

Opinion Poll

The majority of the Lebanese support holding a referendum on Lebanon’s identity
62.7% favor a temporary military takeover

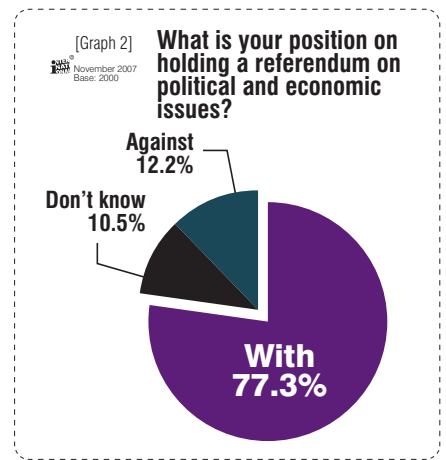
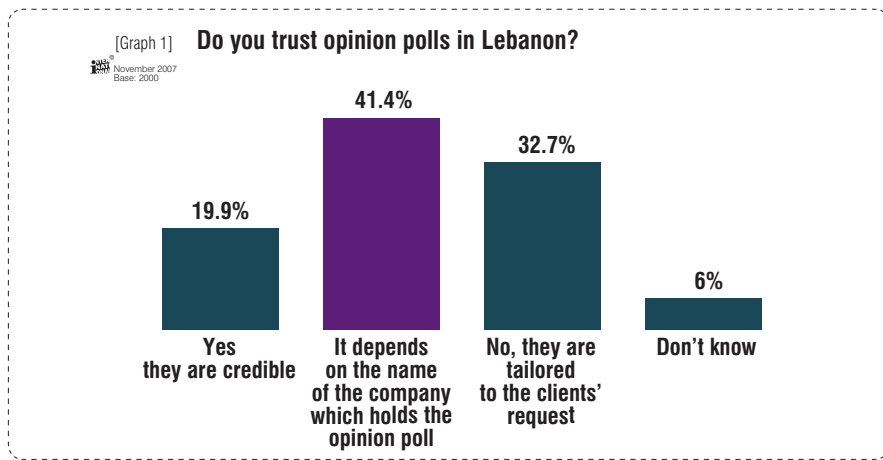
The Lebanese people are divided behind their zu’ama (leaders), who always disagree over national and critical matters in order to protect their status and interests. Recently, some politicians called for the need to hold a referendum on the presidential elections and other issues as a means to resolve the current political deadlock.

Unlike the Constitution in some other countries, the Lebanese Constitution does not include any article that stipulates the holding of referendums, knowing that the consecutive governments have decided not to conduct even a census to draw a demographic map of the Lebanese population.

Information International surveyed the Lebanese on holding referendums over critical matters.

Credibility of Opinion Polls

41.4% of respondents say their trust in the results of an opinion poll “depends on the name of the company which conducts” it. 32.7% say the polls “are tailored to the clients’ request” compared to 19.9% who say “they are credible”, while 6% “don’t know” (Graph no.1).



Holding a Referendum

The overwhelming majority of respondents (77.3%) are with holding a referendum on political and economic issues, compared to 12.2% who are against it and 10.5% who “don’t know” (Graph no.2).

However, respondents disagree over the issues that should be raised in referendums, as shown in Table no.1.

Distribution of respondents by national issues that could be raised in a referendum
Table 1

Should the following issue be raised in a referendum?	Yes	No	Don't know
Lebanon's identity	62.6%	32.1%	5.3%
Syrian-Lebanese diplomatic relations	71.8%	24%	4.2%
Peace with Israel	37.3%	55.4%	7.3%
Presidential elections by the people	67.7%	29.5%	2.8%
Hizbullah's arms	63%	32%	5%
International tribunal for Rafik al-Hariri's assassination	63.8%	29.4%	6.8%
Elimination of the political confessional system	73.5%	21.1%	5.4%
Optional civil marriage	51.2%	42.5%	6.3%
Naturalization of Palestinians in Lebanon	30.9%	63.1%	6%
Amendment of the Ta'if Accord	49.2%	39%	11.8%

