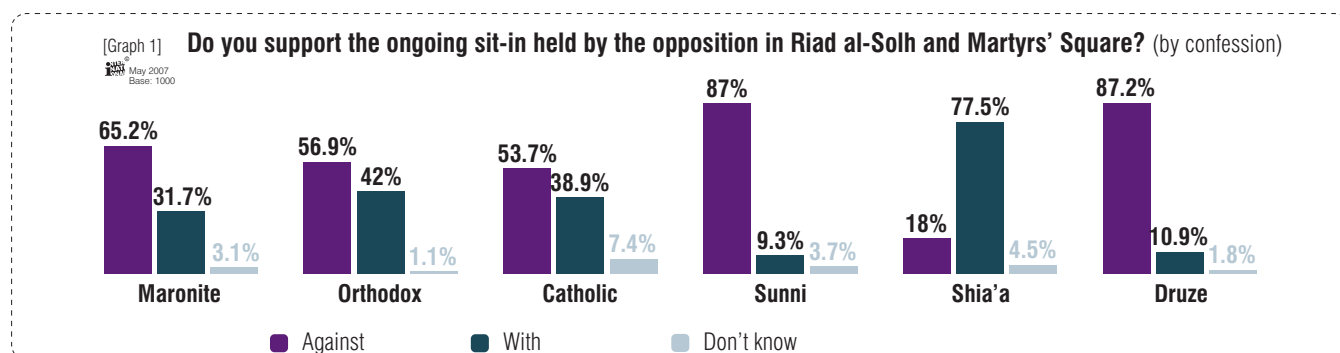


The Lebanese Less Supportive of the Ongoing Sit-in

Divided over the Presidential Elections and with the Tribunal but with Conditions

Since the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri on February 14, 2005, the Lebanese have been witnessing a state of political and security tensions that reminds them of the black days of civil war. **Information International** surveyed the opinions of the Lebanese about current and controversial issues in an opinion poll conducted between May 7-14, 2007. In Part I, *li Monthly* will present the position toward the ongoing sit-in in downtown Beirut, the international tribunal, presidential elections, the ownership of weapons, Hizbullah's arms and other questions. Part II will focus on the most favorite za'im (leader), the position toward political parties, foreign countries' role in Lebanon and national dialogue.

The ongoing sit-in held by the opposition in Riad al-Solh and Martyrs' Squares. The majority of respondents (56.8%) reported to be against the ongoing sit-in held by the opposition since the first of December 2006 in downtown Beirut. Only 39.6% said they supported the sit-in, while 3.6% said "I don't know". The respondents' answers by confession are shown in Graph no.1



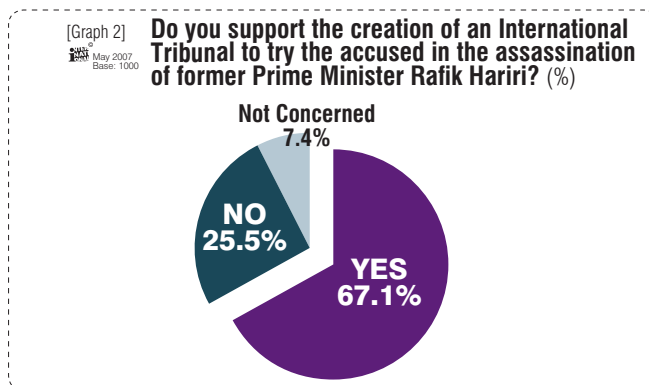
The tribunal of international character to try the accused in Rafik Hariri's assassination

67.1% of respondents supported the formation of an international tribunal to try the accused in Rafik Hariri's assassination against 25.5% who reported to be against the tribunal and 7.4% who said they were not concerned by the issue. (Graph no.2)

Moreover, 86.9% of respondents said they did not change their stance toward the international tribunal against 13.1% who said they did.

