

Opinion poll: Lebanese Divided Behind Their Leaders Over Critical Matters [2/2]

In its previous issue, *Ii Monthly* examined the first half of the results of the August opinion poll conducted by *Information International* in Lebanon.

The first half covered the following issues: Hizbullah’s abduction of the two Israeli soldiers, the description of the war and the scenes which most affected the Lebanese, the positions concerning the International Resolutions, the deployment of the army in the South, the position of the Lebanese on Hizbullah’s armaments as well as the Lebanese perception of the personality of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, Hizbullah’s Secretary General.

In this second and last part, *Ii Monthly* publishes its findings on Cheba’a Farms, the performance of the leaders “Zua’ama” during the war, the stance towards certain countries, the most preferred candidates for President and Prime Minister.

Part 2

The Position of the Lebanese During the War

More than half of the respondents (50.8%) believe that during the war, and despite all the tragedies and the displacement, the Lebanese dealt with each other on the basis of honest national cooperation, while 36.5% believe that the Lebanese dealt with each other with an only “apparent” cooperation, 9.3% believe that there was a big split among the Lebanese during war, and 3.4% replied “I do not know”.

The Position of the Lebanese Towards Certain Foreign Countries

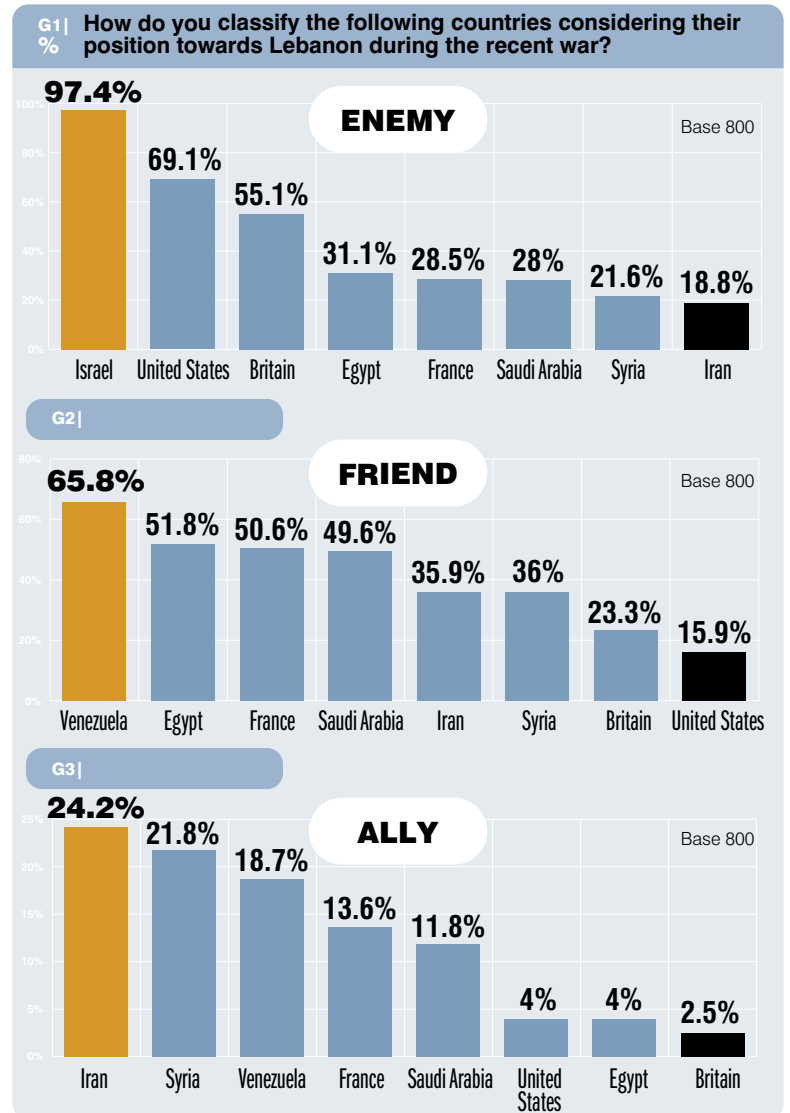
For 33 days, many countries made statements concerning the situation in Lebanon.

