



PROJECT ALBATROS II MENA

COUNTERING INFORMATION THREATS IN LEBANON,
EGYPT AND IRAQ

Information environment analysis:

LEBANON

INFO OPS
POLSKA



Shaffafiya | shafafiyat.com



THE STUDY OF LEBANON'S INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

Warsaw 2024

A project carried out by the INFO OPS Polska Foundation and the
Casimir Pulaski Foundation.

INFO OPS
POLSKA



PROJECT ALBATROS II MENA

Information environment analysis:

LEBANON

The activities are financed from the state budget as part of a competition by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, '**Public Diplomacy 2024–2025 – European Dimension and Countering Disinformation**'. This publication expresses the views of the authors only and cannot be identified with the official position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Poland

INDEX OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION — Geopolitical situation of Lebanon	7
I. General remarks	7
II. Political situation	8
CHAPTER 1. Characteristics of Lebanon's information environment	13
1.1. Traditional media outlets	15
1.1.1 Television	15
1.1.2 Press & News Agency (Press)	20
1.1.3 Radio	25
1.1.4 News websites	29
1.2 Non-traditional media	39
1.2.1 Influencers/Famous persons	39
1.2.2 YouTube	43
1.2.3 TikTok	44
1.2.4 Instagram	45
1.2.5 X (formerly known as Twitter)	46
1.3 Recurring holidays as well as nationwide and regional events	49
1.4 Non-governmental and non-state organizations influencing public opinion in Lebanon	52
1.4.1 Organisations affiliated with political parties in Lebanon	52
1.4.2 Religious organisations	56
1.4.3 Ethnic organisations	56
1.4.4 Local organizations supporting Lebanese statehood	57
1.4.5 Lebanese NGOs	57
1.5 International organisations influencing public opinion in Lebanon	59
1.5.1 International non-government organisations	59
1.5.2 Organisations analysing the political situation of Lebanon	62
1.5.3 Humanitarian organisations affiliated with the UN	63
1.5.4 Other international actors	64
1.6 Economic entities with the potential to influence the nature and accessibility of content	67
1.6.1 Private telecommunications companies	67
1.6.2 Advertising agencies and marketing firms	68
1.6.3 Technological companies and startups	69
1.6.4 Capital Groups	70
1.6.5 State-owned economic actors	73
CHAPTER 2. Information habits	75
2.1 Information habits of Lebanese society	75
2.2 Viewership and perception of state media	76
2.3 Viewership and perception of non-state media, including party-affiliated and sectarian/religious media	77
2.3.1 Private media	78
2.3.2 Party-affiliated media	79
2.3.3 Religious media	79
2.3.4 Sectarian media	80

2.4 Popularity of online sources, including unverified ones	81
2.5 Popularity of foreign media	85
2.6 Susceptibility to the “bazaar news,” including conspiracy theories	86
2.7 Places of religious cult serving as information hubs	88
CHAPTER 3. Social vulnerabilities	90
3.1 Religious divisions	90
3.2 Sectarianism and ethno-sectarianism	91
3.3 Economic instabilities	93
3.4 Ethnicity	94
3.5 Political outcomes	96
3.6 Foreign influences	97
3.7 Security concerns	98
CHAPTER 4. Psychological Vulnerabilities of Lebanese Society: A Cultural, Economic, and Psychological Analysis	100
4.1 Main psychological stressors in Lebanon	101
4.2 Family relationships of Lebanese people and their impact on psychological vulnerabilities	102
4.3 Migration and refugee issues in Lebanon: an impact on psychological vulnerabilities	105
4.4 Community and religion	107
4.5 Influence of economic and financial situation on psychological vulnerabilities in Lebanon	116
4.6 Impact of armed conflicts on the mental health of the citizens	119
4.7 Crime in Lebanon and its impact on psychological vulnerabilities	122
4.8 Perception of the administration/state security structures and psychological vulnerabilities	124
4.9 Psychological vulnerabilities	126
CHAPTER 5. Key areas of foreign influence	129
5.1 Economy	129
5.2 Humanitarianism	130
5.3 Religion	131
5.4 Geopolitics	132
5.5 Ideology	132
5.6 Identity	133
CHAPTER 6. Key FIMI (foreign) assets in Lebanon and their attribution	135
6.1 Companies	135
6.2 NGOs	136
6.3 Opinion leaders	140
6.4 Religious leaders	142
6.5 Political leaders	143
6.6 Military leaders	144
6.7 Traditional media	145
6.7.1 Financed by foreign governments	146
6.7.2 Western media outlets	148
6.8 Non-traditional media	149
6.9 Academic and scientific cooperation	154
6.9.1 Universities	154
6.9.2 International research centers and think-tanks	155
6.9.3 Possible threats related to academic and scientific cooperation	157
6.10 Military cooperation and non-state military actors	158
CHAPTER 7. Selected techniques and tactics of manipulation, linguistic mechanisms of persuasion, actions and psychological effects — identification and analysis	164

7.1 Vectors and narratives of Russian influence operations	164
7.2 Key techniques and tactics employed by Russia	165
7.3 The use of emotions in Russian psychological operations conducted in Lebanon against the West	172
7.4 Chinese influence apparatus	175
7.5 Mechanisms of linguistic persuasion used by Russia	176
7.6 Persuasive strategy and linguistic techniques used by pro-Hezbollah circles in the Lebanese information space	177
CHAPTER 8. Propaganda activities aimed at the perception of the West and democratic values	180
8.1 Externally motivated	180
8.2 Internally motivated	183
CHAPTER 9. Propaganda activities targeted at the perception of Poland	186
9.1 Externally motivated	186
9.2 Internally motivated	187
CHAPTER 10. Case Study — the analysis of narratives targeted against Poland based on DISARM model	189
10.1 The DISARM RED Framework — An effort to standardize the description and exchange of information regarding activities in the information space	189
10.2 Russian influence operation conducted in the information space of Lebanon: Creating a false image of Poland and the West as aggressors seeking to annex Ukrainian territories	191
RECOMMENDATIONS	196

INTRODUCTION — Geopolitical situation of Lebanon

I. General remarks

The second quarter of 2024 has been a difficult period for Lebanon, marked by rising tensions along its border, intensified exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), a prolonged political deadlock over the presidential election, and a lack of economic and institutional reforms. State institutions exert minimal influence over Hezbollah's activities, further worsening the already fragile security environment and hindering Lebanon's functioning on the international stage, particularly in its relations with Western countries. Regional and global actors have attempted to pressure both Lebanon and Israel to limit the scope of the conflict and prevent its escalation. So far, these efforts have yielded no tangible results. The risk of further deterioration in regional security is real, although there are no clear indicators pointing to the likelihood of such a scenario materializing. Toward the end of the first quarter of this year, IDF airstrikes increasingly targeted sites located well beyond the area of UNIFIL responsibility. The persistent political deadlock continues to undermine the security situation. Discussions surrounding the selection of a new head of state have not led to any breakthroughs. To date, the Lebanese political class has failed to agree on a candidate capable of assuming leadership of the country.

International mediation efforts (involving the USA, Qatar, Egypt, France, and Saudi Arabia) have proven ineffective. Given the unfavourable regional conditions, this situation is dangerous — it significantly limits the state's ability to function on a formal level (such as the inability to appoint heads of key state institutions) and in the economic sphere (with Lebanon's credit and investment credibility remaining extremely low). The Lebanese government and political decision-makers continue to employ anti-immigration rhetoric — intensified by the assassination of one of the leaders of the Christian party "Lebanese Forces" which occurred at the beginning of the second quarter of this year. In May this year, Lebanon was visited by Commissioner Ursula von der Leyen who offered €1 billion in aid in exchange, among other things, for tightening the country's borders and curbing the flow of illegal migration to EU countries.

II. Political situation

Domestic policy

a) The primary factor shaping the country's domestic policy is the conflict with Israel, particularly the military involvement of Hezbollah. The Lebanese authorities appear to have no control over the activities of the "Party of God." Since Hamas's attack on Israel in October 2023, the intensity of cross-border fire along the Lebanese-Israeli frontier has steadily increased. In the past quarter, there has been a notable rise in Hezbollah's use of UAVs and in Israel's deployment of fighter jets (Lebanese UAVs are primarily used for reconnaissance, while the IDF air force and drones are employed for precision strikes, including far beyond the UNIFIL area of responsibility — i.e., the territory south of the Litani River).

So far, the conflict has not reached a critical phase — neither side is fully engaging its military capabilities. It is assessed that Hezbollah likely does not have full approval from Iran to escalate its involvement in the conflict. Moreover, the complex domestic situation in Lebanon limits Hezbollah's freedom of action — political leaders are increasingly voicing doubts about the justification for entering the war. Even now, the direct and indirect costs of military operations along the border are considerable. Since October 2023, approximately 95,000–100,000 people have fled southern Lebanon and relocated north of the Litani River. It is estimated that due to IDF's use of white phosphorus munitions, around 1,200 hectares of farmland have been irreversibly contaminated and scorched, making it unusable for agriculture. Olive groves, the backbone of the regional economy, have also been destroyed. Around 400,000 livestock animals have perished. In total, approximately 75% of the population living in the south has lost its primary source of income. Lebanon's total losses due to the conflict are estimated at approximately USD 1.7 billion.

The main global actor involved in efforts to develop mechanisms that would enable a cessation of hostilities is the United States. The U.S. State Department's Special Envoy for Lebanon, Amos Hochstein, has been appointed by Washington to negotiate with the parties to the conflict (previously, Hochstein was involved in talks between Lebanon and Israel concerning the access to gas deposits located in disputed territorial waters). The scenario proposed by the Americans envisions a withdrawal of Hezbollah forces to a distance of 8–10 kilometres from the Israeli border, a strengthened presence of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in the area, and the opening of negotiations on the delineation of the border line (as part of which Israel's withdrawal from disputed territories would likely be proposed). For the United States, a stable situation in Lebanon remains one of the key guarantees of relative regional calm.

Despite firm declarations by the country's authorities, emphasising their lack of intent to escalate the conflict, previous attempts to neutralise Hezbollah's influence have proven ineffective, and the exchange of fire continues to intensify. Lebanon's position on the conflict is expected to remain reactive – shaped to the scale and pace of Israel's actions.

b) The Syrian issue remains one of the most significant topics shaping Lebanon's internal political discourse. Despite divergences in other areas, the matter of Syrian migrants is what unites political blocs and decision-makers who are calling for the urgent regulation of migration-related issues. Lebanon currently hosts around 780,000 registered Syrian refugees, along with hundreds of thousands of unregistered ones. The Lebanese parliament has approved the creation of a ministerial committee tasked with communicating Lebanon's policy priorities regarding the Syrian issue on the international and regional stage. Lebanese security services have intensified repatriation efforts. Government officials continue to employ strong, unequivocal anti-migration rhetoric. Lebanon's Minister of the Interior has made the government's stance clear: only Syrians whose presence is justified on security grounds may remain in the country – ensuring national security is the government's priority. During the "Brussels VIII" conference in May this year, Lebanon's Foreign Minister A. Bou Habib stated that Lebanon had reached a critical mass on the Syrian issue – according to the government's official position, Syrian refugees are one of the main causes of rising crime rates, the formation of organised criminal groups, kidnappings for ransom, and other such threats.

Lebanon's Ministry of Foreign Affairs is planning a diplomatic offensive aimed at reaching out to the international community and developing a timeline for the relocation of Syrian refugees back to Syria. According to the official position of the Lebanese authorities, Lebanon can no longer bear the burden of hosting Syrians and it certainly lacks the resources to act as a "migration shield" for the EU. Sectarian tensions within the country, directed at the Syrian community in Lebanon, have been rising since the killing of one of the key politicians of the Maronite "Lebanese Forces" party – P. Sleiman – in April this year. Sleiman was killed during a robbery. Despite findings from Lebanese military intelligence indicating that the abduction and death of Sleiman were not politically motivated, local communities (mainly Christian) have carried out retaliatory actions against Syrians: sporadic attacks on Syrian-owned shops have occurred, Syrians are subjected to meticulous checks by local security forces, and politicians cynically exploit the issue to build political capital.

c) There is no prospect of reaching a compromise on the election of the country's president. Despite the ongoing conflict, institutional obstruction (with no constitutional means of appointing key state officials), and a prolonged economic crisis – particularly affecting the public sector – there is virtually no chance for a swift selection of a candidate who could garner a broad political support. One of the main lines of dispute currently concerns S. Frangieh, the leader of the "Marada" movement and a candidate proposed by Hezbollah and the Shiite Amal party. So far, Gebran Bassil, the leader of the Christian "Free Patriotic Movement" (FPM), has expressed clear opposition to this candidacy, although he now shows signs of softening his stance. This is significant, as the FPM's parliamentary bloc could provide the necessary quorum to hold the election. Nonetheless, there are currently no indications of progress in this matter.

Foreign policy

a) The main area of interest for Lebanon's international partners currently revolves around security issues directly related to the Lebanese-Israeli conflict and its regional and global implications. In the second quarter of this year, there was an increase in the intensity of contacts with Lebanon from senior representatives of the European Union. In May, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, visited Lebanon (accompanied by the President of Cyprus, Nikos Christodoulides). The purpose of the visit to Beirut was to discuss the most pressing domestic and regional challenges.

The Commissioner announced that the EU would provide Lebanon with a financial aid package worth EUR 1 billion, to be distributed over the years 2024–2027. The funds are intended to help ensure citizens' access to essential services such as education, social protection, and healthcare. The support will be accompanied by the introduction of necessary and urgent reforms in the economic, financial, and banking sectors. The aid will also cover the Lebanese armed forces and state security institutions – they are to receive equipment and training, including in border management and combating smuggling. The visit of the President of the European Commission and the conditions attached to the EU financial support were met with criticism from certain political groups (including the FPM) and religious circles in Lebanon, which described the aid package as a bribe aimed at keeping Syrians on Lebanese territory.

b) France remains one of Lebanon's most significant Western partners in shaping the country's domestic policy. In May of this year, the French President's special envoy for Lebanon, Jean-Yves Le Drian, visited the country. The purpose of the visit was to highlight the urgent need to overcome the political deadlock that has persisted since the end of the term of the former President Michel Aoun. France appears politically determined to continue its efforts aimed at stabilising Lebanon's political situation. Although Le Drian's visit did not produce tangible results, it represents an important contribution to the broader engagement of Western states in Lebanon, serving as a counterbalance to Iranian influence. Additionally, France's recent activity serves as a reminder of the existence of the "Lebanon Quintet" – a group of five countries: France, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Egypt – that have deepened cooperation with the aim of jointly developing mechanisms to help Lebanon break the political deadlock. However, the ambitious declarations of the "Lebanon Quintet" have yet to translate into any concrete achievements.

c) UNIFIL and UNSCOL remain important components influencing Lebanon's security architecture, yet their actual capacity to affect local realities is limited. Despite the activities of these UN bodies, they have not succeeded in achieving a lasting security for the areas south of the Litani River, while Hezbollah's military operations continue to intensify. The current situation casts doubt on the possibility of a full implementation of Resolution 1701 which outlines the conditions Lebanon and Israel should adhere to in order to ensure regional peace.

Economic situation

Despite some positive trends noted at the end of the first quarter, the latest indicators describing the state of Lebanon's economy are far from optimistic. In April of this year, the PMI index (which measures economic and production trends in the private sector) dropped to its lowest level in four months (48.8 points compared to 49.4 points in March) — remaining below the neutral threshold. The decline was primarily due to a weaker demand and a reduced business activity, largely linked to rising geopolitical tensions in the region. On a positive note, wages in the public sector increased, and the minimum wage in the private sector doubled (to the equivalent of USD 200).

It is worth noting that despite significant concerns within the HoReCa industry, the start of the holiday season has seen a very high volume of tourist activity. The ongoing military operations in the south of the country have not significantly affected the performance of this sector. Furthermore, LOT Polish Airlines is reporting record-high occupancy rates on its BEY-WAW-BEY route. Most passengers on this route are in transit (with the main destinations being Scandinavian countries, the US, and Canada).

Security environment

The conflict along the Lebanese-Israeli border and the IDF strikes on targets within the country continue to negatively affect the security environment, although there are currently no direct indications of the outbreak of a full-scale war. Multiple scenarios for how the situation might evolve remain possible, with the reaction of Western countries—who can exert influence on Israel—being of key importance.

For over two years, Lebanon has been facing a political crisis stemming from an electoral deadlock following the departure of Michel Aoun from office and the parliament's ongoing failure to elect a new head of state (the Lebanese president must be a Maronite Christian).

Since October 2023, the total number of casualties has risen to over 1,800 people killed and 9,100 injured. The victims include civilians, healthcare workers, and humanitarian personnel. The conflict has severely disrupted basic services, damaged critical infrastructure, and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. As of 30 September 2024, 346,209 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been identified. Additionally, over 175,000 Lebanese and Syrians have fled to Syria.

Another major issue is the collapse of the Lebanese economy, driven by rampant corruption, the worthless Lebanese pound, and the breakdown of the banking system. These factors have created difficulties in accessing electricity, services, the Internet, and cash. The concentration of strategic companies like Électricité du Liban (EDL) in the hands of prominent politicians and the control of fuel supply have paralysed everyday life in Lebanon and made citizens entirely dependent on the political cartel.

The Israeli ground invasion on 30 September 2024 also brought Lebanon's education system to a standstill. In Lebanon, two out of five students have been displaced as a result of the Israeli airstrikes. Around 500,000 of the country's 1.25 million students—roughly 40%—have been displaced due to shelling by the Israeli army. Owing to the ongoing conflict, the start of the school year was postponed to 4 November.

Lebanon's security situation is also heavily dependent on Hezbollah, particularly its political and military wings. Hezbollah is the most influential Shia party in Lebanon. To get things worse, Lebanon lacks full control over its own territory and is being treated as a proxy battleground by Iran, Hezbollah, and Israel. The weakness of the state is further demonstrated by the inaction of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) which comprises only 15,000 manpower. In military terms, the Lebanese army is relatively powerless and deemed one of the weakest in the region.

The UNIFIL mission operating in Lebanon does not improve the security environment. Its mandate does not include peace enforcement but rather focuses on monitoring the situation, providing humanitarian assistance, cooperating with the Lebanese Armed Forces, and coordinating efforts with Beirut and Tel Aviv. The mission's limited scope of operations illustrates the ineffectiveness of this contingent.

A major threat to all of Lebanon lies in regional conflicts which contribute to migratory movements. Over the past decades, Lebanon has become a place of refuge for Palestinians, Iraqis, and Syrians. Migration poses a particularly serious risk for Lebanon because Beirut often struggles to provide decent living conditions and access to public goods even for its own citizens.

Lebanon is also facing the threat of disinformation which is largely due to the efforts by Russia. A key tool of Russian propaganda in Lebanon is Sputnik Arabic whose primary target audience is the Shia population. The Kremlin's narrative is aimed at fostering negative perceptions of the West and manipulating the mood of the Arab population.

The agricultural sector in Lebanon is in decline, and a large portion of the country's food supply is imported. At the same time, the Israeli military is causing an environmental disaster reminiscent of the ecocide seen in Gaza. The IDF has destroyed vast stretches of farmland in southern Lebanon, the region's main economic sector. There is a looming food crisis in which access to food will become increasingly limited.

All these factors significantly affect the security situation in Lebanon. In what used to be "the Switzerland of the Middle East," there is currently no field or sector that enjoys relative stability. Society is living under conditions of rampant inflation, a worthless Lebanese pound, lack of access to essential services and goods, pervasive corruption, barely functional armed forces, and the political and military dominance of Hezbollah. On top of all this, the Israeli ground invasion of southern Lebanon threatens in the coming months to turn into an attempt to seize and "pacify" Beirut.

CHAPTER 1. Characteristics of Lebanon's information environment

In Lebanon, the media landscape is visibly divided between outlets that support the current government through the dissemination of propaganda and those that oppose the official narrative. This division often reflects the broader rivalry between pro- and anti-Hezbollah factions within the country. Lebanese media are heavily politicised, with only a handful of outlets attempting to maintain objectivity. In addition to television programmes and newspapers, individual media personalities—journalists and influencers—also have significant impact. Many of them speak out against the current regime and as a result face repression from Hezbollah. The majority of newspapers and media outlets are headquartered in Beirut.

With ten private daily newspapers published in three languages, and over 1,500 weeklies and monthlies, Lebanon accounts for around half of the publications issued in the Middle East. The country also has nine television stations and approximately 40 radio stations. Despite this diversity, over 84% of the media are politically affiliated. Of these, 27% are directly linked to political parties, 5% have direct ties to the state, and around 60% are associated with individuals who are either active in politics or aspire to become politicians. Furthermore, roughly 32% of the most popular media outlets are owned by at least eight of Lebanon's most prominent families. As such, Lebanon possesses one of the most politically dominated media landscapes in the region, with nearly two-thirds of outlets owned by politically active individuals or parties.

Television is the most popular medium (reaching 80% of the population), followed by radio (50%), and online content (40%). However, online media are becoming increasingly influential.

Except for public broadcasters, all media companies in Lebanon are privately owned. Most are registered as joint-stock companies (*Société anonyme libanaise*) or limited liability companies (*Société à responsabilité limitée*). Some media outlets are not affiliated with a formal media company; for example, Bint Jbeil, Lebanon Debate, and El Shark are individual enterprises, while others like Ya Sour are operated by associations in accordance with the 1909 law.

Most companies were established as separate legal entities for a specific media outlet and do not operate in other sectors. The only exceptions are a few companies that span multiple audiovisual sectors, such as Lebanese Communication Group L.C.G. SAL (which runs Al-Manar and Al-Nour), Al Jadeed SAL (Al-Jadeed and Al Jadeed 90.3 FM), and National Broadcasting Network SAL (NBN and Al-Risala Radio). The media landscape in Lebanon is characterised by the dominance of private owners and a wide array of media platforms.

Over the years, each political group has come to possess its own television network tailored to its target audience. This trend has gradually expanded into online media sources such as digital newspapers, social media news accounts, and political social media accounts.

To summarise, the majority of Lebanese media outlets are heavily politicised:

(a) **They are directly affiliated with specific political parties**, such as Hezbollah (Al Manar, Al Nour), Amal (National Broadcasting Network), Kataeb (Voix du Liban), the Lebanese Forces (Radio Liban Libre), or the Lebanese Communist Party (Sawy El Shaeb);

(b) **They are linked to politicians, former officials, or their families**. For example, media sympathetic to former President Michel Aoun and his Free Patriotic Movement due to personal connections include OTV, El Nashra, and Sawt el Mada, while Lebanon 24 is owned by the family of current Prime Minister Najib Mikati, among others;

(c) **They are associated with foreign capital**, e.g., Al Modon (Qatar).

The politicisation of Lebanese media is further reinforced by the fact that many outlets are controlled by powerful political dynasties. For example, the Hariri family controls The Daily Star, Sawt Beirut International, and Radio Orient, and has influence over Annahar; the Murr family controls MTV, El Nashra, Al Joumhouria, and more.