Out of the 13.1% who changed their position, 46.6% said they were with the tribunal and now they are against it; 16.8% said they were against it and now they support it; 27.5% said they used to support it and no longer care about it; and 9.1% said they were against it and no longer care about it.

Out of the 67.1% who support the tribunal, 39.8% said they "wanted to know the truth behind Hariri's assassination



provided that no strife or divisions result from the creation of such court". Meanwhile, out of the 25.5% who reported to be against the tribunal, 19% said "it had political objectives other than revealing the truth". 17.8% said they supported the tribunal to stop assassinations provided that no divisions occur, 6.5% said they supported it to

stop assassinations even if divisions occurred. 0.8% said they were against it because their religious and political authorities are against it; 5% said they did not care and 2.4% said they didn't know.

Needless to say, confessional considerations play an important role in respondents' stance toward the tribunal, as shown in Table no.1.

Respondents' position toward the international tribunal by confession Table 1

Do you support the creation of the international tribunal?	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Yes	66.5%	67%	68.5%	89.9%	47.4%	83.6%
No	23.4%	25%	22.2%	7.1%	44%	10.9%
Not concerned	10.1%	8%	9.3%	3%	8.6%	5.5%

Source: Information International – May 2007

The Petition sent by 70 Deputies to the UN Secretary General

The 70 deputies of Parliament's majority bloc sent a petition to the UN Secretary General, asking him to take the necessary measures to adopt the international tribunal. The majority of respondents (44.7%) said the deputies' step was "hasty and irresponsible", against 41.8% who said such step was "necessary and efficient". 0.8% gave other answers, while 12.7% said they didn't know.

Dialogue Sessions between Nabih Berri and Sa'ad Hariri

Speaker Nabih Berri and Deputy Sa'ad Hariri held several dialogue sessions in March 2007 in failed attempts to reach a political solution to the current crisis. 36.6% of respondents said Berri-Hariri dialogue should be resumed, while 30.5% said it was a waste of time, 28.4% said it contributed to easing tension and 4.5% said "don't know".

Smuggling of Arms across the Syrian-Lebanese Borders

Politicians, officials and international reports talk about arms smuggling from Syria into Lebanon. This issue has gained some credibility as half of respondents (50.9%) said that arms were being smuggled, while only 18.9% rejected the claims. A high percentage of 30.2% said "don't know". (Graph no.3)

Deployment of International Observers along the Lebanese-Syrian Borders

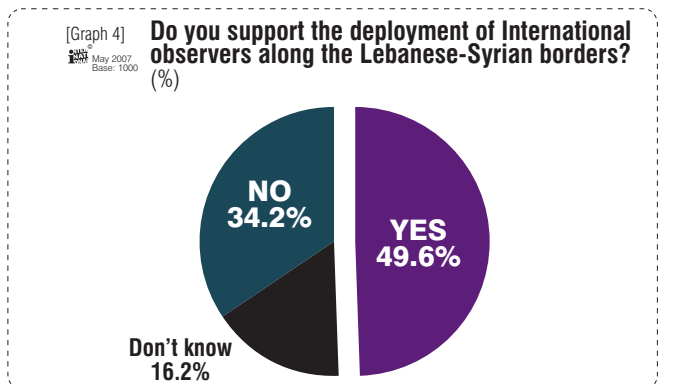
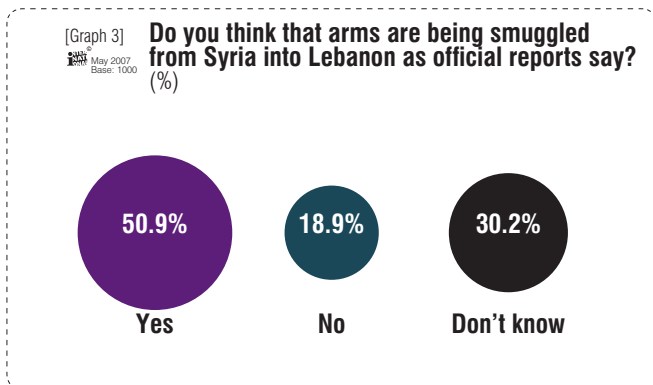
In light of talks on arms smuggling and people illegally entering the Lebanese territories, many local and international parties are calling for the deployment of international observers along the Lebanese-Syrian borders. 49.6% of respondents support such measure against 34.2% who don't. 16.2% said "don't know". (Graph no.4)

