

Lebanon

Last update:	21 juli 2020
Population:	6,855,713 million (World Bank 2019 est.)
Prime minister:	Hassan Diab
President:	Michel Aoun
Governemental type:	Parliamentary multi-confessionalist republic
Ruling coalition:	Free Patriotic Movement, Hezbollah, Lebanese Democratic Party, Tashnaq, Union Party, Marada Movement
Last election:	May 2018 (general elections)
Next election:	2022 (general elections)
Sister parties:	Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)

Politics in Lebanon are based on a post-civil war imposed sectarian system where power is shared over the different groups. The president has to be someone from the Christian Maronite group, the prime minister is reserved for a Sunni Muslim and the speaker of parliament has to be a Shia Muslim. However, divisions within the sectarian groups had left the country in a political deadlock, leaving Lebanon without a president for more than two years. 2016 marked a turn in the country's political situation. The parliament elected Michel Aoun, from the Free Patriotic Movement. In June 2017, a new election law was approved which is meant to improve the representation of sectarian groups. The new law paved the way for elections in May 2018. The elections brought a surprising defeat to the party of prime minister Saad Hariri. The Hezbollah led coalition won several seats and gained a majority. In October 2019 large scale protests about the political and economic situation in Lebanon broke out. Prime-minister Hariri resigned on October 29th and a new government, led by new prime-minister Diab, was formed on the 20th of January 2020.

Political Situation

Lebanon's current government was formed right at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Lebanese politicians claim that this new cabinet is made up completely of Hezbollah and its allies and excluded the mainstream Sunni bloc lead by former prime-minister Hariri's Future Movement party. At the moment, Lebanon is facing the worst economic crisis in its modern history. The Lebanese pound lost about 75% of its value since October and the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown has driven half the population into poverty. The country has held several sessions of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in hope to gain foreign aid. However IMF or any donor state will not provide help unless the government carries out reforms, at the forefront of them accelerating an overhaul of its loss-making electricity sector.

In regard to neighboring relations, negotiations between Lebanon and Israel to delimit the maritime boundary do not seem likely to begin any time soon. Namely, in 2009 the Leviathan field was discovered and found to hold about natural gas reserves of 600 billion cubic meters. The Leviathan falls in 860 square kilometers of disputed oceanic territory between Israel and Lebanon, where there may well be additional reserves yet to be discovered. Relationship between Syria and Lebanon have been fragmented. Tensions increased during the war in Syria when around 1 million refugees came to Lebanon. Also the war had a bad impact on the Lebanese economy. However, in recent years the Assad government and elements of Lebanon's government, notably Hezbollah, have grown closer. Both the Assad regime and Hezbollah are highly influenced y Iran.

Syrian conflict

The conflict in neighboring country Syria caused a deadlock on the previous elections in Lebanon in different manners. The situation in Syria made it difficult for Damascus to influence the electoral process in Lebanon. Moreover, Pro-Hezbollah parliamentarians refused to attend the election sessions, making it impossible for candidates to gain a two-thirds majority of the legislature. Tensions increased as well because of the enormous group of refugees coming from Syria, which is currently over 1 million people. Finally, the ongoing Syrian war has led to increased polarization in the country, while both Iran and Saudi Arabia wield influence through the rival alliances. It also badly influenced the Lebanese economy by cutting trade routes and making

Lebanese traders ship more of their goods via the Mediterranean Sea.

October 2019 protests

The impact of the war in Syria, as well as years of corruption and inefficiency, have caused Lebanon's GDP growth to fall from 8%-9% in 2011 to 0% in 2019. Lebanon has a national debt of around 150% and unemployment among under 35s is as high as 37%. Although Lebanon's government has been warned about the possible consequences for years, they have failed to take action and implement the necessary reforms. Similarly, the political situation in Lebanon has decreased as well.

The population became increasingly fed up with the blatant corruption and nepotism among politicians. When the new government announced in October 2019 that they were going to implement a tax on internet-based calling services such as WhatsApp, the population had had enough. The combination of growing economic and political grievances sparked the start of what is called the Lebanese "October Revolution" on October 17th 2019. The protests started small but in a short time grew to a movement made up of hundreds of thousands of people protesting all over the country. The protests paralyzed Lebanon's banking and transportation system and caused prime-minister Saad Hariri to hand in his resignation on October 29th 2019.