As of 2024, Lebanon ranks 140th out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index. Political control over media ownership is a serious issue, which translates to a highly polarised and biased media landscape. Media ownership significantly affects content and thus plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion. In the hands of politicians, media can be used to serve personal interests through biased reporting and the amplification of political reach

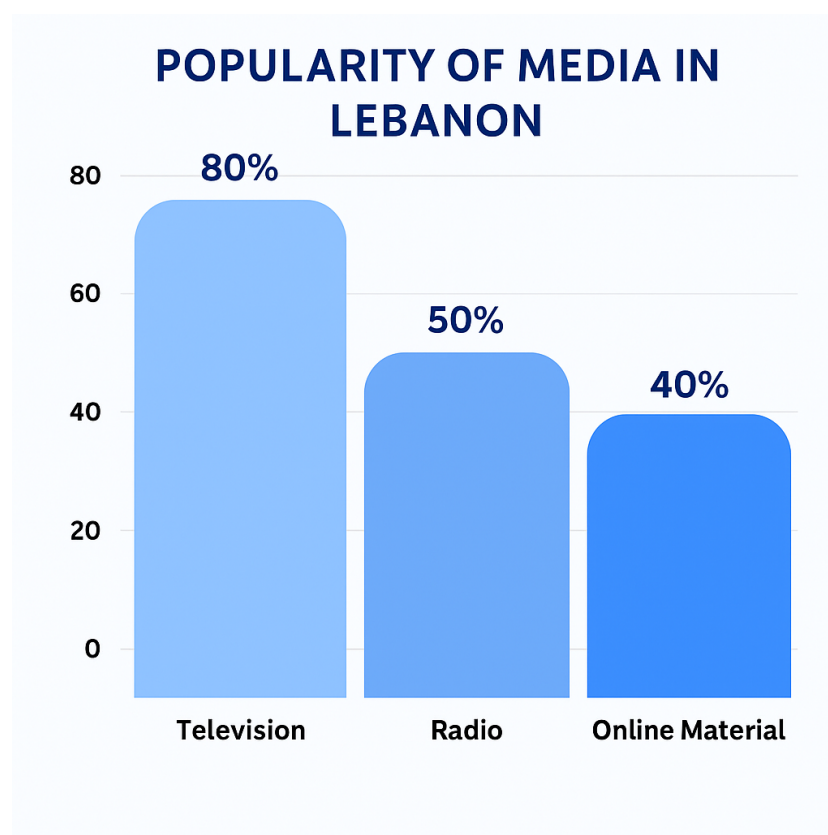


Chart 1. Popularity of media in Lebanon.

1.1. Traditional media outlets

1.1.1 Television

State-owned TV stations

Télé Liban — تلفزيون لبنان	
Official website: Télé Liban	The Lebanese public television broadcaster, managed by the Ministry of Information currently headed by Minister Ziad Makari, provides national news and entertainment. It is the first Lebanese public TV network and is owned by the Lebanese government. Programmes are broadcast in Arabic. A live stream is available at: https://www.teleliban.com.lb/live Television remains the most important news medium in Lebanon. The first television station in the Middle East was established in 1959 under the name “Compagnie libanaise de télévision,” which later became Télé Liban. The introduction of the Audiovisual Media Law No. 382 in 1994 ended Télé Liban’s broadcasting monopoly. In August 2023, there were concerns about the station’s closure due to financial difficulties; however, following a dispute with the labour union, broadcasting was temporarily resumed. Télé Liban has a limited reach compared to private channels, with a market share of 8% during the last elections in 2022. The current acting director general is Viviane Lebbos.

Al-Manar	
Official website: Al-Manar	Lebanese satellite television, owned by the political party Hezbollah and broadcasting from Beirut. It is managed by the Lebanese Communication Group L.C.G. It is the official media outlet of Hezbollah, delivering content aligned with the group’s political agenda. One of its key shareholders is Mohammad Hassan Raad (a politician of the Lebanese Shia Islamist political party and militia Hezbollah). The channel’s director general is Ibrahim Farhat, known for his active support of journalists and promotion of Hezbollah’s narrative. The station broadcasts programmes in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish. The United States designated Al-Manar as a Global Terrorist Entity and placed the television channel on its sanctions list in 2006. Although Al-Manar is affiliated with Hezbollah and not directly controlled by the government, some consider it a significant broadcaster due to Hezbollah’s political presence in Lebanon. However, it is more representative of a specific faction of Lebanese society rather than a formal public broadcaster in the traditional sense, such as Télé Liban.

Private TV stations

MTV (Murr Television)	
Official website: • MTV (Murr Television)	As a prominent private television station in Lebanon, MTV is considered one of the most important in the country. It was established in 1991 by Michel Murr, a Lebanese businessman and a public figure. The station gained popularity due to its moderate editorial stance and independence from Hezbollah, distinguishing it from many other channels in the region. MTV offers a wide range of programming, including live coverage of national events, news, analysis, and entertainment shows. It broadcasts in both Arabic and English, allowing it to reach a broader audience, including international viewers. The station is known for its reliable reporting and active engagement with current political developments, making it a significant source of information for Lebanese society. MTV not only delivers news but also contributes to public debate, positioning itself as an influential voice in Lebanon's media landscape. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/mtvlebanon.news?igsh=MXM0cTc4aWF0NGxzZA== X: https://x.com/MTVLebanon

LBCI (Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International)	
Official website: • LBCI	It is one of the most important private television stations in Lebanon, recognised as the country's first such broadcaster. It was established in 1992 by Pierre Daher (who remains its president and formerly led PAC Ltd., one of the largest production companies in the region until its closure in 2012). Initially associated with the Christian militia Lebanese Forces during the civil war, the station became independent in the post-war period. It quickly gained popularity thanks to its diverse entertainment and news programming, as well as its commitment to political criticism, particularly of Hezbollah. The station produces many popular shows that have earned acclaim among viewers, including talk shows, dramas, and live coverage of both national and international events. LBCI is a leading source of news and entertainment in Lebanon and among the Lebanese diaspora worldwide. In addition to its domestic channel, it offers international versions—LBC Europe and LBC America—targeting Lebanese citizens in Europe and the Americas, enabling it to reach a wider audience. Content is available in both Arabic and English, enhancing its accessibility. Formerly known as LDC (Lebanese Diaspora Channel), the station plays a key role in shaping public opinion in Lebanon and representing Lebanese values internationally. It promotes liberal values, which often provoke controversy. The station is also engaged in social initiatives such as "Cheyef 7alak," a citizen journalism campaign, and collaborations with UNICEF to amplify the voices of children in Lebanon.

	Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/lbcilebanonnews?igsh=MXJhYWxzNWtmnJpYQ== X: https://x.com/LBCI_NEWS
--	--

Al-Jadeed	
Official website: • Al-Jadeed	Al-Jadeed (formerly known as New TV) is a television station founded in 1992 by the Lebanese Communist Party. Initially gaining popularity, it was forcibly shut down in 1997 due to a lack of required licensing—a move widely seen as retaliation for its criticism of the pro-Syrian Lebanese regime. In 2001, the station was relaunched by Tahseen Khayat, owner of the Tahseen Group, and in early 2007, it was rebranded as Al-Jadeed. Al-Jadeed is known for its editorial stance critical of the Future Movement and the March 14 Alliance, making it a significant voice in Lebanon's media landscape. The station focuses on current affairs and investigative journalism, offering viewers 24-hour programming. It broadcasts in Arabic and aims to attract audiences through comprehensive and credible coverage of domestic and international events. Through its strong engagement with political and social issues, Al-Jadeed plays an important role in shaping public opinion in Lebanon and across the region. X: https://x.com/ALJADEEDNEWS

OTV Orange (OTV Lebanon)	
Official website: • OTV Orange	OTV Orange (OTV Lebanon) is a public television station in Lebanon, founded in 2007 by former President Michel Aoun. The station is closely affiliated with the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), a political party that promotes Lebanese nationalism and implements Aoun's political agenda. It is managed by the company Alubnaniah lil Ilam SAL, whose shares are controlled by the Aoun family and close associates (its CEO, Roy Hachem, is the husband of Mireille Aoun, Michel Aoun's daughter). OTV is owned and operated by supporters of the movement, making it a key platform for its political messaging. The station is publicly listed and aims to provide news, cultural, social, and political programming. OTV focuses on issues relevant to the Lebanese and Arab diaspora worldwide, offering content in Arabic, French, and Armenian. With its diverse programming, OTV seeks to reach a broad audience by delivering news, analysis, and entertainment that reflect the interests and concerns of Lebanese society. The station plays a significant role in shaping public debate in Lebanon, particularly regarding politics and culture. However, it is frequently criticised for undermining the legitimacy of social protests and for consistently broadcasting pro-government interviews that highlight the FPM's alliance with Hezbollah. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/otvlebanon/

	X: https://x.com/otvlebanon?lang=en Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/OTVLebanon/ Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/OtvLebanon/videos
--	--

Al Mayadeen TV	
Official website: • Al Mayadeen TV	Al Mayadeen TV is a Lebanese pan-Arab news channel founded in 2012 by a group of former Al Jazeera Arabic employees. Their decision to establish a new station stemmed from dissatisfaction with Al Jazeera's coverage of the Syrian conflict. Al Mayadeen TV has reporters in most Arab countries, allowing it to provide a wide range of information and analysis on regional events. The channel broadcasts in three languages: Arabic, Spanish, and English, enabling it to reach a diverse audience. Its strong focus on events in Lebanon is often associated with promoting pro-Iranian perspectives, making it a significant voice in the context of regional politics. Operating 24 hours a day, it offers news programmes, analysis, and debates, serving as an alternative to Gulf-based channels such as Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya. Al Mayadeen TV is also known for its engagement in progressive narratives for various groups and its support for the "axis of resistance," which includes Iran, Syria, and organisations such as Hezbollah. With its unique approach, the channel has gained considerable popularity among viewers seeking alternative information and commentary on the situation in the region.

National Broadcasting Network (NBN)	
Official website: • National Broadcasting Network	National Broadcasting Network (NBN) is a Lebanese television channel that serves as the official broadcaster of the Amal Movement, representing the Shia community. The station was founded in 1996 by Nabih Berri, the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament and leader of Amal. Its current Director General is Ali Hamdan, a former media adviser to Berri, and the news director is Mohammad Nouredine—convicted in 2018 for money laundering and criminal conspiracy—who oversees the station's political content. NBN broadcasts primarily in Arabic and holds a national viewership share of approximately 4.8%, making it one of the notable players in the Lebanese media market. The channel is known for its pro-government, pro-Syrian, and pro-Iranian editorial stance, consistently promoting Amal's alliances, including its cooperation with Hezbollah. In 2000, NBN launched a satellite channel to reach the Shia diaspora in the Arab region, Africa, and Europe. NBN offers free content accessible not only via traditional television but also on various mobile devices and computers, increasing its availability to viewers. As a pro-Amal station, NBN frequently reflects the views and interests of the Shia community, making it an influential tool in shaping public opinion in Lebanon.

	The station is also committed to promoting the values and ideology of the movement. Its programming includes news, talk shows, and cultural and political content. Thanks to its close ties with the Amal Movement, NBN plays a key role in communicating between political leaders and the Shia population in Lebanon. X: https://x.com/AlMayadeenNews
--	--

Lebanon 24 TV	
Official website: • Lebanon 24 TV	Lebanon 24 TV is a modern television channel owned by Investcom Holding, a group controlled by the Mikati family. The station was established with the goal of providing viewers with reliable information about events in Lebanon and the broader Middle East region. Lebanon 24 TV focuses on a wide range of topics, including local and international politics, finance, and sports, making it a versatile source of news. The channel is known for its rapid updates and in-depth reports on current affairs, making it a key source of information for those interested in the Lebanese political and international context. In addition, the station is actively involved in analyzing events and phenomena that affect Lebanon's situation, frequently publishing content that combines curated news with original analysis. Lebanon 24 TV broadcasts in Arabic, allowing it to reach a broad audience both domestically and abroad. The channel is also engaged in promoting values and ideologies, and its programming includes news, talk shows, as well as cultural and political programmes. Thanks to its close ties with the Amal Movement, NBN plays a key role in facilitating communication between political leaders and the Shia community in Lebanon.

Télé Lumière (NOURSAT)	
Official website: • Télé Lumière	Télé Lumière (NOURSAT) is the first Christian television station in Lebanon and the Arab world, established in 1991. Since 2003, it has been broadcasting satellite programs worldwide under the name Noursat. Operated by the Catholic Convention of Bishops of Lebanon, the station aims to promote Christian values, religious teachings, and interfaith dialogue. The channel offers a variety of religious content, including live broadcasts of services, Bible studies, religious discussions, prayers, and hymns. Programs are available in Arabic and English, allowing the station to reach a broad audience. Télé Lumière is independent of any political party or commercial entity, and its operations rely on support from the Christian community. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/noursatnetwork/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/NoursatNetwork/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT3l7eP2aITz4TTGH6yqFTQ

Future International	
Official website: • Future International	Future International was a free-to-air television station that began broadcasting in 1993 at the initiative of Rafik Hariri, former Prime Minister of Lebanon and a prominent political figure. The station gained popularity through its news and entertainment programming, as well as by serving as a platform for promoting the views of the Future Movement. Future TV was available not only in Lebanon but also across Arab countries and regions such as the European Union, the United States, Canada, and Australia, making it a key source of information for the Lebanese diaspora. Currently, the channel is suspended, meaning it is no longer engaged in broadcasting activities.

At least two television stations were temporarily shut down due to their opposition to the authorities: Al Jadeed in 1997 and MTV in 2002.

1.1.2 Press & News Agency (Press)

Historically, Lebanon was known for having one of the highest rates of privately owned newspapers per capita in the Middle East and North Africa region. Today, out of 110 licensed publishing houses in the country, only 8 daily newspapers and fewer than 20 political weekly or monthly magazines are still in circulation.

Foreign funding, which used to be the primary financial source for print media, has significantly declined since Gulf countries launched their own television channels and media networks. This trend has intensified in recent years due to the global financial crisis and the drop in oil prices. For example, Assafir, once one of the most popular newspapers in Lebanon, sold over 50,000 copies a day in 2010, but by 2016—when it was ultimately shut down for financial reasons—its circulation had dropped below 10,000.

By 2024, print newspapers have largely been replaced by their online versions, and new revenue-generating models have started to dominate.

Lebanese National News Agency; National News Agency (NNA)	
Official website: • National News Agency	A government news agency that provides reports and updates from both Lebanon and abroad. The Lebanese National News Agency operates as the main source of official news, statements, and announcements from Lebanon and foreign sources. Established in 1961, it functions under the supervision of the Ministry of Information, delivering information on political, social, and economic developments in Lebanon. The NNA publishes content in both Arabic and English, enabling it to reach an international audience. The agency releases reports from press conferences, government announcements, and other official statements, serving as a key source for both local and international media. It plays an essential role in conveying the official positions of the Lebanese government and in reporting the latest developments within the country and the region.

Akhbar Al Yawm أخبار اليوم	
Official website: • Akhbar Al Yawm	Akhbar Al Yawm (أخبار اليوم) is a news channel licensed by the Lebanese Ministry of Information, managed by Omar Rassi and Bassam Abou Zeid. The channel maintains very close ties with political figures. It actively covers ongoing conflicts and diplomatic negotiations related to Lebanon, Israel, and other regional actors Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/akhbaralyawmleb X: https://x.com/akhbaralyawm

The Daily Star	
Official website: • The Daily Star	The Daily Star, an English-language newspaper founded in 1952 in Lebanon, has been a key source of information on Lebanese politics and Middle Eastern conflicts, particularly valued for its reporting on the Lebanese Civil War and the Arab-Israeli conflict. In 2010, it was acquired by a group of businessmen closely linked to the Hariri ¹ family which represents Sunni interests, although it appears to no longer have ties to the family today. The newspaper, which has repeatedly faced financial difficulties, currently limits its activity to online publications. Malek Mrowa, son of founder Kamel Mrowa, serves as chairman of the board and also has close connections to Al-Hayat, another newspaper established by his father. The Daily Star provides news and analysis concerning Lebanon and regional affairs. It is available in English.

¹ The Hariri family is one of the most influential and well-known families in Lebanon, particularly in the context of politics and business. It is led by Saad Hariri, former Prime Minister of Lebanon and the son of Rafik Hariri, a popular politician and businessman who served as Prime Minister from 1992 to 2000 and again from 2009 to 2011. Rafik Hariri was also renowned for his numerous investments in the development of Beirut and other regions of Lebanon. The family has strong ties to the Sunni community in Lebanon and is known for promoting reform and stability in the country. Following the assassination of Rafik Hariri in 2005, the family became a symbol of resistance to Syrian dominance in Lebanon.

Al-SAFA News	
Official website: • Al-SAFA News	Al-Safa News is an independent news platform that evolved from a former newspaper. Today, it primarily operates as a website, offering news and analysis across various fields. Due to its stated commitment to impartiality, Al-Safa News strives to provide objective information. The service is available in three languages: Arabic, French, and English, allowing it to reach a wide audience both in Lebanon and among the diaspora.

AAI Akhbar جريدة الأخبار	
Official website: • Al Akhbar	Al Akhbar is an Arabic-language tabloid daily. It is known for its criticism towards the establishment and for publishing insightful political analyses. It displays a pro-Hezbollah stance.

L'Orient-Le Jour	
Official website: • L'Orient-Le Jour	L'Orient-Le Jour, founded in 1971 through the merger of the newspapers L'Orient and Le Jour, is the leading French-language daily in Lebanon, promoting the values of pluralism, democracy, and freedom of expression. Led by Nayla de Freige, the newspaper has received prestigious awards, including the Grande Médaille de la Francophonie, for its contribution to promoting French culture. In 2020, it launched a sister platform, L'Orient Today, aimed at an international audience. L'Orient-Le Jour is committed to financial independence and encourages intercultural dialogue. On the occasion of its centenary in September 2024, it organised the “Un vent de liberté” festival in honour of freedom of speech and cultural diversity. The newspaper provides news and analysis while promoting democratic values, pluralism, and openness to intercultural exchange. It is known for addressing sensitive topics in Lebanon. The outlet also offers content in English. X: https://x.com/LOrientLeJour

Al Joumhouria	
Official website: • Al Joumhouria	Al Joumhouria is a daily newspaper that offers a wide range of content, including local and international news, business, art, science, health, fashion, culture, sports, and technology. It is owned by Al Joumhouria News Corp SAL, part of the Murr Group, highlighting its strong ties to the Lebanese media landscape. The newspaper has a right-leaning political orientation, emphasising values of Lebanese nationalism and Christian democracy, which is reflected in its coverage and commentary on current events. Additionally, it is affiliated with the Lebanese Socialist Party, which influences its editorial stance.

An-Nahar	
Official website: • An-Nahar	An-Nahar is one of the oldest and most influential newspapers in Lebanon, offering Arabic-language content. The owners of the newspaper—members of the Tueni² family—play a key role in the title's editorial staff. The newspaper has become an important forum for critics of foreign influence in Lebanon, especially during the Syrian occupation, when it often took a critical stance towards the authorities. An-Nahar provides a diverse range of content, including local and international news, social issues, health, and technology. Since 2009, it has also operated a WebTV service, expanding its reach and accessibility. It is known for promoting freedom of speech, transparency, and reform in Lebanon, making it a significant voice in the country's media landscape.

El Shark	
Official website: • El Shark	El Shark is an Arabic-language newspaper focusing on national and regional events. It is published by Dar El Shark from Qatar and has been an important part of the Lebanese media landscape for many years. The newspaper is associated with the Karam family and maintains a conservative, pro-establishment stance in its reporting. Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/elsharkonline/

El Kalima	
Official website: • El Kalima	El Kalima is an Arabic-language newspaper based in the city of Zahle, known in the region for its local coverage and analysis of national events. Its publications cover a wide range of topics, including politics, the economy, and culture, making it an important source of information for residents and the local community.

Ad – Dyiar	
Official website: • Ad – Dyiar	Ad-Diyar is an Arabic-language daily newspaper founded in Lebanon in 1941, known for its pro-Syrian stance and political analysis. It is directed by Charles Ayoub, who owns 98.6% of Al-Nahda SAL, the newspaper's publishing company. Ayoub is a controversial figure, formerly associated with the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), from which he was eventually expelled. In the past, Ayoub has faced multiple defamation charges and was temporarily detained in Dubai. Despite this, Ad-Diyar remains one of the more influential Lebanese media outlets, promoting pro-government and pro-Iranian views, and also sharing commentary on French news via Ayoub's social media accounts.

² In Lebanon's history, members of this family have been actively involved in resisting foreign influence, particularly during the Syrian occupation. The family's journalistic tradition continues to this day, and their newspaper remains one of the key voices in the Lebanese media landscape.

Alahed News العهد الإخباري	
Official website: • Alahed News	Alahed News is a news service owned by Hezbollah. Available in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish, it focuses on delivering news and analysis from Hezbollah's perspective. As a platform affiliated with the organization, the service promotes its stance on political, social, and regional matters, making it an important communication tool for its supporters.

Al Aman	
Official website: • Al Aman	Al Aman is a magazine dedicated to the topic of security, published by Balagh Media, Press and Publishing Company. It is characterised by strong ties to Islam which influence its editorial stance and approach to the issues discussed. The magazine provides information and analyses on security matters in both religious and social contexts.

Al-Binaa	
Official website: • Al-Binaa	Al-Binaa is a daily newspaper in Lebanon, published by the National Media Company, which is closely affiliated with the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP). The editor-in-chief is Nasser Qandil, a Lebanese politician. The newspaper focuses on local and regional news, politics, and social issues, promoting cultural and national views associated with the SSNP. Al-Binaa has a relatively small market share of around 0.3%, which classifies it as a niche publication.

Al Liwaa جريدة اللواء	
Official website: • Al Liwaa	Al-Liwaa is a daily Arabic-language newspaper, considered one of the leading and oldest in Lebanon. It was founded in 1963 by Abdel Ghani Salam. The newspaper has strong ties to the pro-March 14 Alliance, a political coalition opposing Hezbollah's influence and military presence in Lebanon. Due to its longstanding presence in the media landscape, Al-Liwaa plays a significant role in shaping public debate in the country.

1.1.3 Radio

Over 40 radio stations operate in Lebanon, making this sector one of the most diverse in the media landscape. In 2022, 72% of stations broadcast in Arabic, 48% in English, and 24% in French.

State-owned radio stations

Radio Liban	
Official website: Radio Liban	Radio Liban, the oldest state-owned radio station in Lebanon, was founded in 1938 as Radio Orient and has been under the supervision of the Lebanese Ministry of Information since 1946. It is the government's official radio station, offering a variety of news and entertainment programmes. It is the only state-run radio station in Lebanon; six others are affiliated with political parties, and two (Voix de Tout le Liban 93.3 and Radio Orient) are owned by Lebanese families involved in politics. Despite facing financial, technical, and logistical challenges, the station continues to operate under the leadership of Mohammed Gharib, broadcasting cultural, news, and current affairs programmes on FM frequencies. Gharib actively collaborates with Arab broadcasters to modernise the station and encourage programme exchange. Radio Liban has received numerous awards, including the "Media Excellence" award from the Arab League, and its programme director, Rita Najem Rumi, manages the station's content, enriching the schedule with socio-cultural programming and actively representing the station at international events.

Private radio stations

(VDL) - FM	
Official website: (VDL) - FM	VDL is one of the oldest private radio stations in Lebanon, broadcasting on FM frequency 100.3 in Beirut. Affiliated with the Kataeb Party, the station offers a wide range of content, including news, political, social, cultural, and entertainment programmes. VDL broadcasts for 20 hours a day, covering all Lebanese territories as well as neighbouring countries, making it an important source of information and entertainment in the region.

Radio Liban Libre – إذاعة لبنان الحر	
Official website: Radio Liban Libre	Radio Liban Libre is a radio station affiliated with the Lebanese Forces, a Christian-democratic political party that emerged from the resistance movement during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990). This party represents the interests of the Maronite Christian community in Lebanon and plays a key role in defending its rights and values within the country's multi-confessional political system. The Lebanese Forces advocate for

	democracy, national sovereignty, close relations with the West, as well as the protection of religious freedom, human rights, and the promotion of a market economy. They support maintaining the balance within Lebanon's political structure, which is based on a delicate power-sharing arrangement among various religious groups. As the voice of this party, Radio Liban Libre plays a significant role in shaping public opinion by delivering news, political analysis, and programmes of a social, cultural, and religious nature. In doing so, the station not only informs but also promotes values aligned with Christian-democratic ideology and a pro-Western political orientation, thereby reinforcing its position as an important element of the Lebanese media landscape.
--	---

Sawt el Mada	
Official website: • Sawt el Mada	Sawt El Mada is a Lebanese Arabic-language radio station founded in 2009, broadcasting on frequencies 92.5, 92.7, and 92.9 FM, and closely affiliated with the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM). The station focuses on politics and national events in Lebanon, and its main owner is Elias Bou Saab, former General Coordinator of the FPM and former Minister of State for Presidential Affairs (2016–2019). Despite growing tensions between Bou Saab and FPM leader Gebran Bassil, Sawt El Mada continues to air programmes that include both Bassil's speeches and critical responses from his opponents. The conflict between Bou Saab and Bassil escalated when Bou Saab relocated the station's headquarters outside the FPM's main office and publicly voiced support for Bassil's rivals. Nevertheless, the station continues to provide analyses and commentary from the FPM's perspective, which shapes its editorial direction. Due to its proximity to political leaders, Sawt El Mada plays a significant role in shaping political discourse in Lebanon.