Presidential Elections

The Constitution stipulates that presidential elections should be held "one month at least and two months at most" before the expiration of the president's term. Hence, the constitutional deadline begins on September 25, 2007. However, many believe that elections would not be held due to the current political crisis. 47.2% of respondents said presidential elections would be held within the constitutional deadline and a new president would be elected.

30.1% ruled out the holding of elections and gave the following answers:

- ⦿ 7.6% said a unified transitional government would be formed;
- ⦿ 16.1% said two governments would be created: one led by the ruling power and the other by the opposition;
- ⦿ 5.7% said the current government would act as a caretaker Cabinet until presidential elections are held;
- ⦿ 0.7% said a military government would be formed;
- ⦿ 22.7% said "I don't know".

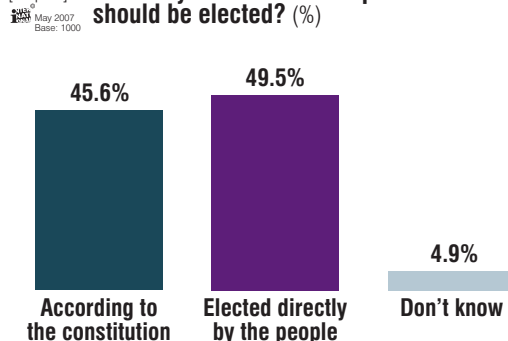


Best Means to Elect a New President

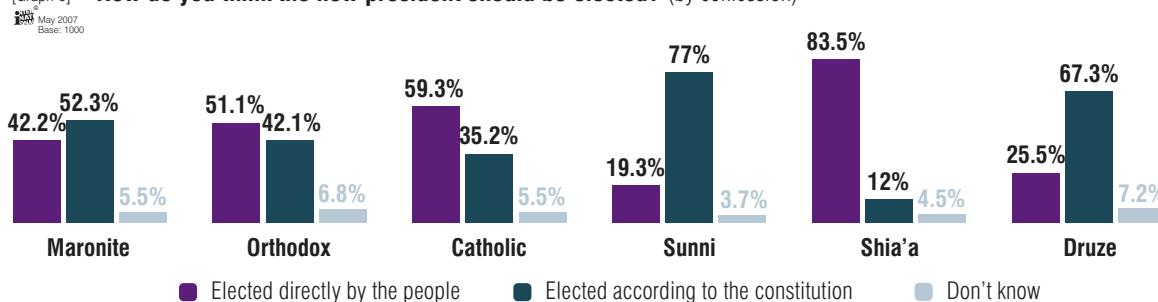
Article 49 of the Constitution stipulates that the president should be elected by Parliament. 45.6% of respondents said elections should be held according to the Constitution, while 49.5% said the president must be elected directly by the people. 4.9% said “don’t know”. (Graph no.5)

Respondents’ answers by confession are shown in Graph no.6.