Source: Information International – October 2007

Respondents' answers on holding a referendum on these issues are vague: their support of holding a referendum on a certain matter can imply their confidence that the majority of people will support this matter. On the other hand, their rejection of holding a referendum on a certain issue can highlight their belief that this issue is rejected by all the Lebanese and that it is unnecessary to survey the people about it (for example peace with Israel, naturalization of Palestinians and civil marriage). Respondents favor holding a referendum on Syrian-Lebanese diplomatic relations, Hizbullah's arms and Lebanon's identity. On the other hand, confessional divisions are apparent when it comes to holding a referendum on peace with Israel, presidential elections by the people and optional civil marriage. Moreover, 63% of respondents are against holding a referendum on the naturalization of Palestinians.

Regarding a referendum on peace with Israel, a high percentage of Maronite and Catholic respondents support it compared to a low percentage of Sunni, Shia'a, Druze and Orthodox respondents, as shown in Table no.2.

Distribution of respondents' answers on holding a referendum on peace with Israel by confession							Table 2
Holding a referendum on peace with Israel	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze	
With	54.3%	38.6%	56.7%	24.8%	30.7%	34.2%	
Against	35.5%	51.9%	29.8%	69.3%	66.8%	61.3%	
Don't know	10.2%	9.5%	13.5%	5.9%	2.5%	4.5%	

Source: Information International – October 2007

Concerning the holding of a referendum on presidential elections by the people, the overwhelming majority of Shia'a respondents support it, compared to a very low percentage of Druze, as shown in Table no.3.

Distribution of respondents' answers on holding a referendum on presidential elections by the people by confession							Table 3
Holding a referendum on presidential elections by the people	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze	
With	56.8%	65.8%	52.9%	62.9%	93.1%	25.2%	
Against	40.1%	29.1%	41.3%	34.7%	4.8%	73%	
Don't know	3.1%	5.1%	5.8%	2.4%	2.1%	1.8%	

Source: Information International – October 2007

When asked about civil marriage, a high percentage of Christians are with holding a referendum on this issue, compared to a low percentage of Muslims, as shown in Table no.4.

Distribution of respondents' answers on holding a referendum on civil marriage by confession							Table 4
Holding a referendum on civil marriage	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze	
With	65.2%	61.4%	59.6%	33.3%	48.8%	49.5%	
Against	25.5%	33.5%	33.7%	60.1%	46.4%	47.7%	
Don't know	9.3%	5.1%	6.7%	6.6%	4.8%	2.8%	

Source: Information International – October 2007

Hizbullah's Arms

59.4% of respondents say that Hizbullah's arms are "necessary to face Israel until the liberation of Sheba'a Farms and the detainees", compared to only 8.5% who call for the "immediate disarmament of Hizbullah by force". Table no.5 shows respondents' position on Hizbullah's arms.

Respondents' position on Hizbullah's arms				Table 5
Position on Hizbullah's arms	With	Against	Don't know	
Necessary to face Israel until the liberation of Sheba'a Farms and the detainees	59.4%	34.3%	6.3%	
Unnecessary after the Israeli withdrawal from the South	36.6%	54.1%	9.3%	
Reinforce the Shia'a at the expense of other confessions	36.5%	51.3%	12.2%	
Play into Syrian-Iranian agendas	42.7%	42.7%	14.6%	
Hizbullah should merge with the Lebanese Army through dialogue and agreement	62.2%	21.8%	16%	
Hizbullah should be disarmed by force	8.5%	82.9%	8.6%	

Source: Information International – October 2007

Confessional belonging is a major factor in respondents' answers. For example, the overwhelming majority of Shia'a respondents (91.6%) say that Hizbullah's arms are "necessary to face Israel until the liberation of Sheba'a Farms and the detainees", compared to 55.5% of Sunni, 42.8% of Maronites and 22.5% of Druze respondents.

