

# The Lebanese Polled

51.8% support the electoral law

78.4% do not trust politicians

89.4% support Michel Suleiman for Presidency

57.9% are against Sanioura's appointment

Lebanon witnessed over the past weeks political and security developments that will definitely mark its future political course: from the agreement over the Doha Accord, which stipulated the election of Army Commander General Michel Suleiman as President, the adoption of the Qada'a as an electoral district as stipulated in the 1960 electoral law and the re-division of Beirut, to the appointment of Fouad Sanioura to form the new government.

On these issues and others, **Information International** conducted an opinion poll from June 2nd-9th 2008 that covered 1,000 Lebanese from across the country.

## I- Section One Presidency

### 1- Election of General Michel Suleiman as President

89.4% of respondents support the election of General Michel Suleiman as President, while 5.6% are against it and 5% "don't know". In a comparison with previous opinion polls, it is noteworthy that Suleiman was not widely supported for Presidency. In an opinion poll conducted in September 2007, around the end of President Emile Lahoud's term, only 9.3% of respondents supported Suleiman, compared to 36.8% who supported General Michel Aoun, 16.3% Boutros Harb, 14.7% Nassib Lahoud and the remaining percentage (22.9%) was distributed among other candidates. On the other hand, in an opinion poll conducted in January 2008, and after Suleiman's name became seriously discussed among politicians, 52.8% of respondents supported him, compared to 23.4% who were with Aoun and the remaining percentage (23.8%) was distributed among other candidates.

### 2- President's Priorities as seen by the Lebanese

The Lebanese are currently facing difficult economic, political, security and social conditions. In his oath speech, Suleiman did not promise the Lebanese miracles, but pledged to cooperate with all the country's institutions to resolve the pending problems. The Lebanese were asked about which priorities the President should first focus on. Their responses came as follows:

- ⊙ 28% - improve the economic situation
- ⊙ 22.5% - launch dialogue and achieve national reconciliation
- ⊙ 19.7% - implement security and withdraw arms from the streets
- ⊙ 5.9% - resolve the issue of Hizbullah's weapons
- ⊙ 5.5% - speed up the passing of an electoral law
- ⊙ 5.5% - fight corruption
- ⊙ 3% - implement administrative and judicial reforms
- ⊙ 3% - speed up the formation of the international tribunal to try those accused in Hariri's assassination
- ⊙ 1.9% - resolve the issue of Palestinian weapons inside and outside camps
- ⊙ 1.3% - organize the Lebanese-Syrian relations
- ⊙ 3.7% - other priorities (cancelling confessionalism – insurance for the elderly – naturalization)

This means that the Lebanese are primarily concerned by the economic situation and then by politics and security.

## II- Section Two: Premiership

### 1- Prime Minister Fouad Sanioura

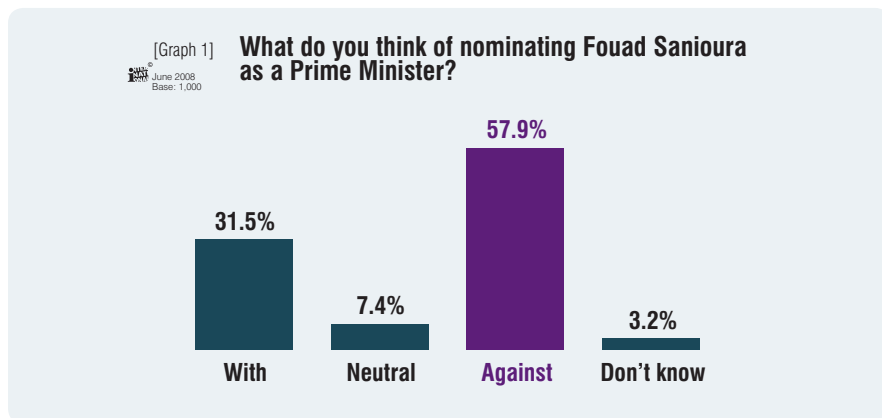
During the parliamentary consultations held by President Suleiman to nominate the new Prime Minister, 68 deputies representing 53.5% of Parliament named Sanioura to form the new government. Among the Lebanese, the rate of support for Sanioura decreased to 31.5%, while 57.9% were against his nomination. 7.4% said they were “neutral” and 3.2% said “don’t know” (Graph no.1).

