

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) has deployed an international observation mission for the Lebanese parliamentary elections scheduled to take place on June 7, 2009. Below is the third in a series of election updates that will be published on a weekly basis until the election.

NDI Pre-Election Delegation in Beirut



NDI delegation with Interior Minister Ziyad Baroud at SCEC with members of the commission

Last week, NDI kicked off its pre-election delegation with the arrival of the Institute's Chairman Madeleine K. Albright, former Prime Minister of Canada Joseph Clark, Director of the Middle East Programs at the Aspen Institute Toni G. Verstandig, NDI President Kenneth Wollack, and Senior Associate and Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa Leslie Campbell. [Click here](#) to read the statement of NDI's pre-election delegation.

From May 5-8 NDI's delegation met with Lebanon's top politicians, including President Michel Suleiman, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, and Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri to assess preparations for the June 7, 2009 parliamentary elections. The delegation also met with party leaders from the governing coalition and the opposition as well as women and youth leaders, and members of civil society. On May 7, NDI held a press conference to present an impartial assessment of the political environment leading up to the June 7 polls. The major challenges perceived by NDI's delegation are the ability to challenge and adjudicate election results, logistical and security concerns, and the need for more robust voter education. The delegation lauded recent and positive electoral reforms as improvements over past elections and the work of Lebanese civil society for its commendable domestic observation efforts.



NDI delegation with Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri

Four Generals Suspected in Hariri Assassination Released

Celebratory gunfire and fireworks erupted in Beirut's southern suburb and other areas throughout the country as four generals who were suspects in the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri were released from prison. The generals were high-ranking security officers during Syria's dominance over Lebanon and have been held without charge since September 2005. The impact of the generals' release on the June parliamentary polls is not yet clear, however this has not prevented either bloc from exploiting the issue for political gain. Hezbollah's second in command, Sheikh Naim Qassem said, claimed that the release of the four generals is one of the last steps before the collapse of the governing March 14 coalition and will lead to its electoral defeat. Saad Hariri, son of the former Prime Minister and leader of his father's political movement, refused to view the release of the generals as a setback, saying that he welcomed any decision from the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, and noted that their release strengthened the credibility of the Tribunal against accusations that it is politicized. While many analysts agree that the generals' release will embolden the opposition as it heads into the elections, it is just one issue currently polarizing Lebanese politics and will likely fade in prominence as election day approaches.



Election Observation Update

LADE Issues Second Report on Findings



On May 8, the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections held a press conference to announce the findings of its second periodic report on pre-election campaign violations. The report included 133 violations, 17 of which were validated. Like in the first report, most violations LADE published were infringements of Articles 59 (financial donations-service provisions and cash payments), 68 (libel, slander, or defamation of a candidate in the media), and 71 (use of public space for campaigning) of the electoral law. LADE named several offenders, including high-profile figures from both political blocs. LADE reported that Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, a March 14 candidate in Saida, held a meeting in the Grand Serail (the headquarters of the Prime Minister of Lebanon) on April 29 with a member of Al-Jamaa Al-Islamiya, a potential political ally, which constitutes a breach of Article 71. The report also noted that the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) hung a large picture of FPM leader General Michel Aoun, a candidate for the opposition in Kesserwan, at the Lebanese University (also breaching Article 71). The report described in detail 15 of the 17 confirmed violations and urged the judiciary to look into the breaches submitted and take the proper measures.

EU Deploys Long Term Observers

On May 4, the European Union Observation Mission held its first press conference led by Chief Observer and Member of the European Parliament José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra. Following the press conference, the EU's 30 long term observers deployed to regions throughout Lebanon. "We consider these elections a chance to reinforce democracy in Lebanon and help establish stability in the region," said Sánchez-Neyra. The EU deployed its core team of nine election experts in late April and approximately 100 short term observers will join the mission to be deployed in teams of two throughout the country in time for the June polls.

Election Administration

The Supervisory Commission for Electoral Campaigns (SCEC) issued its first report on May 7, which cited 293 electoral violations between April 14 and 28. Fifty-two percent of the violations were cases of libel and slander, 18% treason, 10% intimidation, 5% provocation, 5% stirring sectarian feelings, and 10% violated other articles of the electoral law. Based on qualitative analysis, 52% of violations appeared in the press, 36% on television channels, and 12% via radio stations. This first report did not name offending institutions, but Interior Minister Ziyad Baroud warned that if the violations continue, the second report would list names to be referred to the Constitutional Council, which is responsible for adjudicating electoral complaints. The Council is not currently functional because the Lebanese government has not appointed its five remaining members.

Over the two last weeks, the Ministry of the Interior officially opened its accreditation office and selected Makram Ouais, a former NDI employee, to take the lead on liaising with and supporting international observers. Associated with the Institute since 1995, Ouais previously held the positions of deputy director for Central and West Africa and deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa region.



Makram Ouais (far left) at a meeting at SCEC

The Ministry will be accrediting approximately 3,000 domestic observers, as well as the international missions of NDI, the Carter Center, and the European Union.