Even though the protest group managed to accomplish this, in reality, they are very decentralized and lack a leader. Often the different fractions of protesters have contradictory positions but they all tend to agree on a couple of things. The first is that the vast corruption among businessman and politicians needs to end and the second is that they demand better governance. With the resignation of prime minister Saad Hariri Lebanon a new government needed to be formed which after a long stalemate happened on January 21st 2020. The new government is led by prime-minister Hassan Diab but it is unlikely that it will be able to solve the enormous problems Lebanon is currently facing.

Elections

Lebanon is a republic. The National Assembly indirectly elects the president as head of state for a six years term. The president, upon a binding consultation with the National Assembly, appoints the prime minister. The prime minister chooses the cabinet, after consultation of the president and the National Assembly.

Election law

Sectarian divisions in the country have plagued every post-civil war government. Increasing pressure from outside actors during the Syrian Civil War (2011-) complicated domestic politics. The stand-off between the Hezbollah led March 8 Alliance and Future movement led March 14 Alliance paralyzed both parliament and government for almost a decade. The parliament was under pressure to reform itself, but the sectarian division complicated negotiations. After years of negotiations, in June 2017 a new electoral law was passed replacing the "1960 law". Under this system, parties gained votes based on their religious sect. In this system, eighteen different confessional groups share power, with parliamentary seats being reserved for different groups. Each sect was granted a certain number of seats based on a quota, this quota was however seen as unfair and unrepresentative due to the country's demographic shift. In the new system is still based on the confessional power distribution, but instead of the 26 constituencies, people vote in 15 new constituencies. Creating a proportional representation system.

The National Assembly

The unicameral National Assembly of Lebanon is elected for four years. The 128 seats in the National Assembly are equally divided among Muslims and Christians. Each of the eleven confessional subgroups occupies a fixed number of seats in the National Assembly.

Due to this unusual division of seats in the National Assembly, the role of political parties in Lebanese politics is different from the role of political parties in normal parliamentary democracies. Many of the political parties are lists of candidates, supported by an important local figure. Political coalitions are therefore only formed because of electoral reasons, and easily fall apart once the seats in parliament are secured. This form of parliamentary politics sustains a form of politics, based on satisfying instantly the grassroots support, rather than that it supports politics based on ideology and long-term objectives. Analysts say that Lebanese politics is both complicated and confusing. The combination of the fixed division of seats among the various religious groups, together with the many local candidates of different religions, makes it hard to get a clear view of the relative strength of political parties in the National Assembly.

The National Assembly is elected by a system of multi-member constituencies with each voter having two votes, one for a party and

one for a specific candidate. The winners-take-all system, where the party winning most votes wins all the seats in the district, has been abolished as a result of the new election law. The National Assembly is now elected in fifteen rather than six different constituencies. Lebanon has no legal electoral threshold, for now, and no compulsory voting. Lebanon has universal suffrage for all men, with a minimum age of 21. Women should have elementary education and the minimum age of 21 to be authorised to vote. Remarkably, voters do not vote according to their place of residence, but according to their "civil record", usually the residence of their forefathers.

Elections of 2014

In November 2014 the parliament voted for the third time to put off parliamentary elections until 2017, which should originally have been held in June 2013. Since the spring of 2014, the parliament has gathered nine times in an attempt to elect a new president. On 25 May 2014, then prime minister Tammam Salam stepped in as acting president. This is because, on 22 March 2013, incumbent Prime Minister Najib Mikati resigned after he attempted to form a committee. This committee was supposed to oversee the next general election which should have taken place in November 2014. He failed to do so, because of opposing sides in Syria's civil war between parties aligned with Hezbollah and Sunni-led rival bloc. The new government that came out two weeks after, was led by Tamman Salam. He was backed by the March 14 Alliance, the Progressive Socialist Party and Amal. Nevertheless, it took ten months for Salam to form a government, which was announced on 15 February 2014, due to rivalries between the Hezbollah-dominated March 8 Alliance and the March 14 Alliance, led by the Sunni Future Party. "This is a unity cabinet that represents at present the best formula for Lebanon with all the political, security, economic and social challenges it is facing", Salam said.