The distribution of answers by confession shows that the highest support rate was among Sunni respondents (56.7%). However, it is also noteworthy that around 33% of Sunni respondents were against his nomination. The lowest rate was among Shia’a respondents (7.4%). Table no.1 shows respondents’ position on the nomination of Sanioura by confession.

**Respondents’ position on the nomination of Sanioura by confession (%) Table 1**

Position on Sanioura’s nomination	Confession					
	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia’a	Druze
With	31.6	38	42.2	56.7	7.4	40
Against	57	44	44.4	33	88.2	43.3
Neutral	7.2	14	11.1	7.6	3	11.7
Don’t know	4.2	4	2.3	2.7	1.4	5

Source: Information International – June 2008



## III- Section Three: Doha Agreement

After the political and security crisis reached its climax, particularly with the clashes that erupted on May 7th, Arab and international mediations were launched to resolve disagreements between the Lebanese. A conference was held in Qatar in the presence of the disputing Lebanese factions, resulting in what was called the Doha Agreement, which stipulated the following:

- 1- Election of Suleiman as President
- 2- Formation of a national unity government of 30 ministers, with 11 ministers for the opposition forces, which guarantee their veto right
- 3- Adoption of the 1960 electoral law in the next elections after the division of Beirut into three new districts
- 4- Dialogue under the patronage of Suleiman over other pending issues
- 5- Assurance by the Lebanese disputing parties not to use arms or violence to achieve political goals

### 1- Description of the Doha Agreement

The majority of respondents (64.8%) believe that the Doha Agreement is a “temporary truce”, while 19% say it is a long-term agreement, 0.6% of respondents gave it other appellations and 15.6% “don’t know”.

### 2- Who benefits from the Doha Agreement?

Around half of respondents (48.8%) say the Doha Agreement met the interests of both the pro-government and opposition forces. Meanwhile, 16.7% say it met the opposition’s interests, 9.7% the pro-government forces’ interests; 13.5% say it was at the expense of both parties; 1.4% gave other answers and 9.9% “don’t know”.

“The majority of respondents (64.8%) believe that the Doha Agreement is a “temporary truce”, while 19% say it is a long-term agreement”

## IV- Section Four: Parliamentary Elections

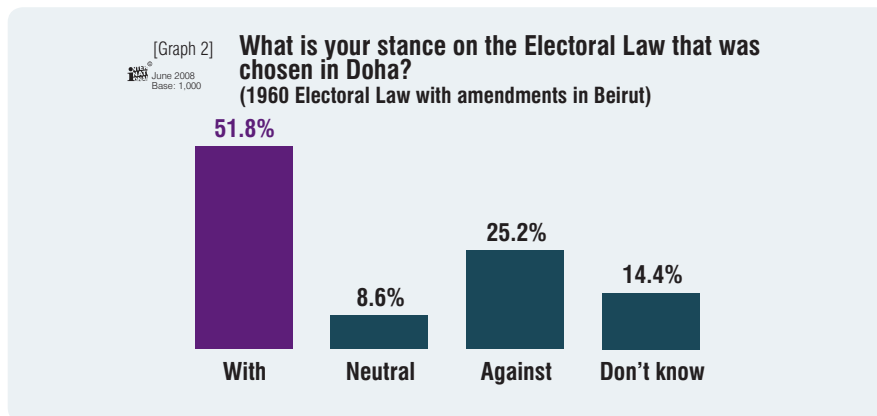
### 1- Electoral Law

The Doha Agreement stipulated the adoption of the 1960 electoral law with a re-distribution of districts in Beirut. 51.8% of respondents support the adoption of this law, compared to 25.2% who are against it. 8.6% say they are “neutral” and 14.4% “don’t know”. (Graph no.2)

The distribution of answers by confession shows that the support rate is high among Orthodox and Catholic respondents and low among Shia’a and Druze respondents as shown in Table no.2.