Sawt Loubnan Radio Station	
Official website: • Sawt Loubnan Radio Station	Supported by the Lebanese Kataeb Party, it offers listeners a variety of programmes. The station's content includes news, political, social, entertainment, and technology broadcasts. Its aim is to inform people about current events and engage society in discussions on key national issues. X: https://x.com/sawtlebnaan?lang=en

Al Nour Radio	
Official website: • Al Nour Radio	A Lebanese station closely affiliated with Hezbollah. Available in Arabic, it focuses on reporting political and military events related to the organisation. The station also airs religious content, such as Quran recitations, Islamic teachings, and religious discussions, reflecting its Shia identity.

Sawt Beirut International (Voix de Beyrouth)	
Official website: • Sawt Beirut International	Sawt Beirut International, also known as Voix de Beyrouth, is a French-language radio station in Lebanon controlled by the Hariri family. The station focuses on representing Sunni interests and provides news and programs related to politics, culture, and social issues in Lebanon and the region. Its programs aim to support dialogue and communication among various social groups.

Radio Orient	
Official website: • Radio Orient	Radio Orient is a Lebanese radio station broadcasting from Beirut on frequencies 88.3 and 88.7 FM. It was founded in 1982 in Paris by Lebanese businessman Raghida al-Shammaa and has been owned by the Hariri family since 1994. It is currently managed by the company Wave Holding SAL, represented by Bahia Hariri. Radio Orient is a theoretically independent radio station that focuses on Sunni interests. It serves as an important media outlet both in Europe and the Arab world. Its programming includes news, political content, and cultural shows aimed at the Arab diaspora and Muslim communities in France and Europe. Radio Orient operates independently, allowing for a wide range of topics and viewpoints. In 2020, the station sparked controversy when presenter Muhammad al-Sibai was suspended for criticising the economic situation and Saad Hariri's financial obligations towards employees.

Fajr Radio	
Official website: • Fajr Radio	Fajr Radio is a radio station that broadcasts in Arabic and is affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, supporting Sunni movements. The station offers a variety of programs focusing on Islamic, social, and cultural topics, reflecting the values and ideas associated with Sunnism. Fajr Radio aims to reach listeners interested in Muslim and societal issues, promoting its perspective within the broader discourse on Islam.

Sawt el Shaeb	
Official website: • Sawt el Shaeb	Sawt el Shaeb is a radio station that operates in Arabic and is closely affiliated with the Lebanese Communist Party. The station focuses on political, social, and economic issues, adopting a leftist and Marxist perspective. It offers programs that include political talk shows, debates, and interviews with politicians, activists, and intellectuals. Sawt el Shaeb advocates for social and economic justice, supports secularism, and criticizes sectarianism and neoliberal economic policies.

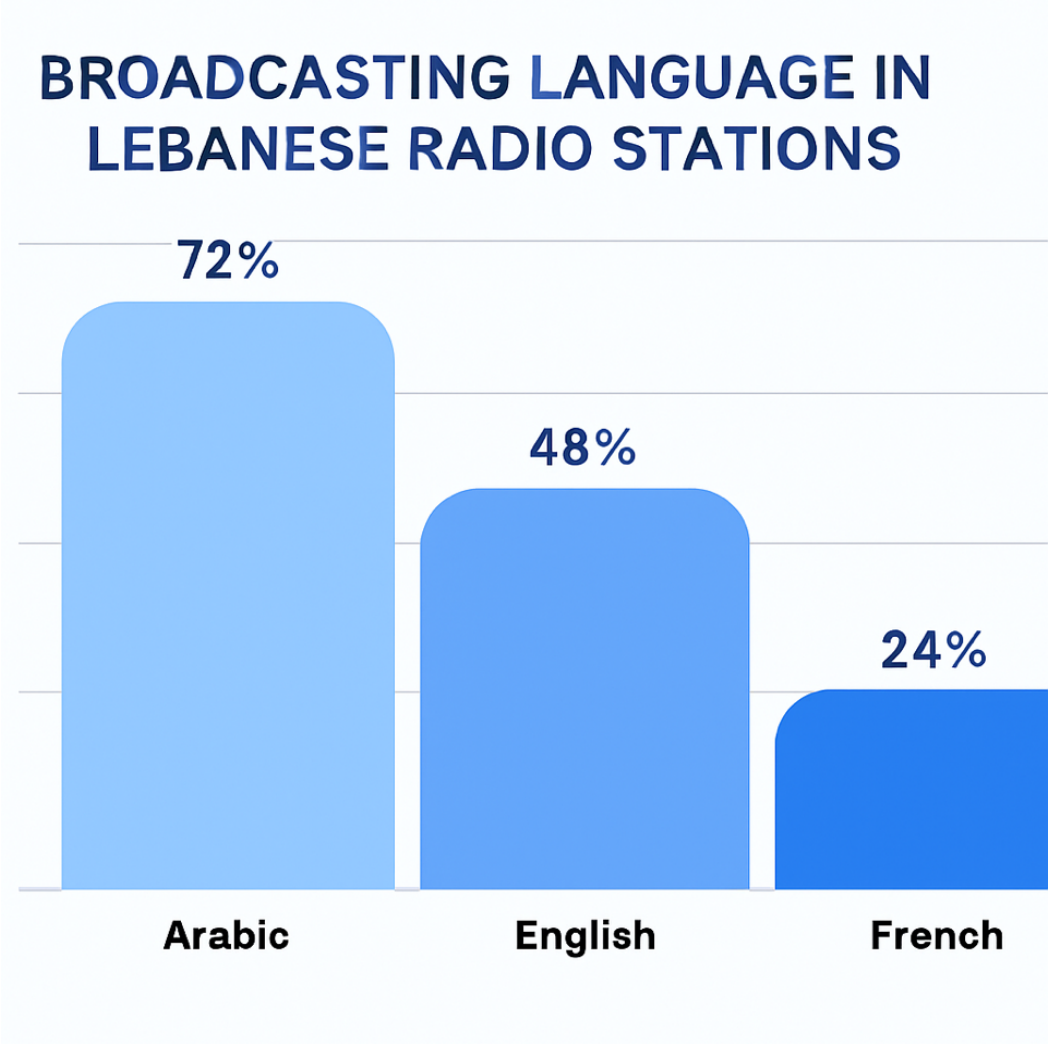


Chart 2. Broadcasting language in Lebanese radio stations

1.1.4 News websites

Thanks to digitisation, the residents of Lebanon have access to a wide range of information platforms, from 24-hour cable and satellite channels to websites and social media. However, this broad array of available media does not translate into greater plurality of opinion. Many new sources simply replicate the voices expressed in traditional media. Nevertheless, in 2024, the rise of independent alternative media—largely relying on social media platforms to broadcast and publish news in an accessible way—has reshaped the landscape of how many social groups, particularly young people, receive, consume, and further process information.

Naharnet	
Official website: • Naharnet	Naharnet, one of the first Lebanese online news portals, offers up-to-date news and analysis on Lebanon and global events. The portal operates in both English and Arabic, attracting an international audience from over 220 countries. Since 1998, Naharnet has published regular international coverage, primarily in cooperation with the Associated Press and Agence France Presse, as well as local news based on its own sources. While it is known for its objective approach and independence from political organisations, its editorial line is pro-Western and moderately pan-Arab. The editor-in-chief is Naufal Daou, a politician and founder of the Sovereignty Movement, as well as several other Lebanese institutions supporting Christian-Muslim dialogue and geopolitical research. As an outspoken critic of Iranian influence and Hezbollah, Daou in 2023 criticised France's lenient approach to Iran while praising Saudi Arabia's position. X: https://x.com/Naharnet

Ya Libnan	
Official website: • Ya Libnan	Ya Libnan is a Lebanese media outlet founded as a blog in 2005 in response to the Cedar Revolution and the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Run by educated Lebanese individuals who advocate for democracy and freedom, the outlet aims to promote values such as liberty, justice, diversity, social sovereignty, the rule of law, and the separation of religion and state. Although there is no publicly identified founder, archival versions suggest that the site is maintained by democracy-minded Lebanese contributors, including Professor Ghassan Karam. Ya Libnan's editorial stance is pro-Western and primarily targeted at an American audience, especially Democratic Party voters, though it also includes criticism of Israel, Iran, Hamas, and Hezbollah. It publishes original articles—often signed by “Ya Libnan Editorial Staff”—as well as external content, mainly from American sources and occasionally from Israel's Haaretz. X: x.com/@Ya_Libnan

Ya Sour	
Official website: • Ya Sour	Ya Sour is an online news platform based in Tyre, generally perceived as pro-Hezbollah and supportive of the political stance of the Shiite community in southern Lebanon. The website covers events in this region, relying on an extensive network of correspondents. It attracts between 120,000 and 150,000 readers daily and is published in Arabic. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/yasourpage/?hl=en Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPf_p1sNLHRyhAghZERkadw Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/yasour.org TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@yasour.org

Daraj Media	
Official website: • Daraj Media	This news platform, affiliated with Saudi Arabia, takes a critical stance toward Iran and Hezbollah. It offers analysis and news in Arabic, specializing in investigative journalism that covers issues such as corruption, human rights, social justice, and governance in Lebanon and the broader Middle East region. It is respected for its bold and uncompromising journalistic approach and independent editorial line. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/darajmedia/ X: https://x.com/daraj_media Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/darajmedia/ Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/c/DarajMedia LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/darajmedia/

Megaphone News	
Official website: • Megaphone News	Megaphone is a progressive, left-leaning Lebanese media outlet that actively engages on social media to reach younger generations—Millennials and Gen Z. Run equally by four journalists—Jean Kassir, Jamal Saleh, Samer Frangie, and Khaled Saghie— the platform focuses on human rights, anti-corruption initiatives, and anti-sectarianism, while expressing opposition to Israeli policies in the region. The founders have activist backgrounds, having participated in anti-corruption protests in Lebanon since 2015. In 2023, Jean Kassir was summoned for questioning by security services, likely due to political criticism. Megaphone is funded by international grants, including from the European Endowment for Democracy and the Open Society Foundations. Its structure includes editorial support from experienced professionals such as Frangie, an associate professor at the American University of Beirut, and Saghie, a former journalist with As-Safir and Al-Akhbar. X: https://x.com/MegaphoneNewsEN Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/megaphonenews/

Political Pen	
Official website: • Political Pen	Political Pen, operating primarily on Instagram with an impressive 314,000 followers, is a Lebanese media platform known for its strong anti-Iranian stance, openly criticizing Hezbollah as well as Israeli attacks on Gaza and Lebanon, while simultaneously promoting Christian values. The founder and editor-in-chief of Political Pen is Pierre Nahas, the son of Sabine Nahas, a Lebanese model, and Elie Nahas, who was implicated in an international prostitution scandal in Cannes in 2012. Despite its popularity on social media, Political Pen faces criticism, particularly in its comment sections, where users accuse the platform of promoting a pro-Western and anti-Islamic agenda. In 2020, Reddit users speculated that Nahas had allegedly offered electoral support to Michel el Murr, though this claim remains unverified. X: https://twitter.com/politicalpen_ Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/political.pen/?hl=en Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/@politicalpen33 TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@politicalpen

The 961	
Official website: • The 961	The961 is a Lebanese news portal founded in 2016 by Anthony Beik Kantara, a Christian entrepreneur who previously worked in various industries and described the creation of The961 as a way to support his country, Lebanon. The platform focuses on independent journalism, aiming to "offer an alternative to media controlled by parties and sects." The961 claims it receives no financial support from politicians or affiliated companies, instead funding itself through advertising, merchandise sales, donations, licensing, and projects such as its coworking space, 961Offices. Although a Canadian foundation associated with the site, The961 Foundation, was dissolved due to regulatory non-compliance, The961 remains active, targeting younger generations with accessible, modern content and a robust fact-checking division. The platform promotes principles of equality, anti-colonialism, and opposition to corruption and human rights violations. It is also developing a mobile app, for which it is gathering a waitlist to boost audience engagement. Facebook: facebook.com/961app - 142,000 followers TikTok: tiktok.com/@961app - 20,000 followers LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/961app X: x.com/961app - 3700 followers

The Public Source	
Official website: • The Public Source	The Public Source is an independent media platform focused on investigative journalism and analysis of events in Lebanon and the Middle East. X: https://x.com/thepublicsource Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/thepublicsource/?hl=en

Saida Online	
Official website: • Saida Online	Saida Online is a news portal based in Sidon, operating in Arabic. It focuses on local news and social events, maintaining an Islamist character while fostering close ties with local partisan sources

Lebanon Files	
Official website: • Lebanon Files	An Arab-language news website founded by Rabin Haber who at the same time is the editor-in-chief. The website is tied to a statistics company Statistics Lebanon. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/lebanonfiles_/?hl=en Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/@lebanonfilesOfficial

Lebanon Debate	
Official website: • Lebanon Debate	Lebanon Debate is a private Arabic-language news portal founded by IT specialist Michel Kanbour. It provides the latest local and international news in politics, tourism, and technology. The outlet focuses on generating its own news content based on brief information from various media sources, though it does not always offer in-depth analysis. Lebanon Debate is active across multiple social media platforms, and most of its content has now shifted to the Spot Shot channel, which has gained significant popularity and operates its own independent website. The outlet is known for its critical stance toward the Lebanese political establishment and frequently publishes content related to geopolitics, often addressing issues involving Israel and regional conflicts. Kanbour, also co-founder of Innovative Technology, has been repeatedly accused of personal rights violations and has been the target of smear campaigns, including allegations of cooperation with the Israeli Mossad. The current editor-in-chief, Fadi Eid, an experienced journalist who has worked for various Lebanese media outlets, continues to guide the portal's geopolitical and socio-political narrative, maintaining its broad audience both in Lebanon and abroad. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/lebanondebate/?hl=en X: https://x.com/lebanondebate Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/thelebanondebate/ Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/@LebanonDebateVideos

Bint Jbeil بنت جبيل	
Official website: • Bint Jbeil	Bint Jbeil is an Arabic-language news platform that is pro-Hezbollah. It focuses on local events and issues related to the Hezbollah movement, supporting the political perspectives of the Shia community in southern Lebanon. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/bintjbeilnews/?hl=en Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/bintjbeil.org/

Al Modon	
Official website: • Al Modon	Al-Modon is an independent news portal from Lebanon, focusing on politics, culture, and social issues. It is known for its critical stance toward Lebanese political parties and Hezbollah. With a liberal and progressive editorial line, the portal is funded by the Qatari company Fadaat Media and plays a significant role in shaping public opinion in the region. Although Fadaat Media also supports Al-Araby Al-Jadeed and Syria TV, Al-Modon has at times come under pressure from Qatar, especially regarding its policy toward regional players like Hezbollah. As a result, editor-in-chief Sateh Nouredine resigned, and his position was taken over by analyst Mounir Rabih, who has published hundreds of political analyses on Lebanon and the Middle East. X: https://x.com/almodononline Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/almodononline YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/Almodononline

Mustaqbal Web	
Official website: • Mustaqbal Web	Mustaqbal Web to cyfrowa wersja gazety Al-Mustaqbal, zamkniętej w 2019 roku z powodu problemów finansowych, i jest ściśle powiązana z rodziną Hariri oraz partią Future Movement, założoną przez zamordowanego premiera Rafiqą Haririego. Obecnie na czele partii stoi Saad Hariri, były premier Libanu. Medium pozostaje w opozycji do Iranu i Hezbollahu, prezentując umiarkowany, informacyjny przekaz i traktując Izrael jako „armię okupanta” w sposób typowy dla umiarkowanych arabskich mediów. Strona zawiera osobne sekcje dotyczące bieżących działań Future Movement oraz liczne materiały o Rafiq Haririm, będąc jednocześnie w dużej mierze własnością rodziny Hariri. Redaktorem naczelnym portalu jest prawdopodobnie Hani Hammoud, doradca medialny Saada Haririego, a menedżerem Saad Al-Ayali, choć te informacje nie są w pełni potwierdzone. Facebook: facebook.com/mustaqbalweblb/ - 73,000 followers Instagram: instagram.com/mustaqbalweb - 11,100 followers, no content posted since the end of 2023 X: x.com/mustaqbalweblb - 39,200 followers YouTube: youtube.com/mustaqbalweb - 12,300 followers, 489 videos, no content posted for the last 4 years LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/mustaqbal-web

Lebanese Forces News	
Official website: • Lebanese Forces News	Lebanese Forces News is a digital news portal affiliated with the Christian political party Lebanese Forces, whose leader is Samir Geagea. The medium has a right-wing and conservative character, supports the ideas of Lebanon's sovereignty, and opposes the influence of Iran and Syria in the country, clearly criticizing Hezbollah. It mainly publishes in Arabic, with selected materials in English. The content includes political, social, and economic news, often from a distinctly pro-party perspective and promoting the actions and positions of the Lebanese Forces. The portal's editorial office operates at the party headquarters in Jounieh, and the editor-in-chief is appointed by the party leadership. The site also features political commentaries and analyses, reports and interviews, as well as broadcasts from party press conferences. Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/lebaneseforcesnews - 344,000 followers X: https://x.com/LebForcesNews - 50,000 followers YouTube: @Lebaneseforceslebaneseforces - 19,700 followers

Tayyar.org	
Official website: • Tayyar.org	Tayyar.org is a media outlet closely affiliated with Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), created with the goal of promoting the party's agenda. Although the site does not disclose its editor-in-chief, sources suggest it is Patrick Bassil, who ceased publishing after Aoun's term ended. Initially part of the March 14 Alliance, the FPM quickly shifted allegiance to the pro-Syrian, pro-Iranian March 8 Alliance and signed a memorandum of understanding with Hezbollah. The party's current leader, Gebran Bassil—known for controversial actions that contributed to the government's collapse—openly collaborates with Hezbollah. This is reflected in Tayyar.org's content, which frequently features reports on casualties inflicted on the IDF. The site often refers to the IDF as the "so-called army," and selects international news that supports the FPM's narrative, particularly portraying Israel as irrational and criminal. Facebook: facebook.com/tayyarorg/ - 769,000 followers Instagram: instagram.com/tayyar.org - 49,000 followers X: x.com/tayyar_org - 166,000 followers YouTube: there are two YT channels linked to this outlet, yet there is no telling if they are official youtube.com/@tayyarorgvideos - 4 450 followers, 1800 videos youtube.com/@Tayyarorgvideo - 571 followers, 352 videos

Kataeb.org	
Official website: • Kataeb.org	Available in Arabic, linked to the party Kataeb. It focuses on social and political events in Lebanon, offering commentaries and analyses that align with the party's political agenda.
El Marada	
Official website: • El Marada	Available in Arabic, tied to the Marada Movement. It offers news reporting and provides analyses on politics, economy and social affairs in Lebanon.
Cedar News	
Official website: • Cedar News	Available in Arabic, it delivers news on Lebanon and the whole region, with special focus on the current political and social events.
Google News Lebanon	
Official website: • Google News Lebanon	A platform that aggregates Arabic-language news, offering the review of information on the current events in Lebanon from diverse sources.
Raseef22	
Official website: • Raseef22	A media platform that focuses on analyses and commentaries concerning social and political matters in the Arab world. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/raseef22/?hl=en X: https://x.com/raseef22?lang=en YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@Raseef22 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Raseef22/

Badil Media (The Alternative Policy Institute)	
Official website: • Badil Media	Badil Media, operating under the name “The Alternative Policy Institute,” is a Lebanese media platform and think tank founded by Triangle Global, headquartered in Malta. It focuses on the Global South, offering alternative narratives and expert analysis to empower citizens to shape their own futures. Managed by Nizar Ghanem and Sami Halabi, Badil emerged in response to the 2019 protests in Lebanon, sparked by controversial government financial proposals and corruption. Halabi, a dual U.S.-Lebanese citizen, specializes in human rights and migration issues, while Ghanem, an economics expert, has been critical of the government for deepening the country's crisis. Known for its progressive and leftist stance, Badil is vocal in its criticism of Lebanon's sectarian system and advocates for radical political and social reform. The platform publishes high-quality articles, often accompanied by infographics, addressing Israeli-Lebanese relations, rising support for Palestine, and the challenges of countering Hezbollah. Its content is aimed primarily at decision-makers and influencers, and often includes criticism of Israel's limited understanding of Lebanese society. Badil analysts collaborate with international organizations such as the EU, UN, WFP, and the Polish Hospitality Foundation, providing technical support for projects like Ukraine Response. Polish experts Michał Misiak and Klaudia Jankowska-Maddison are also involved with Triangle Global, contributing to data analysis and humanitarian initiatives in Central Asia and Turkey. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/badilmedia/ X: https://x.com/Badilmedia Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/badilalternative/

Annahar	
Official website: • Annahar	Annahar is one of the most prominent Arabic media outlets, founded in 1933 by Gebran Tueni, a Christian Arab of Syrian descent, and has remained in the Tueni family for decades. The current editor-in-chief is Nayla Tueni, the founder's granddaughter, who received the Women's Champion Award for her contributions to press freedom and women's rights. The director of publications is Ghassan Hajjar, who is actively involved in promoting interfaith dialogue, including through the Nahar Al Shabab initiative. According to Wikipedia, approximately 17% of Annahar is owned by Saudi billionaire and royal family member Al Waleed bin Talal al Saud, 23% belongs to the Tueni family, and 39.6% is held by the Hariri family through Al Mal Investment Co. SAL Holding. This respected Lebanese media outlet focuses on the country's politics and culture, offering news bulletins, talk shows, interviews, and reports, providing in-depth analysis of events in Lebanon and the region. It is also known for its strong advocacy of press freedom and transparency. During the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, it maintained a critical stance toward the regime. Today, it is critical of Iran and Hezbollah and strongly anti-Israel, though it strives to maintain objectivity by also criticizing Western hypocrisy. As part of its innovative efforts, it launched an AI model called

	"President Al" and published seven discontinued Lebanese newspapers in protest against censorship. It also launched a WebTV platform and maintains a strong presence on social media, attracting an international audience. Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/annaharnews/?hl=en X: https://x.com/Annahar Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Annaharlb/
--	--

Foreign news services

Al Jazeera Lebanon	
Official website: • Al Jazeera Lebanon	Al Jazeera Lebanon does not operate as a separate channel, and Lebanese viewers widely rely on Al Jazeera Arabic — the Qatari station known for promoting a pro-government narrative aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood, and regarded as a tool of Qatar's influence on the international stage. It was established with the support of Qatar's Emir, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, and is currently overseen by Hamad bin Thamer Al Thani, a member of the Qatari royal family. Although Al Jazeera claims to be independent, it has sparked controversy due to its structural ties to the Qatari government. Reports — including those commissioned by the UAE — suggest that the station promotes Qatari interests and Islamic groups such as Hamas, as well as Iran. Its close relationship with China has also drawn attention, particularly due to co-productions with CICC, an entity linked to the Chinese propaganda apparatus. Al Jazeera played an active role during the Arab Spring, and in 2024 it was banned in Israel for activities deemed a threat to national security. Arabic-language version (original): • X: x.com/AJArabicnet - active (427,600 followers) • Facebook: facebook.com/aljazeera.net - active (3.7 million followers) • Instagram: @aljazeera - active (9.7 million observers) • Whatsapp: aj.me/zktxv2 • Tiktok: @ajarabicnet - active, but the last time it posted a video was posted was in June (648,400 followers, 6 million likes) • Telegram: t.me/Ajarabicnet - active (25,700 subscribers) • Youtube: @AjArabic - active (44,900 subscribers) English-language version: • X: x.com/AjEnglish - active (8.9 million followers) • X: x.com/AJENews - active (2.2 million followers) • Facebook: facebook.com/aljazeera - active (17 million followers) • Instagram: @aljazeeraenglish - active (5.1 million observers) • Youtube: @aljazeeraenglish - active (14.5 million subscribers) • email: aljazeeranet.social@aljazeera.net

France24	
Official website: • France24	A French international news channel that provides reporting on Lebanese issues within the frame of a broader context of international events.