Government formation of 2019

The elections last May were won by the Hezbollah bloc and the Christian Lebanese forces. The Future Movement, the party of the designate Prime Minister Hariri, lost one-third of its seats. Despite the loss, Hariri was appointed to form a government. Hariri has the task to divide the ministerial posts among six parties. Different problems occurred during the division of minister posts. One of the first problems during the summer was the dispute between the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and Lebanese Forces (LF) about the Christian representation. LF leader Samir Geagea said that the portfolios that were offered to LF were not fair compared to their size in the parliamentary bloc and demanded the post of deputy prime minister which was rejected by President Aoun and the FPM leader, Gebran Bassil.

A second problem that occurred was the Druze representation. About 200.000 members of the Druze community are living in Lebanon and according to the constitution, the Druze are entitled to three ministerial posts. Most of the Druze are part of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), led by Walid Joumblatt. However, if Hariri would give the Druze of PSP this position, the Druze of the Lebanese Democratic Party (LDP) would not be represented. Joumblatt agreed to allocate only two Druze ministerial seats instead of three. LDP agreed with one minister post and putting forward a 'neutral' candidate.

The biggest obstacle in the formation process was the Sunni representatives which became known as the 'Sunni Knot.' Hezbollah was keen to have one of its Sunni allies as minister of health. However, the fear was that this appointment would complicate foreign (western) aid. Hezbollah insisted that their Sunni MPs should be represented in the new government, but Hariri and Aoun refused. Finally, the breakthrough came after the rival factions worked out compromises to allow the representation of Sunni lawmakers in the new formation.

Nine months after the general parliamentary elections in May a government was formed on 31 January 2019. The new 30-member cabinet finally came into being when the political blocs agreed on a new arrangement of the ministry positions. Hezbollah ally Gebran Nassil now retains the Foreign Ministry while Ali Hassan Khalil, from Hezbollah's ally Amal, will continue as finance minister. Moreover, against the will of the United States, Hezbollah appointed Shia doctor Jamil Jabak as health minister, being the fourth-biggest ministry in the state-apparatus. The demand of Hezbollah to appoint a Hezbollah backed Sunni lawmaker resulted in appointing Hasan Mrad, representative of a pro-Syria Sunni group that is backed by Hezbollah, as minister of state. It now seems that Hezbollah and its allies control political power more and more and therefore the influence of Iran and the Syrian government in Lebanon is enlarged.

Government formation of 2020

When prime-minister Saad Hariri resigned at the end of October he left a political vacuum that has been affecting every Lebanese citizen. The state requires urgent action to get out of the economic crisis but has no leader to steer them in that direction. One of the main demands of the protesters was that a new government was chosen fast and that it would be made up of technocrats, instead of the sectarian politicians previously in power, that are capable of carrying out effective economic reforms.

Their demand for a cabinet of independent specialist was shared by the Christian Lebanese Forces (LF) which is a leading

Christian grouping, as well as former prime-minister Hariri who is aligned with Gulf Arab and the western states. However, President Aoun and his ally Hezbollah believe the government should not be made up of just technocrats but that it should include politicians as well. The Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), which was founded by president Aoun, stated that they too would not agree to a government which is only made up of technocrats. Lebanon's foreign allies have urged them to form a credible government, meaning with limited influence of Hezbollah who is regarded by the U.S. as a terrorist organization, if it wants to receive international support to solve Lebanon's problems.

When on the 19th of December 2019 former education minister Hassan Diab was chosen as the new prime minister of Lebanon, it was perceived by many as a victory for Hezbollah and its allies. The protesters rejected Diab as prime-minister because of his close ties with some of the ruling political parties and his previous position. Even though Diab presented himself as independent he has clear ties to the former ruling class and thus the protesters continued to demand an independent prime-minister but without success. A little over a month after Diab was appointed he announced the formation of his new cabinet. From the outside, the cabinet could be perceived as being independent and technocratic, but upon taking a closer look this does not seem to be the case.

The deal for a new cabinet came after an agreement by the Iranian-backed Hezbollah (a major parliamentary bloc), and its allies, including the Free Patriotic Movement, led by Gibran Bassil who is president Aoun's son-in-law. Former prime-minister Hariri and his Future Movement party, as well as other parties, had no opportunity to influence the decision at all. Hariri's Future Movement and the Progressive Socialist Party of Druze leader Walid Jumblatt stayed out of the government altogether.

