored at the Central Bank of Lebanon.

Polling and counting – 6 May

Observers positively assessed the administration of polling and noted that although counting was transparent, established procedures were not always followed.

Voting on election day was generally peaceful, although there were a number of confrontations between party supporters, which were swiftly defused by the internal security forces and the army. Overall, the observers' assessment of the opening of polling was positive, with widespread adherence to procedures. Although almost 80 per cent of polling stations had fewer than three officers¹⁰⁴, their performance was assessed as 'good' or 'very good' in all but 5 per cent of cases. The gender distribution of polling staff was balanced, although head officers were mostly men. The agents of candidates and lists across the political spectrum, an important part of transparency, observed the process without hindrance in all stations visited by observers. This included the agents of independent candidates.

EU EOM recommendation: to guarantee the presence of three polling staff at each polling station.

Lawful campaign activities were conducted throughout the country, although in some cases they were held close to the polling stations, which is unlawful. It would be important to clarify definitions in the law in this instance and to reinforce their implementation¹⁰⁵. Observers were informed about a few credible cases of alleged vote-buying. Vote-buying was often cited by those candidates who filed complaints to the Constitutional Council requesting the invalidation of results in several districts, for example in Beirut 2, Bekaa 1, Bekaa 2 and North Lebanon 2. Implementation of polling procedures throughout the day was rated as positive, so too overall transparency of the process. All EU EOM observers were able to observe the polling process without obstruction. Although voters' fingers were not consistently inked, all safeguards to avoid multiple voting were in place: verification of voter ID, inking and signing of the voter list. In 88 per cent of observed polling stations, the layout was adequate for the administration of polling and protection of voting secrecy.

EU EOM recommendation: To amend the legal framework to specify a precise distance from the polling centre within which electoral activities will be prohibited.

The elections law reduced the maximum number of voters per PS from 800 to 600. However, more than one third of polling stations nationwide accommodated more than 600 registered voters. In 32 per cent of observed polling stations, observers reported long queues of voters waiting at the

¹⁰⁴ The elections law states that the head officer of the polling station is to have two assistants, one of whom is to be chosen by the head officer from among the voters present at the opening of the polling station, the other for second assistant by voters.

¹⁰⁵ Articles 91 and 77 of the elections law forbid campaigning 'near' the polling centre, without specifying a precise distance.

entrance. Increasing the number of polling stations and equipping them with an additional polling booth would boost the flow of voters and avoid long queues.

Observers reported that where voters were in queues at 7pm, when officially polling was to close, they were generally allowed to cast their ballots. The use of overhead projection-style systems in the polling stations, with the ballots captured and shown as they were counted, contributed to the transparency of the process, although it was not always consistent. The presence of candidates' agents in all observed polling stations also contributed to transparency. However, observers reported that the procedures for the reconciliation of ballots cast against signatures in the voter list was not always properly conducted and that the polling staff had difficulty in filling the PS reports in a quarter of the observed cases. This delayed the finalisation of counting procedures. Considering the new features introduced with the new elections law, among them the use of the official printed ballot, it would be advisable for the MoIM to provide additional training for polling staff, focused on this part of the process.

In 89 per cent of observed polling stations results were posted outside, while party agents received a copy of the results in 76 per cent of cases.

Tabulation of Results

Tabulation would benefit from detailed regulation and its transparency could be improved at HRC level.

The tabulation of results in the PRCs, which are headed by judges, was carried out in the presence of candidate agents and observers and in a secure environment. The EU EOM observed the tabulation process in 40 PRCs, or a quarter of the total. The MoIM did not adopt any procedures related to the tabulation of results and modalities of a recount. Moreover, the law does not provide for the conditions under which a recount of results should be conducted. In some cases, the tabulation took a long time mainly because of the need to recount ballot papers from polling stations whose results forms contained numerical inconsistencies, and to count the votes cast abroad and in early voting. Observers reported that due to the absence of detailed procedures for the counting of these ballots and the tabulation of results in the PRCs, the judges worked in different ways across the country. However, observers assessed positively the organisation of work in 87 per cent of the cases and the staff performance in 95 per cent of cases.

EU EOM recommendation:

To establish in the law the conditions under which a recount of ballots has to be conducted.

To adopt procedures for the tabulation of results, to be applied by PRCs and HRCs. These may include precise instructions to follow in case of recounts.

In the HRCs, the process concerned mainly the aggregation of all results that had already been tabulated in the PRCs. The EU EOM observed 14 out of 30 HRCs nationwide and assessed that the facilities were not always adequate for the conduct of the process. Observers evaluated this stage as less transparent and less organized than the tabulation in the PRCs. Their overall assessment was positive in 65 per cent of observed cases. Four teams of observers did not have full access to the HRCs, in Metn, Chouf, Zahle and Tyre¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁶ In Tyre, the operation of centralisation of the results for Saida village (Zahrani) were conducted completely behind closed doors.

EU EOM recommendation: to grant full access to all stages of tabulation for candidates' and lists' agents, as well as election observers.

The judges involved in the tabulation at PRCs and HRCs did not follow the relevant training on the new system and on the introduction of the technology in the tabulation process, nor were they present at the simulation conducted before the election, as noted by observers. They only attended an information/theoretical session in Beirut which did not illustrate the real cases they could be facing on election night. Training to familiarise judges with the software and to include a simulation exercise would be recommended to speed up the tabulation process and enhance its transparency and integrity.

EU EOM recommendation: to provide additional training for polling staff, judges and other members of PRCs and HRCs, with a focus on counting and tabulation procedures.

XV. Results and post-election environment

Publication of Results

The publication of results disaggregated by polling station represents an important improvement in the transparency and traceability of votes.

After election day, the MoIM published the official results by major district on its website, using files that explained to the public how the electoral quotient and allocation of seats were calculated. In addition, the MoIM published the results disaggregated by polling station, allowing list and candidate agents to cross-check them with the results they observed during the counting in the polling stations. These are important steps for the transparency and the traceability of votes compared to 2009¹⁰⁷.

However, the presentation of the results could have followed a more logical order and been presented in a more user-friendly format¹⁰⁸. The MoIM also published clarifications on some discrepancies in the number of registered voters¹⁰⁹. It published the final official turnout figure (49.7 per cent), although this is not required by the law.

After the publication of results disaggregated by polling station, the EU EOM noticed there were some 500 results forms relating to polling stations abroad which for some minor districts were filled in with zeroes in the 'registered voter' and 'votes' columns¹¹⁰. This raised concerns among national observers and political parties. According to the EU EOM observation of the majority of cases, in polling stations where there were no registered voters for a given minor district, polling staff still

¹⁰⁷ In 2009, results were made available on the official ministry website, but they were removed after three days. Results for Nabatiyeh and Zahle, and blank votes in Zahle, Zahrani, Saida and Byblos, were never made available (EU EOM Final Report 2009).

¹⁰⁸ The results coming in from polling stations in the same polling centre were spread across different files because at the moment of tabulation the envelopes containing the results were randomly assigned to the PRCs. The results were presented in non-machine-readable PDF format, which reduces access to results and which makes cross-checking difficult.

¹⁰⁹ These discrepancies concerned the number of registered voters published along with the final results. They were mainly due to keyboard inputting errors and the absence of double entry, that occurred at the moment of the introduction of data in the system and did not affect the candidate and list results.

¹¹⁰ Polling stations abroad had variable numbers of registered voters per minor district, from just a few to all 26 minor districts. This is the case of the Lebanese embassy in Greece, for example, where there were registered voters for 22 of the 26 minor districts, as reported by EU EOM short-term observers.

filled in the form with ‘zero’, evidently denoting no activity rather than any form of result¹¹¹. In other cases where it’s known there were registered voters, but where none cast a ballot on election day, the results showed ‘zero registered voters’ and ‘zero votes’¹¹². There were also cases where observers reported some OCV votes were invalidated, reportedly because of the absence of supporting documents in the envelopes. And one case concerned Nabatiyeh minor district, where a total of 115 votes¹¹³ from abroad were invalidated¹¹⁴. It is not clear what the reason was¹¹⁵. It should be noted that these votes would not have changed the results in the concerned districts. However, it is to be recommended that judges tabulating OCV results receive more training, as well as those concerned with in-country tabulation, mentioned above.

Complaints related to election results

The process of adjudication of complaints against the election results is excessively long, permitting potential uncertainty over the electoral results while cases are being determined.

According to article 19 of the Constitution, the law on the functioning of the Constitutional Council (CC)¹¹⁶ and its internal by-laws, the CC is the institution mandated to arbitrate disputes that arise from parliamentary. It consists of ten members, half of them elected by the Parliament and half of them appointed by the Council of Ministers for a six-year period. The current CC was established on the eve of the parliamentary elections of June 2009 and its mandate expired on 5 June 2015. However, this was extended according to internal regulations as no new members were nominated¹¹⁷. Decisions are taken by a majority of seven members and a quorum consists of eight members, which has sometimes hindered the adoption of decisions¹¹⁸. The decisions are final.

The right to challenge the parliamentary election results is limited to the defeated candidates and only against the winning candidates in the constituency in which they ran. In the previous electoral system this meant that a losing candidate could lodge a complaint only against winning candidates of the confessional seat the challenger ran for. In the new proportional electoral system, a candidate or list can now also challenge the results of candidates in other confessional seats¹¹⁹, from the same or other lists, because of the effect of the threshold and preferential ranking on the confessional allocation of seats.

By the end of the complaint period on 6 June, seventeen complaints¹²⁰ concerning eight major

¹¹¹ For example, at polling station 6 at the Lebanese embassy in Berlin, voters for Bint Jbeil and Nabatiyeh (South 3) alone were registered. However, in the results published by the MoIM it appears that a form from the same polling station relating to the minor district of Jbeil (Mount Lebanon 1), where there were no registered voters, was received containing zeroes beside ‘registered voters’ and ‘votes’.

¹¹² For example, this was the case at polling station 8 at the Lebanese embassy in Berlin, where seven voters were registered for the minor district of Minnieh and two for the minor district of Dinnieh and none cast their ballot on the day. Yet, in these two cases the results in the PRC files are ‘zero’ under both the ‘registered voters’ and ‘votes’ columns.

¹¹³ From 21 out of 107 results forms relating to polling stations abroad.

¹¹⁴ Details on invalidated votes are provided in the annex.

¹¹⁵ The EU EOM contacted the judge heading this PRC but he declined to explain the reasons behind this invalidation.

¹¹⁶ Law No.250 of 14/7/1993 on the Establishment of the Constitutional Council amended by law No.150 of 30/10/1999 and further amended by law No.43 of 3/11/2008.

¹¹⁷ As mentioned by Art.4 of the Internal Regulation No.243 of the Constitutional Council.

¹¹⁸ Appeals were filed to the Constitutional Council (CC) against the two extensions of the Parliament’s mandate. The lack of quorum obstructed the Council’s ability to take a decision regarding the first extension in 2013. In the second case, the CC rejected the appeal in order to avoid an institutional vacuum, acknowledging nevertheless that the extension of the mandate was unconstitutional (CC Decision No. 7/28.11.2014).

¹¹⁹ In fact, only eight losing candidates confined their complaints to challenging only the winners of the confessional seat they ran for.

¹²⁰ Beirut 1 (one complaint), Beirut 2 (six complaints), Mount Lebanon 2-Metn (one complaint), Mount Lebanon 4-Chouf Aley (one complaint), Bekaa 1-Zahle (three complaints), Bekaa 3-Baalbek-Hermel (two complaints), North Lebanon 2-Tripoli (three complaints), North Lebanon 3 (one complaint).

districts had been filed with the Constitutional Council. Four of them were lodged by some or all members of a list against winners in the district they ran in. The rest were lodged by losing candidates individually. The reasons cited for an invalidation of results include alleged irregularities in the filling of results forms, mathematical errors in the adding up of votes, irregularities in the voting, counting and tabulation processes, vote-buying, violence on election day, alleged abuse of office from some of the minister candidates running, and irregularities in the OCV.

According to the law governing the Constitutional Council, once an appeal is submitted, the President of the Constitutional Council appoints another member as a rapporteur with investigating powers. The rapporteur must present a report to the President within three months of his/her appointment. Immediately after the submission of the report the Council will convene and must issue its decision within one month. This means that from the publication of results to the issuing of a decision, as many as five months may have passed. This timeframe is excessively long¹²¹, permitting uncertainty over the electoral results while cases are still being determined. Despite the 2009 EU EOM's recommendation to shorten this timeframe, no reform was implemented. A shorter timeframe for deciding on complaints related to election results could be provided by legislation to ensure effective and timely remedy. At the moment of drafting this report the cases were still being examined by the Constitutional Council.

EU EOM recommendation: To shorten the timeframe for deciding on complaints related to election results.

The Constitutional Council can decide either to validate or invalidate the appealed results, although the law is silent on the criteria for annulment. In case it decides there are reasons for invalidation, the CC is entitled to annul the results, correct them and announce the victory of another candidate, or to cancel the challenged results and order new elections for the seat. It is important to note the Constitutional Council also has the power to demand all electoral materials from the MoIM in order to carry out recounts.

Political Overview of the Election Results

Based on the official results announced by the Ministry of Interior on 7 and 8 May, 105 representatives of political parties¹²² and 23 independent candidates were elected to Parliament. Nearly half of them (63) are newcomers.

In general terms, the slim victory of the parties forming the March 14 bloc in 2009 was converted, in 2018, into a slight advantage for the March 8 parties. However, everything has to be read in the context of the gradual blurring of the dividing lines between these blocs. The election saw the consolidation of the Shiite parliamentary bloc and a certain fragmentation of the Sunni bloc, as the Future Movement lost a number of seats. Among the Christian parties, the Lebanese Forces almost doubled their seats. Below are the key developments:

- With 19 MPs, the Future Movement lost one third of its seats, due to the defeat of Sunni candidates in its strongholds of Beirut II, North II, North I and South I, and the failure of candidates competing for other confessional seats elsewhere.
- With 18 seats, the Free Patriotic Movement increased its number of MPs by four and now has representatives in nine districts, including five where it had no presence. With a total of

¹²¹ From the date of the proclamation of results by the MoIM and the decision of the CC on complaints against the election results more than five months can pass.

¹²² This included one representative of Sabaa party, a civil society-based party running within the Kulluna Watani coalition's lists.

29 party members and allies elected, the Free Patriotic Movement has the largest bloc in parliament.

