

The Extension of President Lahoud Term, the New Government and Resolution 1559 (Part 1/3)

Lebanon has witnessed several political developments over the last three months whose effects are being debated in political circles. Those include:

- The extension of President Lahoud's mandate through a Council of Ministers' amendment to Article 49 of the Constitution. Parliament voted in favor of the amendment on 3 September 2004 with a 96-vote majority, 29 votes opposed and three absentees. The amendment, published according to Law No. 585 dated 4 September 2004, reads as follows: "This statement was added to Article 49, once and exceptionally, to extend the current president's term for 3 years, to end on 23 November 2007."

- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 was issued on 2 August 2004. The resolution calls for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon, the dissolution of the armed militia and carrying out fair presidential elections (no term extension for President Lahoud). It also calls on the Secretary General to present a report one month after issuing the resolution. The report, which was issued on 2 September 2004, clearly stated that the terms were not met.

- Former Prime Minister Hariri decided not to head the next

government. Instead, Omar Karami was appointed to the post by 82 deputies and formed a new government on 26 October 2004. It was composed of 30 ministers and given a vote of confidence by 59 deputies, while 29 opposed it and 21 were absent from the vote.

Information International conducted a poll, to be published in two parts, to assess Lebanese public opinion of those events.

Part 1

Attitudes toward the three-year presidential extension

According to the poll, 51.8% of respondents advocated the extension of President Lahoud's term, compared to 35.8% who opposed it and 12.4% who replied "I don't know". (Graph 1)

The poll showed that the highest percentage of respondents opposed to the extension were among the Druze (66.7%) and Maronites (52.9%), while the highest percentage of supporters was among the Shiia (61.3%) and Catholics (60.7%). (Table 1)

Attitudes toward President Omar Karami for Prime Minister

The majority, or 60.2% of respondents, supported Omar Karami for prime minister, while 24.1% were opposed and 15.7% replied "I don't know".

Again, the highest percentage of respondents opposed to Karami for prime minister was found among the Druze (42.1%) and Maronites (35.5%), while the majority of those supporting him were among the Orthodox (70.5%), Sunni (67.6%) and Shiia (66%). (Table 2)

The newly formed government included, for the first time in Lebanon's history, two women.

Opinion on this development was:

- 75.9% viewed it as a positive event
- 12.1% said it did not affect their opinion of the new government
- 10.5% viewed it as self-evident
- 1.5% replied "I don't know" (Graph 2)

President Lahoud and Prime Minister Karami's slogan of choosing the right person for the right position when forming the new government was also put to those polled. The majority, or 56.9%, felt that was accomplished in certain ministries, but not all of them, while 26.2% said it was not accomplished at all, 4% said it was accomplished fully and 12.9% stated "I don't know". (Graph 3)

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE THREE-YEAR PRESIDENTIAL EXTENSION BY SECT

TABLE 1

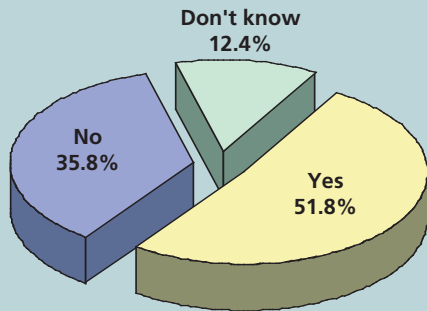
| Sect | Opposed | In Favor | Don't know |
|----------|---------|----------|------------|
| Maronite | 52.9% | 41.3% | 5.8% |
| Orthodox | 34.8% | 57.6% | 7.6% |
| Catholic | 29.5% | 60.7% | 9.8% |
| Sunni | 24.2% | 57.8% | 18% |
| Shiia | 28.6% | 61.3% | 10.1% |
| Druze | 66.7% | 17.5% | 15.8% |