BBC Arabic (BBC News Arabic)	
Official website: • BBC Arabic	It is one of the main sources of information in the Arab world, offering objective coverage of local and international topics through its website, television channel, and—until recently—radio, which ceased broadcasting in February 2023 after 85 years due to budget cuts. Initially, BBC Arabic Television was owned by the Saudi Mawarid Group but was shut down in 1996 following criticism of Sharia law. BBC Arabic provides comprehensive reporting, citing content from Israeli media as well as coverage of groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. This has at times drawn criticism for allegedly supporting extremism, particularly from figures like former BBC Television director Danny Cohen. The current editor-in-chief is Tim Awford, who oversees both BBC News Arabic and Persian, supported by Nancy Elnakib and Mouna Ba, who manage program production and digital content. Facebook: facebook.com/BBCnewsArabic - 16 million followers Instagram: instagram.com/bbcarabic - 2.3 million followers YouTube: youtube.com/@bbcnewsarabic - 11.8 million followers, 42,000 videos X: x.com/bbcarabic - 9.3 million followers Telegram: t.me/s/BBCArabic - 36,500 followers

Russian-Lebanese Coordination Office	
Official website: • Russian-Lebanese Coordination Office	An institution whose aim is to enhance the cooperation between Russia and Liban. It is also a platform for spreading propaganda slogans, which shapes the political narratives in Lebanon.

Euronews Liban	
Official website: • Euronews Liban	A privately-owned news channel that provides information regarding Lebanon and the Middle East.

The Telegraph Lebanon	
Official website: • The Telegraph Lebanon	A British news platform that offers news and analytical content on the situation in Lebanon.

France Info	
Official website: • France Info	A French news platform that reports on the events in Lebanon within the context of the Middle East and far beyond.

1.2 Non-traditional media

The number of internet users in Lebanon in January of this year reached 6.01 million, accounting for 89.3% of the Lebanese population. As a result, online media and news platforms in Lebanon have developed significantly.

YouTube ranked first with 5.06 million users, followed by Facebook with 3.15 million, and Instagram with 2.20 million.

1.2.1 Influencers/Famous persons

Malek Maktabi

Malek Maktabi is a Lebanese television host known for presenting the controversial talk show *Ahmar Bel Khat El Arid* (Red in Boldface), aired on LBCI, where he regularly addresses sensitive social issues, often considered taboo in the Arab world, such as topics related to sexuality. The show gained international attention, particularly after an episode featuring a Saudi guest who showcased his collection of sex toys, leading to the guest's arrest. Maktabi, a popular celebrity often perceived as apolitical, is also affiliated with Saudi Arabia, hosting a podcast and videocast for the Saudi channel Shahid. Privately, he is married to Nayla Tueni, editor-in-chief of *Annahar*. Despite their religious differences—he is a Shiite and she is a Christian—the couple held a civil wedding in Cyprus, which sparked considerable interest in Lebanon.

- **Instagram:** [instagram.com/@malekmaktabi](https://www.instagram.com/malekmaktabi) - 1.4 million followers
- **Tiktok:** [tiktok.com/@maktabimalek](https://www.tiktok.com/@maktabimalek) - 1.1 million followers

- **Facebook:** facebook.com/p/Malek-Maktabi-100057467149508/ - 8 million followers
- **YouTube:** youtube.com/@MalekMaktabi - 5.51 million followers

Albert Konstantin

A Tv journalist, economist and consultant for LevantConsult and Arthur D.Little. Content creator (in Arabic). He has 39 K followers on X.

Mounir Younés

Mounir Younes is a respected economic journalist known for his contributions to *L'Orient-Le Jour* and frequent appearances on television programs such as MTV Lebanon and Al Safa News. He was the first to expose the Optimum scandal, which focused on the illegal financial activities of the Central Bank of Lebanon's governor, Riad Salameh, who was accused of using Ponzi schemes to siphon millions of dollars from the state budget. Following his reporting, a smear campaign was launched against Younes, which—according to Megaphone News—aimed to divert attention from Salameh's crimes. In 2022, Younes accused Salameh of profiting from Lebanon's economic crisis, asserting that the banker's trial was merely a show trial that would not address the disappearance of \$100 billion from the state treasury.

- **X:** x.com/Mouniryouniss - 24,500 followers
- **LinkedIn:** lb.linkedin.com/in/mounir-younes-a9aa7a30

Rym Momtaz

Rym Momtaz is a Lebanese-American journalist and analyst specializing in foreign policy and security in Europe and the Middle East. She currently serves as the editor-in-chief of the *Strategic Europe* blog at Carnegie Europe. From 2019 to 2022, she was a senior correspondent at *Politico Europe*, where she had exceptional access to information regarding the foreign policy of French President Emmanuel Macron. Before joining Carnegie, Momtaz worked as a researcher at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), focusing on strategic competition in the Eastern Mediterranean. She also has extensive experience covering conflicts, gained during nearly eight years as a producer for ABC News, where she reported on the threat of Islamic terrorism in Europe and conflicts in the Middle East, including Syria and Iraq. She also took part in UN Security Council negotiations on military intervention in Libya. In recent years, Momtaz has moderated and participated in seminars and debates on migration crises, Islamist radicalization, and populism in Europe, organized by institutions such as the Atlantic Council, the European Council on Foreign Relations, and the Brookings Institution.

- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/rymomtaz/?hl=en>

Amar Mustafa

On this personal profile, Amar Mustafa shares his thoughts on the current events and the socio-political situation in Lebanon. He studies the history of the working class and the Arab left in the Middle East and North Africa. He has 6.1 thousand followers.

- **X:** <https://x.com/Amarmustafa>

Karim Becc

A profile that elaborates on a variety of topics, including politics and culture, with a personal attitude towards the current issues. He has 4.5 thousand followers.

- **X:** <https://x.com/KarimBecc>

Marcel Ghanem

A popular journalist, a staunch opponent of Hezbollah. He discusses fragile issues. He has 5.3 thousand followers.

- **X:** <https://x.com/amarcelrgd>

Pierre Heachache

Pierre Hachach, also known as Pierre Hashash, is a Lebanese rapper and political activist known for his controversial views and methods. He gained notoriety for his satirical election campaigns for the Maronite seat in Tripoli and his criticism of politicians, including Lebanon's army commander, which led to his arrest in 2012 for allegedly "lowering army morale." Hashash is particularly known for his outspoken criticism of the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and its leader, Gebran Bassil. He has been arrested multiple times, including for participating in anti-government protests in 2015 and 2019. In 2017, he was assaulted after criticizing Bassil, and in 2020, he was sued by a female FPM politician. His posts frequently cause controversy, such as in October when he published cryptic messages following the death of Hassan Nasrallah, leaving audiences uncertain about his intentions. Currently, he actively produces content across various platforms, often criticizing the LGBTQ+ community and numerous Lebanese politicians. As a Maronite Christian, he is unafraid to break taboos, as seen in the aesthetic of his videos which are often filmed with alcohol bottles in the background.

- **X:** x.com/ipierre_hachach - 16,900 followers
- **Youtube:** youtube.com/@pierrehachach - 25,300 followers, 651 videos (Social Blade does not find a user of that name - no available information on the outreach)
- **TikTok:** tiktok.com/@pierre.hachach - 17,400 followers

- **Instagram:** [instagram.com/pierrehachach71](https://www.instagram.com/pierrehachach71) - 51,800 followers
- The artist's official website at ReverbNation: [reverbnation.com/pierrehachach](https://www.reverbnation.com/pierrehachach) - 66,600 fans

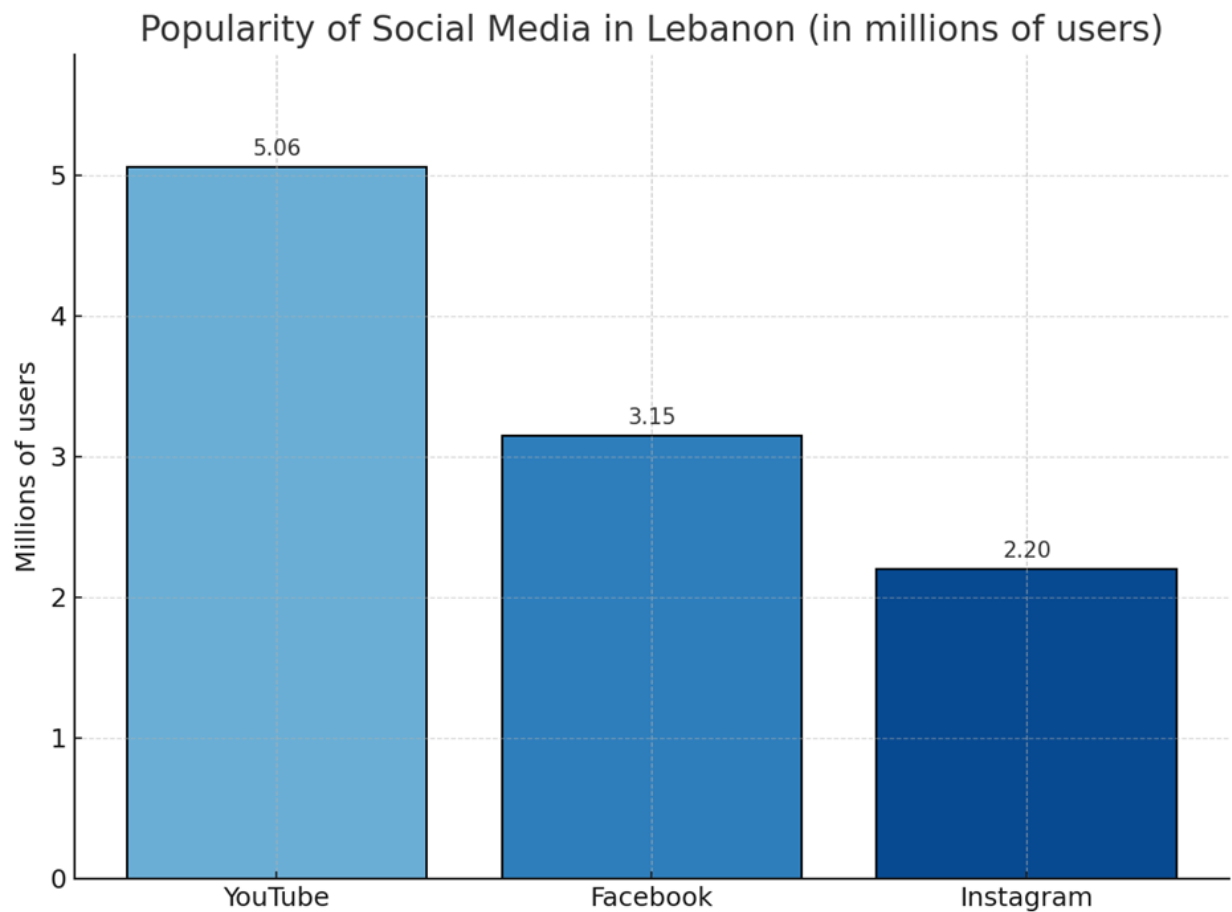


Chart 3. The popularity of social media in Lebanon

1.2.2 YouTube

Leamor ليا مور

A mixture of vlogs, challenges, comedy sketches and pranks. It has 1.96 million subscribers and its engagement rate is 5.13%.

- **Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@Leamor86>

SBI صوت بيروت إنترناشونال

Sawt Beirut International, founded in 2005, initially operated as a music station but gradually evolved into a news platform with a strong focus on anti-Iranian and anti-Hezbollah content. Its editor-in-chief is Jerry Maher, an advisor to Bahaa Hariri, who also provides financial support to the outlet. Maher, known for his outspoken criticism of Assad and Hezbollah, is a proponent of cooperation with Western countries and openly accuses Hezbollah of terrorism, corruption, and responsibility for the 2020 Beirut port explosion. The platform's current content carries a patriotic, anti-Iranian, and pro-Western tone, while also promoting Muslim-Christian coexistence in Lebanon. Sawt Beirut has seen a rise in popularity in times of regional conflict, particularly after Hamas's attack on Israel and recent developments related to Hassan Nasrallah.

- **Facebook:** facebook.com/SawtBeirut/ - 766,000 followers
- **X:** x.com/sawtbeirut - 83,000 followers
- **Instagram:** instagram.com/sawtbeirut - 134,000 followers
- **Youtube:** youtube.com/@SBI - 866,000 followers

Lebanon On

It focuses on delivering up-to-date news from Lebanon and around the world. It covers topics such as politics, social issues, and cultural events, with 302,000 subscribers and 109 million views.

- **Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@lebanonon>

Mmfidawla مواطنون ومواطنات في دولة

It focuses on political and social content, aiming to build a democratic and civic state in Lebanon. It features discussions, analyses, and updates on political and social issues relevant to Lebanese citizens, with 12,000 subscribers and over 1.7 million total views.

- **Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@mmfidawla/videos>

Petra Badr

It focuses on news and politics. It has 40.4 thousand subscribers and 9.1 thousand monthly views, with an average of 364 likes and 40 comments per video.

- **YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@petrabadr>

1.2.3 TikTok

Hicham Haddad

Hicham Haddad is a Lebanese comedian, actor, and television presenter known for hosting satirical programs such as *Ktir Hal2ad* on MTV and the earlier *Lahon W Bass* on LBCI, where he combines humor with commentary on current affairs. He is the founder of the advertising agency DIGI7 and the company Nexus SAL, as well as the ambassador for Passport Legacy Levant and Betway Sports Arabia. His sharp tongue and direct statements have frequently sparked controversy, such as in 2018 when jokes about a Saudi prince led to prosecution charges. Previously affiliated with the Free Patriotic Movement, he was expelled after criticizing its leader, Gebran Bassil, whom he called a "dictator." Though he once supported Hezbollah, Haddad changed his stance following the 2019 protests, accusing the group of backing politicians at the expense of the youth. He recently stirred debate by questioning the logic of supporting Gaza, arguing it may increase risks for Beirut. On TikTok, 54% of his comedy content's audience comes from Lebanon

- **Youtube:** youtube.com/@HichamHaddadOfficial - 1000 followers, 29 videos (no content posted for the last 3 years)
- **Facebook:** facebook.com/HichamOfficialPage/ - 1 million followers (no content posted since June, 2023)
- **Prywatny profil:** facebook.com/hicham.haddad.925
- **Instagram:** instagram.com/hichamhaddadz - 890,000 followers
- **X:** x.com/HichamHaddad57 - 706,500 followers (new posts appear every now and then)
- **TikTok:** tiktok.com/@hicham_haddad - 497,000 followers

Elychemaly

Elie, a former reporter of LBCI, currently working for MTV Lebanon, is a creator of comedy sketches, social media comments, news and daily reviews. He has 462.7 thousand followers and every video posted by him produces 19.9 thousand likes on average. 83.1% of his audience are residents of Lebanon.

- **Tiktok:** <https://www.tiktok.com/@elychemaly>

1.2.4 Instagram

There are 2.7 million users of Instagram in Lebanon.

Kalimatts كلمات ستغير حياتك

The account focuses on journalism, sharing inspiring and motivational content through reflective quotes and messages. It has 2.6 million followers, averaging 4,500 likes and 34 comments per post.

- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/kalimatts/>

Aghani Aghani

An account affiliated with the Lebanese television and radio channel Aghani Aghani, known for Arabic music and entertainment. It has 2.3 million followers.

- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/aghaniaghani/?hl=en>

Live Love Beirut

An Instagram profile dedicated to the beauty of Beirut and its unique culture. It features inspiring photos and stories that showcase life in the city, local attractions, events, and the creativity of its residents.

- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/livelovebeirut?igsh=OTJyMmJqN2pmNHZy>

Lebanese Daily News

An Instagram profile that provides daily news and updates from Lebanon. It focuses on various aspects of social, political, and cultural life.

- **Instagram:**
<https://www.instagram.com/lebanesedailynews?igsh=MTVlb2J5Y2V1d2FtMw==>

LB Breaking News

A profile dedicated to the latest news from Lebanon, offering rapid updates on important events and crisis situations in the country.

- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/lbbreakingnews?igsh=OG85NDdmZm5raHJk>

El Nashra News

A news service that reports on events in Lebanon, offering analyses and commentaries on current situations.

- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/elnashranews/?hl=en>

1.2.5 X (formerly known as Twitter)

ICI Beyrouth News

ICI Beyrouth News is a Lebanese news portal that actively promotes national and international cooperation in the fields of economic development and the strengthening of inter-state relations. Recent initiatives include a memorandum between the Union of Lebanese Chambers and the René Moawad Foundation to support economic growth, as well as meetings with Francophone ambassadors aimed at enhancing relations with Lebanon. The portal's president, Marc Saikali, participated in a conference at the Arab World Institute in Paris, which addressed the challenges faced by journalists covering conflicts in the region. The portal also collaborated on the event "Beyrouth, capitale des médias arabes 2023," organized by the Ministry of Information, which aimed to advance new digital platforms and strengthen ties within Arab media.

- X: <https://x.com/IciBeyrouthnews> - 8945 followers

The Party Of Allah

A profile dedicated to promoting the political activity and ideology pursued by Hezbollah in Lebanon.

- X: <https://x.com/ThePartyOfAllah>

Infos Liban

A news website that provides updates from Lebanon in French, with a focus on local events.

- X: <https://x.com/InfosLiban>

El Nashra News

A news service that reports on events in Lebanon, offering analyses and commentaries on current situations.

- X: <https://x.com/ElnashraNews>, 494,200 followers

Sarah Abdallah

Sarah Abdallah, known on Twitter as @sahouraxo, is a controversial Lebanese geopolitical commentator who expresses strong support for the Syrian government, Hezbollah, and Russia, while simultaneously criticizing Western interventions in the region. Her posts often spark accusations of disinformation, particularly in the context of the war in Syria, and many target American politicians, such as Barack Obama, as well as Saudi Arabia. Despite her high activity on social media platforms, her identity remains unclear—she has no published work outside of social media and does not make public appearances, raising speculation about the authenticity of her journalistic activity.

- X: <https://x.com/sahouraxo> - huge outreach, anti-Israeli narrative

Adam Lucente

Adam Lucente is a correspondent for Al-Monitor, specializing in the analysis of politics and conflicts in the Middle East, particularly the relations between the Gulf countries, Iran, and Israel, as well as developments in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. In addition to Al-Monitor, he contributes to Noon Post, covering topics such as demographics in Iraq and U.S. policy, and to Ayn al-Madina, where he analyzes the activities of organizations like ISIS and the situation in Syrian refugee camps. He also collaborates with the Al Jazeera Institute and regularly writes for Middle East Eye on conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Kurdistan. Lucente has also appeared as a commentator on Al-Hurra and TalkTV, where he discussed, among other topics, the situation in Gaza and the impact of Joe Biden's visit on the region.

- **X:** https://x.com/Adam_Lucente

Other accounts on X that display a high activity

- <https://x.com/Naharnet>
- <https://x.com/usembassybeirut>
- <https://x.com/DailyStarLeb>
- <https://x.com/rusembleb>
- https://x.com/LaRevolte_LEB
- <https://x.com/charminmoon>
- <https://x.com/Elwhylamya2>
- <https://x.com/GermanosPeter>
- https://x.com/haddad_ernest
- <https://x.com/andrewliveca>
- https://x.com/LB_Citizen_
- <https://x.com/samygemayel>
- <https://x.com/TonyBouloss>
- <https://x.com/sarahbourjeily1>
- <https://x.com/SawtBeirut/status/1837828029747183953>
- <https://x.com/LBCILebanon>
- <https://x.com/MTVLebanonNews>
- <https://x.com/penhascovato> - a harsh anti-Israel stance

- <https://x.com/beautyoflebanon>
- https://x.com/yara_lubnan7
- <https://x.com/Imanelbrahim1>
- https://x.com/lakiss_nancy
- https://x.com/w_aki
- <https://x.com/janiehaddad>
- <https://x.com/Xxprncessx>
- <https://x.com/LebaneseProblem>
- <https://x.com/JeanNakhoul>
- https://x.com/rami_kiwan

1.3 Recurring holidays as well as nationwide and regional events

National holidays

- Independence Day (November 22)
 - Commemoration of Lebanon's independence from the French mandate in 1943.
 - Marked by official ceremonies, parades, and patriotic activities.
- Liberation Day (May 25)
 - Celebration of the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon in 2000.
- Martyrs' Day (May 6)
 - Honors Lebanese and Syrian nationalists executed by the Ottoman Empire in 1916.
- Armed Forces Day (August 1)
 - Commemoration of the establishment of the Lebanese Armed Forces.
 - Includes military parades and ceremonies honoring the army

Religious holidays

- Eid al-Fitr (around April 10)
 - Ramadan in 2025 is expected to begin on the evening of March 10 and end on the evening of April 8.
 - Celebrated by the Muslim community, marking the end of Ramadan.
- Eid al-Adha (around June 16)
 - Commemorates Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son. Both holidays are public holidays
- Mawlid al-Nabi (around September 7)
 - Celebration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad.
- Christmas (December 25)
 - Celebrated by the Christian community.
- Easter (April 20)

- Observed according to both Gregorian and Julian calendars, includes Good Friday (April 18) and Easter Sunday
- Saint Maroun's Day (February 9)
 - A public holiday for Maronite Christians, commemorating Saint Maroun, the founder of the Maronite Church.
- Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15)
 - Celebrated by Catholics and Orthodox Christians, marked by masses and processions.
- Ashura (around September 6)
 - An important holiday for the Shia Muslim community, commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, observed with processions and religious gatherings.

Cultural and regional events

- **Beirut International Film Festival**

It usually takes place in September. In 2025, it will likely be held around September 20–30 (the exact date has not yet been announced).

- **Byblos International Festival**

It usually takes place in the summer, in July. In 2025, it may be held in July (the exact date has not yet been determined).

- **Baalbek International Festival**

It is traditionally held in the summer, usually in June or July. In 2025, the expected dates are June–July (exact date to be confirmed).

- **Zouk Mikael International Festival**

It usually takes place in August. In 2025, it may be held in August (the exact date has not yet been announced).

- **Al-Madina Festival (Tripoli)**

It usually takes place at the turn of September and October. In 2025, it will likely be held in September (exact date to be confirmed).

Recurring national holidays and regional events

Lebanese media coverage often focuses on significant national and regional events, such as:

- Independence Day (November 22): Coverage includes various media reflections on Lebanon's history and its current state.
- Civil War commemorations: Reports often focus on remembrance and reconciliation efforts related to Lebanon's civil conflict.
- Protests and social movements: Media frequently cover social movements, especially those protesting against corruption and economic mismanagement.
- Regional conflicts: Events in neighboring Syria and Palestine are regularly reported due to their direct implications for Lebanon.

1.4 Non-governmental and non-state organizations influencing public opinion in Lebanon

1.4.1 Organisations affiliated with political parties in Lebanon

Lebanese Forces (LF)

(No. of seats in the Parliament: 19 / 128)

- **Lebanese Forces Students**

An organization that brings together students supporting the Lebanese Forces, organizing campaigns and events on university campuses in a bid to mobilize the youth.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/LFStudents/?locale=ar_AR

Free Patriotic Movement (FPM)

(No. of seats in the Parliament: 16 / 128)

- **Tayyar Youth (the youth movement of the FPM)**

A youth organization promoting the FPM's policies at universities and among young people. It plays a significant role in election campaigns and organizing demonstrations.

