

# Foreign countries Friends, Allies or Enemies?

The answer depends on the confession and loyalty to the za'im!

**Information International** conducted an opinion poll between June 2-9 2008, surveying 1,000 Lebanese on their position towards Arab and foreign countries, relations with Syria and other issues.

“Qatar ranks first among “friends” according to the respondents, followed by France and Saudi Arabia”

## Arab and foreign countries' relations with Lebanon

In light of the political-confessional divisions in Lebanon, position regarding Arab and foreign countries depend on the respondent's confessional belonging, except for Israel, which is considered an enemy country by almost all respondents. Qatar ranks first among “friends” according to the respondents, followed by France and Saudi Arabia. The latter remains the first “ally” of Lebanon, according to the respondents. Results also showed that the quarter of respondents consider Syria an “enemy” and around half of them consider the United States the same, while percentages are very close when it comes to considering Iran and Saudi Arabia as “enemies”.

Table no.1 shows respondents' position on some countries' relations with Lebanon.

Respondents position on some countries' relations with Lebanon (%)										Table 1
Position	Country	Saudi Arabia	Iran	Syria	Egypt	Qatar	USA	France	Britain	Israel
Ally		22	15	14	12	19	12	15	8	0.4
Friend		31	30	33	52	68	25	45	32	0.6
Enemy		30	30	26	17	4	48	25	35	96
Don't know		17	25	27	19	9	15	15	25	3

Source: Information International – June 2008 (percentages were rounded to the nearest digit)

In a previous opinion poll conducted by **Information International** on May 7-14 2007, a high percentage of respondents considered Saudi Arabia and Iran “allies” and Syria an “enemy”, as shown in Table no.2.

While 83% of Sunni respondents consider Saudi Arabia an “ally” and a “friend”, only 20% of Shia'a respondents think the same of the Kingdom.

The highest percentage of those who consider Syria and Iran an “enemy” is among Sunni respondents, as 44% of Sunni respondents consider Syria an “enemy” and 49% of them say the same on Iran. Meanwhile, 66% of Shia'a respondents say Saudi Arabia is “enemy” and 88% of them say the same on the United States. 90% of Shia'a say Syria is “ally” and “friend”.

Table no.3 shows respondents' position on some countries by confession.

**Respondents position on some countries' relations with Lebanon in May 2007 (%)** Table 2

Position	Country	Saudi Arabia	Iran	Syria	Egypt	USA	France	Britain	Israel
Ally		32	20	16	15	16	29	14	1
Friend		31	18	17	27	18	17	18	-
Enemy to a certain extent/ Enemy		33	58	63	51	61	49	63	94
Don't know		4	4	4	7	5	5	5	5

Source: Information International – May 2007 (percentages were rounded to the nearest digit)

**Respondents' position on some countries' relations with Lebanon by confession (%)** Table 3

	Saudi Arabia		Iran		U.S.A.		Syria		France	
	Ally and friend	Enemy	Ally and friend	Enemy	Ally and friend	Enemy	Ally and friend	Enemy	Ally and friend	Enemy
Maronite	62	20	32	43	48	38	36	35	73	17
Orthodox	46	29	34	39	27	49	39	27	55	24
Catholic	51	27	47	18	53	27	42	22	69	18
Sunni	84	6	19	49	64	22	21	44	71	8
Shia'a	20	66	89	3	7	88	90	3	35	52
Druze	73	8	23	40	43	30	23	40	82	7

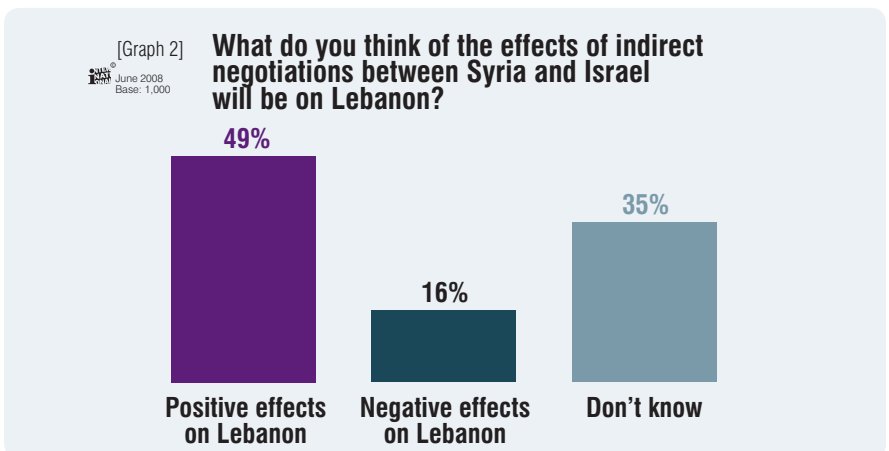
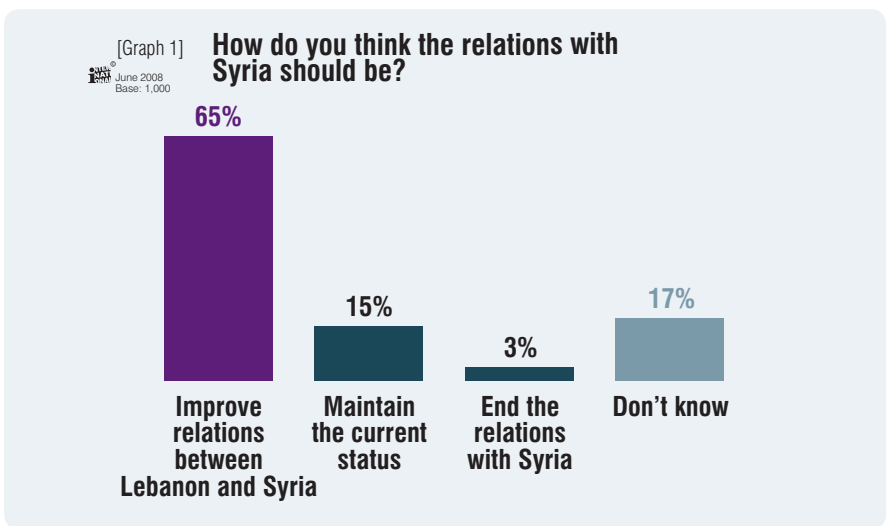
Note: Percentages of those who said "don't know" are not included in the table.  
 Source: Information International – June 2008 (percentages were rounded to the nearest digit)