ATTITUDES TOWARD OMAR KARAMI FOR PRIME MINISTER BY SECT

TABLE 2

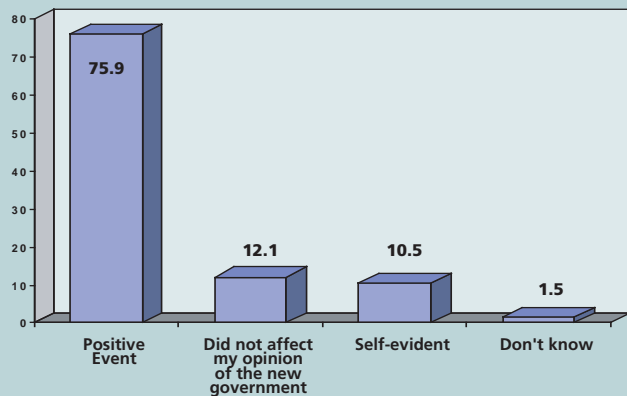
| Sect | Opposed | In Favor | Don't know |
|----------|---------|----------|------------|
| Maronite | 35.5% | 49.4% | 15.1% |
| Orthodox | 18.9% | 70.5% | 10.6% |
| Catholic | 16.4% | 65.6% | 18% |
| Sunni | 14.4% | 67.6% | 18% |
| Shiia | 25.5% | 66% | 8.5% |
| Druze | 42.1% | 26.3% | 31.6% |

Do you support the three-year presidential extension? (%)



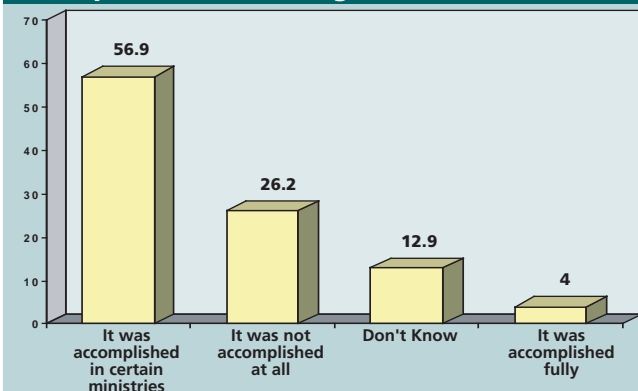
G1

What is your opinion of having two women in the new government? (%)



G2 Base: 1250

Was the slogan of "the right person for the right position" accomplished in the new government? (%)



G3 Base: 1250

Attitudes toward appointing political party members as ministers

During negotiations on forming the new government, Hariri said he would refuse to appoint political party members as ministers. However, upon taking office, Prime Minister Karami limited the number of ministers affiliated with political parties to four.

Respondents' views varied as follows:

- 31% were totally against the appointment of members of political parties as ministers
- 18.8% were in favor of it
- 23.1% said it should be based on the competence of the party member
- 5.3% felt they should only be appointed as Ministers of State
- 15.8% were indifferent
- 6% replied "I don't know" (Graph 4)

Debate on the post of Minister of Interior and Municipalities being offered to Sleiman Franjieh instead of Elias El Murr was a main issue in the appointments.

Out of those polled:

- 29.4% supported the appointment
- 24.6% felt the post should have remained with Murr

The largest proportion (35.1%), however, was in favor of appointing someone else for the post, 2.6% did not specify and 8.3% replied "I don't know".

Karami's failed efforts to appoint a member of the Qornet Shehwan opposition were viewed by the public as follows:

- 42.2% blamed the opposition itself
- 25.8% blamed the government
- 17.8% blamed both
- 14.2% replied "I don't know"

Does the new government present a challenge or provocation to any party?

The poll showed that 29.2% of respondents felt the new government does not constitute a challenge or provocation to anyone, whereas 61.7% had different ideas.

Out of that group, 20.2% said the government is a provocation to Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) leader Walid Jumblatt, 16.6% to Hariri, 9.7% to Qornet Shehwan, 5.7% to Elias El Murr, 5.1% to Beirutis, 4.4% named various other parties (each with less than 1.9%) and 9.1% replied "I don't know".