- Hezbollah maintains the same number of seats (13), while Amal has 15, an increase of two. All the incumbents of Hezbollah and Amal who ran were re-elected in their strongholds in the south and in Baalbek. In South II and III¹²³ the Hezbollah/Amal alliance retained all its seats, nullifying the intended effect of proportionality to widen fields of competition. By contrast, their opponents in Future Movement and Lebanese Forces made a breakthrough in Baalbek where they won two of the four non-Shi'a seats. For their part, Amal and Hezbollah won the two Shi'a seats in Beirut II for the first time.
- The Lebanese Forces won 13 seats, nearly doubling their representation. They reached beyond their strongholds, to six new districts where they won marginal seats for Christian communities that were open to more competition because of the proportional system.
- The Progressive Socialist Party won the nine seats it already held, with the re-election of seven incumbents, the election of Taymour Jumblatt in the seat formerly held by his father, Walid, and of a new representative in Beirut.
- The Marada party kept three MPs in the northern region, losing one in its Zgartha stronghold and gaining a new one in Koura. Another Christian party, Kataeb, lost two of the five seats it held. With three MPs now, Tashnag won one more seat than it had before and is the only Armenian party in Parliament¹²⁴.
- The secular Syrian Social Nationalist Party won an additional seat and has now three.
- Najib Mikati's Azm list made a breakthrough in Tripoli, a traditional bastion for Saad Hariri's Future Movement, moving from one to four seats. Other smaller forces, such as the Lebanese Democratic Party and the Baath party lost one seat each and are left with one each. The Popular Nasserite Organization and the Al Ahabash association re-entered the Parliament with one elected member¹²⁵ each.
- Among the civil society lists, participating for the first time in parliamentary elections, the Kulluna Watani coalition was the only one to get a seat: the Armenian Orthodox seat of Beirut I is now held by the female candidate Paula Yacoubian, who ran on the civil society list as a member of the Sabaa party. In the other eight districts where their lists were running, Kulluna Watani did not reach the threshold of eligibility.
- There are now fewer political forces represented in Parliament than in 2009: 14 instead of 18. Seven parties and movements¹²⁶ are not represented anymore.

Hezbollah and Amal, and one of their long-standing allies, Jamil Sayyed in Baalbek, won 26 out of the 27 Shi'a seats, the other going to an independent candidate. Seventeen of the 27 Sunni seats were taken by Future Movement candidates, while the rest are held by the Azm list, the Popular Nasserite Organization, the Al Ahabash Association, Hezbollah, and independent candidates. Six of the eight Druze seats were taken by the Progressive Socialist Party, while the Lebanese Democratic Party and Amal took remaining two. Alawites are represented by an independent and an Azm MP.

¹²³ In South III, the Hezbollah-Amal led alliance won all the seats with their candidates, in addition to one seat for each of their traditional allies, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party and the Baath party which were running on their list.

¹²⁴ In the 2009 Parliament, two other Armenian parties had representation: Hunchak held two seats and Ramgavar one.

¹²⁵ The Popular Nasserite Organization was represented in the Parliament elected in 2005, and the Al Ahabash in 1992.

¹²⁶ Among these seven political forces, the Armenian parties Hunchak and Ramgavar, the Islamist organization Al Jama'a al Islamiya, the National Liberal Party and the Solidarity Party presented candidates, while the Democratic Left and the Islamic Action Front did not.

The major share of Parliament's 64 Christian seats remains with the Free Patriotic Movement and its allies. Most of the other Christian seats are held by the Lebanese Forces, Kataeb, Marada, the Armenian Tashnag, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, Amal and a sizeable number of independent MPs. Of the six Armenian seats three went Tashnag, two to independent candidates and one to Kulluna Watani.

At the time of compiling this report, a number of independent candidates had still not decided who they would join, or whether they would form their own bloc. The Free Patriotic Movement announced the constitution of the Strong Lebanon bloc with a membership of 29 MPs (18 members and 11 allies). The Lebanese Forces' bloc, called the Strong Republic, consists of 15 MPs (13 party members elected and two allies). The Future bloc for now includes 19 elected party members and one independent ally.

Democratic Gathering, the Druze bloc of Taymour Jumblatt, the son of Walid Jumblatt, has nine MPs. The Marada Party has formed a trans-confessional bloc of seven MPs, with their three party members and four independent representatives, called the National bloc. A second Druze parliamentary bloc of four members, called the Guarantee of the Mountain, has been established by Talal Arslane.

The March 8 camp has a tight majority (65 of the 128 seats) over the March 14 camp, with the seats won by the Free Patriotic Movement, Hezbollah and Amal, in addition to their allies and five March 8 Sunni independent representatives.

The post-election environment remained calm in Lebanon with only a few exceptions. In Aley, an armed clash between Progressive Socialist Party and Lebanese Democratic Party supporters led to one death. Religious representatives and political leaders of the relevant Druze parties in the district intervened to avoid an escalation of tensions. On the night of election day, scuffles broke out in Beirut between pro-Hezbollah and pro-Future Movement supporters. A demonstration of force by Amal and Hezbollah partisans to celebrate their victory in opponent villages in South III was prevented by the parties' leaderships.

XVI. Recommendations

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
ELECTION ADMINISTRATION						
1.	Pg.16	The law gives the Supervisory Commission for Elections (SCE) a mandate limited mainly to the monitoring of the media's compliance with campaign regulations and the monitoring of candidates' and lists' campaign finance. However, loopholes and unclear provisions in the elections law concerning the SCE's power to investigate and sanction, as well as a delayed budget allocation, seriously undermined its capacity to effectively fulfil its mandate.	<p>To enhance the SCE's remit to fully investigate and sanction any instances of non-compliance with campaign regulations.</p> <p>To grant the SCE full financial and administrative autonomy from the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM), as well as sufficient financial and human resources to carry out its legal duties.</p>	Amendment of Chapter III of the elections law	Parliament Council of Ministers SCE	<p>Enhancing periodic and genuine elections.</p> <p>Transparency and the Right to Information.</p> <p>United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN, ICCPR), Art. 2.2 <i>“adopt such laws or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights...”</i></p> <p>UN, ICCPR Art. 25.(b) <i>“Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity (...): (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors”</i></p> <p>UN, General Assembly (GA) Resolution A/RES/68/164(2013) <i>“The GA notes the importance of adequate resources for the administration of efficient and transparent elections at the national and local levels, and recommends that Member States provide adequate resources for those elections”</i></p>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
2.	Pg.23	<p>The law requires the contestants and media outlets to submit essential documentation to the SCE necessary for the fulfilment of its monitoring tasks (monthly financial reports of the contestants, the list of prices for electoral advertising and the weekly paid-for coverage reports by media). However, the law does not impose any penalties for the failure to respect these obligations.</p>	<p>To include effective sanctions which can be imposed by the SCE on candidates, lists and the media in cases where they do not submit the required documentation to the SCE, as required by the law.</p>	<p>Amendment of Chapters V and VI of the elections law</p>	<p>Parliament Cabinet of Ministers</p>	<p>Transparency and the Right to Information. UNCAC, Art. 1.(c) <i>“The purposes of this Convention are: (c) To promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs and public property.”</i> UNCAC, Art.26, para.4 <i>“Each State Party shall, in particular, ensure that legal persons held liable in accordance with this article are subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal or non-criminal sanctions, including monetary sanctions.”</i> UNCAC, Art. 5.1. <i>“ Each State Party shall develop and implement or maintain effective, coordinated anti-corruption policies that promote the participation of society and reflect the principles of the rule of law, proper management of public affairs and public property, integrity, transparency and accountability.”</i> UNCAC, Art.7.3 <i>“Each State Party shall also consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures...to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office”.</i></p>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
3.	Pg.24 Pg.29	<p>According to the elections law, the SCE is not required to publish the monthly and final financial reports of the contestants or its audits, nor the list of prices for the paid-for electoral coverage and the related weekly reports. The law does not require either the publication by the SCE of any detected media violations, complaints received, or actions undertaken.</p>	<p>To reform the law to provide for the public disclosure of financial reports of candidates and lists, the SCE’s audit of these, the media’s list of prices for paid-for electoral coverage and the related weekly reports.</p> <p>To reform the law to provide for the SCE to publish any detected media violations, complaints received, or the actions undertaken, in a timely manner during the election campaign.</p>	Amendment of Chapter V of the elections law	Parliament Council of Ministers SCE	<p>Transparency and the Right to Information.</p> <p>UNCAC, Art.5.1, Art.7.3, UNCAC, Art.10 <i>“Each State Party shall take such measures as may be necessary to enhance transparency in its public administration... Such measures may include, inter alia: (c) Publishing information”</i></p> <p>Art.13.1. <i>“(a)Enhancing the transparency of and promoting the contribution of the public to decision-making processes; (b) Ensuring that the public has effective access to information;”</i></p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No.34, Art.18. <i>“Article 19, paragraph 2 embraces a right of access to information held by public bodies. Such information includes records held by a public body, regardless of the form in which the information is stored, its source and the date of production.”</i></p> <p>Art.19 <i>“To give effect to the right of access to information, States parties should proactively put in the public domain Government information of public interest”</i></p>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
4.	Pg.15	<p>The communication flow from the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) to the governors and sub-governors was not always well-timed.</p> <p>The MoIM did not always publicise important information.</p>	<p>To define clear internal communication between the MoIM and election officials in the field and improve coordination with them.</p> <p>All decisions, decrees and circulars issued by the MoIM could be communicated in a timely and widespread fashion and by a variety of means.</p>	Adoption of regulations, decisions, decrees	MoIM	<p>Transparency and the Right to Information.</p> <p>UN, ICCPR, Art. 19(2). <i>“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information”</i></p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No.34, Art.18. <i>“Article 19, paragraph 2 embraces a right of access to information held by public bodies. Such information includes records held by a public body, regardless of the form in which the information is stored, its source and the date of production.”</i></p> <p>Art.19 <i>“To give effect to the right of access to information, States parties should proactively put in the public domain Government information of public interest”</i></p>
VOTER REGISTRATION						

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
5.	Pg. 12 Pg. 13	Serving military personnel are disenfranchised.	To give serving military personnel the right to vote.	Amendment of Art. 6 of the elections law	Parliament Council of Ministers	Right and Opportunity to Vote. Universal suffrage. UN, ICCPR, Art.25.(b) <i>“Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without unreasonable restrictions: (b)To vote and to be elected;”</i> UN, HRC CCPR, GC No.25, para. 4. <i>“Any conditions which apply to the exercise of the rights protected by article 25 should be based on objective and reasonable criteria.”</i>
6.	Pg. 12 Pg. 13	Persons to whom the Lebanese State grants citizenship are disenfranchised and cannot stand for elections for a period of ten years after their naturalization.	To provide for the immediate right to vote and to stand for elections to all persons granted citizenship by the Lebanese State.	Amendment of Art. 7 of the elections law	Parliament Council of Ministers	Right and Opportunity to Vote Universal suffrage. UN, ICCPR, Art. 25(b). <i>“Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without unreasonable restrictions: (b)To vote and to be elected;”</i> UN, HRC CCPR, GC No.25, para. 3. <i>“Article 25 (b) protects the rights of “every citizen”. Distinctions between those who are entitled to citizenship by birth and those who acquire it by naturalization may raise questions of compatibility with article 25.</i>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
7.	Pg. 12 Pg. 13	Pre-trial detainees, although not disenfranchised by law, cannot vote as measures are not put in place for the exercise of their right.	To ensure that voting facilities and/or voting systems are in place for all those prisoners eligible to vote.	Adoption of regulations, decisions, decrees	MoIM in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice (MJ)	<p>Right and Opportunity to Vote.</p> <p>UN, ICCPR, Art. 25(b). <i>“Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without unreasonable restrictions: (b) To vote and to be elected;”</i></p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No. 25, para. 11. <i>“States must take effective measures to ensure that all persons entitled to vote are able to exercise that right.”</i></p> <p>UN, General Assembly Resolution on <i>Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners (28.03.1991)</i>. <i>“Except for those limitations that are demonstrably necessitated by the fact of incarceration, all prisoners shall retain the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ICCPR”</i></p>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
8.	Pg. 16 Pg. 17	<p>Since the adoption of the Law on the Civil Status in 1924, a voter's registration place is the paternal ancestral village, which leads to massive movements of people around every election day.</p> <p>The allocation of voters in polling stations following a confessional and gender-based separation can lead to an infringement of secrecy of vote.</p>	<p>To implement a system that allows voters to cast their ballot in the place where they reside.</p> <p>To allocate voters to polling stations without confessional and gender-based separations.</p>	<p>Amendment of Art. 85, Art. 86, Art. 96</p> <p>Adoption of decrees and regulations</p>	MoIM	<p>Right and Opportunity to Vote.</p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No. 25, para. 12. <i>"Positive measures should be taken to overcome specific difficulties, such as ...impediments to freedom of movements which prevent persons entitled to vote from exercising their rights effectively."</i></p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No. 25, para. 11. <i>"States must take effective measures to ensure that all persons entitled to vote are able to exercise that right."</i></p>
9.	Pg. 17	<p>An application for a transfer of a voters' registration location can be made, but the procedure is extremely cumbersome and requires the final approval of the Council of Ministers.</p>	<p>To simplify and shorten the process by which voters may transfer their registration location to where they actually reside.</p>	<p>Amendment of the Law on the Civil Status of 1924</p>	<p>Parliament</p> <p>Council of Ministers</p>	<p>Right and Opportunity to Vote.</p> <p>UN, ICCPR, Art. 25(b). <i>"Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without unreasonable restrictions: (b)To vote and to be elected;"</i></p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No. 25, para. 11. <i>"States must take effective measures to ensure that all persons entitled to vote are able to exercise that right. Where registration of voters is required, it should be facilitated and obstacles to such registration should not be imposed."</i></p>

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10.	Pg. 12 Pg. 13	Lebanon is one of the few countries in the world where the voting age is 21 while the age of majority is 18, thus disenfranchising adult citizens.	To consider lowering the voting age from 21 to 18.	Amendment of Art. 21 of the Constitution	Parliament Council of Ministers	<p>Universal suffrage.</p> <p>UN, ICCPR, Art. 25(b).). <i>“Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without unreasonable restrictions: (b)To vote and to be elected.”</i></p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No. 25, para. 4. <i>“Any conditions which apply to the exercise of the rights protected by article 25 should be based on objective and reasonable criteria.”</i></p>
CANDIDATE REGISTRATION						
11.	Pg. 18	The new electoral law raised the non-reimbursable candidate nomination fee to eight million Lebanese pounds (€4,300) a high amount that can be considered an obstacle for those candidates with limited financial resources.	To reduce the candidate nomination fee.	Amendment of Art.45, para. 2 of the elections law	Parliament Council of ministers	<p>Right and Opportunity to be Elected.</p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No. 25, para. 16. <i>“Condition relating to nomination dates, fees or deposits should be reasonable and not discriminatory.”</i></p> <p>UN, ICCPR, Art. 25(b).). <i>“Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without unreasonable restrictions: (b)To vote and to be elected.”</i></p>

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POLITICAL PARTIES AND CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT						
12.	Pg. 34	<p>The law provides that electoral activities shall be prohibited near polling centres, without however specifying a precise distance.</p> <p>The MoIM did not issue any regulation to clarify this matter.</p>	<p>To amend the legal framework to specify a precise distance from the polling centre within which electoral activities will be prohibited.</p> <p>This could be accompanied by enforcement measures.</p>	Amendment of Art.77 and Art.91 of the elections law and/or adoption of regulations	<p>Parliament</p> <p>Council of Ministers</p> <p>MoIM</p>	<p>Legal Certainty and Clarity</p> <p>UN Human Rights Council Resolution 19/36 (A/HRC/RES/19/36, 2012)16 (c) <i>“The HRC calls upon States to make continuous efforts to strengthen the rule of law and promote democracy by: ...c) Ensuring that a sufficient degree of legal certainty and predictability is provided...”</i>.</p>
CAMPAIGN FINANCE						
13.	Pg. 22	Charities, foundations and institutions connected to candidates had a significant impact in driving electoral support. They are not subject to campaign spending limits and do not fall under the control of the SCE.	To adopt legislative measures to regulate the contributions of foundations and charities for the campaigns of candidates and lists. These contributions could be included in the calculation of campaign expenses.	Amendment of Art. 62.2 of the elections law	<p>Parliament</p> <p>Council of Ministers</p>	<p>Transparency and accountability of funding</p> <p>UNCAC, Art.7.3 <i>“Each State Party shall also consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures...to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures”</i>.</p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No. 25, para. 19. <i>“Reasonable limitations on campaign expenditure may be justified where this is necessary to ensure that the free choice of voters is not undermined or the democratic process distorted by the disproportionate expenditure on behalf of any candidate or party.”</i></p>