Confession	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia’a	Druze
With	44.7	68	75.6	59.8	40.2	46.7
Against	23.6	16	13.3	23.7	35.8	25
Neutral	10.1	11	2.2	6.3	8.5	10
Don't know	21.6	5	8.9	10.2	15.5	18.3

Source: Information International – June 2008



As for those who are against the 1960 law, 21.8% of them are for the adoption of the Mohafaza as electoral district based on a proportional representation, 14.3% are for one deputy in one district and 38.5% for Lebanon as a single electoral district based on a proportional representation; 12.3% are for the draft electoral law set by the National Electoral Law Committee, which was headed by Fouad Boutros, 9.5% for the 2000 electoral law and 3.6% for the adoption of other alternatives.

### 2- Participation in the Elections

72.7% of respondents say they are determined to participate in the coming elections, while 18.2% say they are yet to decide on this and 9.1% will not participate. This indicates an expected rise in the participation rate in the 2009 elections. If we consider that the number of residents who have the right to vote is 2.7 million (based on statistics by the Central Administration of Statistics in 2004 and *Information International's* estimations for 2009) then around 1.8-1.9 million will participate in the elections (compared to 1.4 million in 2005).

### 3- Lowering the Voting Age to 18

71.7% of respondents are with lowering the voting age to 18, while 18.2% are against it and 10.1% “don’t know”. Lowering the voting age raises confessional considerations, as it would increase the number of Muslim voters compared to that of Christians. This explains why a high rate of Muslim respondents supports this measure (Table no.3).

## V- Section Five: Lebanese Politicians

### 1- Trust in Politicians

Despite expressions of democracy in Lebanon, there is a wide gap between the Lebanese and their political leaders. The overwhelming majority of respondents (78.4%) do not trust politicians, while only 6.8% trust them and 14.8% “don’t know” (Graph no.3).

### 2- Position on Politicians after the Doha Agreement

42.6% of respondents say they “forgave” Lebanese politicians after the adoption of the Doha Agreement provided that problems would not reoccur. Meanwhile, 31.7% of respondents say they will not forgive politicians, 14.3% say they are not to judge or to forgive and 11.4% “don’t know”.

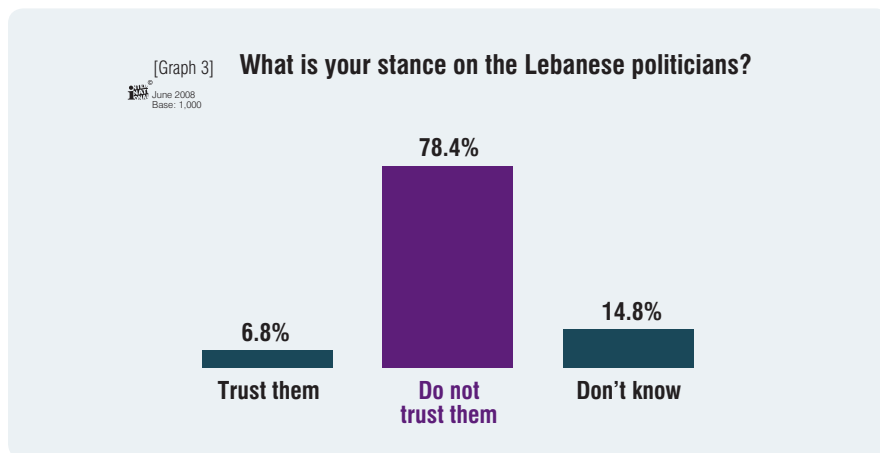
### 3- Politicians' Performance

Respondents' position on the politicians' performance depend on their political and confessional affiliations. Michel Suleiman ranks first among politicians with the best performance (41.8%), followed by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah (38.8%) and Michel Aoun (32.4%). Table no.4 shows respondents' evaluation of politicians' performance.