Even though the cabinet (composed of 20 ministers) was quickly criticized by protesters and the media, adding to its appeal among the international community was the fact that it was the first cabinet in Lebanon with six women in it, including the first government in the Arab world that had a female defence minister. Nevertheless, after the formation of the new government protests in Lebanon increased again not only because the protesters believed the new government did not reflect them, but also because they do not believe the government is capable of implementing effective reforms to solve the economic crisis.

Parliamentary Elections

Parliamentary elections of 2018

On May 6th 2018 Lebanon went to the polls for the first general election in almost a decade. After a political impasse that lasted for several years due to internal and external strife, a large overhaul of the electoral system led in summer 2017 to the prospect of elections. The new electoral law redrew the country into 15 electoral districts, further entrenching Lebanon's sectarian makeup, and introduced proportional representation. Voters cast two votes, one for a list of candidates and one for a single preferred candidate.

Results

Party	Seats	+/-
<i>Amal-Hezbollah and allies</i>	40	+9
Amal	16	+3
Hezbollah	12	+2
Independents	5	+2
Small parties	8	+3
<i>Free Patriotic Movement and allies</i>	29	+5
Free Patriotic Movement	18	+8
Independents	5	-5
ARF	3	+1
Small parties	3	+1
<i>Future Movement and allies</i>	20	-15
Future Movement	19	-7
Independents	1	-8
<i>Lebanese Forces and allies</i>	15	+7
Lebanese Forces	13	+5
Independents	2	+2

<i>Small independent parties</i>	15	-4
Progressive Socialist Party	9	-2

Only 49% of the electorate went to the polls compared to 54% during the last election. Many analysts cite the lack of trust in the government to tackle corruption and to boost the economy as the reasons for the low voter turnout. The Shiite coalition of Hezbollah-Amal reaped the benefits of the newly implemented electoral law by increasing their parliamentary bloc to 40 MPs, while the Lebanese Forces (LF) pulled off an upset after securing 14 seats. Prime Minister Saad Hariri's Future Movement saw his bloc almost split in half after getting only 20 seats, in contrast to the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and their allies who bolstered their position after electing 29 representatives.

Saad Hariri, commenting on the election result, admitted that his Future Movement had lost about a third of its seats, but reaffirmed that "[t]hose who won in parliamentary elections are our partners in the principle of stability" and that he was satisfied with the outcome. He further stated that the new electoral law allowed parties to commit elections violations. Hariri said that his Future Movement faced several challenges, though he did not specify which. Lebanese President Michel Aoun (FPM) tweeted: "I was surprised by the low turnout and the exercise of the right to vote. I renew the appeal, if you wish to change and to establish a new approach, you must exercise your right." With the Iran-backed Shi'ite group Hezbollah and its political allies winning more than half the seats it will boost Hezbollah's influence in the country.

International reaction and observers

The international community congregated Lebanon with its first election in almost a decade. The European Union acknowledged that the electoral process was an improvement from the old system. real innovations like ballot secrecy were successfully implemented. The EU, however, had to acknowledge that there is room for improvement. There are still hurdles to take such as more room for female candidates. The international observation mission of the National Democratic Institute also noted that although the vote went relatively smooth, there were still incidents. "some polling officials failed to ensure the safety of election materials during the count," as well as maintaining that "vote-buying was widely reported." Lebanon's Association For Democratic Elections (LADE) also recorded over 3000 violations from the moment the polls opened until the votes began to be tallied.

Presidential Elections

On 31 October 2016, the Lebanese parliament gathered together for the 46th time to vote on a new president. Finally, Michel Aoun (Free Patriotic Movement) won with a majority of 83 out of 128 votes. Before these elections, Lebanon had been without a president for 2.5 years, and it was the first time that the entire parliament gathered since April 2014. Aoun's election is a victory for his Lebanese Shiite ally Hezbollah, Iran and Syria. It was said that Aoun mainly got elected because of a deal he struck with the head of the Sunni movement, Saad Hariri. The deal involved that Hariri would become prime minister if he would support the election.

There were three rounds of voting. In the first round, Aoun did not secure a two-thirds majority among the 128 MPs present. The second round of voting only required a simple majority to win, though there were 128 ballots cast making the round invalid. In the third round, he received the winning 83 votes.

Social Democratic Parties

Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)

Party Leader: Walid Jumblatt

Number of seats: 9

<http://www.psp.org.lb>

The Progressive Socialist Party was founded on 5 January 1949. The founders comprised six individuals, all with a different background. Among the founders was Kamal Jumblatt. He was the most prominent of the founders and was party leader until 1977,

when he was assassinated. His son Walid is the present-day leader of the PSP.