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14.	Pg. 23	<p>The SCE has 30 days for the audit of the financial reports submitted by candidates and lists. Reports not audited within this time are deemed approved. Given the complexity of the process, this period is clearly insufficient.</p>	<p>To extend the timeframe the SCE has to audit the financial reports submitted by candidates and lists.</p>	<p>Amendment of Chapter V of the elections law</p>	<p>Parliament Council of Ministers SCE</p>	<p>Transparency and accountability of funding</p> <p>UNCAC, Art. 1.(c) <i>“The purposes of this Convention are: (c) To promote integrity, accountability and proper management of public affairs and public property.”</i></p> <p>UNCAC, Art.7.3 <i>“Each State Party shall also consider taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures...to enhance transparency in the funding of candidatures for elected public office”.</i></p> <p>UNCAC, Art.26, para.4 <i>“Each State Party shall, in particular, ensure that legal persons held liable in accordance with this article are subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal or non-criminal sanctions, including monetary sanctions.”</i></p>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN						
15.	Pg. 31 Pg. 32	<p>Women are severely under-represented in the Parliament, with only six women elected among the 128 members.</p> <p>The high registration fee could be particularly prohibitive for women, facing financial constraints.</p>	<p>To adopt temporary special measures to increase women’s representation in the Parliament, for example a quota on the candidates’ lists, accompanied by enforcement mechanisms.</p> <p>These could be supported by advocacy campaigns, capacity development programmes for women candidates, as well as a reduced candidature fee for women.</p>	Amendment of the Art.54 and Art.45 of the elections law	Parliament Council of Ministers Civil Society groups targeting women	<p>Equality Between Men and Women. Non-discrimination.</p> <p>UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Art.7 <i>“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life and shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (a)To vote and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; Art.4.1. “Adoption by State Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women”</i></p> <p>UN, CEDAW, General Recommendation (GR) No. 23, para. 5. <i>“Article 7 obliges States parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life and to ensure that they enjoy equality with men in political and public life. The obligation specified in article 7 extends to all areas of public and political life”</i></p>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
16.	Pg. 32	Discrimination towards women and lack of gender equality persist within the electoral framework. Women cannot transfer their Lebanese nationality to their children. Since nationality is a precondition to exercising fundamental political rights, women's status as equal citizens in elections is undermined.	Consider an amendment of the Nationality Law to allow women to confer their Lebanese nationality to their children on the same basis as men.	Amendment of the Law No.15 of 1925	Parliament Council of Ministers	<p>Equality Between Men and Women. Non-discrimination.</p> <p>UN, ICCPR, Art. 3: <i>“The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights”</i></p> <p>UN, CEDAW, Art.7. <i>“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (a)To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies.”</i></p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, Third Periodic Report of Lebanon, 5 April 2018. <i>“Lebanon should amend the nationality act to ensure that women have equal rights with men in the transmission of their nationality to the children and spouses.”</i></p>

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17.	Pg. 32	<p>According to the law on civil status, a women's registration location is automatically transferred, once married, to her husband's place of registration. This represents a discriminatory provision against women.</p>	<p>To reform the legal framework in order to give women, after they marry, the right to choose whether to keep their registration place or change it to their husband's.</p>	<p>Amendment of the law on the civil status of 1924</p> <p>Amendment of Art.26, Art.31 of the elections law</p>	<p>Parliament</p> <p>Council of Ministers</p>	<p>Equality Between Men and Women. Non discrimination.</p> <p>UN, ICCPR, Art. 3: <i>"The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights"</i></p> <p>UN, CEDAW, Art.7. <i>"States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country"</i></p> <p>UN, CEDAW, GC. No. 23, para.5. <i>"Article 7 obliges States parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life and to ensure that they enjoy equality with men in political and public life. The obligation specified in article 7 extends to all areas of public and political life"</i></p>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
ELECTORAL DISPUTES						
18.	Pg. 38	The timeframe during which the Constitutional Council can decide on complaints against the election results is excessively long (up to four months), permitting uncertainty over the electoral results while cases are still being determined.	To shorten the timeframe for deciding on complaints related to election results.	Amendment of the Law No.250 of 14/7/1993 on the establishment of the Constitutional Council	Parliament Council of Ministers	<p>Right to effective remedy.</p> <p>UN, ICCPR Art. 2.3 <i>“Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes: (a) To ensure that any person whose rights or freedoms as herein recognized are violated shall have an effective remedy”</i></p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No. 25, para. 20. <i>“There should be independent scrutiny of the voting and counting process and access to judicial review or other equivalent process so that electors have confidence in the security of the ballot and the counting of the votes.”</i></p> <p>Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Art. 8 <i>“everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.”</i></p>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
POLITICAL RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWD)						
19.	Pg. 32 Pg. 33	Most of polling stations were not accessible to people with disabilities (PWD). The voter education was not inclusive, there were no specimen tactile ballots and the media coverage of campaign and other election events did not include sign language.	<p>To introduce measures to ensure the full participation of PWD in the electoral processes.</p> <p>These measures would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making polling stations accessible to PWD, - disseminating voter education and electoral information adapted to PWD, - using specimen tactile ballots, - using sign language in media coverage of campaign and other election events. 	Enforcement of Art.96 of the elections law	MoIM Media	<p>Right and Opportunity to Participate in Public Affairs.</p> <p>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Art.29.i <i>“Ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right and opportunity for PWDs to vote and be elected, inter alia by: (i) Ensuring that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use;“</i></p> <p>UN, ICCPR, Art. 25(b).). <i>“Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without unreasonable restrictions: (b)To vote and to be elected.”</i></p>

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VOTER EDUCATION						
20.	Pg. 24	The MoIM launched the voter information programme late.	To launch public education programmes and voter information campaigns take place at the start of the election campaign.	Amendment of Art.75 of elections law and/or Adoption of regulations, decisions, decrees	MoIM in collaboration with civil society	<p>Right to Information.</p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No. 25. Para.11 <i>“States must take effective measures to ensure that all persons entitled to vote are able to exercise that right. Voter education and registration campaigns are necessary to ensure the effective exercise of article 25 rights by an informed community.”</i></p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No. 25. Para.12 <i>“Positive measures should be taken to overcome specific difficulties, such as illiteracy, language barriers, poverty or impediments to freedom of movements which prevent persons entitled to vote from exercising their rights effectively.”</i></p>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
OUT OF COUNTRY VOTING (OCV)						
21.	Pg. 26	The procedures adopted for the counting of the ballots cast abroad did not always respect the secrecy of voting, especially when just one or a few votes were cast in a polling station abroad for a given minor district, making the traceability of the voter's identity easy.	<p>To ensure secrecy of voting during the counting of the ballot papers for the out-of-country voting (OCV).</p> <p>This could be achieved by mixing all ballots cast abroad for a single minor district and counting them together rather than individually.</p>	<p>Amendment of Art. 119 of the elections law</p> <p>Adoption of regulations and procedures</p>	MoIM in collaboration with Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), and MJ	<p>Secret Ballot.</p> <p>UN, ICCPR, Art.2.2, Art.25 <i>“Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity,(b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot..”</i></p>
POLLING, COUNTING AND TABULATION						
22.	Pg. 34	In the majority of the polling stations observed by the EU EOM, there were only two polling staff, not three as required by the law. As a result, polling staff were overloaded especially during the counting and the filling in of the polling station reports.	To guarantee the presence of three polling staff at each polling station.	Enforcement of Art.86 and Art.94 of the elections law	MoIM	<p>Enhancing periodic and genuine elections.</p> <p>UN, General Assembly (GA) Resolution A/RES/68/164(2013) <i>“The GA notes the importance of adequate resources for the administration of efficient and transparent elections at the national and local levels, and recommends that Member States provide adequate resources for those elections”</i></p>

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23.	Pg. 35 Pg. 36	<p>The law does not specify the conditions under which a recount of ballots should be conducted by the Primary Registration Committees (PRCs) during the tabulation of results. Furthermore, the MoIM did not adopt any procedures related to the tabulation of results in the PRCs, including the modalities of a recount.</p> <p>There were cases in which observers were denied access to the Higher Registration Committees (HRCs).</p>	<p>To establish in the law the conditions under which a recount of ballots has to be conducted.</p> <p>To adopt procedures for the tabulation of results, to be applied by PRCs and HRCs. These may include precise instructions to follow in case of recounts.</p> <p>To grant full access to all stages of tabulation for candidates' and lists' agents, as well as election observers.</p>	<p>Amendment of Art.106 of the elections law</p> <p>Enforcement of Art. 20 of elections law</p> <p>Adoption of decrees and regulations</p>	MoIM in collaboration with the MJ	<p>Transparency and the Right to Information.</p> <p>Enhancing periodic and genuine elections.</p> <p>UN, GA Resolution A/RES/68/164 (2013) <i>"The GA notes the importance of adequate resources for the administration of efficient and transparent elections at the national and local levels, and recommends that Member States provide adequate resources for those elections"</i></p> <p>UN, HRC CCPR, GC No.25, Art.20 <i>"The security of ballot boxes must be guaranteed and votes should be counted in the presence of the candidates or their agents. There should be independent scrutiny of the voting and counting process"</i></p>
24.	Pg. 36	Polling staff did not consistently follow the counting procedures and had some difficulties filling in the polling station reports. The judges responsible for the tabulation at PRCs and HRCs did not follow the relevant training.	To provide additional training for polling staff, judges and other members of PRCs and HRCs, with a focus on counting and tabulation procedures.	Adoption of regulations	MoIM in collaboration with the MJ	<p>Enhancing periodic and genuine elections.</p> <p>UN, GA Resolution A/RES/68/164 (2013) <i>"The GA notes the importance of adequate resources for the administration of efficient and transparent elections at the national and local levels, and recommends that Member States provide adequate</i></p>

NO.	Pg. in the report	CONTEXT	RECOMMENDATION	SUGGESTED CHANGE IN LEGAL FRAMEWORK	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL / REGIONAL PRINCIPLE / COMMITMENT
MEDIA						
25.	Pg. 28	<p>Different interpretations of the elections law opened the space for broadcasters to offer paid-for coverage of contestants across all kinds of programme formats, including news and political talk shows. This undermines the voters' right to receive genuine information and the candidates' rights to equal access.</p> <p>In breach of the law, media outlets did not respect the provision requiring them to mark the paid-for content as such and to indicate by whom it was paid. EU EOM media monitoring showed partisan news coverage by some media outlets. This affected the space for balanced information.</p> <p>The SCE did not enforce the elections law provision requiring it to establish a ceiling for the amount of paid-for airtime and space that private media could offer.</p>	<p>To amend the elections law to further clarify the distinction between free-of-charge editorial coverage, including news and political talk shows, and paid-for access to private media. Clear regulations and guidelines could also be issued by the SCE on this matter.</p> <p>To amend the elections law to provide the SCE with appropriate regulatory and sanctioning powers to redress violations concerning paid-for access in the media and unbalanced editorial coverage.</p> <p>As required by the elections law, the SCE should issue regulations indicating a ceiling for election-related paid-for content in private media.</p>	<p>Amendment of Chapter VI of the elections law</p> <p>Enforcement of Art.71 and Art.72 of the elections law</p> <p>Adoption of regulations, guidelines by the SCE</p>	<p>Parliament</p> <p>Council of Ministers</p> <p>SCE</p>	<p>Right to seek and receive information.</p> <p>UN, ICCPR, Art.19</p> <p>UN, OSCE ,OAS, ACHPR, Joint Statement on the Media and Elections, 15 May 2009 <i>“Public media has the obligation to respect strict rules of impartiality and balance.”</i></p> <p>UN Doc. E/CN.4/1999/64 Art.16 <i>“the State must ensure that Media inform the public about the political parties, candidates, campaign issues and voting processes; government media are balanced and impartial in election reporting, do not discriminate against any political party or candidate in granting access to air time and ensure that news, interviews and information programmes are not biased in favour of, or against, any party or candidate; UN, ICCPR, GC No.34, para. 13. “The free communication of information and ideas implies a free press and other media able to comment on public issues without censorship or restraint and to inform public opinion. The public also has a corresponding right to receive media output.”</i></p>

XVII. Annexes

Annex nr. 1 : EU EOM MEDIA MONITORING RESULTS

The EU EOM conducted quantitative and qualitative media monitoring of eight national TV channels during the campaign for the 6 May parliamentary elections:

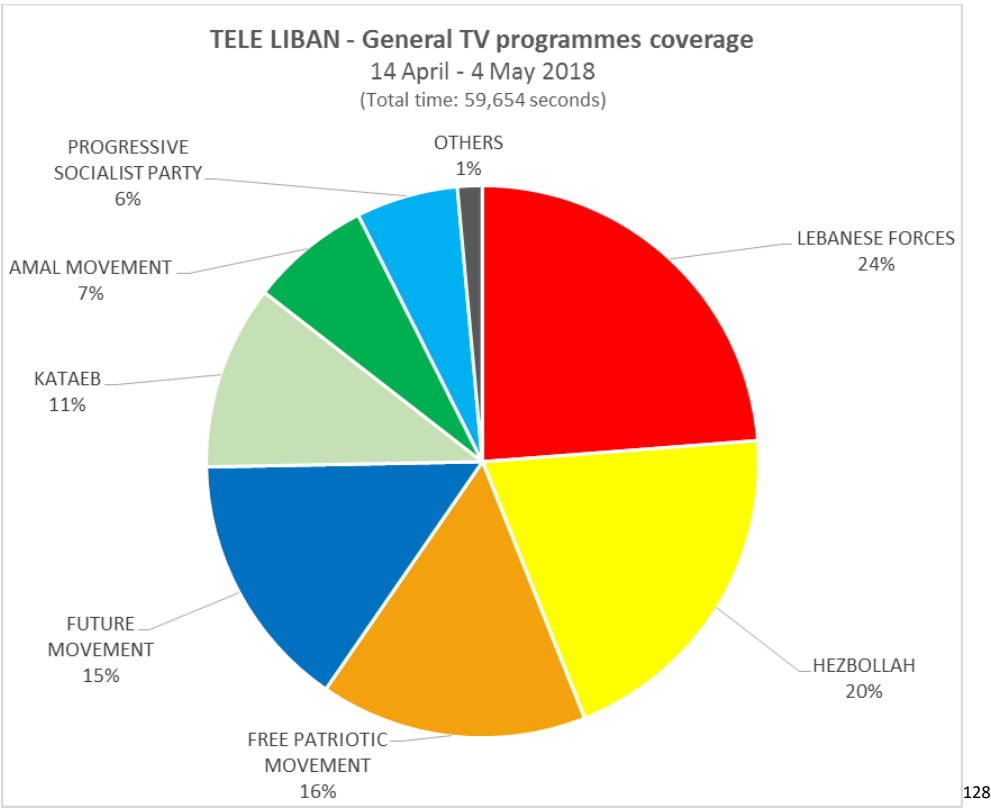
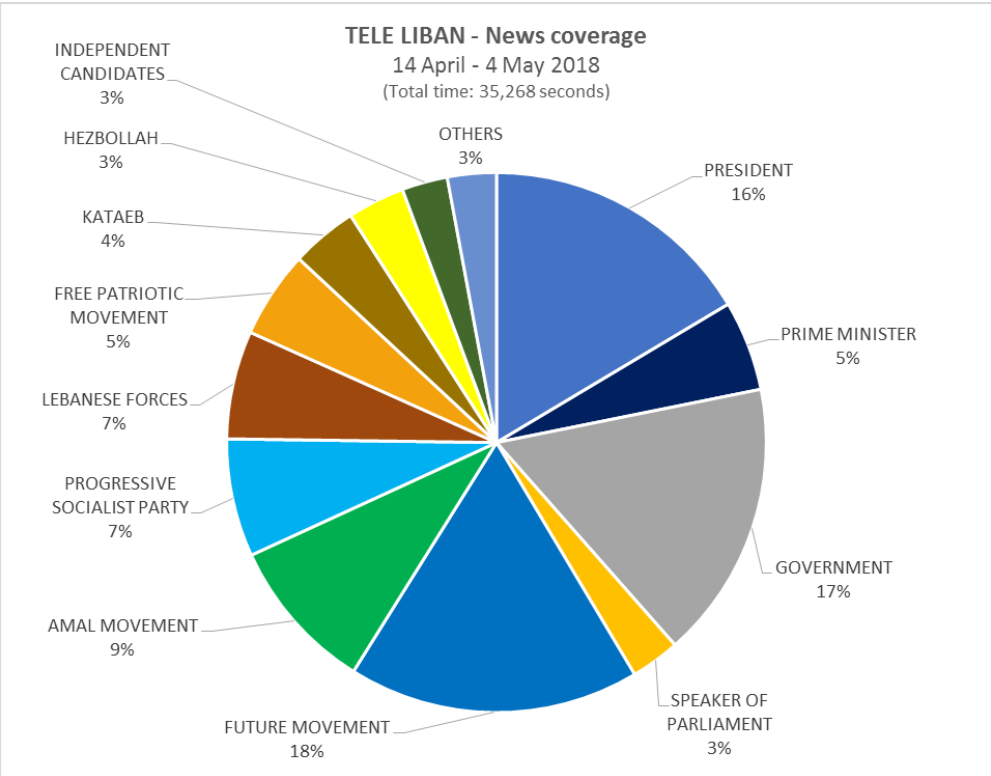
- ✓ **TELE LIBAN** – state-owned TV channel
- ✓ **MTV** – private TV channel
- ✓ **LBC** – private TV channel
- ✓ **AL JADEED (NEW TV)** – private TV channel
- ✓ **FUTURE TV** – private TV channel
- ✓ **AL MANAR** – private TV channel
- ✓ **NBN** – private TV channel
- ✓ **ORANGE TV (OTV)** – private TV channel

The TV channels were monitored from 14 April to 4 May 2018, from 17:00 to 01:00 daily. The same TV channels were monitored for 24 hours on 5 and 6 May, to observe if the silence period was respected. The media monitoring focused on coverage of the President, Prime Minister, members of the government, Speaker of the Parliament, political parties and their members as well as independent candidates.

In the following pages, you will find a summary of the results for the quantitative media monitoring. The charts present the coverage devoted to the subjects in the news and in general TV programmes. The latter include talk shows, current affairs programmes, interviews, reportage, live coverage of campaign events and entertainment shows. The adoption of such a general category is due to the absence of a clear distinction in the monitored TV channels between editorial coverage and paid-for access. Indeed, broadcasters informed the EU EOM that they offered paid-for access in all types of format. Yet the paid-for coverage was rarely marked as such, making it difficult to differentiate between editorial and paid-for content. It also made it difficult to assess to what extent the TV channels' output was a reflection of unbalanced editorial coverage or whether the uneven coverage of political parties and candidates arose because of the amount of paid-for coverage bought by candidates.¹²⁷ The “General TV programmes” category does not include news, satirical programmes, voter education spots or paid-for political spots. Candidates purchased a very limited amount of paid political spots during the election campaign; therefore, the graphics relating to the allocation of paid-for political spots are not included in the summary. The tone used towards institutional and political subjects in the analysed broadcast media was largely neutral; thus, the graphics relating to the tone of the media are not included in this summary.

¹²⁷ The same problem applies to newscasts, as some broadcasters acknowledged that news coverage was also open to paid-for access. However, the results for the news coverage are kept separate from the “General TV programmes”.

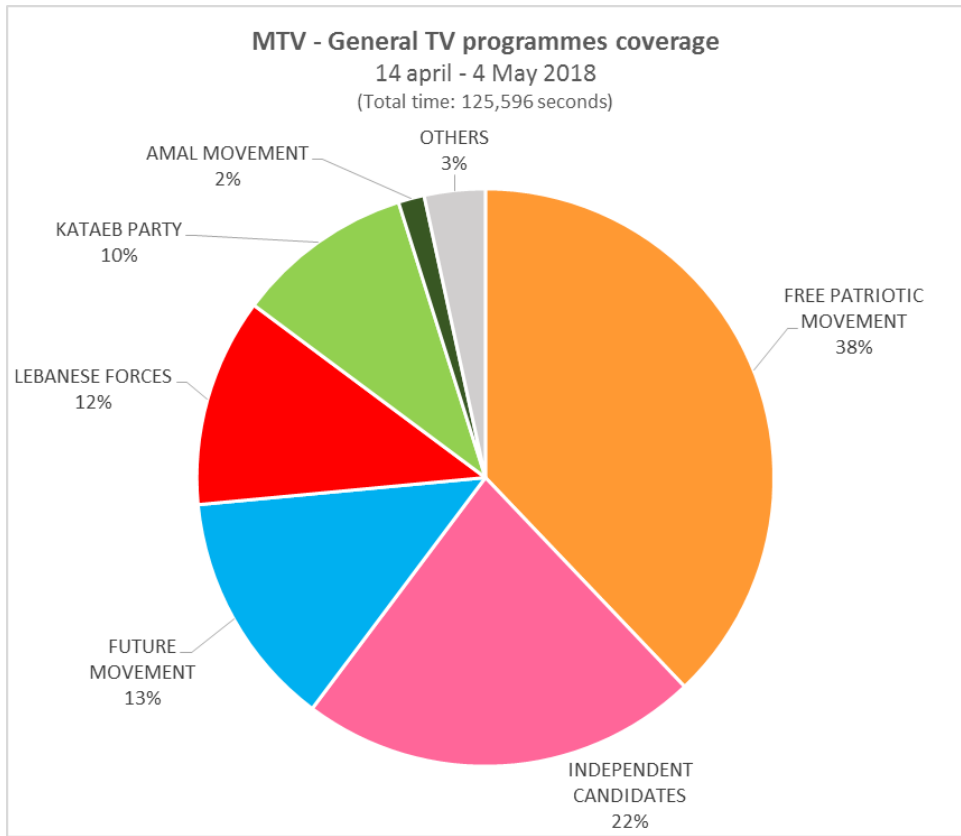
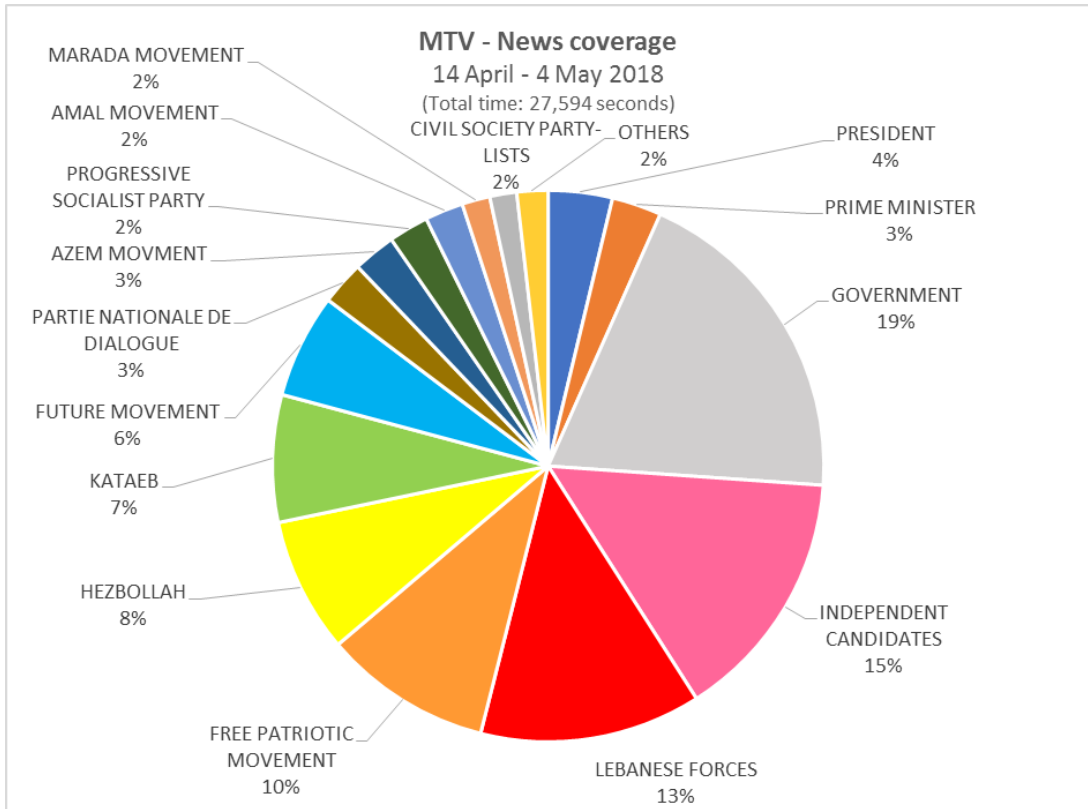
TELE LIBAN (STATE-OWNED TV CHANNEL)



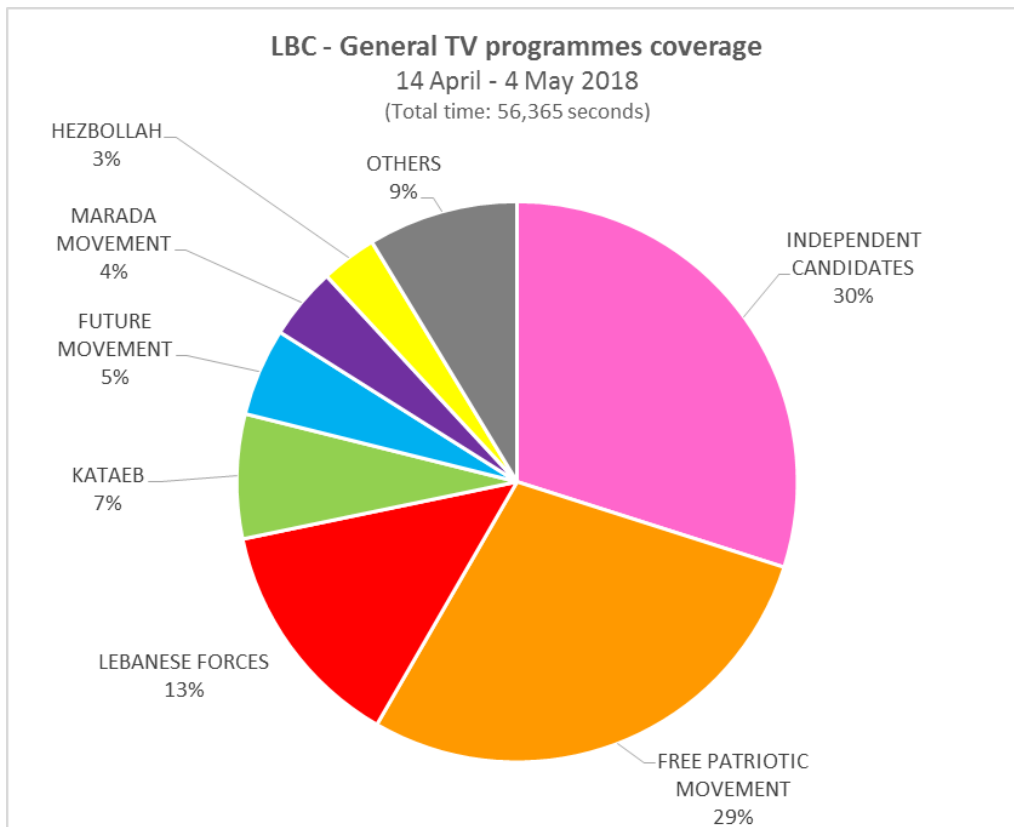
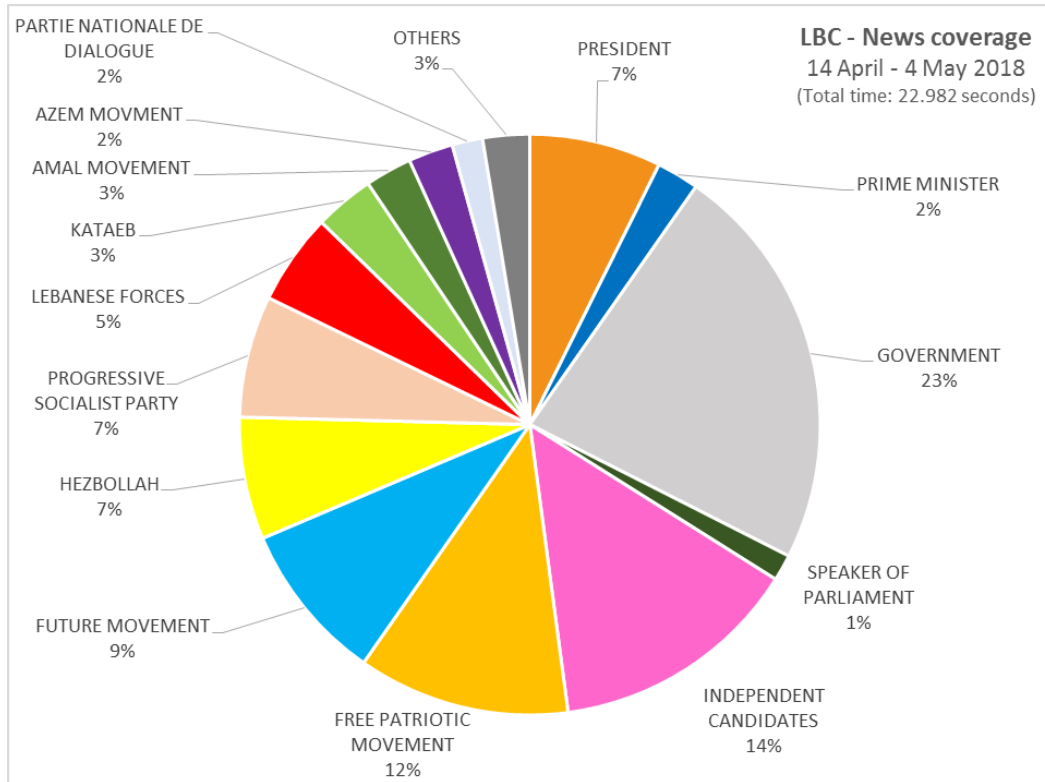
128

¹²⁸ The “General TV programmes” category on Télé Liban was largely made up of live coverage of campaign events.