Some of these countries showed their support for Lebanon while others, as believed by the respondents, supported Israel. Graphs 1, 2 and 3 illustrate the classification of the position held by key countries regarding Lebanon during the recent war.

According to 97.4% of the respondents, Israel remains the biggest enemy to Lebanon, followed in second place by the United States of America (69.1%).

On the contrary, and according to 84.5% of the respondents, Venezuela is in first place in terms of being an ally and friend to Lebanon; it is followed by France (64.2%), Saudi Arabia (61.4%), and Iran (60.1%). The positions of the Leaders (Zu’ama) towards a particular country as well as the confession of the respondent both play a major role in the classification of these countries as enemies, allies or friends.

Table No. 1 illustrates these positions by confessions.



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The Classification of some Countries considering their position towards Lebanon during the recent war by confession Table 1

Country	Confession	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
The United States (Ally or Friend)		28.2 %	22 %	35.5 %	23.7 %	0.5 %	53.4 %
The United States (Enemy)		52.1 %	60.3 %	51.6 %	66.2 %	99.5 %	31.1 %
France (Ally or Friend)		81.4 %	82.3 %	83.9 %	80.7 %	21.3 %	91.1 %
France (Enemy)		10.6 %	11.8 %	6.5 %	14.5 %	68.6 %	6.7 %
Syria (Ally or Friend)		37.8 %	52.9 %	58 %	47.9 %	95 %	20 %
Syria (Enemy)		32.4 %	23.5 %	16.1 %	23.2 %	2.3 %	57.8 %
Saudi Arabia (Ally or Friend)		67.5 %	80.9 %	54.9 %	79.7 %	30.5 %	84.5 %
Saudi Arabia (Enemy)		16 %	11.8 %	22.6 %	15.5 %	58.6 %	8.9 %
Iran (Ally or Friend)		38.3 %	60.3 %	54.8 %	54.1 %	96.4 %	17.8 %
Iran (Enemy)		30.9 %	13.2 %	16.1 %	19.3 %	0.5 %	57.8 %
Britain (Ally or Friend)		37.8 %	33.8 %	35.5 %	30.4 %	3.2 %	55.5 %
Britain (Enemy)		29.8 %	39.7 %	38.7 %	51.7 %	94.5 %	20 %
Egypt (Ally or Friend)		62.8 %	70.6 %	51.6 %	71 %	26.8 %	82.2 %
Egypt (Enemy)		20.7 %	10.3 %	25.8 %	18.8 %	62.3 %	11.1 %
Israel (Ally or Friend)		1.6 %	-	-	-	-	4.4 %
Israel (Enemy)		94.1 %	97.1 %	93.5 %	99.5 %	100 %	88.9 %
Venezuela (Ally or Friend)		78.2 %	83.8 %	83.9 %	80.2 %	98.2 %	64.5 %
Venezuela (Enemy)		1.6 %	1.5 %	3.2 %	2.4 %	0.9 %	2.2 %

Note: The total number of answers by confession equals 100% distributed among the respondents who think of the country as an Ally, a Friend, or an Enemy. The remaining percentages are for those who chose to give "No Answer".

Positions from Different Quotes and Scenes

Before and during the Israeli war against Lebanon, there were many important political statements and events. *Ii Monthly* has chosen some quotes and scenes of which the respondents were asked to specify their positions regarding them. The results are as illustrated in Table No. 2 below.

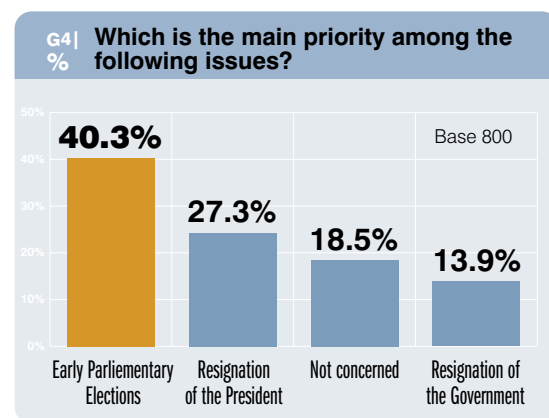
The Position from a Particular Quote or a Scene	Support	Oppose	I do not know
Honoring the U.S. Representative to the United Nations, John Bolton, by granting him the Cedar Armament last May	16 %	68.3 %	15.7 %
Prime Minister Sanioura kissing Condoleezza Rice upon her arrival at the Ministerial Palace	33 %	56.8 %	10.2 %
"The current war was provoked to mislead the international tribunal investigating in the assassination of Former Prime Minister Hariri"	29.4 %	56.9 %	13.7 %
Rice: "It is now the time for the birth of a new Middle East"	11.6 %	77.3 %	11.1 %
Rice meeting the 14 of March forces for lunch	28.1 %	63.3 %	8.6 %
The latest speech of President Bashar Al-Assad	25.3 %	59.4 %	15.3 %