[Graph 5] How do you think the new president should be elected? (%)



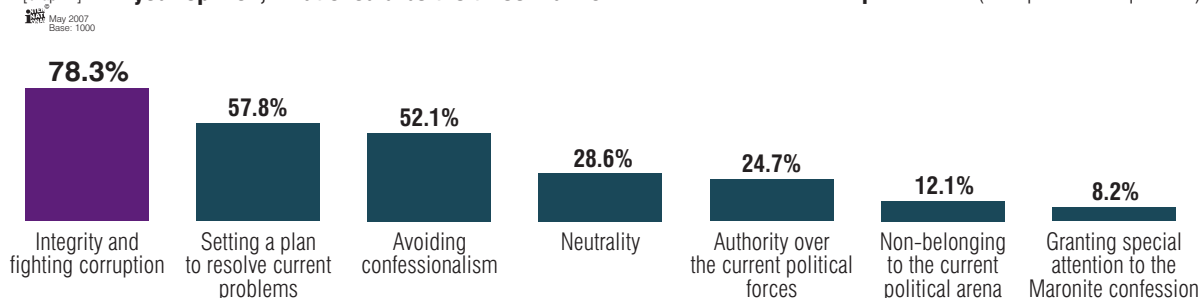
[Graph 6] How do you think the new president should be elected? (by confession)



Characteristics of the New President

Respondents were asked about the three main characteristics the new president should have. “Integrity and fighting corruption” ranked first (78.3%), followed by “setting a plan to resolve current problems”. Respondents’ answers are shown in Graph no.7.

[Graph 7] In your opinion, what should be the three main characteristics of the new president? (multiple answer question)



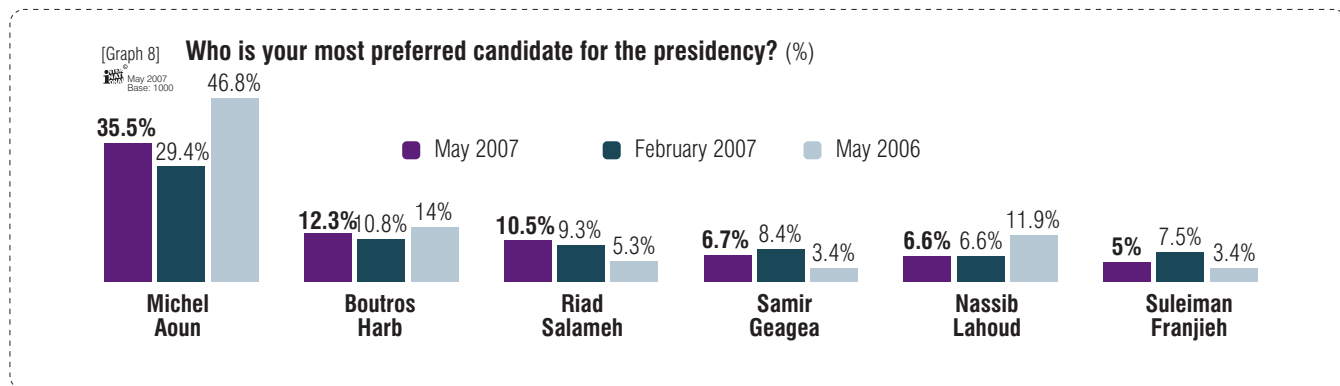
Most Preferred Candidate for the Presidency

Michel Aoun ranked first with 35.5% of supporters, followed by Boutros Harb with 12.3% of support, Riad Salameh (10.5%), Samir Geagea (6.7%), Nassib Lahoud (6.6%) and Suleiman Franjeh (5%).

In an opinion poll conducted by *Information International* in February, 2007, Michel Aoun got 29.4% of supporters, followed by Boutros Harb with 10.8%, Riad Salameh (9.3%), Samir Geagea (8.4%), Nassib Lahoud (6.6%) and Suleiman Franjeh (7.5%).

“ Michel Aoun ranked first with 35.5% of supporters, followed by Boutros Harb with 12.3% of support, Riad Salameh (10.5%). ”

In another opinion poll conducted by *Information International* in May 2006, results came as follows: Michel Aoun (46.8%), Boutros Harb (14%), Nassib Lahoud (11.9%), Riad Salameh (5.3%), Samir Geagea (3.4%) and Suleiman Franjeh (3.4%). (Graph no.8)



Results of the current poll by confession are shown in Table no. 2.