Amal Movement

(No. of seats in the Parliament: 14 / 128)

- **Al-Zahraa Charitable Association**

A charitable organization affiliated with Amal, providing financial and educational assistance to Shiite families, mainly in southern Lebanon.

Official website: <https://alzahrahostel.org/main/index.html>

- **al-Rissala Scouts Association**

It plays a significant role in community development and social services within Shiite Muslim communities in Lebanon, particularly in areas where the Amal Movement has a strong presence. It focuses on promoting Islamic values, social service, and cultural heritage through its scouting programs, which aim to foster a sense of responsibility and civic duty among young people.

Official website: <https://risalascout.org/>

Hezbollah

(No. of seats in the Parliament: 13 / 128)

Hezbollah conducts activities aimed at gaining public support by providing healthcare, education, and crisis assistance services. To this end, they operate a comprehensive social development program that includes at least four hospitals, 12 clinics, and 12 schools. The medical services offered by Hezbollah are more affordable than those provided by most private hospitals in Lebanon. Nevertheless, Hezbollah's charitable operations largely rely on generous foreign support—unlike the legitimate government of Lebanon, the group is not required to balance its expenditures or worry about budget shortfalls.

- **Islamic Resistance Support (IRSA)**

The Islamic Resistance Support Association is an organization directly affiliated with Hezbollah, established in 1989 to raise funds in support of the group's military operations both in Lebanon and abroad. IRSA runs campaigns such as "Equip a Fighter" and "Support a Fighter," which encourage financial contributions for the purchase of weapons, ammunition, and military equipment. The organization is active within Shiite communities, conducting fundraising efforts in homes, schools, and shops, as well as online, spreading propaganda and countering disinformation through Al-Manar, Hezbollah's official television channel, and on social media platforms. IRSA has been placed under international sanctions, particularly by the United States, which has designated it as a terrorist organization. In its promotional efforts—including video clips—IRSA portrays community support as a means of achieving "victory" and backs Hezbollah not only financially but also logistically and through media, stirring patriotic sentiment in response to Israeli aggression.

- **Jihad al-Binaa**

An organization affiliated with Hezbollah, particularly active in the area of rebuilding destroyed infrastructure and providing humanitarian aid after wars and conflicts.

Official website: <https://jihadbinaa.org.lb/>

- **Imam al-Mahdi Scouts**

It serves as part of Hezbollah's broader social and cultural framework, providing scouting activities that include religious and ideological teachings aligned with Hezbollah's resistance narrative. The organization plays a significant role in shaping the values and beliefs of its young members, promoting themes of martyrdom and resistance.

Official website: <https://www.almahdiscouts.net/>

Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)

(No. of seats in the Parliament 8 / 128)

- **Progressive Youth Organization**

A youth organisation promoting socialist values and the activities of the PSP. It engages young people in political activity and electoral campaigns.

Official website: <http://www.pyo.20m.com/>

- **PSP Medical and Social Services Foundation (Farah Social Foundation)**

An organization providing medical and social services, promoting health and education programs. It is not explicitly listed as a direct arm of the PSP, but its activities are closely aligned with the political and social goals of the party (with an emphasis on social justice and community development), particularly in Druze-dominated areas of Lebanon.

Official website: <https://farahsocialfoundation.com/>

Future Movement

(No. of seats in the Parliament: 8 / 128)

- **Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development**

An organization founded by the Hariri family, aimed at supporting education, social and economic development, particularly within the Sunni community. The foundation's initiatives align with the political goals of the party, reflecting the legacy of Rafic Hariri.

Official website: <https://hariri-foundation.org/>

- **Future Youth Organization**

A youth wing of the Future Movement party, responsible for engaging young people in political activity and mobilizing them to participate in the party's campaigns.

Official website:

<https://daleel-madani.org/civil-society-directory/future-youth-organizaton>

Lebanese Kataeb Party (Phalangist Party)

(No. of seats in the Parliament: 4 / 128)

- **Kataeb Party**

Also known as the Phalangist Party, it holds significant influence over public opinion in Lebanon, particularly within the Christian community. The party operates its own media outlets, allowing it to effectively reach supporters and shape public narratives. Its use of social media also contributes to the party's ability to mobilize youth.

Official website: <https://www.kataeb.org/>

- **Student and Youth Department**

A fraction of the party whose aim is to encourage the young people towards politics and social activity while promoting Christian values.

Official website: <https://en.kataeb.org/tag/students-and-youth-department>

- **Youth Forum for National Youth Policies**

It consists of youth non-governmental organizations and youth factions of political parties registered with the Lebanese government. It serves as a platform where young people from NGOs and political parties collaborate to express their views and convey them to decision-makers in the form of youth policy recommendations.

Official website: <https://youthforum-lb.org/>

1.4.2 Religious organisations

Al Mabarrat Association

A charitable organization founded in 1978 by the late Shia cleric Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah. It operates independently of political parties but is often associated with the broader Shia community in Lebanon due to the influence of its founder.

- **Official website:** <https://www.almabarrat.org/>

Maronite Foundation in the World

An organization dedicated to promoting and supporting the Christian Maronite community, it provides assistance in areas such as education, cultural heritage preservation, and facilitating interactions between Maronites and Lebanese government offices, including marriage and birth registrations. Founded by Cardinal Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, it began operations on July 23, 2008, offering support in establishing the legal status of Maronites. It is a non-profit organization funded through donations and membership contributions from its board of trustees.

- **Official website:** <https://maronitefoundation.org/MaroniteFoundation/en>

Tur Levnon

It is headquartered in Brooklyn (the USA) and in Zhalta (Lebanon). This organization promotes the culture, spirit and language of the Syrian Maronites.

- **Official website:** <https://arab.org/directory/tur-levnon/>

1.4.3 Ethnic organisations

Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)

An organisation that represents the interests of the orthodox Armenian diaspora in Lebanon. It supports cultural activity, education and charitable initiatives.

- **Official website:** <https://agbu.org/>

1.4.4 Local organizations supporting Lebanese statehood

Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE)

An independent non-governmental organization promoting democratic electoral processes in Lebanon. Their activities include monitoring elections and advocating for electoral reforms, such as proportional representation and the reduction of political corruption. LADE has a significant impact on shaping public opinion regarding the integrity of democratic processes in the country.

- **Official website:**
<https://www.eods.eu/posts/lebanese-association-for-democratic-elections-lade>

KAFA (Enough) Violence & Exploitation

A secular, feminist, non-profit non-governmental organization working for women's rights and combating domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. It has played a key role in debates on women's rights in Lebanon, including in the process of passing the law against domestic violence in 2014.

- **Official website:** <https://kafa.org.lb/en/about>

1.4.5 Lebanese NGOs

Lebanon Renaissance Foundation

It engages in various social and educational initiatives, supporting societal change. The Lebanon Renaissance Foundation strives to make Lebanon a free, democratic, and open state, fully integrated into the global economy, while also ensuring that people have the freedom to choose their way of life in accordance with the rule of law.

- **Official website:**
https://arab.org/directory/lebanon-renaissance-foundation/#google_vignette

Human Association for Relief and Development

It is a civil NGO founded in 2003. Its goal is to improve the standards of living and the social level of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

- **Instagram:** https://www.instagram.com/human_association/

B Mahabatikom Nouti

It helps people who have found themselves in difficult living situations, by providing them with medications, medical equipment and covering their hospitalisation expenses.

- **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/bmahabatikom-nouti-organization-bno-072911261>

May Chidiac Foundation Media Institute (MCF MI)

Its activity focuses mainly on research and education in the area of media, press, democracy and social care.

- **Official website:** <https://mcfmi.org/>

1.5 International organisations influencing public opinion in Lebanon

1.5.1 International non-government organisations

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

It runs projects to assist refugees and local communities, particularly in the areas of protection, education, and health.

- **Official website:** <https://www.rescue.org/country/lebanon>

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

It works to provide healthcare in crisis regions, having a significant impact on public opinion regarding public health issues.

- **Official website:** <https://www.msf.org/lebanon>

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

It focuses on promoting human rights, justice, and social policy. In Lebanon, HRW addresses issues such as freedom of speech, treatment of refugees, and government accountability. Through detailed reports, the organization plays a key role in shaping both local and international opinions on human rights in the country. HRW also works to hold the Lebanese government accountable for violations and advocates for legal reforms.

- **Official website:** <https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/lebanon>

Caritas Lebanon

A charitable organisation affiliated with the Catholic Church, providing humanitarian aid, helping refugees and running an educational activity.

- **Official website:** <https://caritas.org.lb/>

Heinrich Böll Stiftung Middle East

A foundation closely affiliated with the German Green Party, operating in Lebanon since 2008. It aims to promote sustainable environmental development, democracy, human rights, and social justice. The foundation supports political dialogue and sustainable development by organizing debates, publishing research reports, and conducting environmental campaigns.

- **Official website:** <https://www.boell.de/en>

International Crisis Group (ICG)

An independent, non-governmental organization founded in 1995, whose mission is to prevent and resolve conflicts through field research and political analysis. Headquartered in Brussels, with offices in key locations such as Washington, London, New York, Jerusalem, and Beirut, the International Crisis Group (ICG) engages in advocacy and policy advising, working with decision-makers to create peace strategies in regions at high risk of conflict, such as the Middle East and Africa. The organization has occasionally faced criticism for its close ties to NATO and controversial decisions, such as awarding the “In Pursuit of Peace” prize in 2013 to the President of Myanmar, which sparked backlash in light of accusations of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya. ICG is currently led by CEO Comfort Ero, who has participated in major conferences on the global consequences of the war in Ukraine, including the Munich Security Conference and the Yalta European Strategy, where she joined other experts in discussing the conflict's impact on international security.

- **Official website:** <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/lebanon>
- **X:** <https://x.com/CrisisGroup>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/crisisgroup>
- **X (Twitter):** <https://x.com/CrisisGroup>
- **YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/crisisgroup>

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) Lebanon

An international foundation whose goal is to promote social democracy, labor rights, and effective governance. It operates in Lebanon by supporting social and democratic development through the strengthening of civil society, the promotion of workers' rights, and the facilitation of dialogue among various political actors. The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) shapes the local political discourse by organizing workshops, forums, and research initiatives that address key social and political issues.

- **Official website:** <https://www.fes-lebanon.org/>

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Lebanon

A German political foundation affiliated with the center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU), but independent from it. Its main goals in Lebanon focus on supporting political dialogue, promoting democracy, and encouraging economic development. The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) works closely with political entities, civil society, and media organizations to promote democratic values, support economic reforms, and create platforms for discussion on the critical political and economic challenges facing the country. The foundation achieves this by organizing conferences, publishing policy papers, and engaging the media, often in collaboration with local think tanks and research centers.

- **Official website:** <https://www.kas.de/en/web/libanon>

International Republican Institute (IRI)

It focuses on promoting democratic governance, strengthening civil society, and supporting electoral reform. IRI's work in Lebanon includes voter education, increasing youth and women's participation in political life, and improving election transparency, through collaboration with Lebanese civil society organizations and political actors.

- **Official website:** <https://www.iri.org/>

Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)

The organization focuses on promoting development, human rights, democracy, and economic policy in the Arab world. Through research papers, advocacy campaigns, conferences, and collaboration with NGOs, ANND plays a key role in initiating dialogue on social justice and democratic reforms, particularly in Lebanon. It disseminates its work via its website, newsletters, social media, and regional policy dialogues, working with a broad network of civil society organizations.

- **Official website:** <https://www.annd.org/>

Skoun – Lebanese Addictions Center

A non-profit non-governmental organization and one of the first outpatient facilities in Lebanon offering prevention, treatment, and support for people who use drugs. It provides support through counseling, therapy, and educational activities. The organization also advocates for drug law reform, promoting a public health–based approach rather than a punitive one.

- **Official website:** <https://www.skoun.org/en>

Lebanese Red Cross

A humanitarian non-profit organization that operates as an auxiliary team to the medical services of the Lebanese army. It is headquartered in Lebanon's capital, Beirut. Founded in 1945, the organization has around 7,000 members/volunteers and 200 staff. It cooperates with the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as bilaterally with the Norwegian and French Red Cross. Since 2008, the LRC has also worked with relevant components of the Lebanese authorities, UN agencies, and other non-governmental organizations.

1.5.2 Organisations analysing the political situation of Lebanon

Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS)

Founded in 1989, it is an independent and influential think tank dedicated to developing and promoting policies aimed at improving governance in Lebanon and the Arab region. Led by Executive Director Makram Ouais, a political science expert with experience in organizations such as UNDP and the Carter Center, LCPS focuses on political representation, sustainable economic development, and social and environmental policies. The center's research covers key topics such as electoral reform, decentralization, natural resource governance, and transparency in the oil sector. LCPS collaborates with local policymakers and international partners, including the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and the Natural Resource Governance Institute, to shape reforms and build governance frameworks. Through reports, policy briefs, and seminars, LCPS engages a broad audience via public events, online platforms, and partnerships with organizations like Transparency International to support political and economic reforms in Lebanon.

- **Official website:** <https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/>
- **Twitter:** <https://x.com/LCPSLebanon>
- **YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwZjiN76KDmWhncVwaZgrcQ> - has not been actualized since
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/LebaneseCenterforPolicyStudies?fref=ts>

Carnegie Middle East Center

The Carnegie Middle East Center, part of the international Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think tank network, operates out of Beirut and focuses on analyzing political, socio-economic, and security developments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The center is highly regarded in the Arab press as a key research hub, particularly in relation to social and political challenges following the Arab Spring. Publications such as the 2017 report *Arab Fractures* warn of escalating socio-economic crises driven by outdated social contracts and the shifting role of oil. The institution also highlights the role of militaries and civil-military relations in the region, promoting its research findings through reports, articles, panel discussions, and podcasts, notably via the *Diwan* platform and social media channels.

- **Official website:** <https://carnegie-mec.org/>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/carnegiemec/?ref=ts>
- **X:** <https://x.com/CarnegieMEC>

Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI)

A research institute affiliated with the American University of Beirut (AUB), it focuses on studies related to public policy, governance, refugees, the environment, and youth policy. The Issam Fares Institute (IFI) organizes public events, workshops, and conferences, and disseminates its research findings through social media and in collaboration with academic journals. The institute is known for promoting dialogue on contentious issues.

- **Official website:** <https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Pages/default.aspx>

1.5.3 Humanitarian organisations affiliated with the UN

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR exerts a huge influence on shaping public opinion, which applies particularly to the discourse on Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

- **Official website:** <https://www.unhcr.org/countries/lebanon>

UNICEF Lebanon

It supports child development in Liban, their education and healthcare, particularly within the communities of refugees.

- **Official website:** <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/>

United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

It focuses on sustainable development, promoting governance reforms, and improving living conditions. Its programs aim to support economic revitalization, enhance environmental balance, and strengthen institutions to ensure peace and stability.

- **Official website:** <https://www.undp.org/lebanon/undp-lebanon-and-un>

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)

Forces operating primarily to maintain peace along the Lebanese-Israeli border. Their objective is to prevent hostilities, support the Lebanese Armed Forces, and ensure the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls for the cessation of hostilities and the stabilization of the region.

- **Official website:** <https://unifil.unmissions.org/>

1.5.4 Other international actors

The World Bank Lebanon

The World Bank focuses on economic development, governance reforms, and social policy. Its influence is particularly evident through the provision of loans, detailed economic reports, and policy recommendations addressing key issues such as the ongoing financial crisis in Lebanon, infrastructure deficiencies, and poverty reduction strategies.

- **Official website:** <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lebanon>

Chatham House

A British think tank specializing in international affairs, known for its political, economic, and global security analyses. It is renowned for organizing debates under the "Chatham House Rule," which allows for open discussion without attributing statements to specific individuals. The institute works on topics such as geopolitics, climate change, the global economy, and energy security, with its research playing a key role in shaping international perspectives, including challenges related to governance and conflicts in the Middle East. The 2015 report "*The Russian Challenge*" analyzed the threats posed by Russian policy, highlighting militarization and cyberattacks. The think tank has faced criticism from anti-war organizations for allegedly supporting military policies, and in 2022, Russia designated its activities as "undesirable," effectively banning its presence on Russian territory.

- **Official website:** <https://www.chathamhouse.org/>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/ChathamHouse>
- **X:** <https://x.com/ChathamHouse>
- **Medium:** <https://medium.com/chatham-house>
- **YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/ChathamHouse10>

European Union (EU) Delegation to Lebanon

It represents the EU's diplomatic mission in Lebanon. Its main areas of focus include promoting democratic governance, supporting economic development, advancing human rights, and encouraging political reforms. The EU provides financial aid, technical assistance, and works closely with Lebanese government institutions and civil society to improve electoral processes, governance structures, and human rights standards. Additionally, the delegation supports political dialogue and cooperation between Lebanon and the EU on various issues, including trade, security, and environmental sustainability.

- **Official website:** https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon_en

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Lebanon

The IMF has played a key role in Lebanon, especially in the face of a severe financial and economic crisis. The Fund has provided technical assistance and policy advice, emphasizing reforms such as restructuring the banking sector, managing public debt, improving corporate governance, and anti-corruption measures. In 2020, Lebanon began negotiations with the IMF for an aid package, but political disagreements and delays in implementing reforms hindered the agreement. The IMF continues to stress the need for critical fiscal and structural reforms to restore stability and revive the economy.

- **Official website:** <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/LBN>

USAID

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been operating in Lebanon since 1951. USAID is committed to helping Lebanon modernize and achieve long-term prosperity through programs that strengthen service delivery and create new jobs. Its activities support the efforts of Lebanese institutions to provide high-quality education and to improve access to water, sanitation, and other public services—particularly in poor and underserved areas of the country. In addition, USAID addresses key issues such as the Syrian refugee crisis and environmental policy, significantly influencing discussions on both Lebanese and international policymaking.

- **Official website:** <https://www.usaid.gov/lebanon>

Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace (LFPCP)

An organization working to promote civil peace and democratic governance in Lebanon. It focuses on areas such as democracy, peacebuilding, and effective governance. The Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace (LFPCP) organizes public events, workshops, publications, and conferences that support electoral reforms, decentralization, and cross-sector dialogue.

- **Official website:** <http://www.lfpcp.org/>

The Policy Initiative

The Policy Initiative (TPI), founded in 2021 in Beirut, is a non-profit organization focused on public policy and economic analysis in Lebanon. It addresses financial crises, economic sectors, and social development by providing reliable data and recommendations to support economic and social reforms. TPI projects that a prolonged conflict between Hezbollah and Israel could cost Lebanon approximately \$1.6 billion, mainly through losses in tourism and investment. The organization also conducts research on the effectiveness of international aid

initiatives, such as the 3RF (Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework), which supports Beirut's recovery following the 2020 explosion. TPI has been critical of the IMF's approach to Lebanon, highlighting overlooked political issues and social inequalities. In its latest report, TPI points to trade data falsifications in Lebanon between 1997 and 2022, suggesting customs evasion and capital outflows—particularly in the trade of luxury goods and petroleum products.

- **Official website:**
https://www.thepolicyinitiative.org/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjwveK4BhD4ARIsAKy6pMIokDSQ_856Wlg9qmZREKF_AL0xWMTgAsZrrmUpm-hOQdLmTqapnUkaAngEEALw_wcB
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/thepolicyinitiativelebanon>
- **Twitter:** <https://x.com/TPILebanon>
- **YouTube:** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2qD6h_oAWU9taavPt_e0tw/videos
(rarely actualised)

SKeyes Center for Media and Cultural Freedom

An organization dedicated to promoting media freedom and freedom of expression, particularly in the context of journalism in Lebanon, which has become a leading voice in defending free speech in the country. It focuses on documenting violations against media professionals and advocating for greater protection of journalists. SKeyes carries out its work by publishing reports on media violations, conducting advocacy campaigns, and releasing detailed reports on freedom of expression. It also collaborates with international organizations focused on media freedom.

- **Official website:** <https://www.skeyesmedia.org/>

Samir Kassir Foundation

The Samir Kassir Foundation was established following the tragic bombing that killed Samir Kassir—a prominent journalist and advocate for press freedom—in 2005. The foundation focuses on promoting freedom of the press and human rights by organizing numerous conferences and events aimed at protecting journalists and strengthening the role of the media in Lebanon and the region. As a non-profit organization, it works to spread a culture of democracy, encourage young journalistic talent, and build a movement for cultural and democratic renewal in the Arab world. Through its initiatives, the foundation seeks to create a space where a free press can play a vital role in civil society.

- **Official website:** <https://samirkassirfoundation.org/en/Home-Page>

1.6 Economic entities with the potential to influence the nature and accessibility of content

1.6.1 Private telecommunications companies

Alfa

One of the two main telecommunications companies in Lebanon, providing mobile, internet, and digital services. It is state-managed and operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Telecommunications. Previously managed by Orascom TMT, it was fully taken over by the Lebanese government in 2020. Alfa offers a wide range of services, including 4G LTE mobile internet, mobile payments, and value-added services.

- **Official website:** <https://www.alfa.com.lb/>

Touch

The second main telecommunications operator in Lebanon, also managed by the state. Like Alfa, Touch was previously operated by the international company Zain Group before being taken over by the government in 2020. Touch provides mobile, internet, and digital solutions, with a focus on developing 4G infrastructure.

- **Official website:** <https://www.touch.com.lb/autoforms/portal/touch>

Ogero Telecom

Technically a government-managed entity, Ogero plays a key role as the main internet service provider in Lebanon, overseeing a significant portion of the country's telecommunications infrastructure.

- **Official website:** <https://www.ogero.gov.lb/>

Cablevision

A private company offering satellite television and internet services, primarily focusing on digital entertainment and connectivity.

- **Official website:** <https://www.cablevision.com.lb/>

TerraNet

A leading private Internet Service Provider (ISP) in Lebanon, offering broadband connections, corporate solutions, and data hosting services.

- **Official website:** <https://www.terra.net.lb/>

Cyberia

A well-known private internet service provider, delivering internet and digital solutions to both consumers and businesses.

- **Official website:** <https://www.cyberia.net.lb/>

Connect

A telecom specialised in providing data, internet and telecommunications services, particularly to businesses across Lebanon.

- **Official website:** <http://www.connect.net.lb/>

Lebanon 24

A news portal that presents Lebanese, Arab, and international realities quickly, objectively, and impartially. It provides round-the-clock coverage of all events, emphasizing them through analysis and comprehensive information reporting.

- **Official website:** <https://www.lebanon24.com/>

1.6.2 Advertising agencies and marketing firms

Impact BBDO

One of the leading advertising agencies operating in Lebanon, Impact BBDO specializes in advertising, digital marketing, and brand management. The agency has a strong presence in the Middle East region and collaborates with many international and local brands, helping them shape their communication and marketing content.

- **Official website:** <https://www.impactbbdo.com/en/work>

Leo Burnett Beirut

A global marketing agency with a branch in Beirut offering services related to advertising, digital marketing, and communication strategies. The agency works with many well-known brands, helping them reach Lebanese and regional audiences through creative content.

- **Official website:** <https://lbbonline.com/companies/leo-burnett-lebanon>

M&C Saatchi MENA

It specializes in advertising, communication strategy, and digital marketing. Operating in Middle Eastern markets, including Lebanon, it creates advertising campaigns that have a significant impact on shaping marketing content.

- **Official website:** <https://mcsaatchi.me/en/Home>

J. Walter Thompson Lebanon

.One of the leading communication agencies in the region, with 27 offices across 24 markets, providing business solutions based on communication across all channels.

- **Official website:** <https://www.facebook.com/JWTMEA/>

Eastline Marketing

Founded in 2006, Eastline Digital, formerly known as Eastline Marketing, was the first independent digital marketing agency in Lebanon and one of the first in the MENA region to offer a full range of online marketing services.

- **Official website:** <https://www.eastlinemarketing.com/index.html>

1.6.3 Technological companies and startups

Anghami

Anghami is a Lebanese streaming platform offering online music. It has gained international recognition and has become one of the leading music platforms in the Middle East. As a technology company from Lebanon, Anghami is shaping the way music content is consumed in the region.