**Respondents' answers on lowering the voting age to 18 by confession (%) Table 3**

Confession Position on lowering the voting age to 18	Confession					
	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
With	67.1	68	86.7	72.8	72	75
Against	17.3	24	8.9	20.5	17.7	16.7
Don't know	15.6	8	4.4	6.7	10.3	8.3

*Source: Information International – June 2008*



“71.7% of respondents are with lowering the voting age to 18, while 18.2% are against it and 10.1% “don't know””

**Respondents' evaluation of politicians' performance (%) Table 4**

Politician	Evaluation	Excellent	Good	Average	Weak	Bad	Don't know
Michel Suleiman		41	37.2	7.1	1.7	2	11
Hassan Nasrallah		38.8	21.3	8.8	7.4	16.2	7.5
Michel Aoun		32.4	20	9.2	10.9	20.3	7.2
Nabih Berry		31.5	26.7	12.3	7.4	15.2	6.9
Suleiman Franjeh		22.1	25.6	12.2	14.9	16.7	8.5
Sa'ad al-Hariri		17.3	19.4	12.4	18.1	25.2	7.6
Walid Jumblat		13.9	16	12.7	7.2	42.5	7.7
Fouad Sanioura		12.9	18.3	10.9	14.4	36.6	6.9
Samir Geagea		12.8	16.3	7.8	6.7	48.5	7.9
Najah Wakim		11.3	21	19	14.3	20.9	13.5
Amin al-Gemayel		7.7	21.4	16.3	13.2	31.4	10
Elias Skaff		6	21	18.2	19	16.3	19.5

*Source: Information International – June 2008*

In an attempt to rate the performance of a non-confessional leader, who does not belong to a political bloodline, we took former Deputy Najah Wakim as an example. According to the results, his situation among respondents is better than Gemayel for example, which indicates the presence of trends in Lebanon outside the confessional and feudal system.

Respondents' evaluation by confession is shown below:

## Maronite Respondents

Around half of Maronite respondents describe the performance of Michel Aoun and Suleiman Franjieh as excellent and good, while around the third of them give this description to Amin al-Gemayel, as shown in Table no.5.

## Sunni Respondents

Around the three-quarter of Sunni respondents describe the performance of Sa'ad al-Hariri and Fouad Sanioura as excellent and good, as shown in Table no.6.

## Shia'a Respondents

Around 100% of Shia'a respondents describe the performance of Hassan Nasrallah and Nabih Berry as excellent and good, as shown in Table no.7.

## Druze Respondents

63.4% of Druze respondents describe the performance of Walid Jumblat as excellent and good, 11.6% as average and weak, 6.7% as bad and 18.3% "don't know".

## Catholic Respondents

46.7% of Catholic respondents describe the performance of Elias Skaff as excellent and good, 22% as average and weak and 11.1% as bad. 20% "don't know".

## 4- Number One Za'im

The Lebanese number one za'im is "no one" according to 27.1% of respondents. It is followed by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah (12%), Michel Aoun (11.3%) and Nabih Berry (10.2%), Sa'ad al-Hariri (9.7%), Michel Suleiman (9.4%), Samir Geagea (3.2%), Walid Jumblat (2.9%), Walid Jumblat (2.9%), Suleiman Franjieh (2.5%) and Salim al-Hoss (1.6%). The remaining percentages were distributed among other politicians, while 5.8% "don't know" (Graph no.4). There were no gender differences in responses for this question.