The confessional split among the respondents concerning their opinions about these scenes and quotes is obvious. In fact, only 0.5% of the Shia'a respondents support the honoring of the U.S. Representative to the United Nations, John Bolton. Meanwhile, 37.8% of the Druze, 23.4% of the Maronite, 20.6% of the Greek Orthodox, 19.8% of the Sunni, and 19.4% of Greek Catholics showed their support for the same scene.

It is noteworthy that the Druze showed extremism in supporting the mentioned scene while the Shia'a exhibited extremism in opposing it. The positions within the other confessions varied, although the majority tends to support the scene.

The Main Political Priority for the Lebanese

Many political issues preoccupied the Lebanese during this period. However, the first political priority remains for the majority of the respondents (40.3%) to hold early parliamentary elections. The second political priority is the resignation of the President of the Republic with 27.3%, followed by the resignation of the Government (13.9%), and 18.5% answered that they were not concerned (Graph 4).



These priorities are classified by confessions as illustrated in Table No. 3 which demonstrates that holding early parliamentary elections is the priority for 62.3% of the Shia'a respondents while the resignation of the President of the Republic is the priority for 68.9% of the Druze respondents.

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The Main Political Priorities of the Lebanese by Confession Table 3

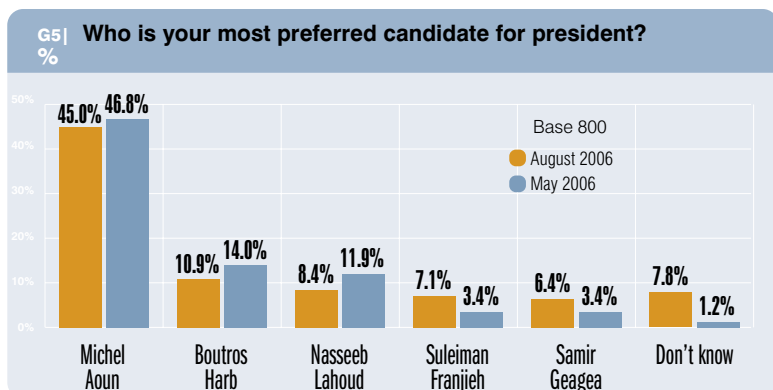
Priority	Confession	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Holding early parliamentary elections		36.2 %	38.2 %	48.4 %	25.1 %	62.3 %	17.8 %
The resignation of the President of the Republic		36.7 %	32.4 %	25.8 %	37.7 %	1.8 %	68.9 %
The resignation of the Government		10.6 %	10.3 %	12.9 %	4.8 %	28.6 %	-
Not concerned		16.5 %	19.1 %	12.9 %	32.4 %	7.3 %	13.3 %

The Most Preferred Candidate for President

Naming a new President of the Republic has always been a controversial issue for the Lebanese. When asked about their most preferred candidate for the post, the results came as follows: Michel Aoun came in first place with 45%, followed by Boutros Harb (10.9%), Nasseeb Lahoud (8.4%), Sleiman Franjeh (7.1%), and Samir Geagea (6.4%). The respondents also suggested other names but they each received less than 5% and totaled 14.4%. The remaining 7.8% answered "I do not know" (Graph 5).

In comparison with the results of an opinion poll conducted by *Information International* between May 13 and 18, 2006, 46.8% of the respondents then supported Michel Aoun for president, 14% supported Boutros Harb, and 11.9% supported Nasseeb Lahoud. Thus, the three main candidates for president remained the same. However, there was a slight regression in support for Michel Aoun and a considerable regression in support for Boutros Harb and Nasseeb Lahoud while Suleiman Franjeh and Samir Geagea gained support (Graph 5).

Table No. 4 illustrates the distribution of the most preferred candidates by confession.