District in Focus: Tripoli

Seat Distribution:

- 5 Sunni
- 1 Alawi
- 1 Greek Orthodox
- 1 Maronite

Major Political Players:

- **March 14:** Future Movement (FM) Local political figures: Minister Mohammad Safadi – MP Misbah Ahdab (Democratic Renewal Movement (DRM))
- **March 8:** Former Prime Minister Omar Karami – Islamist leader former MP Fathi Yakan
- **Other Players:** Former Prime Minister Najib Mikati



Photo credit: Agence France-Presse– Getty Images

Total Voters: 186,377

Muslim Voters: 165,062 (88.6%)
 Sunni: 149,466 (80.2%)
 Alawi: 14,211 (7.6%)
 Shia: 1,375 (0.7%)
 Druze: 10 (0.0%)

Christian Voters: 21,315 (11.4%)
 Greek Orthodox: 12,220 (6.6%)
 Maronite: 4,281 (2.3%)
 Other: 4,814 (2.6%)

2008 Figures

Tripoli, a largely Sunni city in northern Lebanon, is the country's second largest city and has in recent years been a base of support for the predominantly Sunni Future Movement (FM). Besides having a large share of parliamentary seats, Tripoli is an important race because of a surprising development in the formation of March 14's electoral list. After weeks of tough negotiations, FM stroke a deal with two prominent local politicians former Prime Minister Najib Mikati, an independent, and Mohammad Safadi, a March 14 figure, to form the "Solidarity list". Absent from the list is MP Misbah Ahdab, Vice President and Co-founder of the Democratic Renewal Movement (DRM), but Ahmed Karami, a pro-Syrian politician, was included on the ticket for the Sunni seat that some expected was reserved for Ahdab. Though there are many theories as to why FM, which is led by the staunchly anti-Syrian Saad Hariri (son of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri), would ally with a pro-Syrian politician, some analysts believe that Mikati is preparing for a rapprochement with Syria or perhaps a larger regional reconciliation. Furthermore, he may be positioning himself as prime minister and he is already branding himself as the "not Hariri" alternative.

By the Numbers

| District | Sunni | Shiia | Druze | Alawite | Maronite | Greek Orthodox | Greek Catholic | Armenian Orthodox | Armenian Catholic | Evangelical | Minority | Total |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|----------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------|-------|
| Akkar | 3 | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | 7 |
| Minieh-Dinnieh | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| Becharre | | | | | 2 | | | | | | | 2 |
| Tripoli | 5 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 8 |
| Zgharta | | | | | 3 | | | | | | | 3 |
| Batroun | | | | | 2 | | | | | | | 2 |
| Koura | | | | | | 3 | | | | | | 3 |
| Jbeil | | | | | 2 | | | | | | | 3 |
| Kesrwan | | 1 | | | 5 | | | | | | | 5 |
| Metn | | | | | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | 8 |
| Baabda | | 2 | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | | 6 |
| Aalay | | | 2 | | 2 | 1 | | | | | | 5 |
| Chouf | 2 | | 2 | | 3 | | 1 | | | | | 8 |
| Saida | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Zahraïni | | 2 | | | | | 1 | | | | | 3 |
| Jezzine | | | | | 2 | | 1 | | | | | 3 |
| Nabatieh | | 3 | | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| Tyr | | 4 | | | | | | | | | | 4 |
| Bint Jbeil | | 3 | | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| Marjayoun-Hasbaya | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | | 5 |
| Baalbek-Hermel | 2 | 6 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | 10 |
| Zahle | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | 7 |
| W. Bekaa-Rachaya | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 6 |
| Beirut I | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 5 |
| Beirut II | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 2 | | | | 4 |
| Beirut III | 5 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| Total Seats by Confession | 27 | 27 | 8 | 2 | 34 | 14 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 128 |

Ad Watch: Lebanese Forces address May 2008 violence in campaign advertisements



Above, a woman looking at a scene from the street violence in Beirut in May 2008, with a caption reading "You can not do anything." Below, the accompanying ad, which reads "Or you can do something."

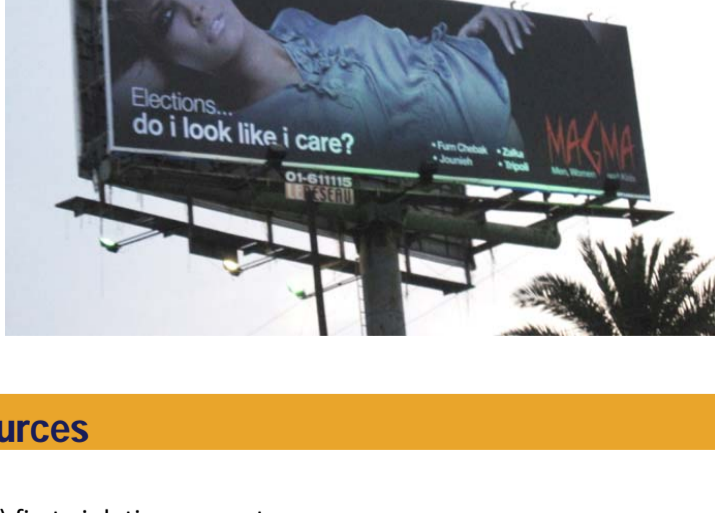
LF Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leJ0lwGn50g>



Above, link to LF television ad addressing violence



"Election" Bill-Bored



Resources

- The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections' (LADE's) first violations report: <http://www.observe.ladeleb.org/news/LADE-Monitoring-Report-I-ENG-final1.aspx>
- Breakdown of seat to candidate per district: <http://nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=90911>
- Report by Amnesty International on human rights in Lebanon and the parliamentary elections: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE18/003/2009/en/2bcd2ad6-7c74-4334-830d-ce402cddb31d3/mde180032009en.pdf>
- In the News:**
- http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=101559
- <http://uk.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUKL1340421>
- http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=101729

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