Jumblatt's opposition to the extension of Lahoud's term

The highest proportion (42.4%) of those polled felt that Jumblatt's stance would not have an effect, 22.2% felt it would

disturb political and national stability, 6.3% said it would lead to the government's failure, 17% believed Walid Jumblatt would end his opposition and 12.1% did not know. (Graph 5)

As shown in Graph 6, the government got the confidence of 59 deputies, while 21 deputies (16.4%) didn't vote and 19 others (15%) were absent. (Graph 6)

Upon asking the respondents about government confidence, 49.9% of them said they are with it, while 39.7% are against it and 10.4% "do not know". (Graph 7)

The U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559 (2 September 2004) calls for the following:

- Withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon
- Dissolving and disarming armed Lebanese and non Lebanese groups
- Government authority over all Lebanese territories
- Conduct free and fair presidential elections according to the rules of the Lebanese constitution, without any interference
- Asking the Secretariat General of the UN to present a report after one month of executing the resolution.

Attitudes towards this resolution showed that 58.41% of respondents oppose it, 30.5% support it and 11.1% do not know. (Graph 8)

ISC Goals

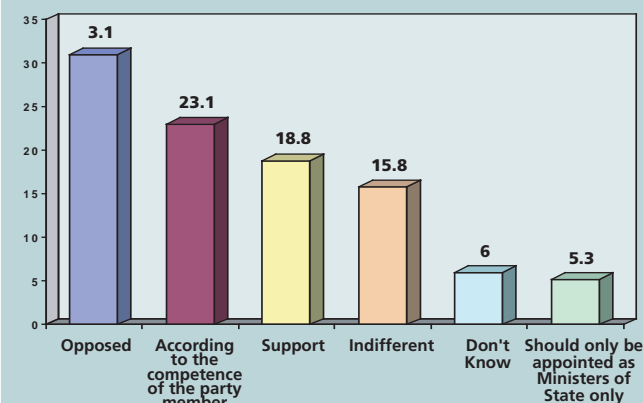
35.3% of respondents believe Resolution 1559 aims at pressuring Syria, 27.1% think it helps Israel to pressure Hizbullah, 16.2% said it helps Lebanon to deploy the Lebanese army in the south, 14.6% believe it is to prohibit the renewal of President Lahoud's term and 6.8% answered "I don't know".

Attitudes toward disarming Hizbullah

49.5% of respondents are against disarming Hizbullah, versus 38.7% who support the move and 11.8% who are indifferent (Graph 9). The distribution of the respondents' attitudes according to sect is detailed in Table 3.

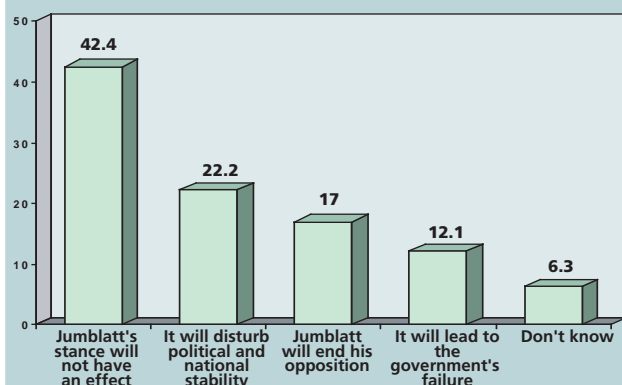
As shown in the table, there is a clear sectoral division in the attitudes towards disarming Hizbullah, with the majority of Christian respondents support this disarming as compared to a majority of Muslims who are against this issue. Catholic and Maronite respondents who are "for" disarming Hizbullah whereas the Shiite and Sunni lead the group opposing Hizbullah disarmament.