The Most Preferred Candidate for the President of the Republic by Confession Table 4

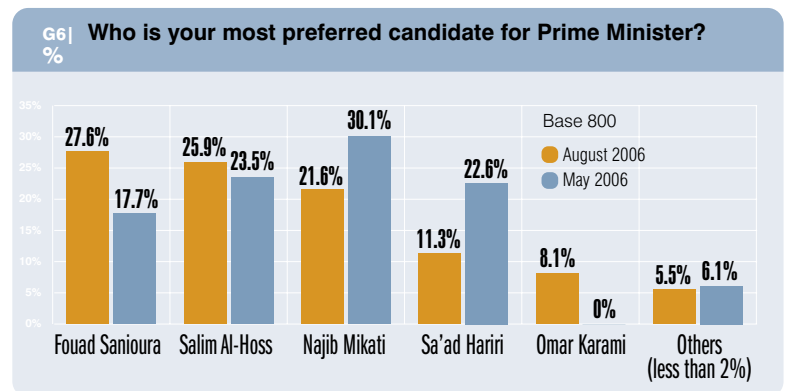
Candidate	Confession	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Michel Aoun		39.9 %	39.7 %	51.6 %	16.4 %	81.4 %	13.3 %
Boutros Harb		10.6 %	13.2 %	9.7 %	21.3 %	0.5 %	20 %
Nasseeb Lahoud		7.4 %	10.3 %	-	15.9 %	0.5 %	22.2 %
Suleiman Franjeh		10.6 %	5.9 %	3.2 %	2.9 %	10.9 %	2.2 %
Samir Geagea		15.4 %	10.3 %	9.7 %	2.9 %	-	6.7 %
Riyad Salameh		3.2 %	7.4 %	9.7 %	8.2 %	1.8 %	6.7 %
Others		6 %	10.3 %	6.4 %	16 %	2.3 %	24.4 %
I do not know		6.9 %	2.9 %	9.7 %	16.4 %	2.6 %	4.5 %

Thus, the Shia'a showed the greatest support to Michel Aoun, followed by the Greek Catholics, the Maronite and the Greek Orthodox.

The Most Preferred Candidate for Prime Minister

Prime Minister Fouad Sanioura was the most preferred candidate for Prime Minister according to 27.6% of the respondents. In second place comes Salim Al-Hoss with 25.9%, followed by Najib Mikati (21.6%), Sa'ad Hariri (11.3%), and Omar Karami (8.1%).

In comparison with the results of the 2006 May poll, 30% of the respondents chose Najib Mikati to be the next Prime Minister. Salim Al-Hoss came in second place with 23.6%, followed by Sa'ad Hariri (22.6%) and Fouad Sanioura (17.7%). Thus, there is more support for Fouad Sanioura today as Prime Minister (Graph 6).



This fact might be related to the performance of the Government during the recent war (77.7% of the respondents describe this performance as excellent and acceptable) or to the fact that the Sunni and the Druze communities do not wish for Sa'ad Hariri to become Prime Minister as long as Emile Lahoud is President of the Republic (according to the results of a former opinion poll).

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Table No. 5 illustrates the distribution of the most preferred candidate by confession.

Candidate	Confession	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Fouad Sanioura		31.9 %	29.4 %	19.4 %	41.1 %	3.2 %	68.9 %
Salim Al-Hoss		13.3 %	19.1 %	29.1 %	15 %	55.5 %	6.7 %
Najib Mikati		33.5 %	26.5 %	29 %	7.7 %	22.3 %	8.9 %
Sa'ad Hariri		9 %	7.4 %	9.7 %	25.1 %	3.2 %	8.9 %
Omar Karami		6.4 %	8.8 %	3.2 %	3.4 %	14.5 %	-
Others		4.3 %	7.3 %	-	5.3 %	0.5 %	6.6 %
I do not know		1.6 %	1.5 %	9.6 %	2.4 %	0.8 %	-

The Performance of the Politicians During War

The respondents had different opinions concerning the performance of each political personality during war. The positions varied mainly according to the confession to which the respondents belong. In fact, each religious community believes the performance of its leader (Za'im) is the best and the one they describe as excellent and good. They also think alike about the performance of their leader's allies.