On the other hand, 61.4% of Maronite respondents support merging Hizbullah with the Lebanese Army, compared to 57% of Orthodox respondents, 56.7% of Catholic respondents, 71.9% of Sunni, 78.4% of Druze and 49.1% of Shia'a. Table no.6 shows the distribution of respondents' answers on Hizbullah's arms by confession.

“When asked about civil marriage, a high percentage of Christians are with holding a referendum on this issue, compared to a low percentage of Muslims”

Distribution of respondents' answers on Hizbullah's arms by confession							Table 6
Hizbullah's arms are necessary to face Israel until the liberation of Sheba'a Farms and the detainees	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze	
With	42.8%	53.8%	34.6%	55.5%	91.6%	22.5%	
Against	48.6%	36.7%	56.7%	39.2%	6.7%	69.4%	
Don't know	8.6%	9.5%	8.7%	5.3%	1.7%	8.1%	
Hizbullah should merge with the Lebanese Army through dialogue and agreement	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze	
With	61.4%	57%	56.7%	71.9%	49.1%	78.4%	
Against	19.3%	20.9%	22.1%	19.3%	30.3%	13.5%	
Don't know	19.3%	22.1%	21.2%	8.8%	20.6%	8.1%	

Source: Information International – October 2007

The Legal Quorum of the Presidential Elections

Article 49 of the Lebanese Constitution stipulates: "...The President of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot and by a two-thirds majority of the Chamber of Deputies. After a first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient. The President's term is for six years..."

The legal quorum of the presidential elections is today one of the most controversial issues among politicians. The pro-government camp is arguing that if the two-thirds of deputies were not present in the first session, a second session is held with the half of deputies plus one. The opposition camp is saying that the two-thirds quorum is required in each presidential election session; if the President did not receive the two-thirds of votes in the first session, he wins if he receives the absolute majority of votes in the second session.

43% of respondents support the pro-government camp's argument, compared to 42.4% of respondents who support the other camp's. 14.6% "don't know" (Graph no.3).

The distribution of respondents' answers by confession shows that a majority of Shia'a, Orthodox and Maronite respondents support the opposition, while a majority of Sunni, Druze and Catholic respondents support the pro-government camp in this question.

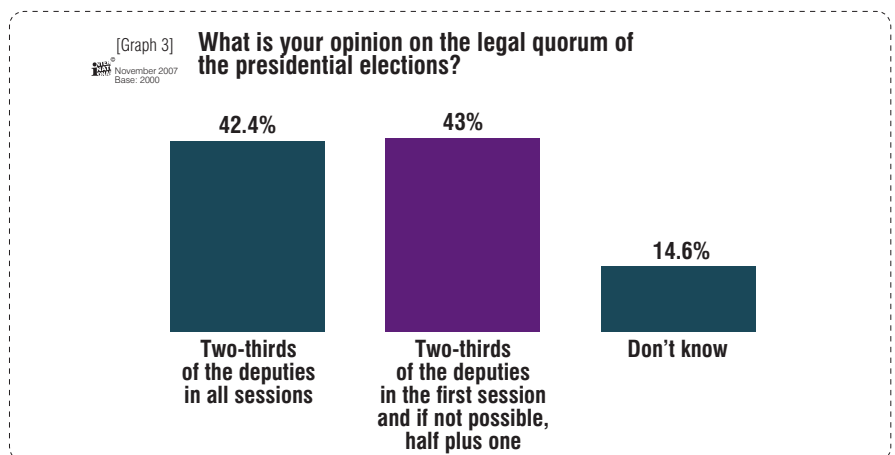


Table no.7 shows the distribution of respondents' answers on the legal quorum of the presidential elections by confession.