Attitudes regarding the appointment of political party members as ministers (%)



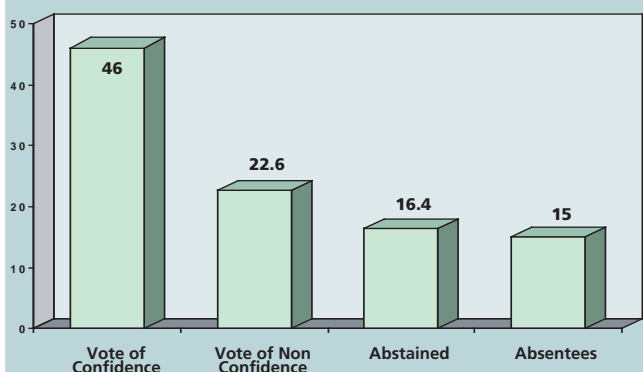
G4 Base: 1250

Opinions toward Jumblatt's opposition to the extension of Lahoud's term



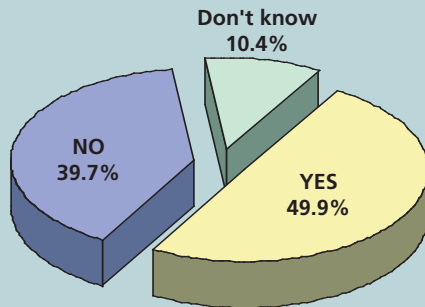
G5 Base: 1250

Results of the vote of confidence in the new government



G6

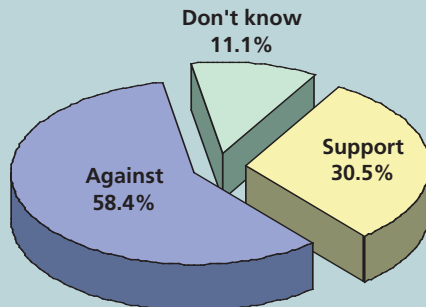
Do you give your vote of confidence to this government? (%)



G7

Base: 1250

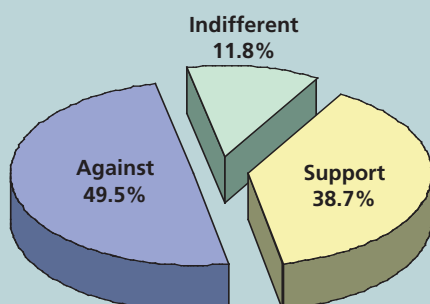
Do you support the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559? (%)



G8

Base: 1250

Attitude toward disarming Hizbullah



G9

Base: 1250

ATTITUDES TOWARD DISARMING HIZBULLAH BY SECT

TABLE 3

| Sect | In Favor | Opposed | Indifferent |
|----------|----------|---------|-------------|
| Maronite | 72.6% | 17.7% | 9.7% |
| Orthodox | 54.5% | 34.1% | 11.4% |
| Catholic | 78.7% | 11.5% | 9.8% |
| Sunni | 23.9% | 63.1% | 13% |
| Shiia | 9.1% | 85.5% | 5.4% |
| Druze | 17.5% | 54.4% | 28.1% |

In conclusion,

- The results show that more than half of those polled (51.8%) support the extension of President Lahoud's term
- 60.2% support Omar Karami as prime minister and most Lebanese are willing to accept members of political parties as ministers under certain circumstances
- Support for female ministers reached 75.9%
- The new government was accused of not choosing the right people for the right positions. ■

Part 2

Government Priorities

In the coming Issue of li Monthly.

Sample

The poll was conducted between 3 and 8 November 2004, taking a sample of 1,250 people distributed across Lebanon, in face-to-face interviews. The gender distribution was 55.7% male and 44.3% female. However, 5.8% of females approached refused to participate, mainly indicating "no interest in politics".

The age distribution of respondents was as follows: 15.1% between 15-24 years, 26.7% between 25-34, 27.3% between 35-44, 19.5% between 45-54, 8.6% between 55-64 years and 2.9% for those over 65.

The poll's margin of error is $\pm 2\%$.