

Governments & People: Diverging Priorities

(Part 3 of 3)

The 2005 draft public budget proposed by the previous finance minister, Fouad Sinioura, has been the subject of much dispute. Proponents have claimed it is a step toward reform, while others have characterized it as a political tool that averts blame from the administration to other parties. The karami government is considering certain measures, as well.

In Part III of *Information International's* poll, opinions regarding some of the proposed procedures in the previous draft budget are surveyed in order to learn of people's reaction to any previous measures, or potential measures.

Ending the policy of permanent appointment of public officers and replacing it with contracting

The switch from permanent appointment of public officers to contracting them for a specified period, was supported by 32.4% of respondents, while 55% opposed it and 12.6% did not specify.

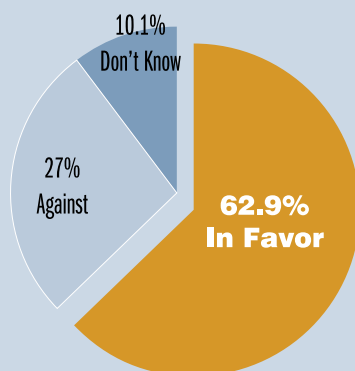
Annuling the State Security Department

40.3% of the respondents agreed with the closure of the state security section, while 46.2% opposed it and 13.5% did not specify.

Annuling the Council of the South

The majority, or 62.9% of respondents supported the closure of the Council of the South, while 27% opposed it and 10.1% did not specify.

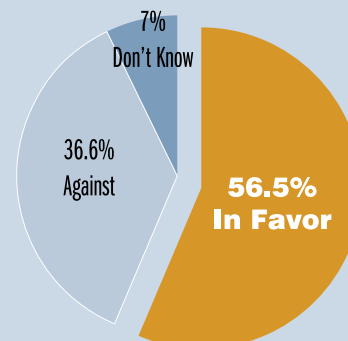
G1 | What is your opinion about annulling the Council of the South?



Annuling the Ministry of the Displaced and its fund

According to the poll, 56.5% of respondents supported the closure of the ministry and fund for the displaced, while 36.5% opposed it and 7% did not specify.

G2 | What is your opinion towards annulling the Ministry of the Displaced and its fund?



Trimming down the military

A decrease in the size of the military force was supported by 34% of the respondents, while 57.5% were against it and 8.5% did not specify.

The results of the poll do not show a unified public opinion on all major reform issues. For instance, the rate of support for lowering politicians salaries and compensations was a high 67.4%, but backing for increased working hours for public officers and teachers was a low 33.8%. Also, an end to the policy of appointing public officers instead of contracting out the positions was only supported by 32.4% of those polled.

However, strong support was detected for issues like the closure of the Council of the South (62.9%) and the Ministry and Fund for the Displaced (65.5%). In contrast, opposition was found to issues like shutting down the state security forces (46.2%) and decreasing the size of the military (57.5%).

Increasing working hours for employees and teachers

Increased office hours for employees and teachers was supported by 33.8% of the respondents, while 55.8% opposed it and 10.4% did not specify.

Reducing salaries and compensations of politicians

A majority of 67.4% of respondents supported a reduction in salaries and compensation for politicians, while 26.9% opposed it and 5.7% did not specify.

Sample & Methodology

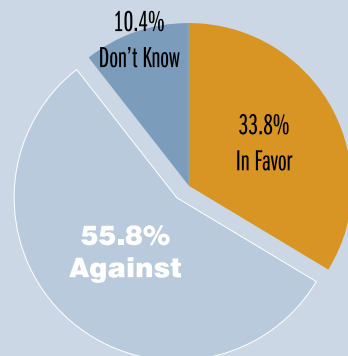
The poll was conducted between 3 and 8 November 2004, taking a sample of 1,250 people distributed across Lebanon, in face-to-face interviews.

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 years, 27.3% between 35-44 years, 19.5% between 45-54 years, 8.6% between 55-64 years, & 2.9% for those over 65.

The survey had a margin of error of $\pm 2\%$

G3 | What is your opinion regarding increased office hours for employees and teachers?



G4 | What is your opinion regarding decreasing the salaries & compensations of politicians?