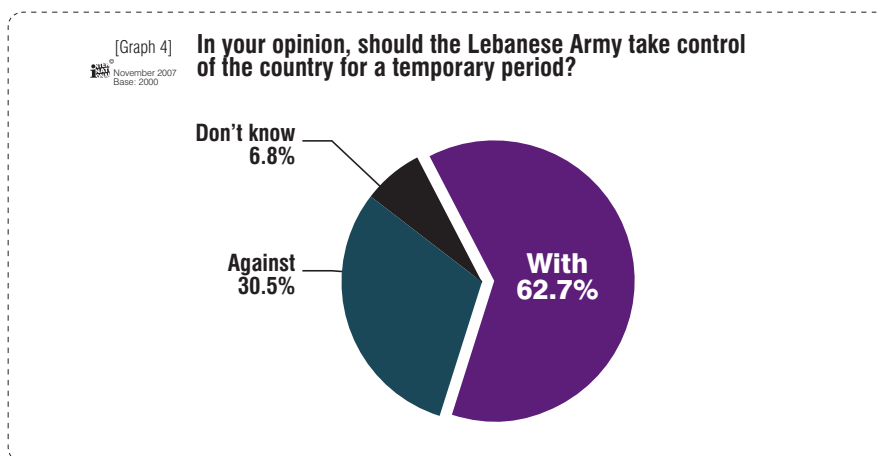
Distribution of respondents' answers on the legal quorum of the presidential elections by confession							Table 7
Confession/ Legal quorum	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze	
Two-thirds of deputies in all sessions	46.1%	46.2%	26.9%	16%	72.7%	13.5%	
Two-thirds of deputies in the first session and if not possible, then half plus one	36.8%	38.6%	48.1%	64.2%	21.5%	77.5%	
Don't know	17.1%	15.2%	25%	19.8%	5.8%	9%	

Source: Information International – October 2007

The Lebanese Army taking control of the country for an interim period

The majority of respondents (62.7%) support the Lebanese Army taking control of the country for an interim period until the election of a president and the formation of a new Cabinet are achieved. 30.5% of respondents are against this option and 6.8% say they “don't know” (Graph no.4).

The distribution of answers by confession shows that the overwhelming majority of Shia'a (85.4%) support this option, compared to 25.2% of Druze, as shown in Table no.8.



Distribution of respondents' answers on whether the Army should take control of the country for an interim period by confession							Table 8
Should the Lebanese Army take control of the country for an interim period?	Confession	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Yes		60.5%	66.5%	43.3%	50.9%	85.4%	25.2%
No		29.5%	27.8%	46.2%	41.9%	9.2%	71.2%
Don't know		10%	5.7%	10.5%	7.2%	5.4%	3.6%

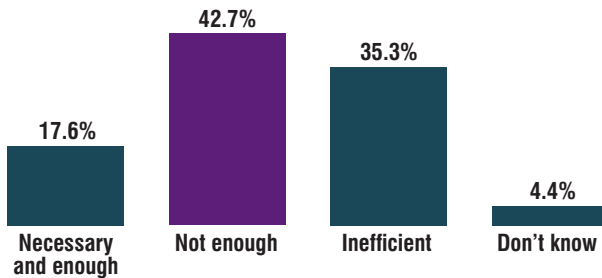
Source: Information International – October 2007

“The majority of respondents (62.7%) support the Lebanese Army taking control of the country for an interim period.”

Security Measures

The majority of respondents (78%) say that the security measures adopted by the Army and the Internal Security Forces are “not enough” (42.7%) and “inefficient” (35.3%), compared to 17.6% of respondents who say they are “necessary and enough”. 4.4% say they “don’t know” (Graph no.5).

[Graph 5] How do you describe security measures in Lebanon?
November 2007
Base: 2000



