

“ii Monthly” polled a sample of the Lebanese in the Greater Beirut area between 7-11 April 2005. The survey tackled several current issues, such as the formation of the new government, the upcoming parliamentary elections, the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, President Lahoud’s resignation, and American intervention. The results will be presented in the form of a two part series, spanning this issue and the next.

### Government Formation

Slightly more than half of the respondents (54.5%) demanded a “national conciliation” government, while 33.2% viewed a small-scale-government, made up of independent figures, as the best solution, followed by 3.8% who wished to see a government made up only of the State’s “Loyalists”, 3.2% who aspired to a government made up of the State’s “Opponents”, while 5.3% stated they “do not know”.

### Elections

The vast majority of the respondents (84.7%) preferred to see the elections held on time, while 6.2% thought it would be better if they were postponed until September, whereas some (5.2%) wanted them postponed until the situation in Lebanon stabilized. 0.8% of the respondents said they wanted elections postponed for a year and 3.1% said they did not know. Many answers were given by the respondents when asked which electoral system/districts they preferred. The majority (23.7%) wanted the districts be the same as the ones of the 1960 elections, followed by 20% who favored considering each Mohafaza as one district, taking proportionality into account, while 13.3% thought that placing Lebanon under one electoral district would be the best solution, 13% wanted the 2000 Election Law implemented, 12.5% indicated that Lebanon should be made into one electoral district but with taking proportionality into account, 5% chose the Mohafaza as the electoral district, and 12.5% stated that they did not know. (Table 1)

Electoral District	Table 1					
	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shiaa	Druze
Lebanon as one electoral district	7.9	13.3	15.2	13.4	18.7	23.5
Lebanon as one electoral district with proportionality	10.1	15	18.2	16.2	12.1	5.9
Mohafaza as one electoral district	3.4	3.3	3	6.1	10.3	0
Mohafaza as electoral district with proportionality	14.6	10	12.1	18.4	37.4	11.8
Districts as implemented in 2000 elections	12.4	5	12.1	19.6	10.3	41.2
Districts as implemented in 1996 elections (as presented by the previous government)	41.6	40	33.3	8.4	1.8	11.8
“Do not know”	10	13.4	6.1	17.9	9.4	5.8

### Participating in Elections

The majority of the respondents (83.3%) said they would participate in the elections, while 7% had not decided yet and 9.7% stated they would not take part. Those who would participate said they would vote as follows: lists supported by the Opposition (30.2%), independent figures (20.4%), lists supported by the Government Loyalists (14.6%), loyalists and opposition members with a preference for the latter (10%), loyalists and opposition members with a preference for the former (9.4%), while 4.6% would hand in white ballots, 10% stated that they did not know what they would do and the remaining 0.8% were divided among different answers (Table 2).

Who will you vote for in the next elections? (First Five Answers)	Table 2					
	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shiaa	Druze
Opposition lists	53.9	55.4	44.8	24	-	60
Independent figures	14.5	5.4	13.8	33.3	20.2	13.3
Loyalist lists	5.3	14.3	3.4	9.3	46.1	0
Loyalists & opposition members with a preference for the latter	15.8	12.5	10.3	7.3	1.1	20
Loyalists & opposition members with a preference for the former	5.3	0	10.3	9.3	16.9	6.7

### The Syrian Withdrawal

Most of the respondents (40.8%) replied that the Syrian forces ought to have withdrawn from Lebanon two years after signing the “Taef Accord”, while 33.33% stated that it would have been better if they had withdrawn immediately after the end of the Israeli occupation of the South in 2000, 8.8% opposed Syrian withdrawal without a joint Lebanese-Syrian plan for security, 6.7% were against the Syrian withdrawal before the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1.9% believed the best time for withdrawal would be after disarming Hezbollah and the Palestinian organizations, and 8.5%

said they ‘did not know’. Table 3 shows the answers provided according to sect.