**Maronite respondents' description of the performance of Maronite politicians (%)**  
Table 5

	Excellent & Good	Average & Weak	Bad	Don't know
Amin al-Gemayel	36.3	24.9	32.1	6.7
Michel Aoun	51.4	17.3	25.7	5.6
Suleiman Franjieh	50.7	20.3	20.3	8.7
Samir Geagea	37.2	14.8	40	8

Source: Information International – June 2008

**Sunni respondents' description of the performance of Sunni politicians (%)**  
Table 6

	Excellent & Good	Average & Weak	Bad	Don't know
Sa'ad al-Hariri	73.2	12.9	8.5	5.4
Fouad Sanioura	71.9	10.3	12	5.8

Source: Information International – June 2008

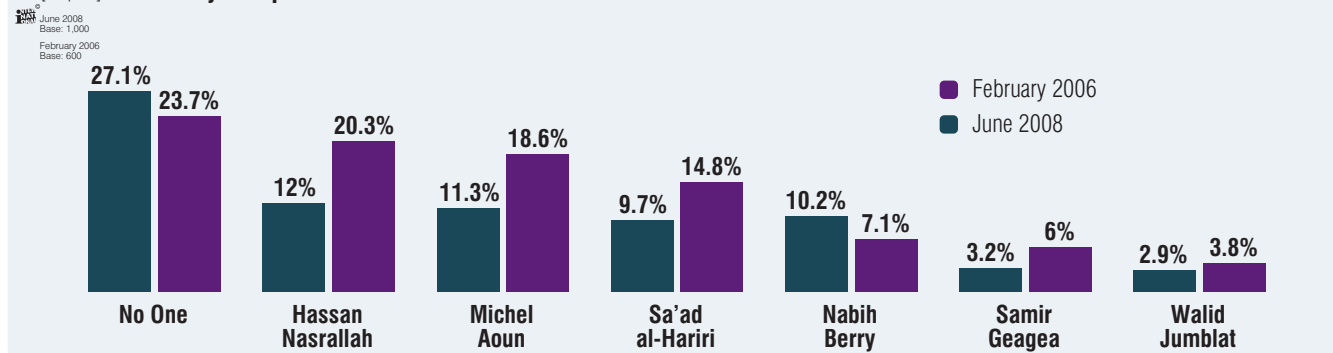
**Shia'a respondents' description of the performance of Shia'a politicians (%)**  
Table 7

	Excellent & Good	Average & Weak	Bad	Don't know
Nabih Berry	96.7	2.2	0.7	0.4
Hassan Nasrallah	97.4	2.2	0.4	0

Source: Information International – June 2008

“63.4% of Druze respondents describe the performance of Walid Jumblat as excellent and good, 11.6% as average and weak, 6.7% as bad and 18.3% "don't know"”

[Graph 4] **Who in your opinion is the number one Lebanese za'im?**



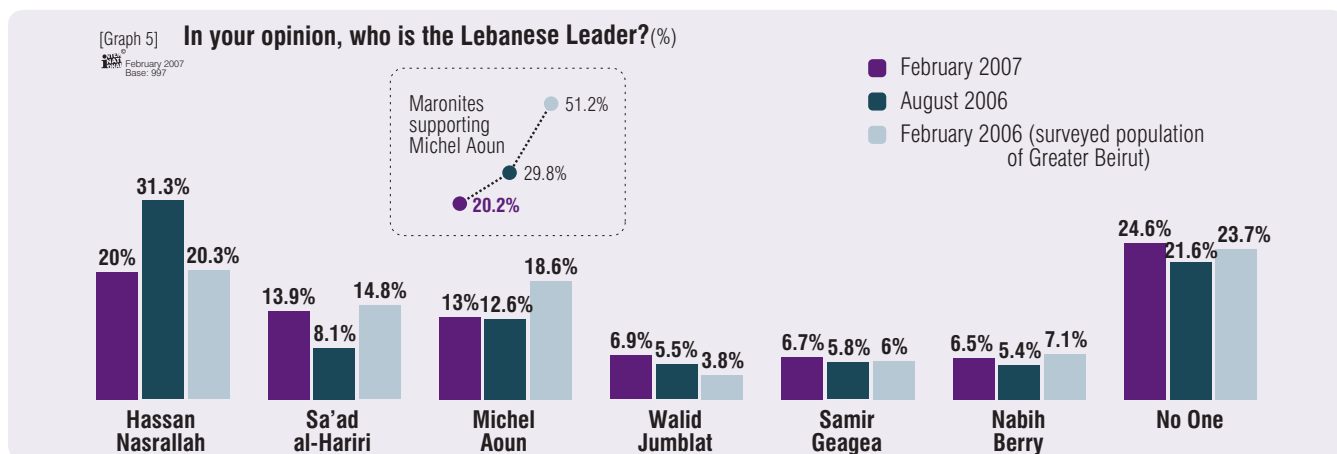
Respondents' answers by confession are shown in Table no.8.