Most Preferred Candidate for the Presidency (By confession)			Table 2											
	Current rate of support May 2007	Rate of Support February 2007	May 2007						February 2007					
			Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Michel Aoun	35.5%	29.4%	29.4%	48.9%	29.6%	5.9%	68%	9.1%	26.8%	41.3%	22.4%	6.3%	54.6%	3.5%
Boutros Harb	12.3%	10.8%	10.6%	9.1%	1.9%	26.4%	1.5%	25.5%	9.6%	13.8%	10.2%	20.4%	1.9%	15.8%
Riad Salameh	10.5%	9.3%	11.9%	5.7%	14.8%	13%	5.3%	21.8%	10.1%	8.8%	16.3%	11.5%	4.8%	14%
Samir Geagea	6.7%	8.4%	13.8%	18.2%	13%	3.3%	-	3.6%	17.5%	5%	10.2%	10.4%	0.4%	5.3%
Suleiman Franjeh	5%	7.5%	9.6%	2.3%	5.6%	1.5%	6.8%	-	6.1%	1.3%	4.1%	1.1%	17.8%	1.8%
Nassib Lahoud	6.6%	6.6%	2.3%	4.5%	1.9%	19%	1.1%	3.6%	4.4%	3.8%	8.2%	12.6%	1.9%	17.5%
Others or No one	18.6%	22.9%	19.2%	7.9%	27.6%	26.8%	11.3%	23.7%	19%	21%	16.4%	23.2%	13.4%	38.5%
Don't know	4.8%	5.1%	3.2%	3.4%	5.6%	4.1%	6%	12.7%	6.5%	5%	12.2%	14.5%	5.2%	3.6%

Source: Information International – May 2007

Hizbullah's Arms

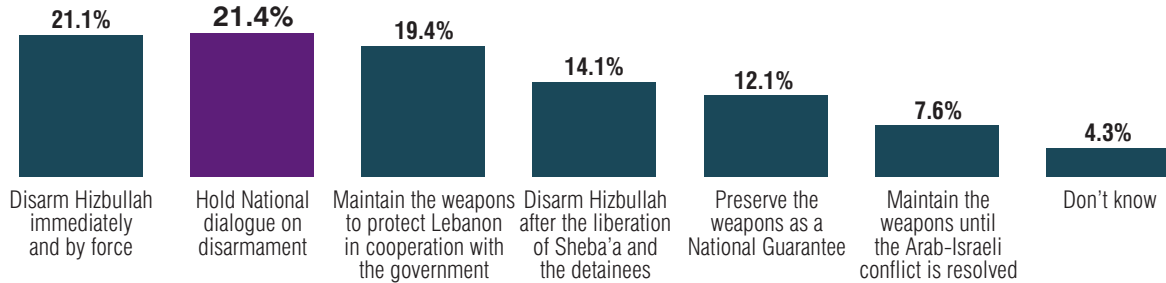
21.1% of respondents said Hizbullah should be disarmed immediately and by force and its weapons should be handed to the Lebanese government. 21.4% said that national dialogue should be held on disarmament; 19.4% said the weapons should be maintained to protect Lebanon in cooperation with the government; 14.1% said Hizbullah should be disarmed after the liberation of Sheba'a Farms and the detainees; 12.1% said the arms should be preserved as a national guarantee; 7.6% stated that the weapons should be preserved until the Arab-Israeli conflict is resolved; and 4.3% said "don't know". (Graph no.9)

Respondents' answers by confession are shown in Table no.3

“21.1% of respondents said Hizbullah should be disarmed immediately and by force.”