Willing to construct a new order, based on secularism, socialism, Arabism and the abolishment of the sectarian system, the PSP began an opposition movement in the fifties, together with other dissatisfied groups: the Lebanese National Movement (LNM). The PSP (as part of the LNM) and Jumblatt supported the Palestinians for religious reasons, but strived against the Arab nationalists slogans of the Palestine movement.

After the restoration of the constitutional rule in 1989, the PSP participated in a number of governments. Later, the PSP joined the opposition to oppose against the Syrian occupation of Lebanon.

After the fall of the government in January 2011, the party moved from the mainly pro-western March 14 Alliance towards the Syrian and Iran-orientated March 8 Alliance. It presumably did so in return for a governmental post, in order to be able to pursue their policy goals. A secular state is nowadays a top-priority of the PSP. Another important issue for the PSP is the reorganisation of the administrative districts in Lebanon. According to the PSP, more autonomy should be given to regional councils to increase their level of independence. Other important issues are the introduction of a progressive tax principle, the assurance of the separation of powers and enhancing the right to public liberties.

Other Parties

Future Movement (FM)

Party Leader: Sa'ad al Hariri

Number of seats: 20

After the assassination of his father, Sa'ad Hariri took over the leadership of the Future Movement. Initially the Future Movement was just a movement, but before the 2005 elections, Sa'ad Hariri vowed to turn the movement into a political party. At the 2005 elections, the party was the most important faction of the Rafik Hariri Martyr list, a coalition of anti-Syrian parties like the PSP and the Lebanese Forces.

Free Patriotic Movement (FPM)

Party Leader: Gebran Bassil

Number of seats: 29

<http://www.tayyar.org/tayyar/index.php>

For a long period of time, former prime minister and current President Michel Aoun (1988-1990) lived in exile while leading the FPM. He returned to Lebanon in 2005 and contested in the 2005 elections, winning 21 seats in the National Assembly together with his allies in the Aoun Bloc.

The FPM claims to be the only party that isn't based on religion. For this reason, the party does not only have Maronite-members, but also many members with a Muslim background.

The most important issues for the FPM is reforming the Lebanese economy. In the past, disarming Hezbollah was another important issue, but this changed after signing the "memorandum of understanding" with Hezbollah in February 2006.

Hezbollah

Party Leader: Hassan Nasrallah

Number of seats: 12

Hezbollah consists of two parts. The militant part of Hezbollah was founded in 1982, as a combination of several small militant groups. During the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), Hezbollah fought for the Shiite community. Their main objective was expelling Israeli and Western Forces from Lebanon. Parts of Hezbollah were involved in kidnapping, torture and detention of Western forces in Lebanon. After the Civil War, Hezbollah has often been accused of acts of terrorism and of bombings of Israeli forces in South Lebanon. The European Parliament entitled Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation on 8 March 2005. On 24 September 2004, UN resolution 1559 stated that all Lebanese militias, including Hezbollah, should be disarmed and all foreign forces should be withdrawn from Lebanon. Hezbollah operates mainly in the south of Lebanon and the Beeka valley and is pro-Palestinian.

Since 1992, the political part of Hezbollah takes part in the Lebanese general elections. The results of previous elections always comprised around 11 seats. In 2009, the party garnered 13 seats. Hezbollah says to strive for the introduction of an Islamic government by peaceful means. On the contrary, US sources say that Hezbollah's goal is to introduce a fundamentalist, Iranian-like state, with no secular influences at all. It is widely assumed that the Syrian government and Hezbollah are closely linked. For this reason, Hezbollah was the driving force behind the pro-Syria rallies during the Cedar Revolution.

In February 2006, Hezbollah leader Nasrallah and Michel Aoun (FPM) signed a "memorandum of understanding". In this agreement, Hezbollah and Aoun agreed to cooperate on a great number of topics, like the reform of the electoral law, security, human rights and foreign relations. This agreement is unique and can be a breakthrough in the relationship between pro-Syrian (Hezbollah) and anti-Syrian (Aoun bloc and governmental parties) politicians.

Hezbollah has been asked several times by UN Chief Ban Ki-Moon and the Lebanese Army leader to disarm. However, Hezbollah rejected these calls, stating that the weapons are the only guarantee to protection of Lebanon.