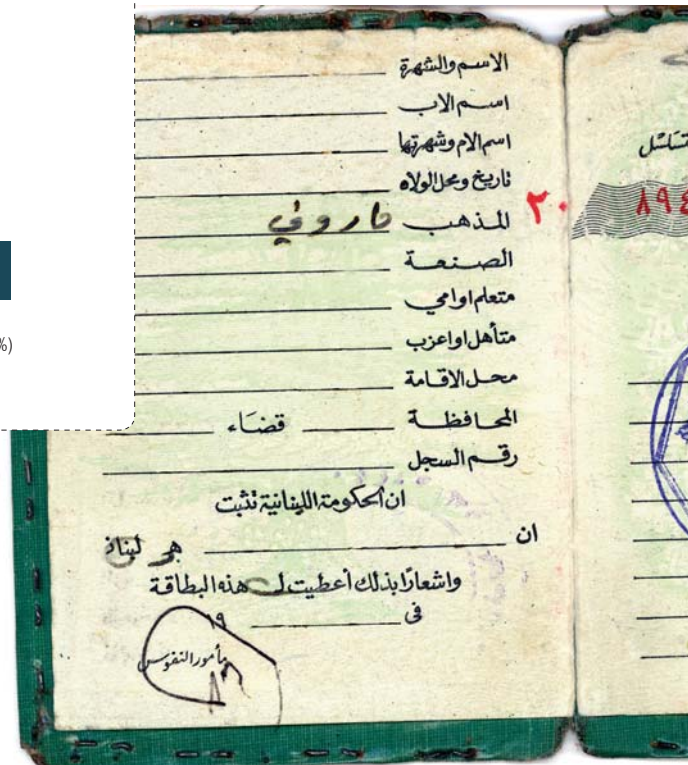
“The majority of respondents (78%) say that the security measures adopted by the Army and the Internal Security Forces are “not enough””

When asked about the best means to protect politicians from assassinations, 40.8% of respondents say politicians should reside “outside the country”, 28.9% say they should reside in a “hotel or compound”, 15.2% say security zones should be formed around their residences, while 3.6% think politicians should resign and emigrate. 11.5% gave other answers (Graph no.6).

[Graph 6] In your opinion, what are the best means to protect politicians from assassinations?
November 2007
Base: 2000



“63% of respondents are against holding a referendum on the naturalization of Palestinians.”

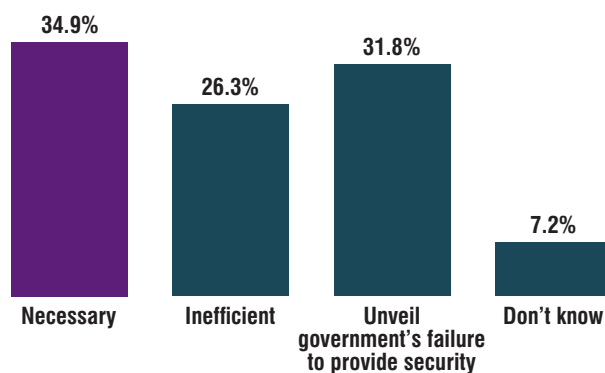


“The majority of respondents believe that “security islands” are areas where Hizbullah is strongly present.”

On the other hand, 34.9% of respondents believe that security zones surrounding the residences of political and military officials are “necessary”, compared to 31.8% of respondents who say those zones “unveil government’s failure to provide security”; 26.3% say they are “inefficient” and 7.2% say they “don’t know” (Graph no.7).

[Graph 7]
November 2007
Base: 2000

What is your opinion on security zones surrounding the residences of political and military officials?



“Security Islands”

Lebanon’s disputing camps are accusing each other of building “security islands”, where the government is forbidden to enter.

When asked about which areas they consider as “security islands”, 90.1% of respondents say the Palestinian camps, 67.8% say Beirut’s southern suburbs, 55.5% the areas located on the Lebanese-Syrian borders, 42.5% Ba’albek and Hermel, 31.7% Chouf and A’aley, 23.4% Bsharri and 21.9% Zgharta.

This means that apart from the Palestinian camps, the majority of respondents believe that “security islands” are areas where Hizbullah is strongly present. ●●

Description of the Sample

The opinion poll was conducted from October 22-28, 2007, on a sample of 2,000 Lebanese people distributed by Qada’a based on the electoral size and the confessional distribution, which was as follows: 22.6% Maronites, 7.9% Orthodox, 5.2% Catholics, 3.1% Armenian Catholics, 1.2% Christian minorities, 27.2% Sunni, 26.1% Shia’a, 5.6% Druze, 0.9% A’alawiyoun and 0.2% did not specify their confession.

Respondents were equally divided by gender. They were distributed among the different age categories and income levels.