[Graph 9] **What is your stance in Hizbullah's arms? (%)**

May 2007
Base: 1000



Position toward Hizbullah's arms by confession

Table 3

What is your stance in Hizbullah's arms?	Confession	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Disarm Hizbullah immediately and by force		26.1%	19.3%	18.5%	35.7%	1.9%	45.5%
Hold national dialogue on disarmament		36.2%	29.5%	29.6%	23.4%	1.5%	10.9%
Disarm Hizbullah after the liberation of Sheba'a and the detainees		13.3%	23.9%	22.2%	10.8%	12.4%	14.5%
Maintain the weapons until the Arab-Israeli conflict is resolved		3.7%	6.8%	1.9%	6.3%	15%	3.6%
Maintain the weapons to protect Lebanon in cooperation with the government		11%	14.8%	18.5%	16%	32.3%	20%
Preserve the weapons as a national guarantee		1%	3.4%	1.9%	4.5%	35.3%	3.6%
Don't know		8.7%	2.3%	7.4%	3.3%	1.5%	1.8%

Source: Information International – May 2007

Relocating, Real Estate Ownership and Confession

Lebanon's political crisis has widened the gap between confessions. However, only 4.9% of respondents said they were considering moving to other areas for confessional considerations, against 93.7% who are not thinking of this option. 1.4% did not answer. (Table no.4)

Positions toward Relocation by Confession

Table 4

Do you consider moving your residence for confessional considerations?	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Yes	6.4%	1.1%	3.7%	6.7%	4.5%	1.8%
No	92.2%	96.6%	96.3%	90.7%	95.5%	96.4%
No answer	1.4%	2.3%	-	2.6%	-	1.8%

Source: Information International – May 2007

“4.9% of respondents said they were considering moving to other areas for confessional considerations.”

Meanwhile, 76.3% of respondents reported not to have concerns at all over the ownership of real estate in their areas by people of confessions different from theirs. 20.9% reported to have some concerns, while 2.8% said “I don't know”.

Respondents' answers by confession are shown in Table no.5.

Respondents' Positions toward Real Estate Ownership by Confession

Table 5

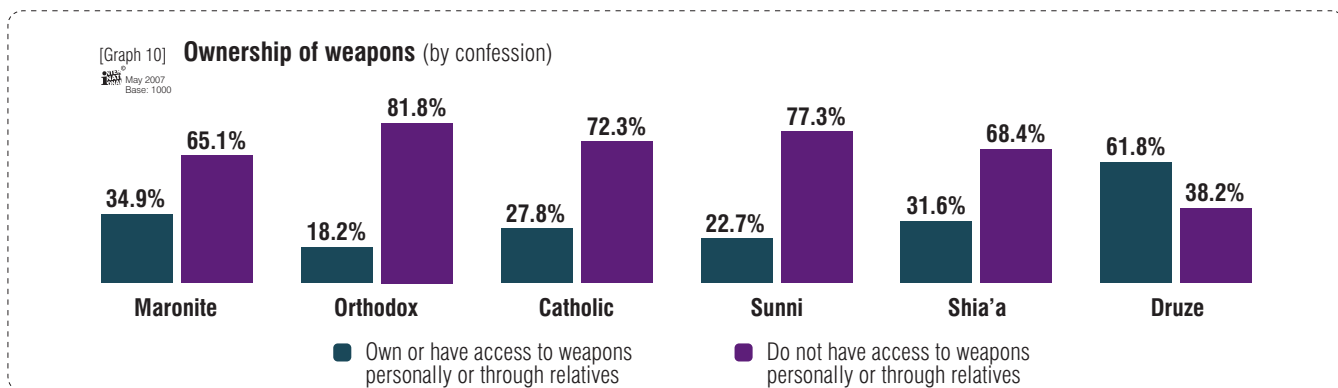
Concern over real estate ownership by a different confession	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
No concerns at all	68.8%	75%	68.5%	77.7%	91.4%	38.2%
Concern to a large extent	9.6%	3.4%	5.6%	3.7%	1.1%	18.2%
Concern to a certain extent	11.9%	3.4%	9.3%	11.9%	1.1%	29.1%
Little concern	8.3%	15.9%	14.8%	3%	3.8%	10.9%
Don't know	1.4%	2.3%	1.8%	3.7%	2.6%	3.6%

Source: Information International – May 2007

“50.3% of respondents said that the other Lebanese are ready to use arms.”