While a high rate of respondents in the majority of confessions voted for "no one" as the first za'im (percentage ranged from 29.1% to 48%), the percentage decreased to 8.5% among Shia'a respondents, which highlight their strong loyalty to their zu'ama (Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and Nabih Berry).

Graph no.5 shows a comparison with results of an opinion poll conducted in February 2007 over number one za'im.

Number one za'im by confession (%)						
Confession/ Politician	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
No One	29.1	48	35.6	31.1	8.5	30
Hassan Nasrallah	3.4	2	4.4	4	34.3	6.7
Michel Aoun	27.4	11	24.4	0.9	4.8	0
Nabih Berry	0	2	4.4	0.4	35.4	1.7
Sa'ad al-Hariri	2.1	1	2.2	39.7	0	1.7
Michel Suleiman	14.8	13	13.3	3.6	7.4	6.7
Samir Geagea	10.1	6	4.4	0	0	0
Walid Jumblat	0	0	0	1.8	0	40
Suleiman Franjieh	6.3	6	0	0	0.7	0
Don't know/ Other	6.8	11	11.3	18.3	8.9	13.2

Source: Information International – June 2008



### 5- Zu'ama of Confessions

Respondents believe that each confession has its number One Za'im:

- **Maronite Za'im:** Michel Aoun (32.5%) – Samir Geagea (12.3%)
- **Orthodox Za'im:** Michel al-Murr (18.2%)
- **Catholic Za'im:** Elias Scaff (9.4%)
- **Sunni Za'im:** Sa'ad al-Hariri (38.6%)
- **Shia'a Za'im:** Hassan Nasrallah (29.2%) – Nabih Berry (19.2%)
- **Druze Za'im:** Walid Jumblat (34.3%) – Talal Arslan (15.5%)
- **Armenian Za'im:** Hagop Pakradounian (11.1%)

It is noteworthy that those who are considered number one zu'ama in their confessions do not enjoy unanimous support but the majority of votes.

### VI- Section Six: Hizbullah's Weapons

38.7% of respondents support Hizbullah's disarmament through an agreement with the party; 21.1% say Hizbullah should not be disarmed before the liberation of Sheba'a Farms and the detainees in Israeli prisons; 11.8% believe that weapons should remain with Hizbullah until a settlement is reached in the region, 11.1% are with Hizbullah maintaining its weapons, 9.9% believe that Hizbullah should be immediately disarmed by force, 1.2% say they should be merged with the Army and 6.2% "don't know."

In a previous opinion poll conducted by *Information International* from May 7th- 14th 2007, 21.1% of

respondents said Hizbullah must be disarmed immediately by force and weapons should be handed to the Army, 21.4% said dialogue should be held over the weapons, 19.4% said Hizbullah should maintain its weapons to defend Lebanon, 14.1% of respondents said Hizbullah should maintain its weapons until the liberation of the Sheba'a Farms and the detainees, 12.1% said it should be maintained as a national guarantee, 7.6% said it should be preserved until a settlement in the region is reached and 4.35 said they "don't know".

This comparison highlights awareness over the need to resolve Hizbullah's arms through dialogue and agreement instead of force.