- **Official website:** <https://www.anghami.com/>

Ecomz

Ecomz is a Lebanese e-commerce platform that provides businesses with tools to create and manage their online stores. Through innovative technologies, the company supports the growth of online commerce in the region, enabling small and medium-sized enterprises to reach a broad customer base.

- **Official website:** <https://www.ecomz.com/>

Shahid

An Arab streaming platform that offers local shows and series, attracting the attention of Lebanese viewers.

- **Official website:** <https://shahid.mbc.net/en>

OSN

A platform that provides a wide range of TV and movie channels, influencing consumer choices in terms of content.

- **Official website:** <https://osnplus.com/en-pl>

1.6.4 Capital Groups

Hariri Group:

Political affiliation: Sunni, pro-West and pro-Saudi

Founded by Rafik Hariri, it plays a significant role in Lebanon's economy and politics, with influence in banking, construction, telecommunications, and media sectors—most notably through Future TV, which promotes pro-Western values. The Future Movement, established by Saad Hariri, represents the Sunni community and seeks to modernize the country, reduce Hezbollah's influence, and support democratic reforms. Although the print edition of the Al-Mustaqbal newspaper was shut down due to financial difficulties, it continues to operate as a digital platform supporting Hariri's political movement. The Hariri Foundation, continuing Rafik Hariri's legacy, focuses on education and socio-economic development by offering scholarships and programs that support students and young leaders.

- **Banque de la Méditerranée (BankMed)**
(<https://www.banquepopulaire.fr/mediterranee/>)

One of the largest banks in Lebanon, also linked to the Hariri family. Through its financial connections, the Hariri group has had a significant influence on the Lebanese economy and media.

- **Solidere** (<https://www.solidere.com/>)

A real estate company founded by Rafik Hariri, former Prime Minister of Lebanon. It was responsible for the post-civil war reconstruction of Beirut, controlling key areas of the city. Hariri had a significant influence on Lebanese media, including television stations such as Future TV (which was controlled by the Hariri family but is no longer operational).

Mikati Group:

Political affiliation: Sunni, independent, pragmatically allied with Hezbollah if need be

- **M1 Group** (<https://www.m1group.com/>)

M1 Group, founded by Najib Mikati—one of the wealthiest Lebanese and a former Prime Minister—invests in a wide range of sectors, including telecommunications, real estate, finance, energy, aviation, and textiles. The group holds shares in MTN, one of the largest mobile operators in Africa and the Middle East, and has invested in luxury real estate in London, New York, and Paris. M1 is also planning expansion into the Egyptian market and the development of telecommunications infrastructure in Myanmar. In the fintech sector, M1 manages Areeba, a company advancing cashless payment systems across the Middle East and Africa.

Audi Group:

Political affiliation: Christian, neutral, business-oriented and supportive of stability

An international financial group primarily focused on the banking sector in the Middle East and Europe, with its core entity being Bank Audi—one of the largest banks in Lebanon. Founded in 1830 and headquartered in Beirut, the bank offers a wide range of financial services, including commercial banking, investment banking, asset management, and private banking. It also operates in Egypt, Turkey, Switzerland, France, and Saudi Arabia. Bank Audi plays a key role in the MENA region but is currently withdrawing from some markets, as evidenced by the sale of its Turkish subsidiary, Odeabank, to ADQ from Abu Dhabi. The group is also facing legal challenges, including a lawsuit filed by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in the UK, demanding repayment of \$234 million in outstanding loans and interest—an issue that could impact the reputation of Lebanon's banking sector.

- **Banque Audi** (<https://www.bankaudigroup.com/group/home>)

One of the largest banks in Lebanon, controlled by the Audi family. By means of its economic power and political ties, it exerts a significant influence on the media sector in Lebanon.

Kassar Group:

Political affiliation: Christian, pro-Syrian, allied with Hezbollah

- **Fransabank** (<https://www.fransabank.com/>)

A bank controlled by the Kassar family, which holds significant influence within Lebanon's financial system and economy. The Kassar family is involved in various industrial sectors, and its members play an important role in Lebanese politics.

Fares Group:

Political affiliation: Christian, pro-Western, tied to some fractions of the Lebanese Sunni policy

The group is not a primary owner of any media empires, but its influence has been evident through discreet support of pro-Western media that promote moderate politics and liberal values in Lebanon's public sphere, such as:

- An-Nahar (<https://www.annahar.com/>)
- Al-Mustaqbal (<https://mustaqbalweb.com/>).

Gemayel Group:

Political affiliation: Christian

- **LBCI** (<https://www.lbcgroup.tv/>)

Initially affiliated with the Kataeb Party, it is now more neutral, though the Gemayel family still retains influence over its operations.

- **Banque Libano-Française** (<https://www.eblf.com/>)

An important player in the financial market, exerting influence on the Lebanese economy.

Frangieh Group:

Political affiliation: Christian, pro-Syrian, allied with Hezbollah

- **MTV Lebanon** (<https://www.mtv.com.lb/>)

Although primarily controlled by the Murr family, Frangieh holds influence in the media and leverages political relationships to promote his views in outlets aligned with Syria and Hezbollah.

Hezbollah:

- **Al-Manar** (<https://www.almanar.com.lb/>)

A television channel controlled by Hezbollah, functioning as a political tool of the group. While Hezbollah is not a typical business conglomerate, it exerts influence over many sectors of the economy, particularly in southern Lebanon, through its economic networks, social institutions, and ties with Iran. Through media outlets like Al-Manar, Hezbollah shapes the media narrative in Lebanon.

1.6.5 State-owned economic actors

Ministry of Telecommunications of Lebanon

It oversees the telecommunications and media sectors in the country. It has a decisive influence on telecommunications infrastructure, as well as regulations related to media and digital technologies. The takeover of control over the telecom companies Alfa and Touch exemplifies the central role of this ministry in ensuring access to mobile communication and the internet. The ministry also influences media regulations, such as licensing of television and radio stations, as well as online news platforms.

- **Official website:** <https://www.facebook.com/mot.lebanon/>

National Audiovisual Council of Lebanon (CNA)

An institution responsible for regulating audiovisual media in Lebanon. It monitors compliance with media regulations by radio and television stations as well as digital platforms and issues broadcasting licenses. The CNA works to maintain media diversity and oversee the content broadcast by stations, which has a direct impact on shaping public opinion.

- **Official website:** <https://www.ministryinfo.gov.lb>

Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)

A regulatory body overseeing and managing the telecommunications sector, including internet service providers and mobile operators. It plays a key role in regulating internet access and managing frequency bands for mobile services. It also influences regulations concerning digital media.

- **Official website:** <http://www.tra.gov.lb/>

Lebanese media syndicates (Press Order of Lebanon)

Trade unions that bring together journalists and media workers, representing their interests in negotiations with the government and media organizations. Numerous journalist associations operate in Lebanon, such as the Lebanese Press Syndicate, which defend press freedom and work to raise professional standards in journalism. Their role is to support media independence and protect journalists' rights.

- **Official website:** <https://www.pressorderlebanon.com/>

CHAPTER 2. Information habits

2.1 Information habits of Lebanese society

On the official websites of the Lebanese Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Telecommunications, no available data can be found regarding radio and television viewership. As a result, reliance must be placed on data collected by non-governmental institutions such as IPSOS, which provides comprehensive Television Audience Measurement (TAM) data for the Lebanese market. IPSOS holds an almost absolute monopoly over audience measurement statistics in the country. Since IPSOS is primarily funded by LBCI, a clear conflict of interest exists in this matter. In fact, in October 2014, five television stations (MTV, Future TV, NBN, Al-Jadeed, and Télé-Liban) decided to withdraw from IPSOS studies due to what they considered inaccurate evaluations and the company's lack of transparency, given its relationship with LBCI. The most recent IPSOS report on television viewership measurements in Lebanon dates back to 2016, with key findings highlighting increasing media viewership and more time spent by users compared to previous years.

For more recent data, reference can be made to the 2022 EU Election Observation Mission Report, which was compiled during the observation of Lebanon's parliamentary election³. This report also includes sections on the media and its role during the electoral campaign. Another potential source regarding the popularity and viewership of specific media outlets is the *Media Ownership Lebanon 2024* portal⁴ which tracks the most popular media channels in Lebanon.

However, it must be noted that TAM measurements across the country cannot accurately reflect demographic changes due to the absence of national population statistics and distribution data (the last official population census in Lebanon was conducted in 1932). As a direct consequence, it is difficult to obtain representative audience samples. The low reliability of viewership data is also due to the limited number of TAM devices in the country. In fact, these devices are largely absent from densely populated areas, such as Palestinian camps, mainly due to security concerns.

³ The 2022 EU Election Observation Mission Report:

<https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/EU%20EOM%20Lebanon%202022%20Final%20report%20English.pdf>

⁴ <https://lebanon.mom-gmr.org/en/media/>

2.2 Viewership and perception of state media

Lebanon's state-owned media, primarily represented by Télé Liban (managed by the Ministry of Information) and Al-Manar (run by Hezbollah), occupy a specific yet complex position within the country's highly polarized media landscape. Together, they attract a moderate share of the audience — 11.6% for Télé Liban and 6.4% for Al-Manar. Compared to more popular private channels with significantly larger audiences, this indicates their limited overall reach.

State channels are often viewed through a political lens, with audiences choosing them based on their own political affiliations. Despite efforts to maintain objectivity and neutrality, these channels are ultimately perceived as aligned with specific political and sectarian groups. This perception stems from Lebanon's complex history of political divisions and the development of its media under the influence of powerful political parties and movements.

Télé Liban

Lebanon's public television channel, managed by the Ministry of Information, provides national news and entertainment. Télé Liban has an audience share of approximately 11.6%. On YouTube, the channel has 175,000 subscribers, with most videos receiving only a few thousand views. According to the EU EOM report during the 2022 parliamentary elections, 31% of the channel's overall election-related news coverage focused on Hezbollah, followed by 19% on the Lebanese Forces. This suggests that viewers affiliated with these two political groups are the primary audience of Télé Liban.

- **Official website:** <https://www.teleliban.com.lb/index.php>

Al-Manar

Lebanese satellite television channel owned by the political party Hezbollah, serving as the official media outlet of Hezbollah. Al-Manar has an audience share of 6.4%. Its content is primarily consumed by individuals who are pro-Hezbollah or affiliated with Hezbollah.

- **Official website:** <https://english.almanar.com.lb/>

2.3 Viewership and perception of non-state media, including party-affiliated and sectarian/religious media

Lebanese non-state media emerged in the 1980s as a counterpoint to the state-controlled Télé-Liban, with rapid growth of politically affiliated channels following the introduction of the audiovisual law in 1994. Today, these media play a key role in shaping public opinion, distributing information, and representing diverse viewpoints. Approximately 97% of adult Lebanese rely on such media, highlighting strong social engagement with these sources. However, similar to state media, non-state outlets are often perceived as less credible due to overt political affiliations, as major TV stations are linked to political factions, religious groups, or foreign interests (nine main TV stations are associated with pro-Western or pro-Iranian groups), creating an environment where professional standards frequently yield to political agendas.

Non-state newspapers and radio stations face a similar dynamic. Historically abundant, Lebanese print media are currently in decline due to the financial crisis and reduced foreign funding, affecting titles such as An-Nahar and Al-Mustaqbal. The radio sector, which after the civil war included as many as 180 illegal stations, is also constrained by economic and regulatory challenges. Despite these difficulties, newspapers and radio stations continue to reflect Lebanon's political spectrum, maintaining their role in political discourse.

Lebanese society has a mixed attitude toward non-state media. On one hand, these media are valued for giving voice to diverse political views, which is important in a pluralistic society. On the other hand, their strong bias raises skepticism about their objectivity. Audiences often approach media consumption cautiously, aware that coverage can vary significantly depending on the channel and its political or sectarian affiliation. Despite concerns about bias, non-state media remain essential for sharing information, especially in the absence of a widely trusted public institution. Their role in political communication and public discourse is reinforced by limited press freedoms and the reliance on non-state platforms for up-to-date news on protests, elections, and social movements.

2.3.1 Private media

MTV Lebanon

With approximately a 64% market share, MTV is one of the most popular stations in Lebanon. Its wide programming lineup includes news, entertainment, and reality shows. The high viewership is partly due to modern production and popularity among younger audiences. Nevertheless, MTV is sometimes criticized for its centrist and right-leaning approach, which attracts viewers with moderate views, especially in cities like Beirut.

- **Official website:** <https://www.mtv.com.lb/>

LBCI

With around 18.5% viewership, LBCI maintains a strong position as the country's first private television station. The channel is popular for its high-quality news programs and series. Although it has a smaller share than MTV, LBCI is valued for its professionalism and relatively balanced approach to reporting events. The station maintains historical ties with the Lebanese Forces, which influence its editorial line.

- **Official website:** <http://www.lbcgroup.tv/>

Al-Jadeed

With a viewership share of around 25.3%, Al-Jadeed is known for its bold investigative journalism and tackling controversial topics, attracting viewers critical of the political elites. The station's message, focused on fighting corruption, meets the expectations of audiences seeking change, especially the younger generation. Despite pressure from authorities, Al-Jadeed maintains significant viewership thanks to its courageous reporting.

- **Official website:** <https://www.aljadeed.tv/>

OTV

This station, with a viewership of around 12.4%, is affiliated with the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), founded by former President Michel Aoun. Due to its clear political ties, it attracts viewers sympathetic to the FPM, particularly among Christians who identify with the party's ideology. OTV places strong emphasis on covering the activities of the FPM, creating a niche but loyal audience base.

- **Official website:** <https://otv.com.lb/>

NBN

The television station is closely affiliated with the Amal Movement, which represents the political interests of Shia Muslims in Lebanon. The channel focuses on news, informational, and political programs that support narratives aligned with Amal's ideology, and its content is often targeted at viewers from the southern regions of the country and areas inhabited by the Shia community. NBN's viewership is generally lower compared to mainstream channels like MTV or LBCI, due to the specific nature of its content and its lesser appeal to a broader audience. Nevertheless, it maintains a steady audience base, mainly among Amal supporters and residents of rural areas where access to commercial media is limited.

- **Official website:** <https://nbn.com.lb/>

2.3.2 Party-affiliated media

Radio Liban

Radio Liban is the national radio broadcaster, funded by the Lebanese government and operating under the Ministry of Information. It plays a key role as an information channel, providing news, cultural broadcasts, as well as educational and music programs. As a public medium, it is not directly dependent on audience ratings or listenership, which makes its market position stable but less competitive compared to commercial stations. Due to its government affiliation, Radio Liban attracts a diverse audience, although its reach is often limited to certain groups, such as older people or residents of areas with less access to social media.

- **Official website:** <https://www.radioliban.gov.lb/>

2.3.3 Religious media

Tele Lumiere

The station has a religious character and is primarily funded by Christian religious institutions in Lebanon. Reports indicate that its market share is low, considering its limited resources and the nature of its broadcast content.

- **Official website:** <https://www.noursat.tv/ar/index.php>

Al Nour Radio

Affiliated with the Hezbollah movement, it primarily serves as a medium for its political message, but detailed data on its listenership is not publicly available.

- **Official website:** <https://www.alnour.com.lb/>

2.3.4 Sectarian media

Badil Media

It operates mainly as an alternative source of information, especially in the context of political accountability, social justice, and economic reforms. Badil Media was established in response to the growing demand for independent and transparent journalism, particularly following the political and economic crisis that intensified after the Beirut port explosion in 2020. This editorial team focuses on issues of state neglect, social injustice, and corruption, seeking ways to improve the socio-economic situation and restore government accountability to citizens. Its content therefore reaches a specific audience that views government actions with a critical eye.

- **Official website:** <https://badil.info/>

2.4 Popularity of online sources, including unverified ones

The popularity of online sources is extremely significant in Lebanon's digital landscape, where internet penetration stands at 90.1%, amounting to 4.76 million users as of early 2024. Social media platforms, reaching 85.6% of the population, play a key role in the flow of information, especially Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. These platforms have redefined political discourse by enabling candidates and political movements to bypass the limitations of traditional, often biased media, and directly, cost-effectively reach audiences amid Lebanon's financial crisis.

The influence of social media is particularly strong among young Lebanese, who increasingly prefer these platforms over traditional media. With capabilities for discussion, targeted advertising, and opinion sharing, social media has become crucial for alternative political movements and grassroots campaigns that lack access to mainstream media. However, the impact of these platforms also brings challenges: unverified information and misinformation spread widely and often remain unchecked, while “echo chambers” on apps like WhatsApp exacerbate the problem. In such spaces, users tend to gravitate toward information that confirms their preexisting beliefs, which can intensify sectarian and political tensions. Consequently, while social media supports political engagement, it also perpetuates a complex environment where misinformation thrives, leading to further polarization and shaping a fragmented public understanding.

Additionally, during crises, social media has proven essential for rapid communication and crisis management, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic when government officials used these platforms to correct misinformation and build transparency. Nevertheless, the spread of unverified content continues to raise concerns.

Using the Semrush platform, we are able to see the exact number of page views and other useful statistical data.

Al-Modon

Al-Modon is valued for its reliability and in-depth analyses, which mainly appeal to liberal and moderate readers.

The website receives 73,600 visits per month.

- **Official website:** <https://www.almodon.com/politics>

Bint Jbeil

Popular mainly among the Shia community and residents of southern Lebanon, it offers local and religious news, focusing on issues important to the Bint Jbeil region. This service is known for its more local, conservative approach to events.

The website receives 23,129 visits per month.

- **Official website:** <https://bintjbeil.org/>

Daraj Media

Daraj is known for its investigative journalism and emphasizes human rights and social policy. It stands out for its strong engagement with topics such as women's rights, political violence, and issues related to religious persecution. It mainly attracts younger, liberal audiences interested in social issues and social change.

The website receives 58,059 visits per month.

- **Official website:** <https://daraj.media/en/>

Elnashra

It is one of the more popular sources for a broad audience, offering a wide range of news from local to international and regional political contexts. Elnashra is known for its timeliness, and its coverage attracts readers seeking both current information and analytical commentary.

The website receives 813,466 visits per month.

- **Official website:** <https://www.elnashra.com/>

Lebanon 24

The news website reaches a wide audience through rapid updates and live event coverage. It often focuses on socially relevant topics and the everyday problems of Lebanese people, making it a popular source for daily news.

The website receives 501,960 visits per month.

- **Official website:** <https://www.lebanon24.com/>

Lebanon Debate

Known for bold articles that often spark controversy, this portal focuses on current political and social events, presenting them in an attention-grabbing manner. The portal is popular among younger, politically engaged readers.

The website receives 757,156 visits per month.

- **Official website:** <https://www.lebanondebate.com/>

Lebanon Files

Another popular source for those seeking current news, Lebanon Files attracts a wide audience with extensive sections on news and analysis, as well as coverage of the economy and domestic politics.

The website receives 506,331 visits per month.

- **Official website:** <https://www.lebanonfiles.com/>

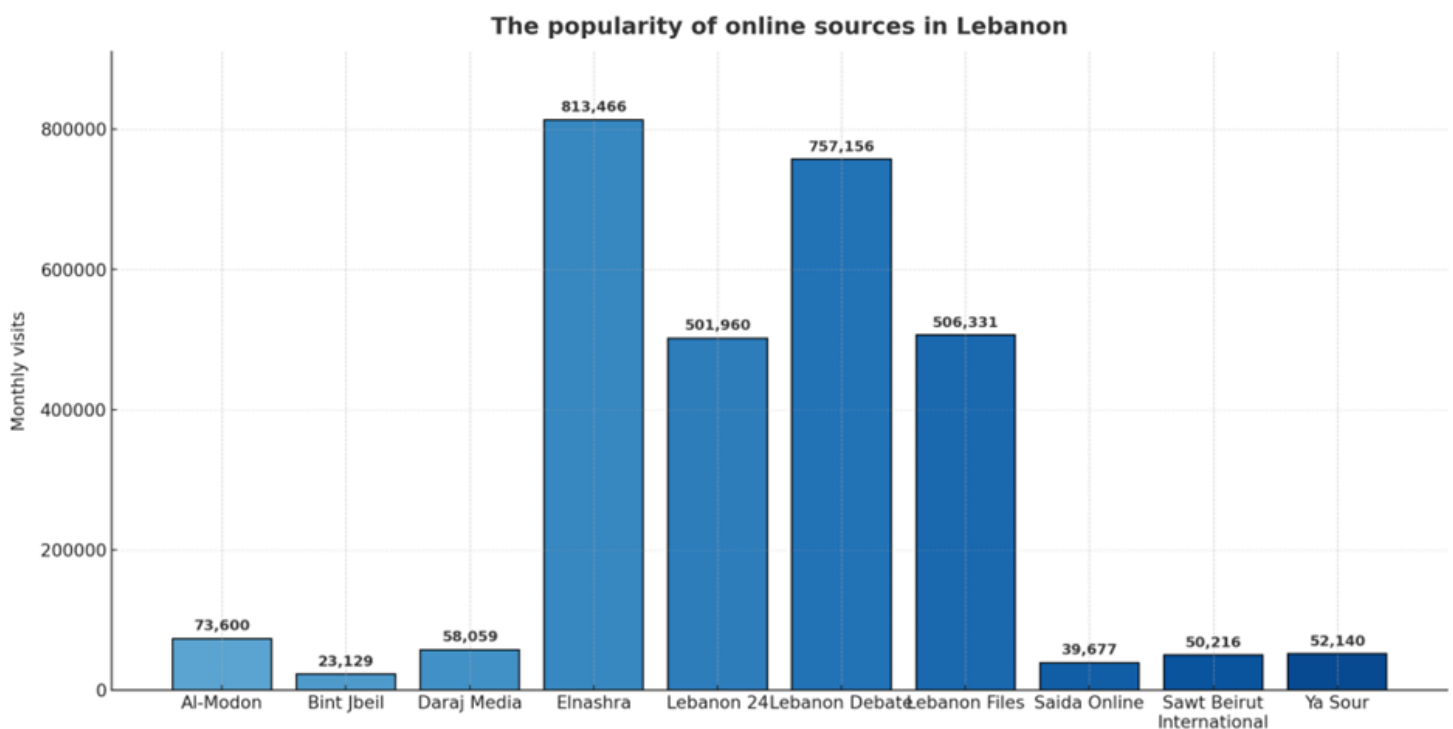


Chart 4. The popularity of online sources in Lebanon • Units: monthly visits (user-provided)

Chart 4. The popularity of online sources in Lebanon

Saida Online

A website focused on southern Lebanon, particularly around the city of Saida. It offers local news as well as coverage of religious and social events, attracting readers from more conservative circles. The website receives 39,677 visits per month.

- **Official website:** <https://www.saidaonline.com/>

Sawt Beirut International

This news portal often attracts political interest by focusing on events in Beirut and across Lebanon. Sawt Beirut International is known for its analyses and reports on regional conflicts as well as the international aspects of Lebanon's situation. The website receives 50,216 visits per month.

- **Official website:** <https://www.sawtbeirut.com/>

Ya Sour

A portal with strong roots in the Tyre region, offering news from southern Lebanon, often related to local events and communities.

The website receives 52,140 visits per month.

- **Official website:** <https://www.yasour.org/>

2.5 Popularity of foreign media

Lebanese society has a diverse approach to foreign media, strongly influenced by political affiliations and regional loyalties. Western media outlets such as BBC, CNN, and France 24 attract a significant number of Lebanese viewers, especially among those who see Western countries as defenders of democracy and human rights. However, trust in these sources is not universal; pro-Iranian and pro-Syrian factions in Lebanon view Western media more skeptically, perceiving them as biased against Iran or Syria.

Arab media also have a strong influence on Lebanese society, with outlets like Al Jazeera (based in Qatar) and Al Arabiya (based in Saudi Arabia) playing key roles, though perceptions of these media vary according to political affiliations. Al Jazeera is popular among audiences supporting broader Arab or pro-Palestinian perspectives, while Al Arabiya is preferred by those closer to Saudi Arabian policies. Nonetheless, Lebanese society is aware that both Arab and Western media serve the foreign policy interests of their home countries rather than providing impartial information, understanding these media as tools for advancing regional agendas.