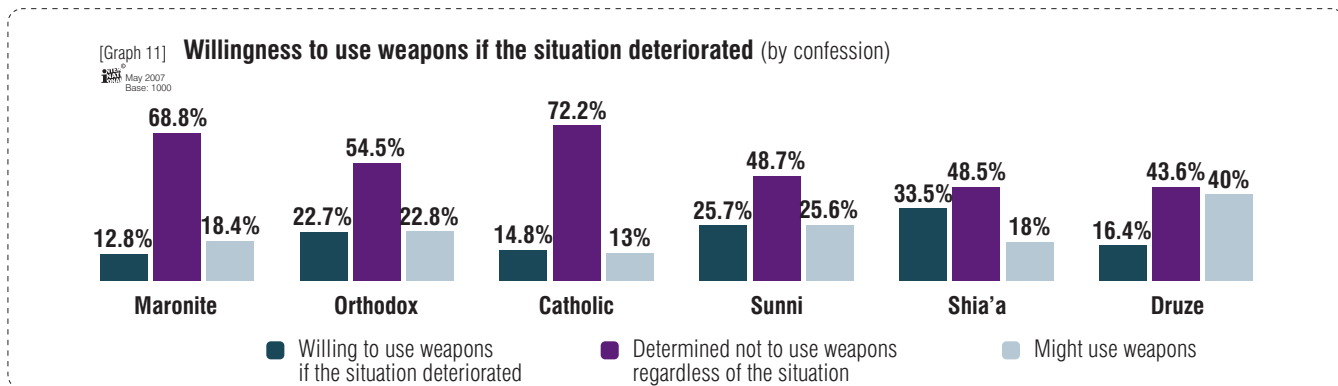
Ownership of Weapons

A lot is being said about the proliferation of weapons among the Lebanese and about people who do not own arms and are currently buying some at high prices. When asked whether they own a military weapon, a rate of 29.5% reported to own or to know relatives who own military weapons, against 70.5% who do not. Graph no.10 shows that a large majority of Druze (61.8%) own weapons.



Respondents were also asked whether they have used a military weapon before: 26.8% said yes against 73.2% who said no.

Asked whether they were willing to use military weapons if the situation deteriorated in Lebanon, 23.5% said yes, 22.1% said they were not sure and 54.4% said they were not willing to use weapons whatever the circumstances. Respondents' answers by confession are shown in Graph no.11.



On the other hand, when asked whether they think that others are willing to use military weapons if the situation deteriorated, 50.3% of respondents said that the other Lebanese are ready to use arms, 16.8% said they are not and 32.9% of respondents said the other Lebanese might.

In a comparison between the current results and those of an opinion poll conducted in November 2006 (published in *Ii Monthly* issue no.56 of February-March 2007), a significant decrease in the percentage of people who own weapons is noted (from 48.3% to 29.5%), while 32.1% had said that they have used military weapons before.