Lebanese Forces (LF)

Party Leader: Samir Geagea
Number of seats: 13
<http://www.lebanese-forces.org>

The founder of the Lebanese Forces, Bashir Gemayel, started his military organisation in 1976. On 10 September 1992, the Lebanese Forces Party was officially formed. The party members are mainly Christian Maronites, although the party claims to be secular. The party is based on three principles: safeguarding Lebanese independence and sovereignty, founding the Lebanese government on the basis of human rights, and establishing a democratic system with respect to human rights. Furthermore, the LF party embraced a hard-line, anti-Syrian opposition and revived ties with Israel.

In 1994, the party leader Geagea was arrested and accused of undermining government authority during and after the Civil War. Geagea was released in 2005. For the 2005 elections, the LF was part of the Rafik Hariri Martyr list, which won the elections. The LF is still considered a very well organised party with its own magazine and TV-station.

Amal Movement

Party Leader: Nabih Berri
Number of seats: 16

The Amal Movement was established by Imam Moussa Al Sadr in 1974 to gather Shiite forces under the banner of lifting the deprivation of the deprived areas in Lebanon and resist the Israeli aggressions. While acknowledging its support base to be the "traditionally under-represented politically and economically disadvantaged" Shi'a community, it aimed to seek social justice for all deprived Lebanese. After the abduction of Imam Moussa Al Sadr, the Lawyer Nabih Berri became the leader of the movement. Amal had numerous confrontations with the Israeli occupation as well as the authority in the era of President Amin Gemayel. Amal also fought a fierce war in the Palestinian camps in the 1980s and then with Hezbollah.

After the Taif Agreement, Amal strongly participated in the parliamentary elections, putting its leader to the second presidency and forming a basic political force in Lebanon.

Lebanese Democratic Party (LDP)

Party Leader: Talal Arslan
Number of seats: 1

The Lebanese Democratic party is established in 2001 by Prince Talal Arslan. Who is the son of Lebanese Druze leader Emir Magid Arslan. The party is officially secular but it is mostly supported by Lebanese Druze, who support the Arslan family. The party is member of the March 8 Alliance. It has one seat in the parliament and one post in the current government, as Talal Arslan acts as Minister of the Displaced. The party is considered to be a centre-right party, which focuses on promoting the interests of the Druze people.

Marada Movement

Party Leader: Suleiman Frangieh
Number of seats: 3

The Marada movement is a political party established from the former Marada militia. Who fought in the Lebanese civil war of the 80s, starting as the Marada Brigade to act as personal militia of Suleiman Frangieh, then president of Lebanon. The fighters of this brigade were named after the legendary Marada, who were warriors of the early Middle Ages, fighting along the external edge of the Byzantine Empire. After the 2005 legislative elections, the Marada became a member of the opposition alliance together with Hezbollah, in June 2006 the party was officially launched. Marada is a right-wing party which is based on Christian democratic values. It currently has 3 seats in the parliament and one post in the cabinet of Lebanon. Youssed Finianos represents the party in the cabinet, as f Minister of Public Works and Transport.

Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF)

Party Leader: Hagop Pakradounian
Number of seats: 3

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation was founded in 1890 to defend the Armenian people against the Ottoman authorities. It became active in Lebanon, as it is considered the largest representative of the Lebanese people of Armenian descent. Its main rivals in the Armenian arena are the Hunchak Party and Ramgavar Party. Armenians are mainly located in Beirut, the northern Metn coast and Anjar in Bekaa. The ARF has been represented in the Lebanese Parliament since 1942. It is an Armenian nationalist and socialist political party and has traditionally advocated democratic socialism. It is a full member of the Socialist International since 2003, which it had originally joined in 1907.

AZM Movement

Party Leader: Najib Migati
Number of seats:

The Azm and Saade Association was founded in 1988. Following President Najib Miqati's participation in the political life as a minister, member of the parliament and prime minister, the current became active in its social, educational and economic services, thus becoming one of the main forces in the Tripoli and the north.

Kateab Party

Party Leader: Samy Gemayel
Number of seats: 3

It was formed in 1936 as a national youth movement by Pierre Gemayel. It then turned into a political party in 1952. The party supported President Camille Chamoun during the events of 1958.