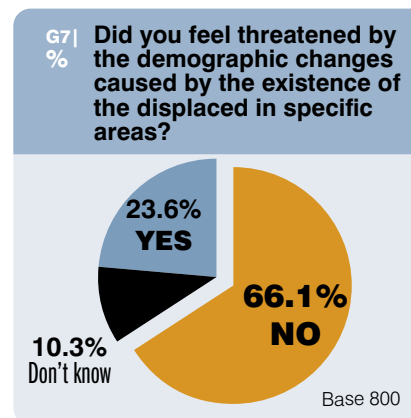
Table No.6 illustrates the distribution of these positions by confession.

Performance Personality	Bad/Weak	Acceptable	Good/Excellent	I Do Not know
Hassan Nasrallah	11.4 %	8.5 %	78.7 %	1.4 %
Sa'ad Hariri	42.6 %	24.1 %	32.1 %	1.2 %
Fouad Sanioura	27.9 %	22.1 %	49.2 %	0.8 %
Nabih Berri	4.9 %	22.5 %	71.2 %	1.4 %
Michel Aoun	25.8 %	14 %	58.1 %	2.1 %
Walid Jumblat	55.9 %	16.8 %	25.6 %	1.7 %
Samir Geagea	57.3 %	18.8 %	21.2 %	2.7 %
Emile Lahoud	36.1 %	19.1 %	43.3 %	1.5 %

The Displaced

The recent Israeli war against Lebanon resulted in a massive movement of people from the bombarded villages and towns to more secure regions. This generated anxiety and fear among people relating to sectarianism.

When asked if they felt threatened by the demographic changes caused by the existence of the displaced in specific areas, 23.6% of the respondents confirmed that they did, while 66.1% denied having had such feelings and 10.3% answered "I do not know" (Graph 7).



The First Leader (Za'im) in Lebanon

Hassan Nasrallah was designated the first Lebanese leader (Za'im) by 31.1% of the respondents. Michel Aoun came in second place with 12.5%, followed by Sa'ad Hariri (8.1%), Samir Geagea (5.8%), Walid Jumblat (5.5%), Nabih Berri (5.4%) and Fouad Sanioura (4.3%). Almost quarter of the respondents (21.8%) do not believe that there is a first leader in Lebanon while 2.1% of the respondents suggested other names (Graph 8).

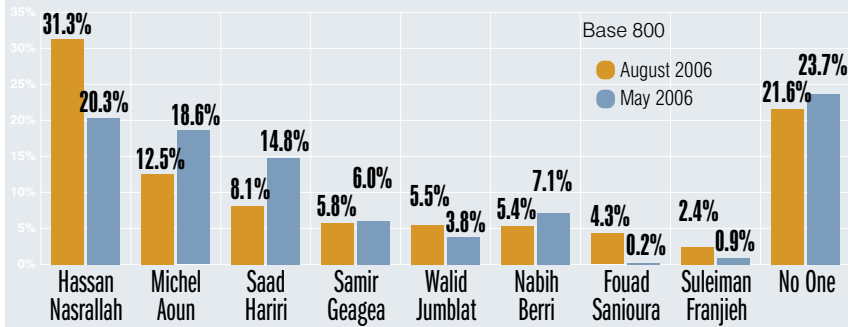
In comparison with an opinion poll conducted by *Information International* in February 2006, Hassan Nasrallah was also designated the first leader (Za'im) in Lebanon by 20.3% of the respondents. Michel Aoun came in second place with 18.6%, followed by Sa'ad Hariri (14.8%), Samir Geagea (6%), Walid Jumblat (3.8%), Nabih Berri (7.1%), and Fouad Sanioura (0.2%).

Table No.7 illustrates the choice of the first Leader in Lebanon by confessions.