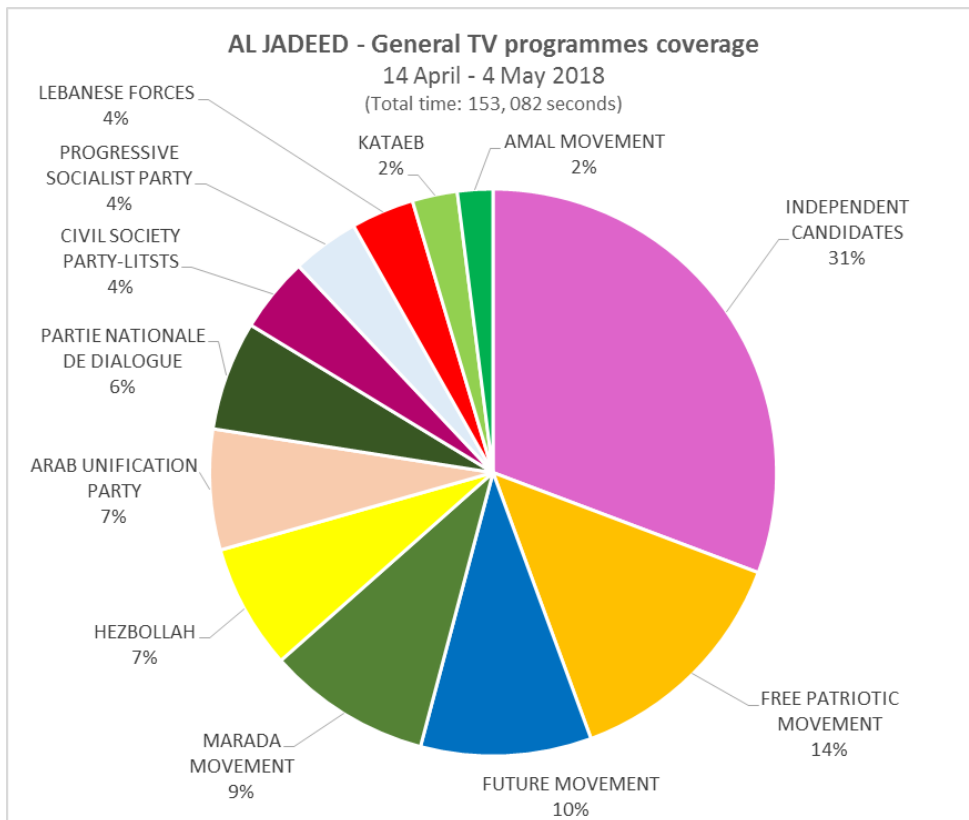
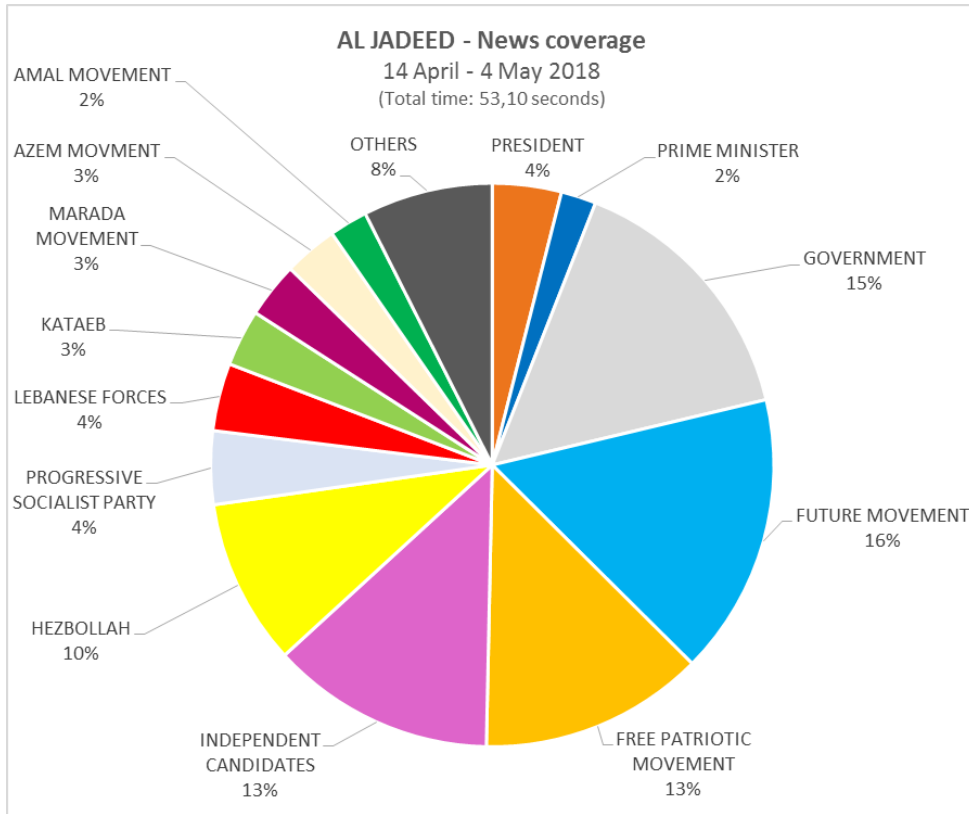
MTV (PRIVATE TV CHANNEL)



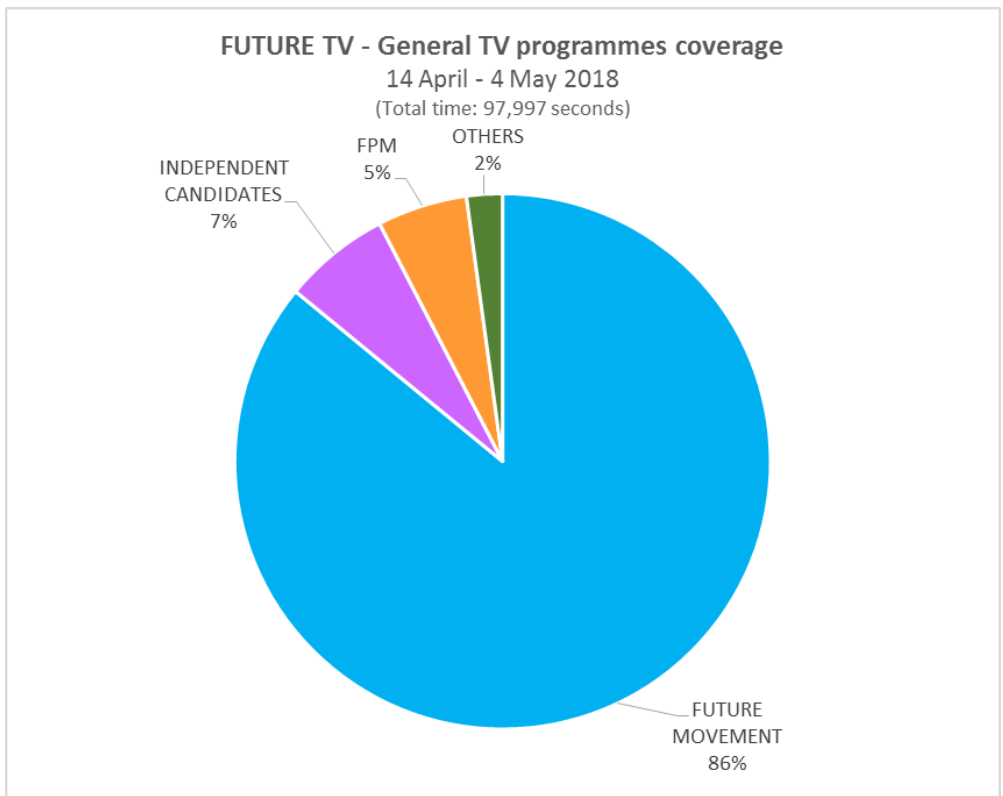
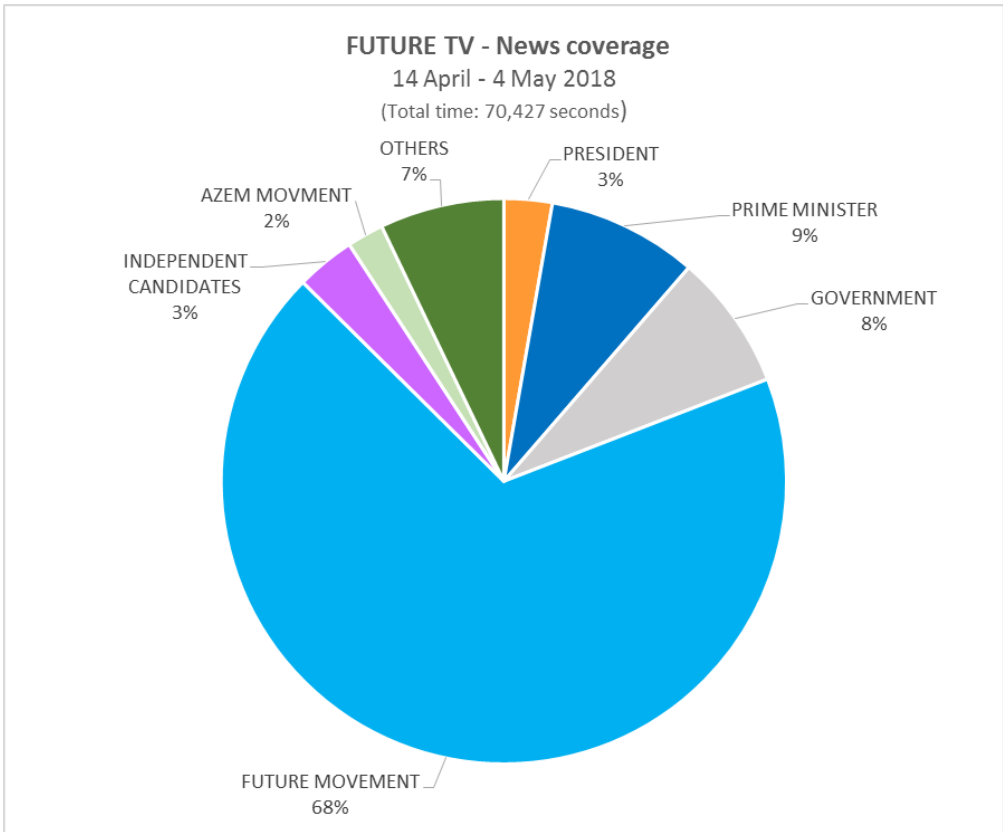
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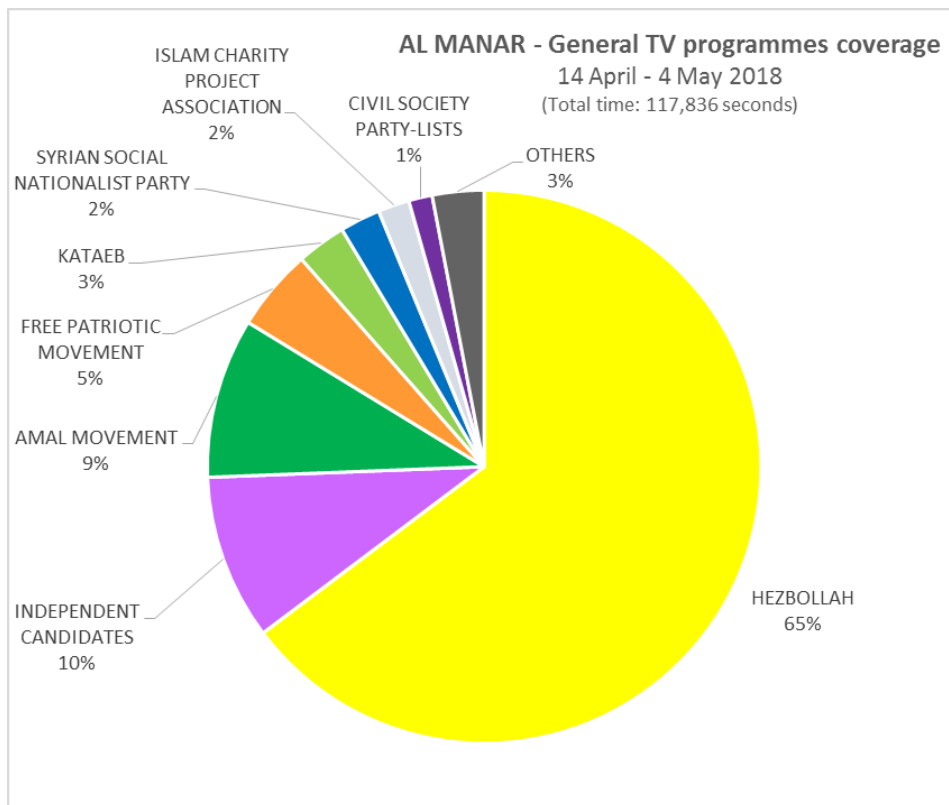
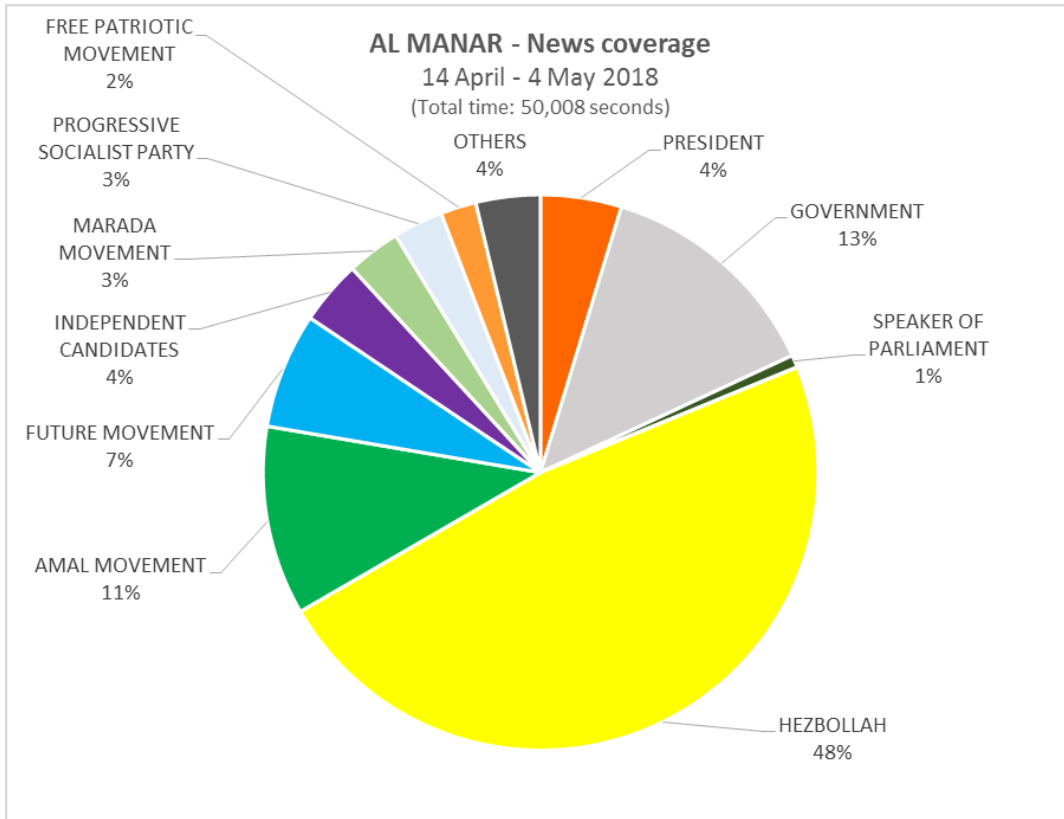
AL JADEED - NEW TV (PRIVATE TV CHANNEL)