The party was the most important right-wing faction during the early Lebanese civil war. The Lebanese Forces emerged from the Kataeb. The party's role and influence gradually declined after the death of its founder in 1984 and following the clashes between forces in the Christian arena. The Kataeb also witnessed several divisions in its ranks.

After the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, the party retrieved its historical role with Amin Gemayel as president. Pierre Gemayel, Amin's son, also played a significant role before his assassination on November 21, 2006. The party was an active member of the March 14 camp.

Biographies

Michel Aoun

President

Michel Aoun, leader of the Free Patriotic Movement, was elected as President of Lebanon on 31 October 2016. Aoun is a Maronite Christian, making him eligible for the presidency according to the sectarian system. In 1988 President Amin Gemayel appointed Aoun as prime minister of one of the two rival governments at that time. In that period his government fought two wars; one against Syrian forces in Lebanon and the other against the Lebanese Forces. In 1990 he was driven away from the presidential palace by the Syrian army, going into exile in France. Aoun was against the 1989 peace deal which reduced the political powers of the Maronite Christians and increased the powers of the Sunni Muslim prime minister. During his exile, Aoun lobbied against Syrian domination of Lebanon as Damascus kept troops stationed throughout the country. He also supported Western moves to end Syria's dominance.

In 2005 he returned to Lebanon because Syrian armed forces withdrew due to the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri. Eventually, Aoun declared an alliance between his party and the Shi'ite movement, which is led by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Hezbollah's support in the parliament has enabled Aoun to get sufficient votes to be elected.

Hassan Diab

Prime Minister

Hassan Diab is the current prime-minister of Lebanon who was appointed on the 19th of December 2019. Prime-minister Diab has a PhD in computer engineering from the University of Bath in the United Kingdom and has taught the subject since 1985 at the American University in Beirut. In 2006, Diab was appointed as the vice-president of Regional External Programs (REP) at the American University of Beirut. The REP is the university's consulting and professional development arm. Between 2011 and 2014 Diab served as education minister under then prime-minister Najib Mikati. After leaving the post he returned to the American University in Beirut and continued teaching and his administrative role at the REP. Prime-minister Diab is an independent and is not a vocal supporter of any political group. He is a Sunni Muslim, a prerequisite for becoming prime minister in Lebanon.

Saad Hariri

Leader of Future Movement

Saad Hariri is the son of former President of Lebanon Rafik Hariri, who was killed in 2005. He is a well-known businessman and politician. In 2016 he was elected by President Michel Aoun as prime minister. Before becoming a politician he studied business administration at the Georgetown University in the United States. Later on he was director of a Saudi company established by his father. Following his father's death he became a politician. He is a Sunni Muslim and was able to create a coalition that represented many parties and ethnical groups in Lebanon. With this coalition he won the elections in 2005. Eventually, he was elected as prime minister at the election on 7 June 2009. The term of this parliament officially ended in 2011, after the resignation of mainly Hezbollah and its allies because of political tensions caused by investigations into the assassination of Rafik Hariri. It is said that Aoun was elected as President because he was able to strike a deal with Hariri. This deal involved Hariri supporting Aoun and in exchange becoming the prime minister. On October 29th 2019 Hariri resigned amid large scale protests about the political and economic situation in the country.

Walid Jumblatt

Leader of the Progressive Socialist Party

Walid Jumblatt is the current leader of the Progressive Socialist party. He succeeded his father Kamal Jumblatt, who had been assassinated in 1977. The Jumblatt family founded the PSP and has been leading the party from its establishment. The family has always been very prominent in the Druze community.

Hassan Nasrallah

Secretary-general of Hezbollah

Hassan Nasrallah is the third and current Secretary General of the Lebanese political and paramilitary party Hezbollah since his predecessor, Abbas al-Musawi, was assassinated by the Israel Defense Forces in February 1992. Nasrallah joined Hezbollah after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In 1989, Hassan Nasrallah traveled to Qom, Iran, where he furthered his religious studies. He believes that Islam holds the solution to the problems of any society. Nasrallah's leadership of Hezbollah is characterized by his populism. Nasrallah also steered the organization beyond its roots as an Islamist militia and into the realm of national politics, establishing himself as a political leader without holding public office. Nasrallah is credited in Lebanon and the Arab world for ending the Israeli occupation of the South of Lebanon, something which has greatly bolstered the party's political standing within Lebanon.