Foreign media proved particularly valuable in Lebanon during crises such as the economic protests in 2019 and the Beirut port explosion in 2020. After these events, Lebanese audiences increasingly turned to foreign media, considering them more accurate and up-to-date sources of information.

However, a 2019 study titled “Media Use in the Middle East” showed that despite this, 66% of Lebanese still prefer consuming news from domestic media organizations, although this preference dropped from 93% in 2017. This suggests growing openness to foreign media sources despite the dominant role of national broadcasters. This trend reflects the complex approach of the Lebanese public to media consumption, balancing local sources with foreign perspectives to better navigate Lebanon’s intricate political landscape.

2.6 Susceptibility to the “bazaar news,” including conspiracy theories

Lebanese society shows a strong susceptibility to “bazaar information,” including conspiracy theories, which stems from societal polarization and a deeply rooted lack of trust in state institutions and foreign influences. This makes alternative explanations more appealing, enabling disinformation networks and extremist groups to exploit public grievances by spreading unverified claims online. The complex political landscape, marked by constant external interference and a fragmented power structure, fosters a situation where citizens often resort to conspiracy theories to explain the country's instability. Relying on speculative information is a coping mechanism for Lebanese people struggling with an opaque governance system and a complicated network of national and international actors vying for influence.

The lack of trust in government institutions makes Lebanese society more open to alternative narratives, which often take the form of rumors and conspiracies. Additionally, the influence of external forces on Lebanon's politics leads to a widespread sense of alienation, weakening social trust and encouraging openness to unverified information sources, creating “echo chambers” where certain narratives become entrenched and resistant to opposition.

Conspiracy theories are common across all social groups, with each faction attributing the country's crises to the influence of foreign powers or rival sects. For example, Hezbollah supporters believe in an alliance between Sunni groups, Israel, the USA, and Gulf countries aimed at weakening their influence, while Sunni factions view Hezbollah and Iran as oppressors backed by the state apparatus.

Foreign influence—whether real or perceived—intensifies these tendencies. Lebanon's sectarian structure and ongoing foreign interference create an environment where people believe that “something is happening behind the scenes,” perpetuating a culture of suspicion and distrust. In the absence of a coherent national identity and credible government institutions, Lebanese often use conspiracy theories as a way to understand their political and social realities, while sectarian leaders may promote these theories to divert attention from internal criticism.

The 2020 Beirut explosion

Among the widely circulated theories are speculations about the 2020 Beirut explosion, when part of the public rejected the official explanations regarding the stored ammonium nitrate, suspecting an attack or conspiracy involving foreign actors, including Israel or Hezbollah. Although Lebanese authorities and experts quickly dismissed these hypotheses, the images of the explosion and its coincidence with the anniversary of the Hiroshima attack fueled the popularity of theories about a “nuclear attack” or a “secret operation” among some groups of citizens, despite the absence of radiation evidence or typical signs of a nuclear explosion.

Financial control at the hands of elites and bankers

Concerns about currency manipulation by Lebanese financial elites are widespread, and combined with the economic crisis, they fuel speculation that international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund are seeking to take control of Lebanon's economy by imposing strict loan conditions. The rising cost of living and hyperinflation exacerbate these theories.

Foreign influences and efforts at destabilization

Amid internal political divisions, many Lebanese are convinced that both Israel and the United States exploit Lebanon's internal weaknesses to weaken Hezbollah and increase their influence over Lebanon, giving rise to theories about the hidden intentions of foreign powers. There are also ongoing theories suggesting that secret alliances and influences are meant to unite Syria and Lebanon.

2.7 Places of religious cult serving as information hubs

Religious institutions in Lebanon serve not only as places of worship but also as key sources of information that significantly influence public opinion and provide essential social services often unmet by the state. This phenomenon has its roots in Lebanon's unique confessional system, which institutionalizes religious divisions within government structures, recognizing 18 distinct denominations, each with autonomy over personal and community matters. Religious organizations frequently fill gaps left by the government, offering services such as healthcare, education, and social support. Supported both locally and internationally, they have gained the status of trusted entities within their communities, performing roles typically assigned to state institutions in other countries.

The influence of religious institutions as sources of information is further reinforced by the pervasive lack of trust in state institutions in Lebanon. Citizens, often disappointed with state leadership, turn to these organizations—closely tied to their religious identities—for guidance on both political and social issues. This dependence fosters strong bonds within communities but also strengthens sectarian loyalty, sometimes at the expense of a unified national identity. As a result, Lebanese society remains deeply divided, with religious leaders exerting significant influence on public opinion and community behavior, especially during times of crisis.

Social welfare organizations affiliated with religious institutions in Lebanon are perceived as reliable and direct sources of support, especially in times of crisis. The government's tolerant approach toward these institutions grants them significant autonomy, enabling the development of resources and infrastructure. As a result, religious institutions can operate almost parallel to the state, often serving as substitutes for public services in many areas. Consequently, they have gained a powerful position in shaping Lebanon's information landscape, influencing public discourse and reinforcing sectarian divisions within society.

Historically, religious institutions have shaped and maintained a power model based on sectarian divisions in Lebanon. Religious leaders often manage community-specific institutions, including personal status courts that regulate matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, further solidifying their role as trusted sources of legal and social advice.

Religious leaders frequently base their teachings on themes of national unity and social morality, aiming to promote coexistence among Lebanon's diverse communities. During times of political or sectarian tension, they are seen as mediators, providing stability and a sense of security. However, the reliance on religious institutions as sources of information highlights a paradox: although they seek to promote unity, they simultaneously maintain sectarian boundaries. By managing social and legal affairs within beliefs-specific structures, they perpetuate social divisions, hindering efforts toward social integration and a cohesive national identity.

Mohammad Al-Amin Mosque in Beirut

One of the largest and most recognizable mosques in Lebanon. This mosque is not only a place of worship but also a center for the Muslim community in Beirut. It hosts religious lectures,

social gatherings, and various forms of charitable support, such as aid for those in need. The mosque also serves as an information hub, especially during political or economic crises.

Saint George Maronite Cathedral in Beirut

The Saint George Cathedral is the main Maronite cathedral in Lebanon, located in the center of Beirut. For the Christian community, especially the Maronites, the cathedral serves as a religious, educational, and social center. The church hosts meetings, lectures, and charitable activities. It also offers counseling, both spiritual and family-related, and through its activities provides information and support to the faithful.

Monastery of Qozhaya, Qadisha Valley

One of the oldest monasteries in Lebanon, belonging to the Maronite Order of Saint Anthony.

The monastery is a popular place of pilgrimage and spiritual retreat. The monks who live there provide spiritual guidance and support to pilgrims and those seeking inner peace. Retreats and workshops are also organized there.

Druze and Religious Center in Mukhtara

Mukhtara is a historic village in the Shouf Mountains and the seat of the Druze community. It is home to prayer houses and religious centers of the Druze. The Druze gather in places like Mukhtara to discuss religious matters as well as social and political issues. Druze religious leaders, known as sheikhs, are often sources of knowledge and guidance for the entire community, including everyday matters such as marriages, dispute resolution, and organizing social events.

Sanctuary of Our Lady of Harissa

The sanctuary is located on Harissa Hill and is one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Christians in Lebanon. It attracts both local and international pilgrims who come to pray and seek spiritual support. The church also organizes educational and social events aimed at supporting the faithful, as well as serving as a place for meetings and information exchange.

Social Centers in Tripoli

In Tripoli, one of the largest cities in Lebanon, there are many religious centers that serve the Sunni and Alawite communities. These centers are places of prayer as well as charitable and educational activities. Numerous organizations operate in Tripoli within these religious centers, offering humanitarian aid, education, and workshops that help people better understand their religion and cope with everyday challenges.

CHAPTER 3. Social vulnerabilities

3.1 Religious divisions

The religious landscape of Lebanon is incredibly diverse. In 2023, the population was approximately 5.4 million people, including 4.5 million citizens and about 1.5 million refugees, mainly from Syria and Iraq, as well as over 180,000 from Palestine. Among the migrants, Sunni Muslims predominate, introducing additional religious divisions and intensifying social fractures. Although Lebanon has not conducted an official census since 1932, data from Statistics Lebanon indicate that 69.3% of citizens are Muslims (including 31.2% Sunnis, 32% Shiites, and 6.1% Alawites and Ismailis), while 30.7% are Christians, mainly Maronites and Greek Catholics. Additionally, the country is home to religious minorities such as the Druze (5.5% of the population), Jews, Bahá'ís, and representatives of Buddhism and Hinduism (constituting less than 1% of the population), further enriching Lebanon's religious mosaic.

Religious identity in Lebanon plays a key role in shaping daily social practices, becoming an important marker of belonging that, on one hand, strengthens bonds among members but, on the other, intensifies boundaries between communities and often leads to feelings of exclusion. The diversity of groups also significantly affects access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and social support, leading to inequalities and creating a system in which individuals rely on their religious communities to obtain assistance and resources. This kind of dependency fosters the development of patronage-client relationships, where loyalty to religious sects becomes more important than national affiliation. As a result, communal identities grow stronger, while broader social cohesion is weakened.

These mechanisms hinder the building of a national identity in Lebanon, and citizens often see themselves primarily as members of their groups rather than as united citizens of the state. Consequently, Lebanese society struggles to build lasting solidarity, which weakens trust between different sectors and complicates the creation of a shared national unity.

3.2 Sectarianism and ethno-sectarianism

Sectarianism and ethno-sectarianism in Lebanon have deep historical roots dating back to the Ottoman and colonial periods, which shaped religious and political divisions. The consociational system introduced in the 20th century institutionalized these divisions by allocating power and resources based on religious affiliation. Under this structure, the highest political offices—such as the president, prime minister, and speaker of parliament—are assigned to specific religious groups to ensure a balance among sects. However, this division, stemming from historical difficulties in integrating different communities, leads to persistent tensions and challenges in building a cohesive national identity.

The Taif Agreement of 1989, which ended the civil war, changed the power-sharing formula that had formed the basis of governance in Lebanon under the 1943 National Pact. The political reconstruction terms outlined in the Taif Agreement modified the structure to reflect the demographic realities of contemporary Lebanon. Several key provisions of the National Pact were altered: most presidential powers were transferred to the Parliament and Council of Ministers, resulting in the Maronite Christian president losing much of his executive authority and retaining only a symbolic role. Important public offices, including those in Parliament, the Council of Ministers, and senior positions, were redistributed evenly between Muslims and Christians, disrupting the traditional six-to-five ratio that had favored Christians under the National Pact.

These divisions are deeply reflected in Lebanese society and politics. For example, the inability to elect a president leads to political deadlocks and weakens citizens' trust in state institutions. Lebanon struggles with effective governance because the interests of sectarian groups dominate over a unified approach to state affairs. Similarly, the political system limits the possibility of implementing broad economic reforms, maintaining social loyalties to religious leaders rather than fostering national unity.

Political-religious groups, such as Hezbollah and Amal, further reinforce these divisions by controlling specific regions of Lebanon and selectively providing social services exclusively to their supporters. In crisis situations, when citizens seek a sense of security, their loyalties to communities deepen social divisions, making cooperation among different groups more difficult and intensifying tensions as a result.

Despite these challenges, there is potential for gradually weakening the influence of sectarianism in Lebanese politics. In accordance with the Lebanese constitution and the National Reconciliation Pact, proposed reforms aim to establish a Senate representing religious communities, rotate the highest state offices among sects, and gradually transform the political system toward more non-sectarian representation in parliament. These actions are intended not only to weaken the influence of sectarianism but also to build a more united society that will be resilient to internal divisions and external pressures.

The current difficult migration situation in the country, related to the Israeli campaign against Hezbollah, has the potential to unite people across divides through mutual assistance to those fleeing the areas most vulnerable to attacks. An example of this behavior is Marjayoun, a predominantly Christian town in southern Lebanon, which opened its schools and church to accommodate dozens of people of various faiths fleeing Israeli attacks.

LEBANON'S RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

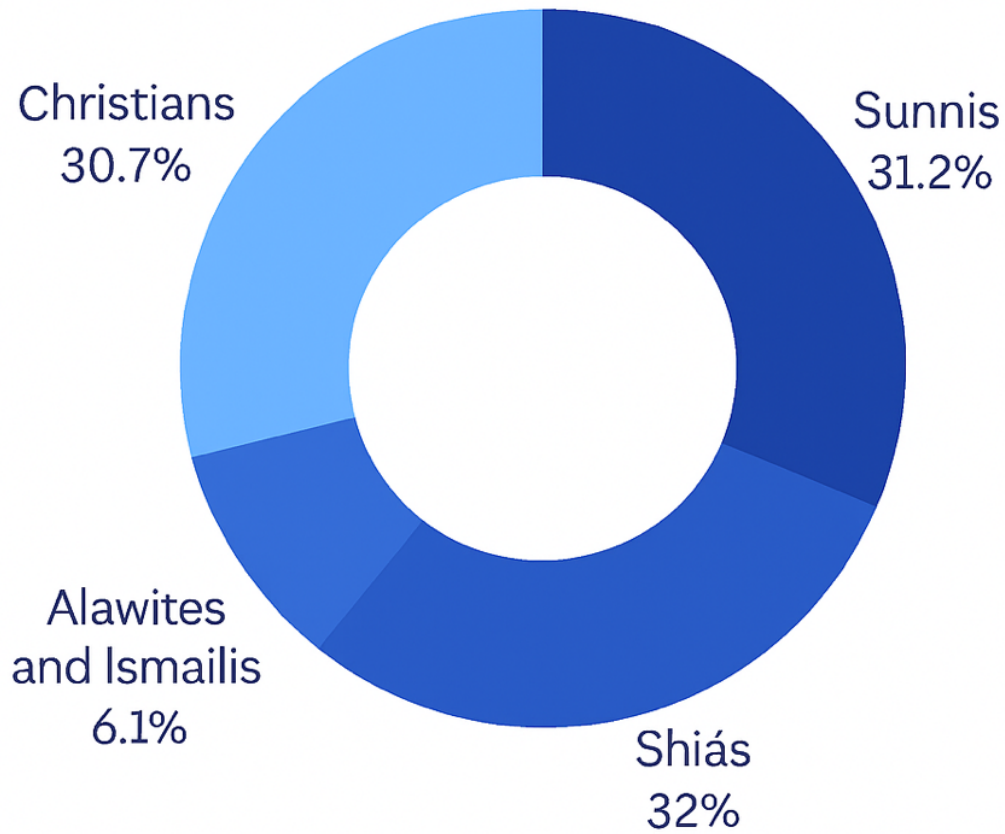


Chart 5. Religious landscape of Lebanon

3.3 Economic instabilities

Political instability, prolonged regional conflicts, and deeply entrenched corruption have caused a decline in GDP growth and the devastation of key economic sectors such as banking and tourism, which are particularly sensitive to the country's security situation. In 2017, the debt-to-GDP ratio reached an alarming level of 152.8%, indicating severe financial instability exacerbated by the dominance of political elites over the economy.

In 2019, Lebanon experienced one of the worst economic crises globally. Food prices increased by over 1000%, and GDP fell by 70-75% compared to pre-crisis levels. Eighty percent of Lebanon's population (over 3 million people) lived in poverty, with extreme poverty affecting 36% of Lebanese citizens (1.38 million).

International efforts were made to support Lebanon's difficult economic situation. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Lebanese government reached an agreement on proposed economic reforms in April 2022. The government committed to implementing reform-related actions before the IMF Board would consider financing a four-year loan worth \$3 billion. However, as of April 2024, Lebanon had made only limited progress in these efforts.

According to the latest 2024 report by the United States Department of State, Lebanon continued to struggle with reduced economic activity stemming from the outbreak of the economic crisis at the end of 2019. Additionally, the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict has impacted Lebanon's current economic situation. Although military actions were largely confined to the southern border areas of Lebanon, instability and the risk of escalation posed obstacles to Lebanon's economic recovery.

Corruption and clientelism, particularly evident in the banking sector and public services, significantly reduce market efficiency, increase income inequality, and limit access to fair employment. Additionally, the influx of refugees from Syria, which has increased competition in the labor market, has lowered wages in low-paying sectors, leading to rising unemployment and deepening poverty among Lebanese citizens.

At the same time, inflation driven by a sharp currency devaluation has caused the cost of living to rise, with food expenses consuming more than half of many households' budgets. This forces many Lebanese to go into debt and face the growing problem of food insecurity. Underfunded infrastructure and corruption in public institutions such as healthcare and education further weaken social safety nets, leading to mass emigration.

All these factors have already significantly deepened Lebanon's economic fragility, and the additional destruction caused by past regional conflicts and the current escalation of the conflict with Israel further destabilizes the situation, exacerbating poverty and limiting the potential for economic recovery. Intense bombings and ground operations have destroyed key infrastructure, including bridges, roads, and airports, hindering the delivery of essential goods and services. Additionally, the escalation of tensions deters investors and tourists, worsening the economic crisis to which the country is already vulnerable.

The rise in regional tensions, combined with political instability, makes it difficult to implement the necessary economic reforms, further intensifying the financial crisis and social inequalities.

3.4 Ethnicity

Social vulnerabilities in Lebanon, arising from ethnic and religious differences, reveal the deep effects of a long-standing political-religious hierarchy, a divided education system, and economically marginalized refugee communities. Since 1992, the Lebanese political scene has been shaped by a rigid structure in which Shiites, Sunnis, and Maronites—considered “Senior Partners”—hold dominant influence. Meanwhile, Druze, Greek Orthodox, and Armenian Orthodox communities, known as “Junior Partners,” have limited political opportunities, and smaller groups such as Alawites and Armenian Catholics are practically “powerless.” Palestinian refugees occupy a particularly marginalized position, classified as “discriminated against,” with restricted access to rights, employment opportunities, and political participation. This entrenched structure has shaped Lebanon’s political power dynamics, creating social vulnerabilities where ethnic and religious identity can significantly impact life prospects.

It is therefore unsurprising that these complex ethnic divisions constitute a significant element of social tensions that have shaped Lebanon’s political and social landscape over the years. The influx of Syrian refugees in 2012 further exacerbated these tensions, and anti-immigrant rhetoric has intensified social divisions, contributing to political support for exclusionary narratives. To this day, many refugees—especially Syrians and Palestinians—remain excluded from the formal labor market, forcing them into insecure, low-paid jobs without legal protection. This dependence on precarious employment increases their vulnerability to poverty and deepens reliance on international aid.

In the educational sphere, Lebanese institutions are often affiliated with specific religious or political ideologies, creating an environment where ethnic affiliation influences social interactions and academic experiences. This divided system, reinforced by linguistic differences—where French and English often symbolize distance from Arab identity—hinders efforts toward national unity. Because controversial topics are frequently avoided, a hidden curriculum perpetuates sectarian biases, limiting opportunities for intercultural understanding. As a result, Lebanon’s social fabric remains deeply fragmented, impeding the emergence of a cohesive national identity and reinforcing social vulnerabilities linked to ethnic divisions that weaken democratic engagement and public trust.

Lebanon, hosting the highest number of refugees per capita in the world, faces serious ethnic and social challenges. The country has taken in approximately 1.5 million Syrians, 479,000 Palestinians, and over 12,000 people from other countries. Additionally, more than 250,000 migrant domestic workers, mainly from African and Asian countries, reside in Lebanon.

Lebanon has not signed the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, resulting in the absence of formal legal frameworks for the protection of refugees. Instead, the country relies on ad hoc agreements with the UNHCR. The only legal act regulating the status of foreigners is a decree from 1962, which does not provide comprehensive protection for refugees.

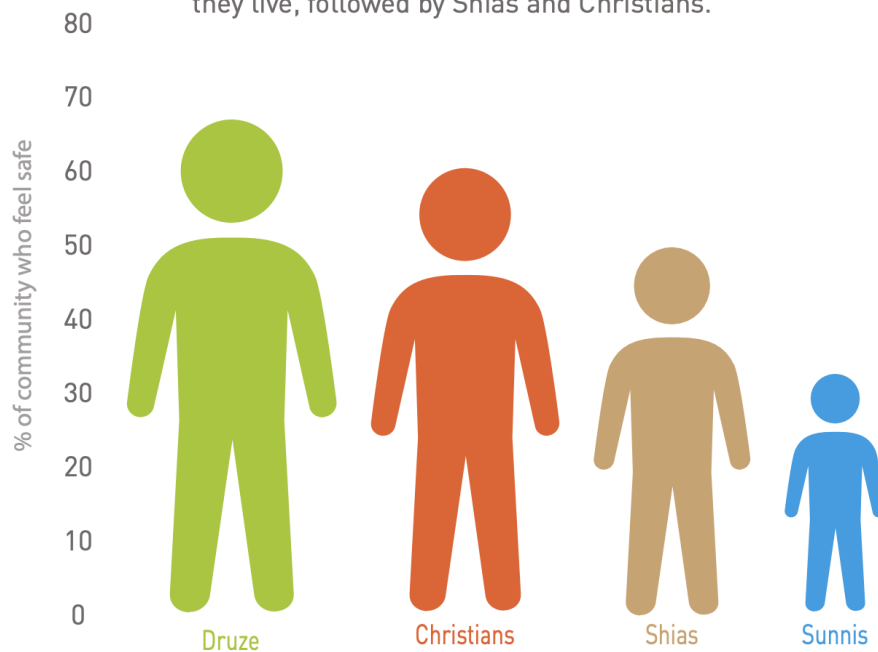
The lack of formal protection mechanisms leads to the marginalization and discrimination of refugees and migrants. Many of them lack access to basic services such as education and

healthcare, which exacerbates their difficult situation. Moreover, the "kafala" system regulating migrant employment contributes to abuses and exploitation, limiting the rights of migrant workers.

The presence of such a large number of refugees and migrants affects Lebanon's delicate demographic balance, leading to social and political tensions. The absence of effective integration policies and adequate legal frameworks hinders the resolution of these issues, negatively impacting the country's stability.

SECTARIAN DIFFERENCES

The Sunni community feel much less safe than other communities in the area in which they live, followed by Shias and Christians.



3.5 Political outcomes

The Lebanese political system is a complex hybrid that combines formal state institutions with the interests of sectarian parties, making elites and clientelism the core of the country's governance. This structure generates significant social risks, as public resources are distributed primarily through the lens of political and ideological affiliations rather than fair public policies. Political parties, acting as intermediaries between the state and their supporters, exploit control over resources and regional influence, often leading to monopolies over basic services such as electricity and fuel. This creates deep socio-economic divisions, leaving citizens dependent on political actors for their basic needs and fostering widespread corruption.

The political framework is further weakened by these divisions, affecting processes such as presidential elections, as factions are unable to reach a common agreement. This deadlock undermines the state's capacity to address urgent issues, further deepening social instability. Lebanon's neoliberal economic model, favored by political elites, focuses on short-term gains in the financial, real estate, and service sectors, marginalizing sustainable sectors such as agriculture and industry. This approach to financialization and reliance on foreign capital flows leads to growing inequalities and insufficient social protections, leaving the population vulnerable to economic changes and external pressures. Due to the stalemate in key reforms, Lebanon's economy remains fragile, public investment is limited, and social instability intensifies, causing increased unrest among communities.

Since October 31, 2022, Lebanon has been without a president due to the lack of agreement among various political and religious groups in the country. According to the 1943 National Pact, the president of Lebanon must be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of parliament a Shiite Muslim. This system aims to ensure balance among different religious communities but often results in political deadlock in practice. After President Michel Aoun's term ended in October 2022, the parliament failed to elect his successor due to a lack of consensus among political factions. As a result, Prime Minister Najib Mikati assumed the duties of head of state while continuing to serve as prime minister. This situation is unconstitutional and undermines the stability of state institutions. The absence of a president deepens Lebanon's political and economic crisis. The country struggles with severe economic problems, including hyperinflation, high unemployment, and mass emigration. Additionally, the presence of powerful armed groups, such as Hezbollah, weakens state authority and complicates democratic processes.