Conclusion

- More than half of the respondents (56.8%) are against the ongoing sit-in held by the opposition in Riad al-Solh and Martyrs' Squares. The majority of those respondents belong to the Druze confession (87.2%), the Sunni confession (87%) and the Maronite confession (65.2%). As to the Shia'a confession, 18% are against the sit-in and 77.5% support it.
- The majority of respondents (67.1%) support the creation of an international tribunal to try those accused in Rafik Hariri's assassination. However, 6% reported to have changed their position and are now against the tribunal, which means that the percentage of support was as high as 73.1%. Meanwhile, 90% of Sunni, 83.6% of Druze and 47.4% of Shia'a respondents reported to be with the tribunal, compared to 44% of Shia'a who are against it.
- 65% of respondents called for the resumption of dialogue between Nabih Berri and Sa'ad Hariri, which they said had contributed to easing tensions and yielded positively on the political arena.
- Positions are almost equally divided on the petition sent by 70 deputies to the UN Secretary General to form the tribunal under Chapter VII. 44.7% of respondents regarded it as a hasty decision, compared to 41.8% who said it was a necessary and efficient step.
- Half of the respondents said arms are being smuggled from Syria into Lebanon while 30% said they didn't know, which means that they are hesitant. These percentages show that respondents are certain that smuggling operations are being carried out, which explains why 49.6% support the deployment of international observers along the borders with Syria.
- The majority of respondents (49.5%) said the President should be elected directly by the people. While the overwhelming majority of Shia'a (83.5%) supports these elections, only 19.3% of Sunni and 25.5% of Druze support them. This disparity of views between the confessions is also highlighted in previous answers.
- Integrity and fighting corruption, setting a plan to resolve the current problems and avoiding confessionalism are the three main characteristics the new president should have, according to the respondents.
- Michel Aoun is the most preferred candidate for the presidency, according to 35.5% of respondents. Support to Aoun has in fact increased by 6.1% since the former opinion poll of February 2007. The percentage of Boutros Harb's supporters also increased from 10.8% to 12.3%. On the other hand, 29.4% of Maronites support Aoun, 10.6% support Boutros Harb and 13.8% support Samir Geagea. Moreover, 68% of Shia'a and 5.9% of Sunni support Aoun. The majority of Sunni (26.4%) and Druze (25.5%) voted for Boutros Harb, while the majority of Orthodox (48.9%) and Catholic (29.6%) support Michel Aoun.
- 42.5% of respondents support Hizbullah's disarmament whether by force or through dialogue. 33.8% gave many reasons why they think the weapons should be maintained and around 20% said the weapons should be preserved to protect the country in cooperation with the government. This division in views reflects a decrease in the support of Hizbullah's arms without government's control. The majority of Shia'a support Hizbullah's arms, while a high percentage of Druze and Sunni called for disarmament.
- A small percentage of 4.9% considers relocating for confessional and political reasons. While 6.7% of Sunni and 6.4% of Maronites are considering this option, the percentage of Shia'a thinking of relocation decreases to 4.5%.
- The majority of Druze respondents (58.2%) have concerns over the ownership of real estate in their areas by people of confessions different from theirs. Only 6% of Shia'a expressed this fear, while 18.6% of Sunni, 22.7% of Orthodox, 29.8% of Maronites and 29.7% of Catholic were concerned about it.
- The majority of Druze respondents (61.8%) said they or their relatives own a military weapon. This percentage decreases significantly in other confessions, as 34.9% of Maronite, 31.6% of Shia'a and only 18.2% of Orthodox reported to own or know relatives who own a military weapon. However, a large majority of Shia'a respondents (33.5%) expressed their readiness to use arms if the situation deteriorated, against 48.5% who said they would not use weapons regardless of the circumstances. 25.7% of Sunni and 22.7% of Orthodox expressed their willingness to use arms and 40% of Druze said they might. Moreover, a large majority of Maronite respondents (68.8%) said they were not willing to use weapons whatever the situation.

Description of the sample

The opinion poll was conducted between May 7-14, 2007 on a sample of 1,000 citizens in different Lebanese areas, with a proportional distribution based on the number of residents and the electoral size of each confession in each Mohafaza.

Males represented 57.5% of the total respondents and women 42.5% distributed by age category as follows:

20.6% between 18-24 years-old	30.9% between 25-34 years-old	25.1% between 35-44 years-old
14.6% between 45-54 years-old	6.5% between 55-64 years-old	1.9% above 65 years-old
0.4% refused to disclose their age.		

Respondents were distributed in all social and professional categories. The margin was error was $\pm 1.8\%$.