Gebran Bassil

Party Leader of the Free Patriotic Movement

Gebran Gerge Bassil is a Lebanese politician, leader of the Free Patriotic Movement, a Lebanese political party whose support base is overwhelmingly from Lebanon's Christian community. Bassil was an activist for the Free Patriotic Movement from 1989 to 2005. In 2009, he served as the Minister of Telecommunications, then as the Minister of Water and Energy in 2011 and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants from 2014 to 2020. In September 2015, he became by designation the leader of the Free Patriotic Movement taking over the position that was occupied by the founder of the FPM and Lebanese President, Michel Aoun.

Source

- [Adam Carr's election archive: Lebanon](#)
- [Al Jazeera](#)
- [Al Jazeera 2](#)
- [Al Jazeera News](#)
- [Amnesty International: Lebanon](#)
- [Aoun-Hezbollah agreement](#)
- Azar, F. and E. Mullet (2002) Muslims and Christians in Lebanon: Common Views on Political Issues. Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 39, No. 6 (Nov.,2002), 735-746
- [BBC: Who's who in Lebanon](#)
- [BBC News: 24 June 2007](#)
- [BBC News: 16 July 2007](#)
- [BBC News: 9 October](#)
- [BBC News: 19 December 2019](#)
- [Boston Globe](#)
- [Britannica: Hassan Nasrallah](#)
- [CIA: Lebanon world fact book](#)
- Dah, A., Dibeh, G. and W. Shahin (1998) The Distributional Impact of Taxes in Lebanon. Midterm Report. Beirut: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.
- [Daily Star](#)
- [Economist](#)
- [Electionguide.org](#)
- [Epic Project: electoral law Lebanon](#)
- [Escwa.org](#)
- [European Union](#)
- European Union Election Observation Mission (2005) Parliamentary Elections 2005 Lebanon. Final Report. · Khoury, M. El

- and U. Panizza (2001) Poverty and Social Mobility in Lebanon. A few Wild Guesses. Beirut: Department of Economics American University
- [Foreign & Commonwealth Office](#)
 - [Foreign Policy 1](#)
 - [Foreign Policy 2](#)
 - [Free Patriotic Movement](#)
 - [Freedomhouse: Lebanon](#)
 - [Hezbollah official website](#)
 - [IFES](#)
 - [International Herald Tribune](#)
 - [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance \(IDEA\)](#)
 - [IPU](#)
 - [Kamal Jumblatt Website](#)
 - [Konrad Adenauer Stiftung \(2018\) Political Party Mapping in Lebanon Ahead of the 2018 Elections. Report.](#)
 - [Lebanese Forces Website](#)
 - [Licus](#)
 - Makdissi, Ussama (1996) Reconstructing the Nation-State: The Modernity of Sectarianism in Lebanon. Middle East Report, No. 200, Minorities in the Middle East: Power and the Politics of Difference (Jul. – Sep., 1996), 23-26, 30.
 - [Middle East](#)
 - [Middle East Eye](#)
 - [Najib Mikati](#)
 - [National Democratic Institute](#)
 - [Press TV](#)
 - [Progressive Socialist Party](#)
 - [ReliefWeb](#)
 - [Reuters](#)
 - [Reuters 2](#)
 - [Reuters 3](#)
 - [Reuters 4](#)
 - [Reuters 5](#)
 - [Reuters 6](#)
 - [SF](#)
 - [Student Pulse](#)
 - [The National](#)
 - [UNIFIL Lebanon](#)
 - [UN: 24 August 2007](#)
 - [UN: 17 August 2007](#)
 - [U.S. Department of State](#)
 - [USIP](#)
 - [Valdai](#)
 - Wenger, M. and J. Denney (1990) Lebanon's Fifteen-Year War 1975-1990. Middle East Report, No. 162, Lebanon's War (Jan. – Feb., 1990), 23-25
 - [Wikipedia: Amal Movement](#)
 - [Wikipedia: Gebran Bassil](#)
 - [Wikipedia: Hezbollah](#)
 - [Wikipedia: History of Lebanon](#)
 - [Wikipedia: Lebanese Civil War](#)
 - [Wikipedia: Lebanese Forces](#)
 - [Wikipedia: Politics in Lebanon](#)
 - [Wikipedia: Progressive Socialist Party](#)
 - [Wikipedia: Sectarianism](#)