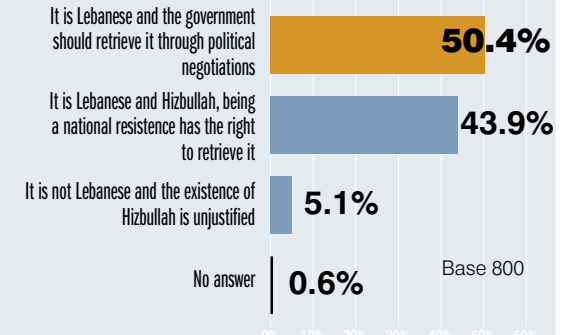
Za'im	Confession	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Hassan Nasrallah		9 %	10.3 %	12.9 %	20.3 %	73.6 %	6.7 %
Michel Aoun		29.8 %	25 %	19.4 %	1.9 %	2.7 %	-
Sa'ad Hariri		1.1 %	1.5 %	3.2 %	29 %	0.5 %	-
Samir Geagea		17 %	14.7 %	6.5 %	-	-	-
Walid Jumblat		2.1 %	2.9 %	-	3.9 %	0.5 %	64.4 %
Nabih Berri		1.1 %	-	6.5 %	1 %	16.8 %	-
Fouad Sanioura		-	2.9 %	-	15.5 %	-	-
Suleiman Franjeh		7.4 %	4.4 %	-	1 %	-	-
Patriarch Sfeir		2.7 %	-	3.2 %	0.5 %	-	2.2 %
Other (Less than 1%)		2.6 %	1.5 %	3.1 %	2.7 %	1.8 %	-
No one		27.2 %	36.8 %	45.2 %	24.2 %	4.1 %	26.7 %

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G8 | Who, in your opinion, is the first leader (Za'im) in Lebanon?



G9 | What is your stance on the Cheba'a Farms?



Mazarea'a Cheba'a and Peace and War Decision

The issue of Mazarea'a Cheba'a is one of the most controversial military-political issues of discussion between the different Lebanese parties. It has a particular connotation as it is related to Hizbullah's armaments and to the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as constitutes an object of disagreement between Lebanon and Syria.

Half of the respondents (50.4%) believe that Mazarea'a Cheba'a is Lebanese and that the Government should retrieve it through political negotiations, while 43.9% think the area is Lebanese and Hizbullah, as a national resistance, has the legal right to retrieve it, 5.1% said that the Mazarea'a Cheba'a is not Lebanese and therefore the existence of Hizbullah is unjustified, and 0.6% gave no answer (Graph 9).

As for the decision to liberate Mazarea'a Cheba'a or, in other words, war and peace decision, more than half of the respondents (54%) think that such a matter should be controlled solely by the Lebanese Government, 37.1% think it should be a decision by both the Resistance and the Government, 7% believe such a decision should be made by the Resistance, and 1.9% answered "I do not know".

The answers are distributed by confession in table No. 8.

A Look at the Future

The recent war resulted in a state of general anxiety and fear among the Lebanese. When asked about their plans for the near future, 15.3% of the respondents said they are seeking to emigrate, 21.5% said that they will wait until things clear up before they seek to emigrate, while the majority (58.9%) has decided to stay in Lebanon despite all that happened and 4.3% gave no answer (Graph 10). The answers are distributed by confession in table No. 9.

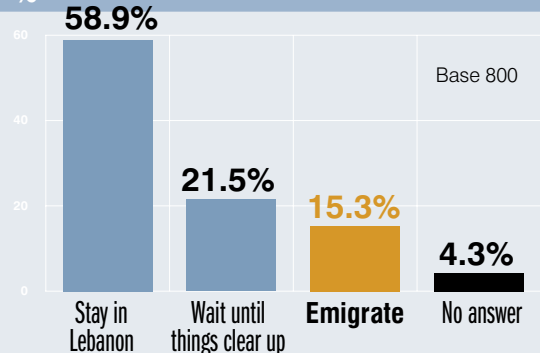
The Party that Should Hold the Decision of Peace and War by Confession
Table 8

The Party	Confession	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
The Lebanese Government		79.8 %	76.5 %	48.4 %	69.1 %	7.3 %	88.9 %
The Resistance		3.2 %	-	-	3.4 %	18.6 %	2.2 %
The Lebanese Government and the Resistance		15.4 %	23.5 %	45.2 %	25.6 %	72.7 %	8.4 %
I do not know		1.6 %	-	6.4 %	1.9 %	1.4 %	-

Choices of the Lebanese by Confession
Table 9

The Choice	Confession	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Sunni	Shia'a	Druze
Stay in Lebanon		58 %	45.6 %	61.3 %	46.9 %	77.7 %	40 %
Wait for things to clear up		16.5 %	22.1 %	29 %	29.5 %	12.7 %	35.6 %
Immigrate		18.1 %	25 %	9.7 %	19.8 %	7.3 %	17.8 %
No Answer		7.4 %	7.3 %	-	3.8 %	2.3 %	6.6 %