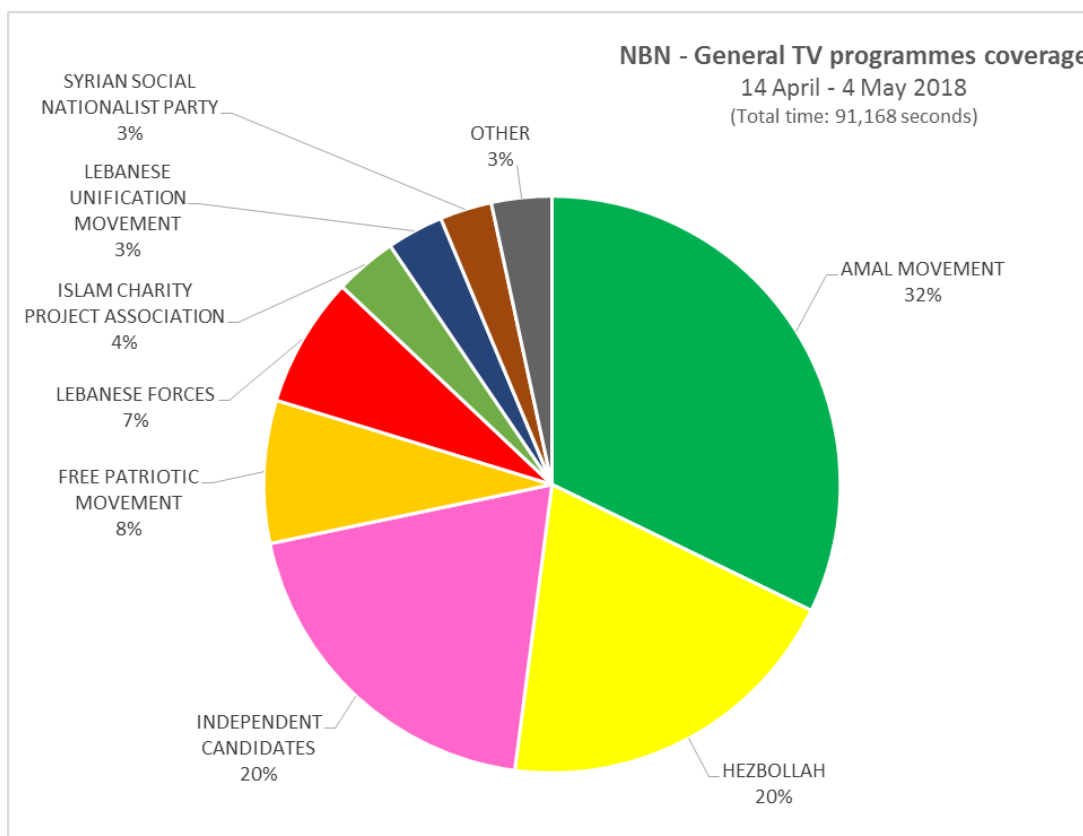
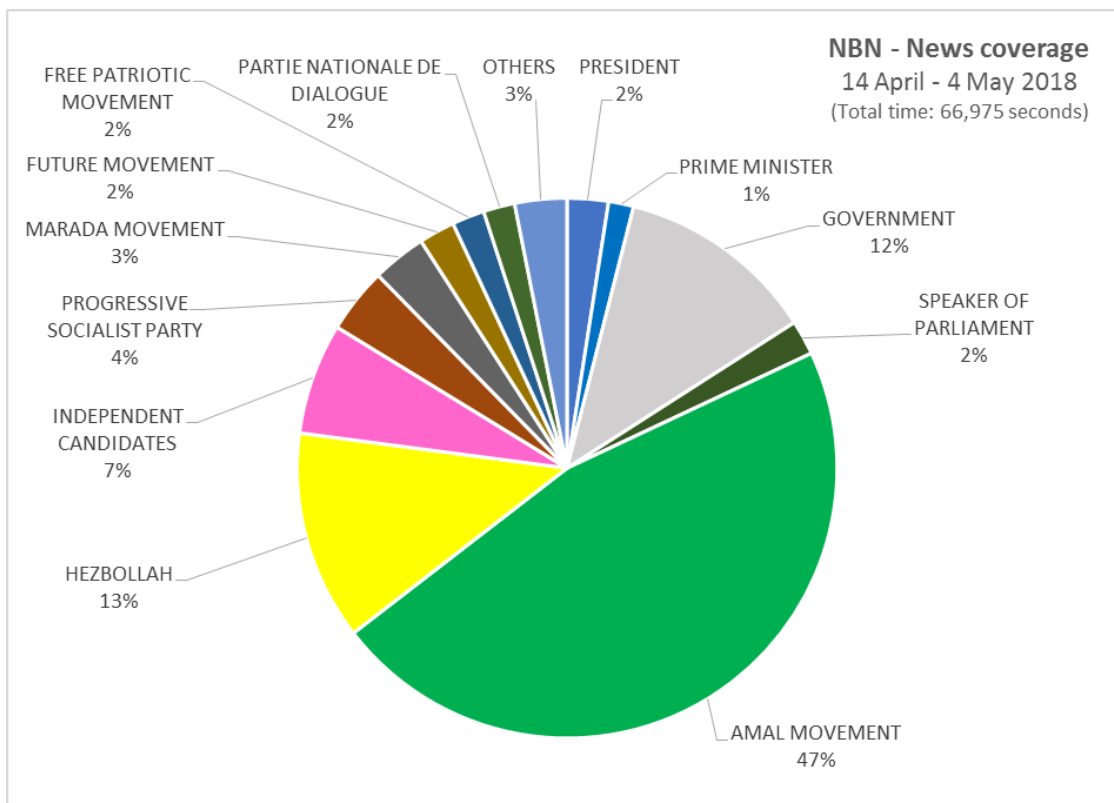
FUTURE TV (PRIVATE TV CHANNEL)



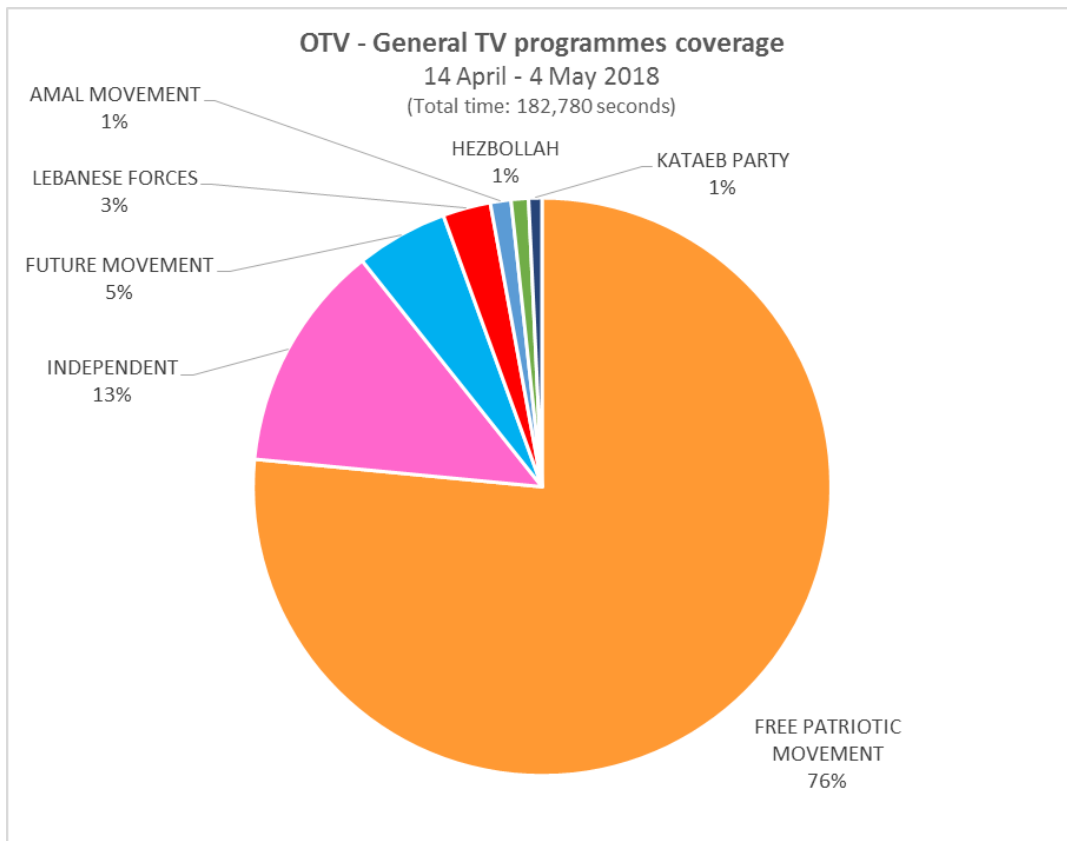
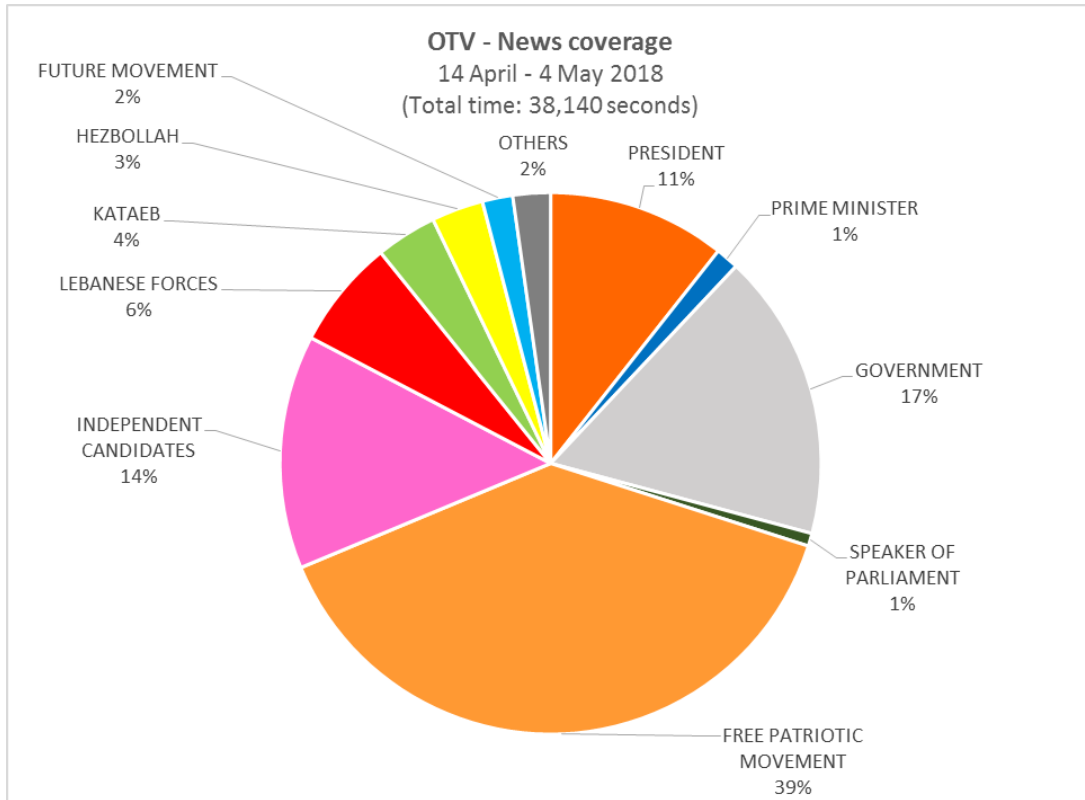
AL MANAR (PRIVATE TV CHANNEL)