The Syrian withdrawal	Table 3					
	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Sunni	Shiaa	Druze
Should have occurred 2 years after Taef	67.4	55	54.5	30.7	15.9	47
Should have occurred after the Israeli withdrawal from the South in 2000	22.5	25	24.2	43.6	32.7	35.5
Should not withdraw without a common Lebanese-Syrian security plan	1.1	3.3	15.2	10.1	18.7	11.8
Should not withdraw before the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict	2.2	6.7	3	4.5	16.8	5.9
Should withdraw after disarming Hezbollah and the Palastenian organizations	2.2	5	0	1.7	0.9	0
“Do not know”	4.6	5	3.1	9.4	15	0

## Confidence in the Lebanese Army

The survey showed that there is a big trust in the Lebanese army: while only 5.2% of the respondents thought that it was unable to establish security and prevent internal divisions, the majority (63.8%) believed that the Lebanese army was capable of doing that at once, 18.5% gave it few months to re-establish security, and 12.5% said they ‘do not know’.

## The Resignation of President Lahoud

With part of the Opposition requesting that President Lahoud resign from his post, respondents were asked about their stance on such a demand. The survey revealed that 30.2% support the request and add that the resignation should be prior to the Parliamentary Elections, 18% asked for an immediate resignation, 26.5% indicated the resignation should occur if more than two-thirds of the Parliamentary Council asks for it, while 13.3% are with President Lahoud continuing his constitutional term, and 12% said they ‘do not know’.

## The Responsibility of Prime Minister Hariri’s Assassination

Around 29.8% of the respondents indicated that the Lebanese and Syrian security forces were responsible for the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri, 7.4% hold the Lebanese security forces responsible, and 5.5% say the Syrian security forces. The remaining answers were: 15.1% blamed the Israeli intelligence, 12.6% the American intelligence, 4.3% International Mafia, 2.6% Lebanon’s enemies, 1.9% Islamic organizations, while 19.5% said they ‘do not know’ and the remaining 1.3% were distributed among various answers.

It should be noted that in the poll administered right after the assassination of Former PM Hariri (19-24 February, 2005) and published in the March issue of Ii Monthly, most respondents (23.9%) hold Israel responsible, 16.7% blame both the Lebanese and Syrian authorities, 15.3% say the US, 10.4% the Syrian authority only, 7% the Lebanese authority only, 8.6% international organizations, and the remaining percentages gave different answers.

## The Latest Bombings

Around one quarter of the respondents (24.9%) believed that both the Lebanese and Syrian security forces were behind the latest bombings in New Jdeideh, Kaslik, Sad Al Bawshrieh, and Broumana, while 16.3% thought that the Israeli intelligence was behind it, 9.5% the American intelligence, 6.5% International Mafia, 5.5% Lebanese security forces, 3% Syrian security forces, 2.7% Lebanon’s enemies, 25.5% stated that they did not know who was behind it, and the remaining percentage (3.8%) was distributed among other answers.

Many options were suggested when it came to who would benefit from such bombings: Israel (26.5%), the U.S. (14.1%), the government and its loyalists (14%), the Syrian government (9.5%), the Opposition (8.6%), Lebanon’s enemies (5.3%); while 19.1% of the respondents answered “do not know”, and the remaining percentage (2.9%) was distributed among different answers.

## Internal Tensions and the Ghost of the Civil War

18.7% of the respondents stated that the Lebanese and Syrian security forces ought to be held responsible for the increase in internal tension, while a similar percentage (18.7%) thought that UN Resolution 1559 was the cause of this tension, the Syrian government (11.8%), Israel (9.5%), the U.S. (7.8%), the Lebanese government (7%), Lebanese security forces (6%), the Opposition (2%), while 16.5% of the respondents said that they “do not know”, and the remaining percentage (2%) was distributed among different answers.

Fear of war breaking out again only affected 29.2% of the respondents, while 65.6% were not haunted by such fears and 5.2% answered they “do not know”. Half of those who are afraid of the outbreak of a civil war did not take any action to comfort themselves, while the other half took the following precautions: proceeding with necessary paper work (request for Visa and tickets) in order to emigrate (19.6%), looking for a house in “secure” areas where battle might not take place (10.3%), considering selling property and emigrating (7.2%), acquiring machine guns (4.1%), transferring money abroad (4.1%), reinforcing security measures in the house such as putting sand bags and metal doors (2.1%), putting in shatter-proof glass for the windows (1.6%), and contracting private security agencies (1%).