## VII- Section Seven: Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir

Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir's latest stances raised controversies, leading some Maronites to call for his withdrawal and the election of a new Patriarch. The opinion poll showed that 32.4% of respondents support the Patriarch and say that he should remain in office until his death; 24.3% say he should immediately resign and a successor should be elected; and 13.1% say he should immediately resign and a patriarchal administrator should be appointed by the Pope until a new Patriarch is elected. 30.2% of respondents "don't know".

In an opinion poll conducted from January 8th – 18th 2008, 57.9% of respondents said the Patriarch should remain in office until his death, 10.3% said he should immediately resign and a successor should be elected, 5.8% said he should immediately resign and a patriarchal administrator should be appointed by the Pope until a new Patriarch is elected, 5.8% said a new Patriarch must be elected after the election of a new President and 20.9% said "don't know."

The comparison shows that the level of support to the Patriarch declined while the percentage of those who said "don't know" increased significantly. Maronite respondents' position on Patriarch Sfeir is shown in Table no.9.

**Maronite respondents' position on Patriarch Sfeir (%)** Table 9

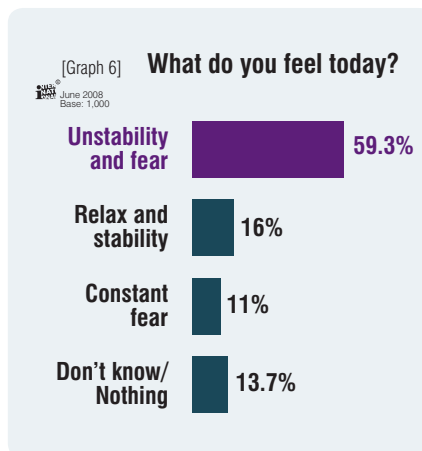
Position	Remain in office until his death	Immediately resign and appointment of a patriarchal administrator	Immediately resign and election of successor	Don't know
June 2008	41.8	9.7	20.3	28.2
January 2008	62.8	3.2	19.2	14.8

Source: Information International – June 2008

## VIII- Section Eight: Realities and Hopes

### 1- Realities

The overwhelming majority of respondents (59.3%) say they are living in a state of fear and instability; 11% are living in a state of constant fear, 16% say they live in a stable and relaxed situation and 13.7% "don't know". This means that around 70% of Lebanese are living in a state of fear and instability (Graph no.6).



### 2- Hopes

42.1% of Lebanese say their main hope is the implementation of stability and security; 40.6% say the improvement of the economic situation and decrease of prices, while only 14.3% say they hope for political stability, 2.3% for fighting corruption and 0.7% for other hopes.

## Summary

- ⊙ It seems that the only za'im who maintained or improved his popularity is Nabih Berry (10.2%), while the rate of support for all other leaders decreased.
- ⊙ Fouad Sanioura received less support by respondents (31.5%) than by Parliament members (53.5%).
- ⊙ Michel Aoun remains number one Christian za'im.
- ⊙ Sa'ad al-Hariri's performance is supported by 75% of Sunni respondents.
- ⊙ Shia'a respondents are the most loyal to their leadership; 96.7% of respondents describe the performance of Berry as excellent and good, and 97.4% say the same on Nasrallah's performance.
- ⊙ Druze respondents showed less support for Lebanese leaders. A decline was registered in their support for Jumblat and Sanioura.
- ⊙ "No one" remains Lebanese number one za'im. Its popularity increased compared to previous polls.
- ⊙ Around the third (27.1%) of Lebanese chose "No one" as their number one za'im, followed by Hassan Nasrallah with only 12% of support.
- ⊙ Around 96% of respondents, who chose "No one" as number one za'im, said they "do not trust" their politicians or "don't know" their opinion on them.

**The Lebanese are worried about the present and the future, support Michel Suleiman, do not trust politicians, but still rally behind zu'ama.**

## Description of the Sample

The opinion poll was conducted from June 2nd-9th 2008 on 1,000 Lebanese distributed in the different Lebanese Mohafazas and the various age categories. 55.8% of respondents were males and 44.2% females. The margin of error was + 2.4