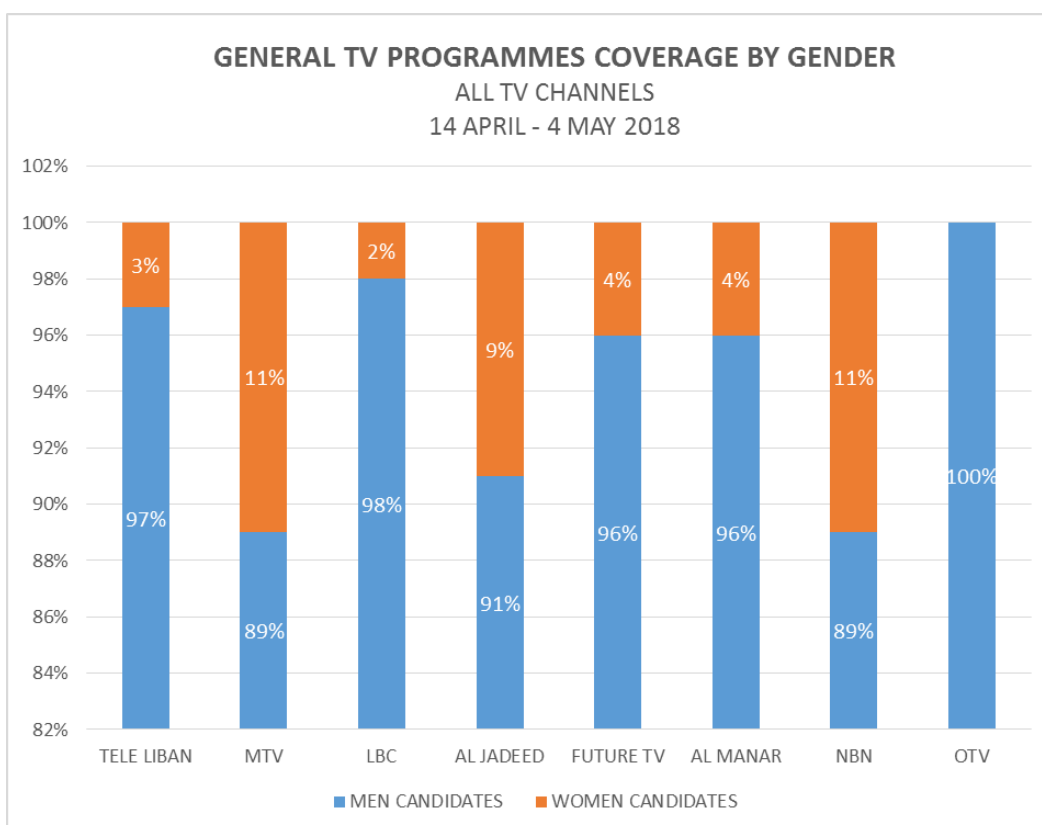
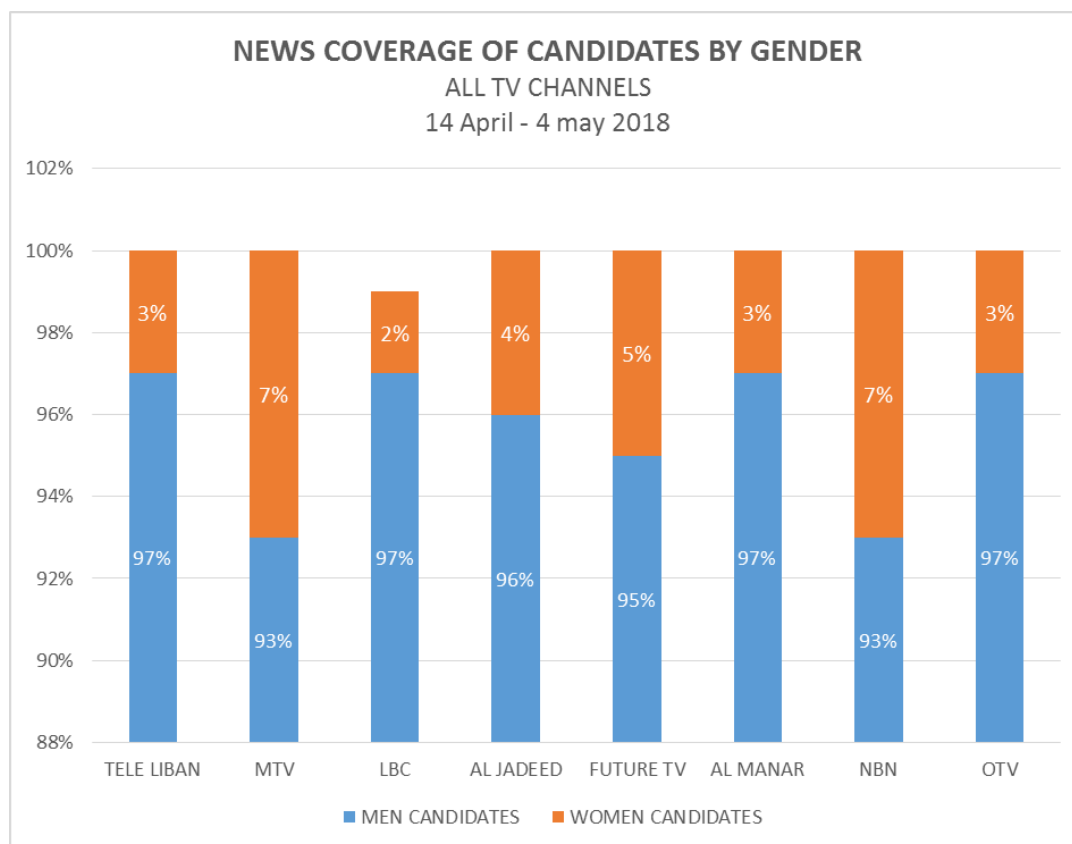
NBN (PRIVATE TV CHANNEL)



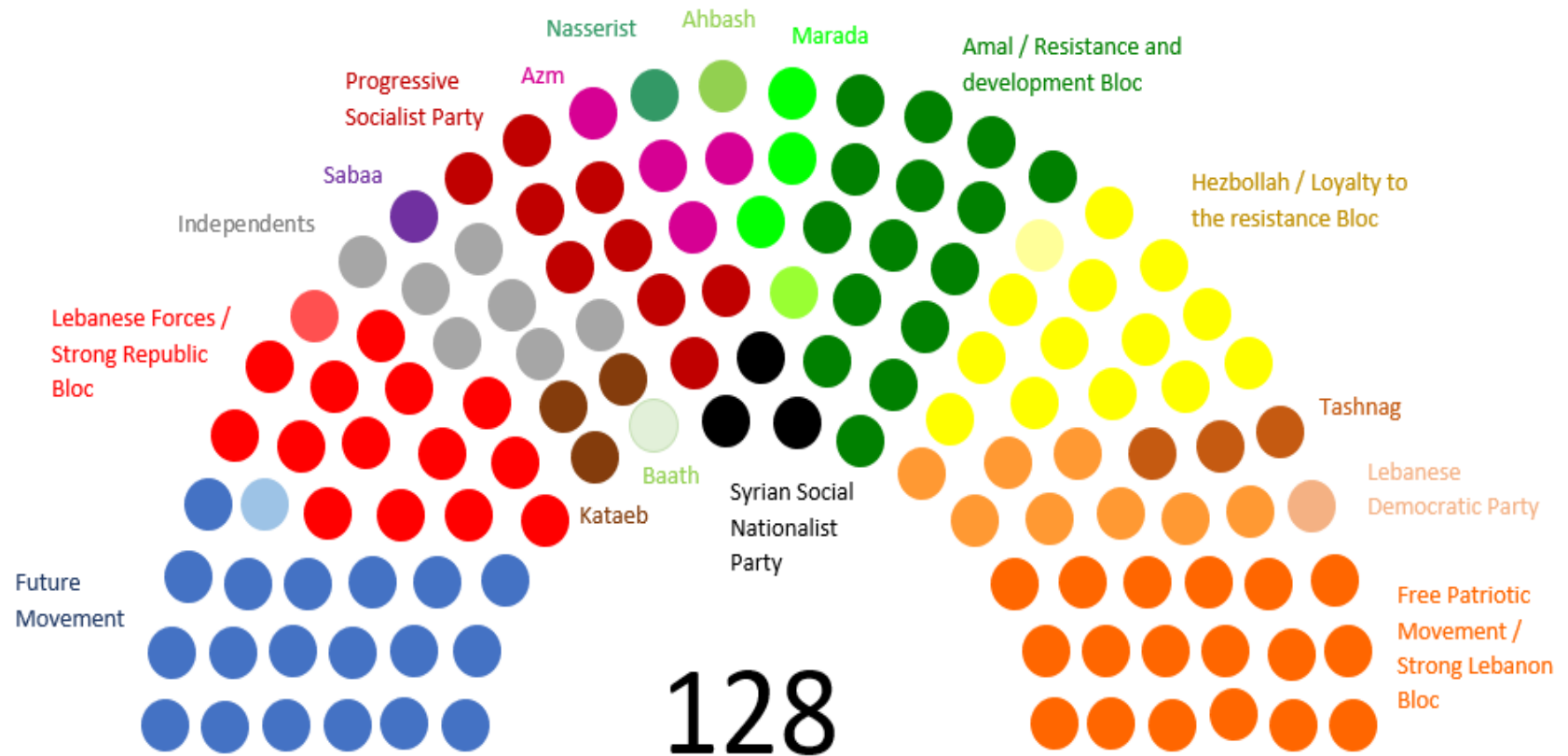
OTV (PRIVATE TV CHANNEL)



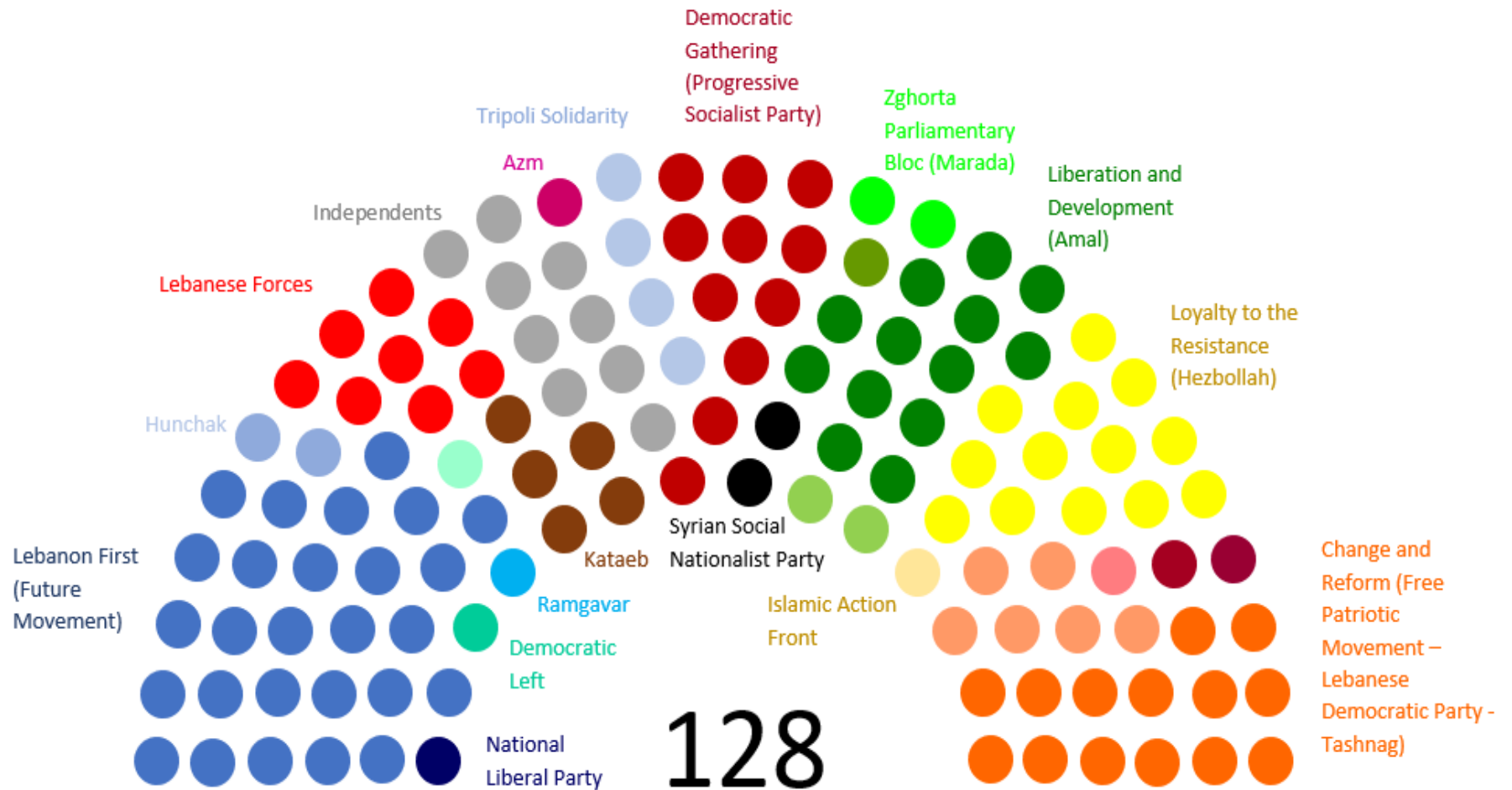
MEDIA COVERAGE OF CANDIDATES BY GENDER



Annex nr. 2: Distribution of seats in the 2018 Parliament: political parties and parliamentary blocs








Annex nr. 3: Distribution of seats in the 2009 Parliament: political parties and parliamentary blocs



Color legend


-  Free Patriotic Movement
-  Free Patriotic Movement ally
-  Tashnag
-  Lebanese Democratic Party
-  Hezbollah
-  Hezbollah ally
-  Amal Movement
-  Amal ally
-  Marada
-  Syrian Social Nationalist Party
-  Ahbash association
-  Baath Party
-  Popular Nasserite Organization
-  Azm list
-  Future Movement
-  Future Movement ally
-  Lebanese Forces
-  Lebanese Forces ally
-  Progressive Socialist Party
-  Kataeb
-  Independents
-  Sabaa

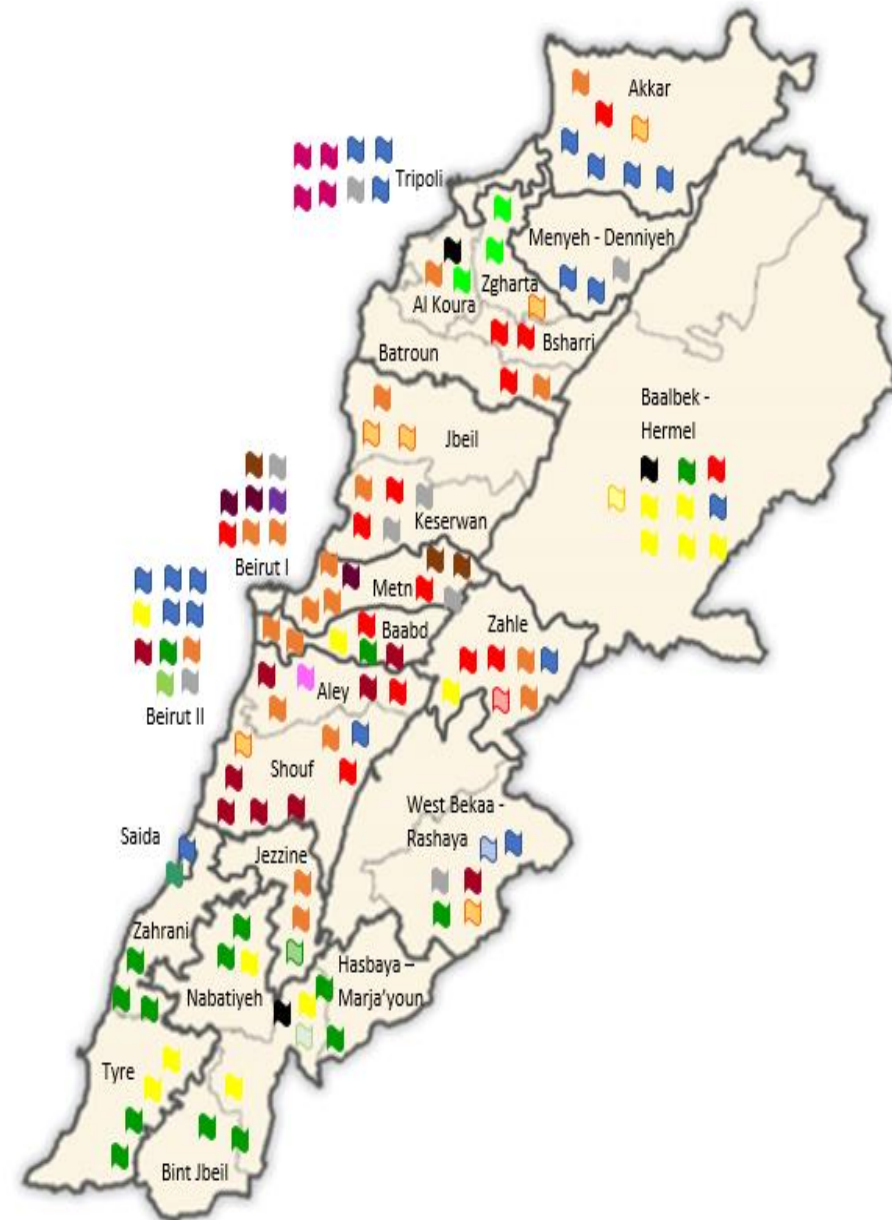
Parties represented in the 2009 Parliament, no longer represented in 2018