### Relations with Syria

The majority of respondents (65%) favor improving relations with Syria, compared to 15% who want to maintain the current status, 3% who want to end the relations with Syria and 17% who "don't know."

Meanwhile, 64% of respondents support the establishment of diplomatic relations (embassies) between Lebanon and Syria, while 17% are against it and 19% "don't know".

Regarding indirect negotiations between Syria and Israel, around half of respondents (49%) say they will have a positive effect on Lebanon, while 16% say they will have a negative effect, and more than the third of respondents (35%) "don't know."



## Preferences and Expectations

Respondents had divergent opinions on various issues, including clerics' meddling with politics, the use of arms and the future economic and political situation, as shown in Table no.4.

Respondents' position on some issues (%)					Table 4
Case	Position	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Don't know
Clerics should not meddle with politics		57	14	24	5
The use of arms for self-defense is a right		40	14	40	7
I expect a long term stability		30	18	40	13
I expect economic revival		32	22	30	15
I expect continuous problems and crises		41	20	22	17

*Source: Information International – June 2008*

### Summary

- Israel is Lebanon's first "enemy" according to respondents, followed by the US and Britain.
- Around half of respondents (48%) consider the US an "enemy". The distribution of answers by confession shows that 88% of Shia's respondents say the US is "enemy", compared to 22% of Sunni respondents. On the other hand, 64% of Sunni respondents consider the US an "ally".
- 44% of Sunni respondents consider Syria an "enemy", while 90% of Shia's consider Syria an "ally and friend".
- The overwhelming majority of Druze (82%) and Maronites (73%) consider France an "ally and a friend".
- After the Doha Agreement, the overwhelming majority of respondents (87%) consider Qatar an "ally and a friend".
- The majority of respondents (65%) are with promoting relations between Lebanon and Syria, which is represented by the opening of embassies.
- Around half of respondents are optimistic regarding the effects of the Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations on Lebanon.
- More than half of respondents (57%) say clerics should not meddle with politics.
- 40% of respondents support the use of arms for self-defense.
- 41% of respondents expect continuous problems and crises, while 32.3% expect economic revival.
- As usual the Lebanese opinions are influenced by the positions of their zu'ama which are tailored to reflect the "interests" of the confessions they lead (Kindly refer to *The Monthly* issue no. 56 of February-March 2007).

### Description of the Sample

The opinion poll was conducted from June 2-9 2008, on a sample of 1,000 Lebanese people distributed in the various Lebanese Mohafaza and age categories. Respondents were 55.8% males and 44.2% females.

The margin of error reached  $\pm 2.4$ .

# The Lebanese and the United Nations

The United Nations plays a major role in Lebanon through the UNIFIL forces in South Lebanon and the establishment of International Resolutions 425 and 1559.

## Establishment of the UN

The United Nations (UN) was established on October 24th 1945 after the end of World War II, with the participation of 51 countries, including Lebanon. The UN, whose member-states today number 192 countries, seeks to provide assistance to resolve international conflicts and draft policies pertaining to essential matters in people’s life. The UN assumes its role through its six main bodies: General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, Secretariat and the International Court of Justice.

## UN Resolutions on Lebanon

The United Nations issued many resolutions on Lebanon, pertaining to the Lebanese-Israeli conflict, in particular Resolution 425 of 1978 and Resolution 1701 of 2006. Over the past few years, the Security Council issued a number of resolutions pertaining to Lebanese internal affairs, mainly:

- Resolution 1559 of September 2nd 2004, which called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, dissolution and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, in addition to the holding of free and fair parliamentary elections without foreign influence.
- Resolution 1595 of April 7th 2005, which stipulated the formation of an independent international commission to look into the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri on February 14th 2005.
- Resolution 1757 of May 30th 2007, which stipulated the adoption of Chapter VII of the UN Charter and authorized the establishment of a special tribunal to try the suspects in Hariri’s assassination.

“Around half of respondents (49%) say that the UN is a “friend and ally”, compared to 29% who describe it as an “enemy”; 22% responded “don’t know.””

## The Lebanese and the United Nations

*Information International* surveyed 1,000 Lebanese (distributed proportionally by areas and confessions) between June 2-9 2008, on various issues, including their position towards the UN.

Around half of respondents (49%) say that the UN is a “friend and ally”, compared to 29% who describe it as an “enemy”; 22% responded “don’t know.”

The distribution of answers by confession shows that only 18% of Shia’a respondents and 39% of Orthodox respondents consider the UN an “ally and friend”, while the percentage is high in other confessions, and reaches 70% among Sunni respondents. Table no.1 shows respondents’ position on the UN by confession.

Respondents’ position on the UN by confession (%)							Table 1
Position	Confession	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia’a	Druze
Ally and Friend		65	39	64	70	18	66
Enemy		19	20	13	10	64	17
Don’t know		16	41	23	20	18	17

Source: Information International – June 2008