G10 | Are you currently actively seeking to:



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Towards an Analysis

According to the results of the poll, the following remarks can be drawn:

- 1- Undoubtedly the Lebanese are divided on confessional and tribal basis. However, the question remains if this split today is more critical than before and whether it is voluntary or imposed on the Lebanese.
- 2- The Lebanese are also divided as a result of their loyalty to their leaders (Zu'ama). However, are there certain leaders that cross confessional boundaries? and why? Some analysts would observe that the Lebanese perceive issues through the eyes of their leaders more than their confessions.
- 3- The Lebanese show remarkable and strong loyalty to their leaders. They also have shown a great resistance to any change in their loyalty, signifying the rigidity of Lebanon political and social symbols.
- 4- Age, gender and education do not significantly affect the political opinions of the Lebanese people on critical national matters.
- 5- Not all Lebanese are behind their confessions. There is a certain category, almost 25% of the respondents, whose answers diverged from the confessional-patronage affiliation. Who is this category and why is it out of the political equation in Lebanon?
- 6- The Lebanese show great and remarkable awareness and wisdom. Their answers are sometimes wiser than those of their leaders. The question remains, is this sense of wisdom and awareness actually strong and resilient enough to generate a change?
- 7- The majority of the Lebanese people agree that Israel is an enemy to Lebanon. Their classification of other countries as "allies", "friends", or "enemies" largely depends on these countries' stance towards Israel. In this poll, the respondents classified the countries according to these countries' positions during the July-August 2006 war.
- 8- The Lebanese have expressed a certain support towards Hizbullah but it is not unconditional.
- 9- There is an admiration, even amongst those who do not necessarily support Hizbullah, for the personality of Hassan Nasrallah, while the opposite is true in the case of Sa'ad Hariri.
- 10- Did Sanioura really manage to consolidate his stature as a worthy Prime Minister? Is he a new phenomenon in the Lebanese system and is it sustainable and are there any structural impediments to this phenomenon?
- 11- How do respondents or analysts explain the answers - whether contradictory or harmonious - which stand out from the confessional-tribal-patronage pattern, by those who normally identify themselves with those patterns?

There is no doubt that the results of this opinion poll have had extremely important connotations. Thus, it remains necessary and crucial to try to analyse the complicated dynamics and mechanisms behind the perception of the Lebanese of each other and the world. *Information International* will soon organize a focus group where such matters will be discussed. 

Sample

The sample distribution (800 persons) was based on the sectarian distribution of Lebanese voters, according to the lists of the Ministry of Interior for Lebanese registered voters for the 2005 Elections. The distribution of the sample by confession is detailed below:

Sunni 26.5%; Shia'a 26.2%; Druze 5.6%; Alawi 0.8%; Maronite 22.1%; Orthodox 7.8%; Catholic 5.2%, Armenian and Maronite 5.8%

The fieldwork was implemented during the period of August 22-27, 2006, in various Lebanese Mohafazas, specifically in the 26 Lebanese qadas, where the center of each qada was adopted for the purpose of the poll. In each center, a main location was specified and polling the requested number of questionnaires was done after specifying the number of existing residential and commercial units. The number of requested questionnaires is divided by the number of units, noting that the distribution of questionnaires by confession was previously specified, according to the number of residents in each qada and its sectarian composition.

The distribution of questionnaires by Mohafaza is detailed below:

Beirut 14.8%; Mount Lebanon 23.5%; South 22.2%; Beqaa 16.7%; North 22.8%

The Gender distribution was as follows: Male 61.1%, female 38.9%; this imbalance was due to the high refusal rate of females

The sample distribution by age group is detailed as follows:

18 to 24 years-old; 24.4% - 25 to 34 years-old; 23.5% - 35 to 44 years-old; 20.7% - 45 to 54 years-old; 16.9% - 55 to 64 years-old; 10.7% - 65 years-old and above; 3.8%

Poll results showed that 25.6% of respondents were displaced from their towns, villages and initial places of residence as a result of the war; around half of them (46.8%) resided temporarily in the homes of their relatives and friends. The poll also showed that 40.6% of respondents were harmed during the war.

The margin of error reached $\pm 3\%$, with a 95% confidence interval.