

# Foreigners Evacuating Lebanon: Hizbullah and Israel held responsible, followed by America, Iran and Syria

The Israeli war against Lebanon led to the evacuation of many Arab and non-Arab tourists and visitors who had come to spend their vacation here. The war also led to the evacuation of many Lebanese citizens holding foreign passports.

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Most foreign embassies prepared evacuation plans for their citizens. Arab embassies like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, planned their evacuations by road to Syria, while the United States, France, England and Canada planned their evacuations by sea to Larnaca, Cyprus.

The facilities offered to the people varied from one country to another. While one country offered full board obligations to its citizens from Lebanon to the target country, other countries only offered to get their citizens to Damascus, Syria or Larnaca, after which people had to find their own way out.

*Ii Monthly* surveyed a sample of the American and Canadian evacuees (205 citizens) at Beirut and Dbayeh sea ports from 25–27 July, 2006. These are the results:

## Lebanese Citizens

The opinion poll showed that 90.7% of the American and Canadian citizens evacuated, also held the Lebanese nationality, while 9.3% did not.

## Residing in Lebanon

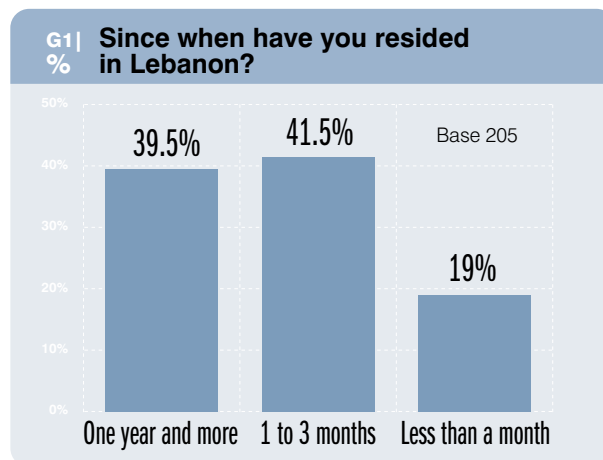
39.5% of the respondents reported to have resided in Lebanon for one year or more, (41.5% residing between 1 to 3 months, and 19% residing for less than a month). This means that more than 1/3 of the people leaving were permanent residents in Lebanon (Graph 1).

## Reasons for Evacuating and Intentions to Return

The reasons for evacuating Lebanon varied among the

respondents, but the main reason to the majority, 79%, was out of fear of the war; 7.3% left on the request of the companies they work for; 2.8% left on the request of their embassy; 8.7% left as it was the end of the summer vacation in Lebanon. For the final 2.2%, the reasons for leaving varied between tourism, to be re-united with their families, studying abroad and emigration (Graph 2). It is noteworthy that the majority of the respondents (87.3%) have reported their intentions to return to Lebanon, while 12.7% did not have intentions to return. However, 34% of those who intend to return do not know when.

Concerning the date of returning to Lebanon, 46.4% reported that they intended to return after the end of the war, 14% one year after the end of the war, 3.4% for



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the next academic year, 1.1% in three months, another 1.1% in two weeks to two months, and 34% did not know when they would return (Graph 3).

## Traveling Expenses

84% of the respondents reported that their governments are paying for their traveling expenses from Lebanon to Cyprus, while 14.2% did not know if their governments would do so. 1.8% of the respondents reported that either they, or their families, will be paying for their traveling expenses.

As for their transportation from Cyprus to their home countries, 75.1% reported that their governments will pay their traveling expenses, while 18% did not know if their governments will be paying. 5.4% of the respondents reported that either they, or their families, will be paying for their traveling expenses, while 1.5% refused to answer.

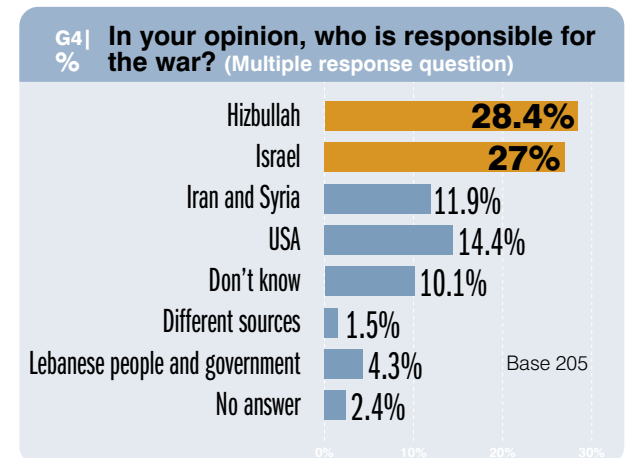
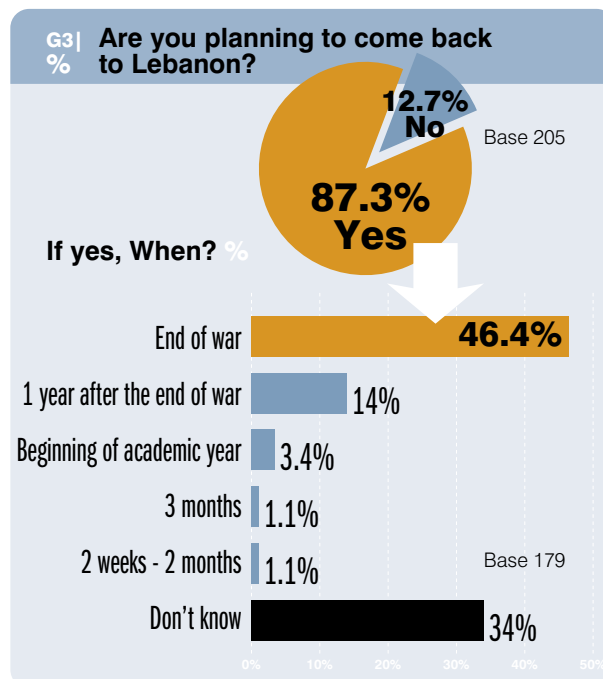
In terms of their residence in their home countries, 82% of the respondents reported that either they, or their families, will be paying for their expenses, 12.2% did not know, 4.4% reported that their governments will be paying for their expenses, while 1.4% reported that

different sources will be paying for their expenses. When the respondents were surveyed on the performance of their embassies towards them during this war, 73% reported to be satisfied with the performance of their embassies, 24% were not satisfied, and 3% did not know.

## The Responsibility of the War

28.4% and 27% of the respondents held Hizbullah and Israel respectively the responsibility for the war in Lebanon. 11.9% held Iran and Syria the responsibility, 14.4% the United States, 2.8% the Lebanese people and 1.5% the Lebanese government. On the other hand, 10.1% did not know who is responsible for the war, 1.5% hold different sources responsible and 2.4% refused to answer (Graph 4 - multiple response question).

Out of the Americans and Canadians evacuating, 90.7% held the Lebanese nationality. They were leaving in fear of the war, keeping in mind that 87% of them were intending to return to Lebanon after the war was over (in different intervals). They held Hizbullah and Israel the responsibility for the war, also to Syria and Iran, but with a larger percentage giving blame to the United States.



\* Visitors are Lebanese citizens residing abroad and visit Lebanon regularly