-  Islamic Action Front
-  Solidarity Party
-  Hunchak
-  Ramgavar
-  Democratic Left
-  National Liberal Party
-  Al Jama'a al Islamiya

Annex nr. 4 : Geographical distribution of seats in the 2018 Parliament

-  Free Patriotic Movement (FPM)
-  Free Patriotic Movement ally
-  Amal
-  Amal ally
-  Hezbollah
-  Hezbollah ally
-  Marada
-  Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP)
-  Tashnag
-  Nasserite
-  Lebanese Democratic Party (LDP)
-  Baath
-  Independent (IND)
-  Sabaa
-  Azm (list)
-  Ahbash

-  Future Movement (FM)
-  Future Movement ally
-  Lebanese Forces (LF)
-  Lebanese Forces ally
-  Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)
-  Kataeb



Annex nr. 5 : Geographical distribution of seats in the 2009 Parliament

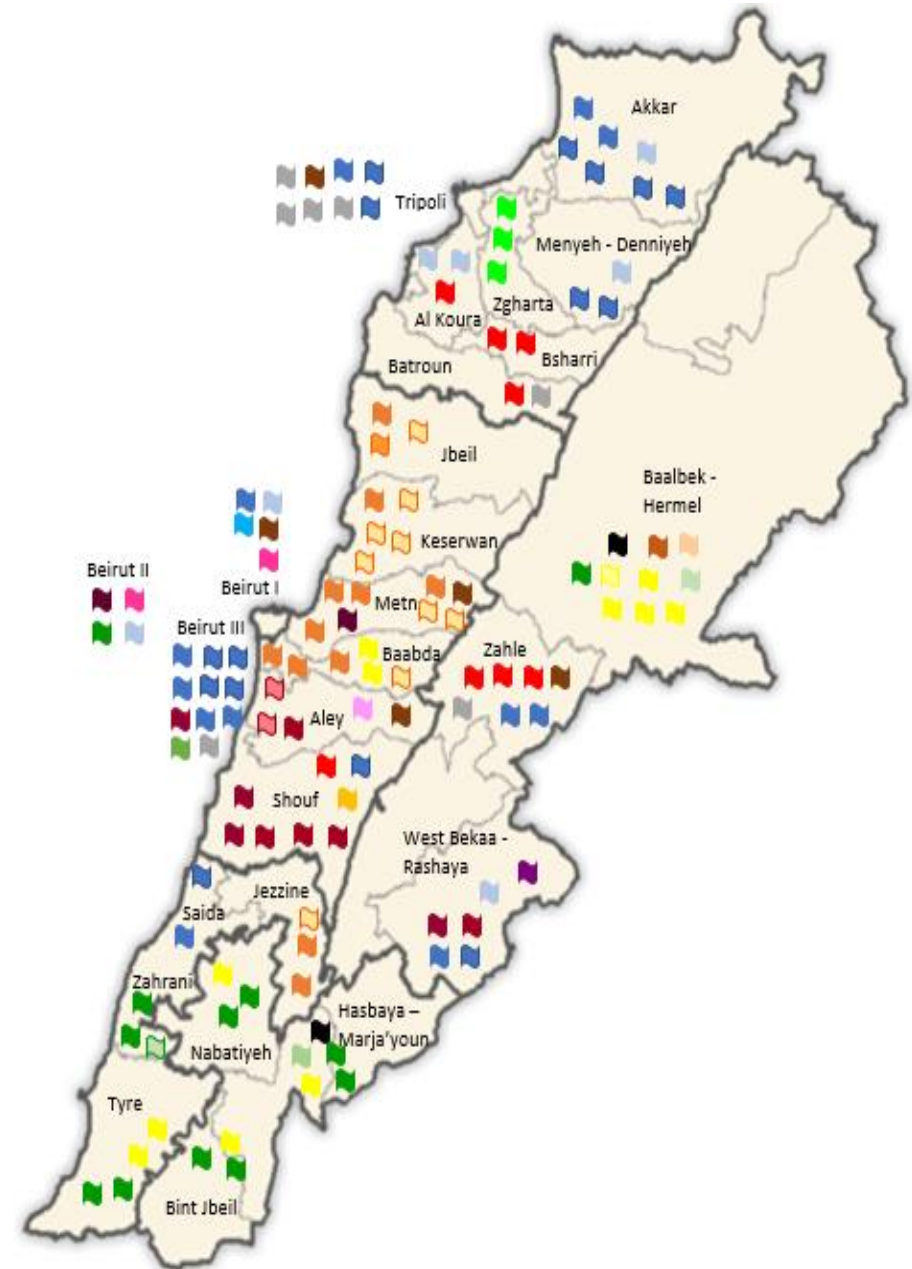
March 8 alliance

-  Free Patriotic Movement
-  Free Patriotic Movement allies
-  Amal
-  Amal ally
-  Hezbollah
-  Hezbollah ally
-  Marada
-  Baath
-  Tashnag
-  Islamic Union Front
-  Solidarity Party

March 14 alliance

-  Future Movement
-  Future Movement ally
-  Progressive Socialist Party
-  Progressive Socialist Party allies
-  Lebanese Forces
-  Kataeb
-  Hunchak
-  Ramgavar
-  National Liberal Party
-  Democratic Left
-  Al Jama'a al Islamiya

 Independent



Annex nr. 6 : Distribution of seats by lists and districts

DISTRICT	LIST	REGISTERED VOTERS	VOTERS	TURNOUT %	Invalid Votes	Blank Votes	Votes for List	% LIST	SEATS
Beirut 1		134,736	44,714	33.2	1,048	313	43,353		8
	FPM - Tashnag - Hunchak - Strong Beirut 1						18,373	42.4	4
	LF -Kataeb - Beirut 1						16,772	38.7	3
	Kulluna Watani						6,842	15.8	1
	IND - We Are Beirut						1,272	2.9	
	IND - Loyalty to Beirut						94	0.2	
Beirut 2		353,414	147,801	41.8	3,972	1,077	142,752		11
	FM- The future for Beirut						62,970	44.1	6
	FPM - Hezbollah - Amal - Ahbash - Beirut's Unity						47,087	33.0	4
	Makhzoumi - Lebanon is Worthy						15,773	11.0	1
	Al Jamaa Islamiya - Beirut the Homeland						7,475	5.2	
	Civil Society - We are all Beirut						6,174	4.3	
	IND - The Voice of the People						1,339	0.9	
	IND - The Dignity of Beirut						971	0.7	
	Achraf Rifi - Beirut Opposition						553	0.4	
	IND - Independent Beirutis						410	0.3	
Bekaa 1		175,613	94,082	53.6	2,414	545	91,123		7
	FPM-FM - Zahle for Everyone						36,391	39.9	3
	Hezbollah - SSNP - Zahle is the Choice and Decision						23,546	25.8	2
	LF - Kataeb - Zahle our Cause						18,702	20.5	2
	Popular Bloc						10,885	11.9	

	Kulluna Watani						1,599	1.8	
Bekaa 2		143,812	68,227	47.4	1,745	541	65,941		6
	Amal - Better Tomorrow						32,578	49.4	3
	FM - PSP - The Future for West Bekaa and Rashaya						31,817	48.3	3
	Civil Society						1,546	2.3	
Bekaa 3		315,643	190,268	60.3	3,199	701	186,368		10
	Hezbollah - Amal - Hope & Loyalty						140,747	75.5	8
	FM - LF - Dignity & Development						35,607	19.1	2
	FPM - The Independent						5,470	2.9	
	Communist Party - IND - Development & Change						4,053	2.2	
	Kataeb - National Cedars						491	0.3	
North 1		283,790	136,947	48.3	3,535	838	132,574		7
	FM - LF - The Future is for Akkar						76,452	57.7	5
	FPM - Al Jamaa Al Islamiya - The Strong Akkar						34,430	26.0	2
	Marada - SSNP - IND - The Decision to Akkar						14,449	10.9	
	Achraf Rifi - Lebanon the Sovereign						4,713	3.6	
	IND - Akkar's Decision						2,032	1.5	
	IND - Akkar's Women						498	0.4	
North 2		350,117	151,759	43.3	5,340	2,272	144,147		11
	FM - IND - The Future is for the North						51,937	36.0	5
	Azm (Mikati) - Determination						42,019	29.2	4
	Marada IND - Ahbash - National Dignity						29,101	20.2	2
	Ashraf Rifi - A sovereign Lebanon						9,656	6.7	
	Jamaa Islamiya - The independent decision						4,184	2.9	
	IND - FPM - People's decision						4,122	2.9	
	Kulluna Watani						2,680	1.9	

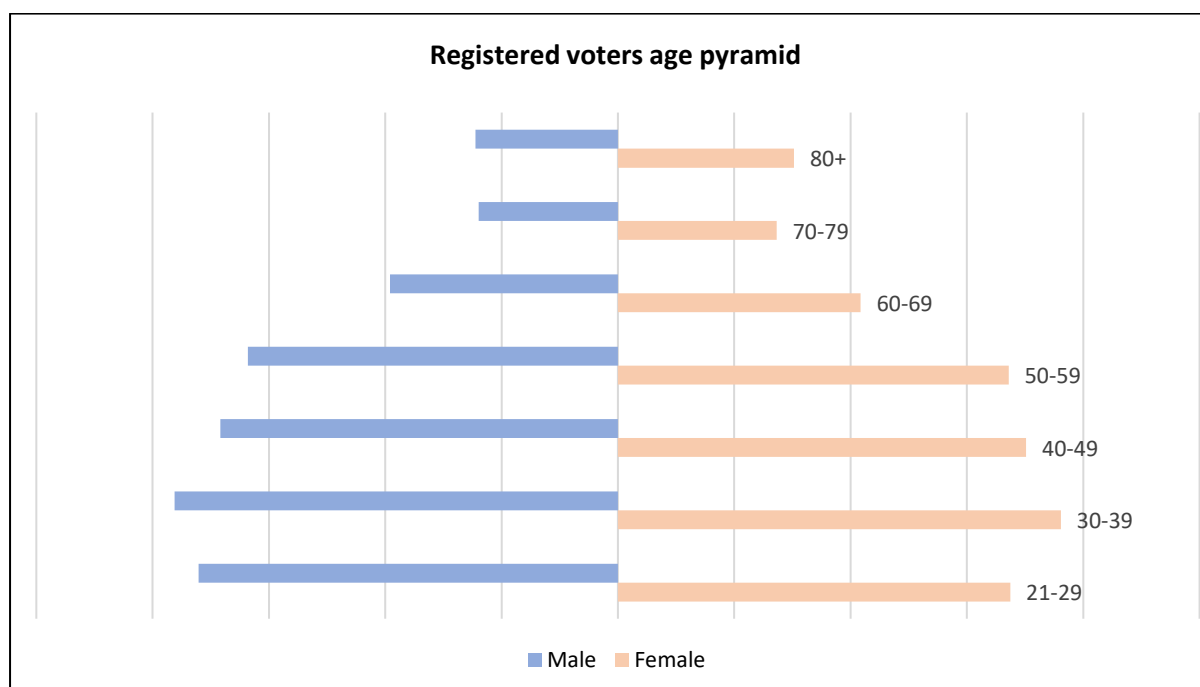
	Independent Civil Society						448	0.3	
North 3		249,416	117,811	47.2	2,015	1,130	114,666		10
	Marada - SSNP - Together for the North & Lebanon						40,788	35.6	4
	LF - Kataeb - Democratic Left - The strong Republic Pulse						37,376	32.6	3
	FPM - FM - The Strong North						33,342	29.1	3
	Kulluna Watani						3,160	2.8	
Mount Lebanon 1		176,711	117,603	66.6	1,984	465	115,154		8
	FPM - IND - Strong Lebanon						54,544	47.4	4
	LF - NLP - IND - Definitive change						26,980	23.4	2
	IND - Kataeb - The decision is ours						18,553	16.1	2
	IND - Hezbollah - National Solidarity						12,551	10.9	
	Kulluna Watani						2,526	2.2	
Mount Lebanon 2		180,137	92,446	51.3	2,044	558	89,844		8
	FPM - Tashnag - IND - Strong Metn						38,897	43.3	4
	Kataeb - Green - NLP - IND - Metn Pulse						19,003	21.2	2
	Michel Murr - Metn Loyalty						13,779	15.3	1
	LF - Ramgavar - IND - Metn is the Heart of Lebanon						13,138	14.6	1
	Kulluna Watani						5,027	5.6	
Mount Lebanon 3		166,135	80,052	48.2	1,585	538	77,929		6
	FPM - Amal - Hezbollah - National Accord						40,669	52.2	4
	PSP - LF - IND - Unity & Development for Baabda						26,500	34.0	2
	Kataeb - IND - NLP - Together for Baabda						5,768	7.4	

	Kulluna Watani						4,992	6.4	
Mount Lebanon 4		329,870	173,320	52.5	2,683	1,498	169,139		13
	PSP - LF - FM - Reconciliation						98,967	58.5	9
	FPM - LDP - IND - Mount Lebanon's Guarantee						39,027	23.1	4
	Tawhid - National Unity						12,796	7.6	
	Kulluna Watani						9,987	5.9	
	Kataeb - Free decision						5,446	3.2	
	IND - Civil						2,916	1.7	
South 1		122,524	67,346	55.0	1,608	820	64,918		5
	Amal - Nasserites - IND - For Everyone						22,083	34.0	2
	FPM - Al Jamaa Al Islamiya - Saida and Jezzine Together						20,127	31.0	2
	FM - IND - Green - Integrity and Dignity						16,470	25.4	1
	LF - Kataeb - Power of Change						6,238	9.6	
South 2		304,192	150,264	49.4	2,962	1,753	145,549		7
	Amal - Hezbollah - Hope & Loyalty						134,068	92.1	7
	IND - Communist Party - Together Towards Change						11,481	7.9	
South 3		460,565	228,563	49.6	2,775	1,980	223,808		11
	Amal - Hezbollah - Baath - SSNP - Hope & Loyalty						193,224	86.3	11
	FPM - FM - LDP - The South Deserves						17,058	7.6	
	IND - One vote for change						5,895	2.6	
	IND - LOP - Enough Talking						4,710	2.1	
	Kulluna Watani						2,262	1.0	
	IND - We can change						659	0.3	
TOTAL		3,746,675	1,861,203	49.68	38,909	15,029	1,807,265		128

Annex nr. 7: Electoral quotient needed for lists to be allocated seats in the 15 major districts

Major Districts	Seats	Electoral quotient to reach in order to participate in the allocation of seats (threshold)
South Lebanon 1	5	20%
Mount Lebanon 3	6	16.7%
Bekaa 2	6	16.7%
South Lebanon 2	7	14.3%
Bekaa 1	7	14.3%
North Lebanon 1	7	14.3%
Beirut 1	8	12.5%
Mount Lebanon 1	8	12.5%
Mount Lebanon 2	8	12.5%
Bekaa 3	10	10.0%
North Lebanon 3	10	10.0%
Beirut 2	11	9.1%
South Lebanon 3	11	9.1%
North Lebanon 2	11	9.1%
Mount Lebanon 4	13	7.7%

Annex nr. 8: Disaggregation of registered voters by age range and gender



Annex nr. 9: Countries where out-of-country voting (OCV) took place and the turnout