3.6 Foreign influences

Lebanese society is highly sensitive to interventions by foreign states due to the country's complex political history marked by colonialism, external influence, and ongoing regional conflicts. The legacy of the French Mandate and the presence of international actors in Lebanese politics—especially in the context of the civil war and post-war reconstruction—have fostered distrust toward external involvement. This sensitivity is particularly strong when foreign states are perceived as interfering in Lebanon's internal affairs, whether through political, economic, or military support. Lebanon's unique sectarian structure further complicates these sensitivities, as different factions may support or oppose foreign powers depending on their ideological or strategic interests. For example, Hezbollah's presence and influence are backed by Iran, while Sunni groups in Lebanon receive assistance from Saudi Arabia.

While some view foreign intervention as necessary for stability or to counter hostile neighbors, others see it as a violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and a deepening of internal divisions. This delicate balance shapes the national discourse, where external influences are often viewed with suspicion, especially when they threaten the fragile political order or exacerbate Lebanon's vulnerabilities.

Lebanon has become a battleground for rivalry among Israel, Syria, Iran, and other states that exploit local conflicts to pursue their own interests. Israel has conducted numerous interventions, including armed invasions aimed, among other objectives, at eliminating the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The presence of Palestinian fighters, especially in the south, provided Israel with a pretext for military actions, while Lebanon's weak central government allowed the PLO to operate as a "state within a state."

Lebanon's situation is closely linked to the broader Israeli-Arab conflict, as well as the struggle for influence between Arab countries and Iran. Despite a desire to protect its sovereignty, Lebanon has repeatedly fallen victim to interventions that have deepened its internal divisions. Lebanese people, regardless of religion, often agree that resolving the Palestinian issue should not come at the expense of their country's territorial integrity.

3.7 Security concerns

Lebanon faces a range of interconnected security threats that deepen its social vulnerability, creating unstable living conditions for its residents. One of the most frequently cited threats is religious extremism and factions linked to the Syrian conflict (over 70% of citizens viewed these as serious threats according to a 2013 survey). Additionally, spreading feelings of insecurity are fueled by political violence, including bombings, assassinations, and street attacks. The rise in crime, such as thefts, robberies, and assaults, poses another problem, as do sexual assaults, harassment, and domestic violence (especially against women). Widespread access to firearms significantly exacerbates these threats, as nearly half of the population reported contact with weapons in their vicinity (as of 2013; given the current situation, this number is certainly higher).



Sectarian tensions exacerbate these vulnerabilities, forcing many people to avoid mixed areas out of fear of violence. This situation is further worsened by the growing role of non-state actors in maintaining security, as political parties such as Hezbollah and Amal effectively (or sometimes ineffectively) replace the state's role as guarantor of security. Their dominance in local security and governance creates a fragmented system where citizens—especially those loyal to these parties—rely on their protection, while others remain exposed to the marginalization of the state's role.

Societal security issues are also reflected in the rising threat of food insecurity, which is further deepened by the ongoing economic crisis. Many Lebanese families, especially in rural areas, struggle with limited access to food, forcing them to adopt extreme survival strategies such as skipping meals or incurring debt. Food insecurity exacerbates existing social problems in the

country, particularly affecting larger households and those located far from markets, leading to increased poverty and greater dependence on aid (especially foreign assistance).

At the same time, cybersecurity has become a new and significant threat, as Lebanon's IT infrastructure is riddled with security vulnerabilities, particularly in sectors such as banking, healthcare, and government administration, exposing sensitive data to unauthorized use. The lack of effective cybersecurity measures—combined with limited institutional response to such threats—puts not only national security but also social stability at risk, threatening critical services and economic functions. The growing number of cyberattacks targeting intellectual property and sensitive data, coupled with the inability of both the public and private sectors to effectively manage these threats, deepens the overall sense of insecurity and highlights the urgent need to implement effective protective measures.

CHAPTER 4. Psychological Vulnerabilities of Lebanese Society: A Cultural, Economic, and Psychological Analysis

Lebanon, a country with a rich history and cultural diversity, faces unique psychosocial challenges. Its people live in the shadow of a legacy of armed conflicts, prolonged political instability, and a multifaceted economic crisis. This society also experiences intense pressures arising from religious divisions, migration, and the growing burden caused by the acceptance of millions of refugees. The aim of this publication is a detailed analysis of the psychological vulnerabilities of Lebanese society, taking into account historical, cultural, and socio-economic aspects. We focus on key factors affecting mental health, such as war trauma, the communal system, the role of religion, and the systematic lack of access to psychological support.

Introduction

Lebanon, located at the crossroads of trade routes between Asia, Europe, and Africa, is a country with a diverse ethnic and religious structure. The region's history includes periods of peace and prosperity, but also numerous episodes of armed conflict and foreign intervention. The civil war (1975–1990) left lasting scars on society, which were further deepened by subsequent events such as conflicts with Israel, political crises, the 2020 Beirut port explosion, and economic collapse.

Social and economic instability have translated into significant burdens on the mental health of citizens. At the same time, rich communal and spiritual traditions play a dual role: on one hand, they are a source of support, and on the other, they generate pressure and conflict.

4.1 Main psychological stressors in Lebanon

Political and economic instability

Since the end of the civil war, Lebanon has failed to fully restore political stability. The system based on power-sharing among religious groups is a source of frequent disputes and institutional paralysis. Since 2019, the country has been in a deep economic crisis: the Lebanese currency has lost over 90% of its value, and more than 70% of the population lives below the poverty line (World Bank, 2021).

These factors cause chronic stress, feelings of helplessness, and anxiety about the future. Lebanese residents often struggle to secure basic needs such as food, electricity, and healthcare, which significantly impacts mental health.

War trauma and violence

Collective traumas are deeply rooted in Lebanon's history and have a significant impact on the psyche of its people. Understanding these traumas and taking actions to support society are crucial for studying psychological vulnerability.

War-related trauma affects both the older generation, who remember the direct events, and the younger generation, who grow up in an atmosphere of constant threat. PTSD rates are significantly higher in Lebanon than in countries with more stable histories.

Research has shown that war trauma influences the intergenerational transmission of fears and reduced stress coping abilities. Youth raised in a violent environment often exhibit problems with aggression or social withdrawal (Karam et al., 2019)

Collective traumas: the legacy of war

Collective traumas in Lebanon are rooted in the civil war (1975–1990), Israeli military interventions (2006), and more recent events such as the Beirut port explosion in 2020. Traumas do not only affect those who experienced them. Studies show that the children of people who experienced conflicts also show symptoms of trauma. These can manifest as anxiety disorders, difficulty building relationships, or a sense of threat that has no direct source

Psychological implications:

- PTSD and Depression: The WHO report (2021) indicates that as many as 33% of adults in Beirut show symptoms of PTSD, and 40% experience moderate to severe depression
- Transgenerational Trauma: Epidemiological studies indicate the transmission of trauma from generation to generation. Children growing up in families that experienced the civil war are more likely to exhibit symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorders.

Factors deepening trauma:

- Lack of adequate psychological support infrastructure.
- Stigmatization of mental health issues in society
- Insufficient mechanisms for education on coping with trauma.
- Lebanon still lacks adequate psychological support infrastructure. Non-governmental organizations such as Embrace Lebanon and Basmeh & Zeitooneh carry out activities supporting mental health, but the scale of needs is enormous.

4.2 Family relationships of Lebanese people and their impact on psychological vulnerabilities

Family as the cornerstone of social life

Family and community play a central role in Lebanese society. In the absence of a developed healthcare system, families serve as the primary source of support. However, excessive dependence on the community can lead to conflicts, especially in situations where younger generations strive for independence. Family relationships in Lebanon are complex, deeply rooted in tradition and cultural norms. While they provide support and stability, they can also generate pressure and emotional conflicts that affect the psychological vulnerabilities of residents. The family plays a key role in shaping the identity and psychological sensitivity of Lebanese people. Traditional family structures, although offering stability and support, can simultaneously create tensions arising from social pressures and changing cultural norms.

Traditional structure of a Lebanese family

Hierarchical social structure

Families in Lebanon traditionally operate within a hierarchical model, where each member is assigned a specific role:

- **Father as Head of the Family:** The father serves as the decision-maker and the person responsible for the family's financial support. This structure reinforces a sense of stability but can limit the freedom of expression for other family members, especially women and younger generations.
- **Mother's role:** Women are often responsible for managing the household and raising children. In rural areas, traditional roles of women are more visible, while in cities such

as Beirut, an increasing number of women are engaging in education and professional careers, which is changing the dynamics of roles within families.

Multigenerational households

Living in multigenerational households is common in Lebanon:

- **Benefits:** This model offers emotional and material support, especially in difficult times such as war or economic crises.
- **Challenges:** Intergenerational conflicts often arise from differences in values. Older generations are attached to traditional norms, while younger generations strive for greater autonomy and gender equality. This leads to tensions that can affect the mental health of family members.

The impact of family relationships on mental health

Social and emotional pressure

The family exerts a strong influence on the life decisions of its members:

- **Marriage and family:** Many families expect young people to get married at a certain age and start a family. A 2021 study by Lebanese American University indicates that 67% of young women aged 20–30 feel pressure to marry, even if their priority is a professional career.
- **Education and career:** High expectations for children, especially regarding education, can lead to stress and burnout. 58% of respondents aged 18–25 admitted to feeling immense pressure to achieve success in line with their family's expectations.

Generational conflicts:

- **Differences in values:** Older generations often do not understand the aspirations of the younger ones, such as emigration, choosing a partner outside their own religious group, or a lack of interest in continuing family traditions.
- **Effects on mental health:** These conflicts can lead to feelings of guilt, emotional isolation, or frustration. A lack of open communication within the family further exacerbates these difficulties.

Family as a haven of support

Protection in times of crisis

Wars, conflicts, and economic crises often force families to serve as a "safety network":

- **Material support:** In difficult times, families share resources, offering shelter and food.
- **Emotional support:** The closeness of family helps individuals cope with uncertainty and stress.

Creating a community narrative

- **Positive aspects:** Stories of survival in difficult times strengthen the sense of community and psychological resilience.
- **Negative effects:** Excessive focus on traumas such as war or migration can lead to a constant sense of threat and uncertainty.

Pressure on women in families

Traditional roles for women

Women in traditional families are often seen as responsible for maintaining the home and raising children. In cities, the role of women is changing, as more and more of them pursue higher education and professional careers.

Conflicts with traditional norms

Women in traditional families are often seen as responsible for maintaining the home and raising children. In cities, the role of women is changing, as more and more of them pursue higher education and professional careers.

Family separation as the effect of migration

High emigration rate among the young Lebanese leads to family separation:

- **Effects:** Members remaining in the country feel lonely and burdened with additional responsibilities, while emigrants experience the feeling of guilt.
- **Emotional isolation:** Family separation affects the emotional bonds and mental health of family members.

Multigenerational trauma in families

Transmission of trauma

Children raised in families that have experienced war often internalize their parents' fears. Symptoms include anxiety disorders, a constant sense of threat, and a lack of a sense of security in relationships with others. As a result, they may have difficulties building trust and perpetuate patterns of anxiety in subsequent generations.

4.3 Migration and refugee issues in Lebanon: an impact on psychological vulnerabilities

Lebanon, thanks to its strategic location and turbulent history, plays a key role in global migrations. For decades, it has served as a refuge for regional refugees while facing enormous challenges. In a country with a population of just a few million, the influx of Syrian and Palestinian refugees has made Lebanon one of the most densely populated places in the world in terms of refugees per capita.

Migration

Lebanon has taken in over 1.5 million refugees from Syria, which is equivalent to about 25% of its population. The strain on social, health, and educational infrastructure leads to tensions between local communities and migrants. In Lebanese families, foreign migration is often seen as a necessity, especially among young people, leading to feelings of loss and family fragmentation.

Scale of migration and displacement

Syrians and Palestinians

- **Syrian refugees:** Since the beginning of the civil war in Syria in 2011, Lebanon has become home to over 1.5 million Syrians, which accounts for nearly 25% of the country's population
- **Palestinian refugees:** After 1948 and the establishment of the State of Israel, Lebanon took in about 475,000 Palestinians, most of whom settled in refugee camps where many still live today

Internal and international migrations

- **Internal displacements:** The civil war (1975–1990) forced many Lebanese to leave their homes, which had a lasting impact on the country's demographic structure. Many regions that were previously religiously homogeneous have been transformed into ethnically and culturally diverse areas.
- **Labor migration:** Many young people go abroad seeking a better life, especially in the Gulf countries, Europe, and North America.

Pressure on local communities

Rivalry over resources

The influx of refugees places enormous pressure on infrastructure, including the water and sewage system, access to electricity, and the labor market. Conflicts between local communities and refugees arise from limited resources and a sense of social inequality.

Sense of injustice

Some Lebanese feel neglected by the government, which they believe focuses more on helping refugees than on addressing the problems of its own citizens. The result is growing frustration and alienation among the local population

Psychological implications

Refugees with their traumas

- **PTSD and depression:** Research conducted by UNHCR indicates that over 50% of Syrian refugees suffer from symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. Many of these refugees arrived in Lebanon carrying traumatic experiences of war, violence, and displacement
- **Social isolation:** Refugees often face ostracism and stigmatization, which hinders their social integration. Children in refugee camps, such as those in Aarsal, experience high levels of anxiety and depression.

Local communities

- **Rise in social tensions:** Economic uncertainty and competition for resources lead to increased social anxiety.

- **Demographic changes:** Forced displacements during the civil war changed the structure of many communities, which in turn affected relations between different ethnic and religious groups.

Labor migration and its effects

Family separation

The departure of young people abroad in search of work causes family breakdowns. Children raised without one of their parents often experience emotional problems, such as a lack of a sense of security and difficulties in forming relationships.

Sense of guilt

Many Lebanese who have emigrated feel guilty about leaving their families behind. This phenomenon particularly affects young men who leave their wives and children in the country

4.4 Community and religion

Influence of religion

Lebanon is a country with a unique socio-cultural character, where religious, ethnic, and political diversity combine with a rich history and contemporary challenges. Socio-cultural factors play a key role in shaping the psyche and psychological sensitivities of Lebanon's inhabitants. Religion, tradition, migration, as well as complex social structures influence both individual identity and their ability to cope with the challenges of everyday life. In Lebanon, religion is not only a source of spiritual support but also a political tool. Polarization between religious groups such as Sunnis, Shiites, and Christians leads to social exclusion. Kirlangiç's reports (2021) indicate that during election periods, as many as 72% of residents experience tensions related to religious affiliation.

Statistical data: Surveys conducted by the Lebanese American University in 2021 showed that 45% of young people consider religion to be the main cause of social conflicts, yet at the same time, 67% of them see it as a key element of identity.

Religion as the foundation of the society

Lebanon: a multi-faith country

Lebanon is one of the few countries in the world where religious diversity forms the foundation of the political and social system. The country's political system is based on a balance among 18 officially recognized religious groups, including Maronite Christians, Sunni and Shia Muslims, and Druze. Confessionalism aims to ensure the coexistence of religious groups, but in practice, it often leads to rivalry and divisions.

Religion and national identity

Religion is the main source of identity for many Lebanese. Belonging to a specific religious group influences their perception of themselves and others, shaping social norms and expectations toward individuals. In the context of religious pluralism, religious identity is not only a spiritual aspect but also a political and social tool.

Community support

Religion in Lebanon plays a crucial role in providing social and emotional support. Religious communities are places where individuals can find a sense of belonging, especially in times of crisis. During difficult moments, such as the civil war (1975–1990) or the Beirut explosion in 2020, religious communities played a significant role in organizing aid and supporting social reconstruction. For many Lebanese, religion is a source of spiritual comfort and strength in coping with trauma. Religious practices, such as prayer or participation in ceremonies, allow for the expression of emotions and finding meaning in difficult life situations.

Christian denominations in Lebanon

Maronites

Maronites are the largest Christian group in Lebanon, with a history dating back to the 5th century. They make up about 25% of the population and play a key role in politics, as the president of Lebanon must be a Maronite Christian.

Effects on mental health and the society:

- **National identity:** The Maronites emphasize their closeness to Western culture, which distinguishes them from other religious groups. Many Maronites consider themselves guardians of Western identity in the Arab region.
- **Psychological effects:** The Maronites often balance between loyalty to their community and coexistence with the Muslim majority. Their role in the civil war (1975–1990) and

political conflicts has left deep marks, leading to generational divisions and social tensions.

Greek Catholics and Greek Orthodox Christians

Both groups constitute significant Christian minorities in Lebanon. Greek Catholics maintain close ties with Rome, while Greek Orthodox Christians belong to the Eastern Christian tradition.

Effect on psychological vulnerabilities:

- **Social relations:** Greek Catholics often cooperate with Maronites, but their cultural and ritual distinctiveness can be a source of internal tensions.
- **Community pressure:** Both groups struggle with the pressure to preserve traditions and rituals in the face of modernization and globalization.

Muslim denominations in Lebanon

Sunnis

Sunnis make up about 30% of Lebanon's population. They are traditionally connected with the Arab Gulf states and have close political ties with Sunni countries such as Saudi Arabia.

Effects on mental health and the society:

- **Political dynamics:** Sunnis feel threatened by the increasing dominance of the Shiites, especially in the context of Hezbollah's activities.
- **Religious influence:** The Sunni tradition is based on orthodoxy and unification, which leads to social pressure to adhere to religious rules.

Shiites

The Shiites, who also make up about 30% of the population, are organized around strong community structures such as Amal and Hezbollah. They play an increasingly significant political and military role, especially in southern Lebanon.

Effects on mental health and the society:

- **Militarization of the community:** The high level of Hezbollah's military involvement puts pressure on the Shiite community, where a sense of threat and the need to defend their own group dominate.

- **Religion and identity:** Shiites often identify their religious identity with the struggle against external enemies, which leads to a sense of solidarity but also isolation from other groups.

Druze

The Druze are an esoteric community originating from Islam, constituting about 5% of Lebanon's population. Their religion is closed and does not accept new adherents.

Effects on mental health and the society:

- **Group identity:** The Druze place great emphasis on community and loyalty to their leaders, which strengthens their internal solidarity.
- **Secrecy:** The hermetic nature of their religion reinforces a sense of distinctiveness but also exclusion in relations with other religious groups.

Interfaith conflicts and the mental condition of society

Civil war (1975–1990)

The civil war was a turning point in the relations between religious groups in Lebanon. Conflicts between Maronites, Sunnis, Shiites, and Druze led to lasting social divisions.

Psychological implications:

- **Collective traumas:** The war left traces in the form of PTSD, depression, and a sense of loss among all religious groups
- **Relationships between groups:** The conflicts deepened mutual distrust and polarization, making the reconciliation process more difficult.

Current tensions

The current tensions between Hezbollah and the Sunnis, supported by the Saudis, reflect the persistence of sectarian divisions. Religious differences are often exploited in propaganda as a tool for social mobilization.

Lebanon, being a multi-confessional country, has a unique religious structure in which religious leaders play a key role not only in spiritual matters but also in social and political affairs. Their influence goes beyond religion, often shaping national political directions and relations between different social groups. Here is an overview of the most important religious leaders in Lebanon and their role in shaping society.

Religious leaders

Religious leaders in Lebanon play a key role in shaping society, both on a spiritual and political level. Their actions influence intergroup relations, political dynamics, and the daily lives of the population. In the face of challenges such as economic and political crises, religious leaders remain an essential element in maintaining (or disrupting) the country's stability.

Maronites (Maronite church)

1. Patriarch Bechara Boutros al-Rahi

Title: Patriarch of Antioch and all the East

- **Role:** Bechara al-Rahi is the spiritual leader of the largest Christian community in Lebanon—the Maronites. His office combines spiritual and political functions, making him one of the most important voices in Lebanon's confessional system.
- **Political influence:** Patriarch al-Rahi promotes interfaith dialogue and emphasizes the importance of Lebanon's neutrality in regional conflicts. He frequently speaks about the need for political stabilization and opposes external influences, such as Iran's role in supporting Hezbollah.
- **Social influence:** In times of crisis, such as the Beirut explosion in 2020, Maronite patriarchs often engage in humanitarian efforts and call for national unity.

Sunnis (Sunni Islam)

1. Grand Mufti Abd al-Latif Derian

Title: Grand Mufti of the Lebanese Republic

- **Role:** The Grand Mufti is the highest spiritual authority of the Sunnis in Lebanon. His position encompasses religious matters as well as representing the interests of the Sunni community on the political stage.
- **Political influence:** Abd al-Latif Derian is known for emphasizing the unity of Lebanese Muslims and Christians and opposing sectarianism. The Grand Mufti often supports Sunni political initiatives and maintains close ties with Sunni countries such as Saudi Arabia.
- **Social influence:** The Mufti promotes religious education and supports aid programs for the Sunni community during times of economic crises.

Shiites (Shia Islam)

1. Hassan Nasrallah

Title: Hezbollah Secretary General

- **Role:** Although Hassan Nasrallah does not hold a formal religious office, he is one of the most influential Shia leaders in Lebanon. His activities combine religion with politics, and Hezbollah plays a key role within the Shia community.
- **Political influence:** Nasrallah represents the interests of the Shiites in Lebanon and is the main advocate of Iranian influence in the region. His speeches are key in shaping political narratives and mobilizing the Shiite community.
- **Social influence:** Hezbollah, under his leadership, provides economic, educational, and medical support for the Shiites, which strengthens their solidarity and loyalty to the organization.

2. Grand Ayatollah Abdul Amir Qabalan

- **Title:** Chairman of the Supreme Shia Council in Lebanon (until his death in 2021; his successor is Ayatollah Sheikh Abdul-Hussein Duwaik).
- **Role:** Ayatollah Qabalan was the spiritual leader of the Shia community in Lebanon. His office represented the Shia community at both the national and international levels.
- **Social and political influence:** His leadership was based on the pursuit of protecting the interests of the Shia community, both in political and religious contexts.

The Druze

1. Walid Jumblatt

Title: Political and spiritual leader of the Druze (informal)

- **Role:** Walid Jumblatt, although primarily a politician, also plays a key role in the Druze community as their informal spiritual leader. The Druze, as a closed community, combine religion with political leadership.
- **Political influence:** **Jumblatt is** the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party and one of the most important representatives of the Druze in Lebanese politics.
- **Social influence:** His actions often focus on maintaining a balance between traditional religious values and contemporary social challenges.

Greek Catholics and Greek Orthodox Christians

1. Patriarch Youssef Absi (Greek Catholics)

Title: Patriarch of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem

- **Role:** Leader of the Greek Catholic community in Lebanon, one of the smaller but influential Christian groups.
- **Social influence:** Patriarch Youssef Absi focuses on promoting interfaith dialogue and protecting the rights of Christians in the region.

2. Patriarch Jan X (Greek Orthodox Christians)

Title: Patriarch of Antioch and all the East

- **Role:** Leader of the Greek Orthodox community, one of the oldest Christian communities in Lebanon.
- **Social influence:** Patriarch John X is involved in initiatives promoting peace and stability in Lebanon, often cooperating with other Christian leaders.

Religion as a tool for inclusion and exclusion

Positive aspects

- **Community support:** Religious groups provide individuals with a sense of belonging and support, especially in difficult times, such as the Beirut explosion in 2020.
- **Spiritual appeasement:** Religious practices help in coping with traumas and life difficulties.

Negative aspects

- **Social polarisation:** Religion, instead of uniting, often reinforces divisions within society.
- **Pressure from conformity:** Religious norms limit individual autonomy, which can lead to internal conflicts and tension.

Negative aspects of religion

Religious conflicts

The religious diversity of Lebanon, although culturally rich, is also a source of social tensions. Conflicts between Sunnis, Shias, Christians, and Druze lead to social and political divisions. Examples include armed conflicts between religious groups during the civil war and political tensions related to the activities of Hezbollah, which represents Shia interests.

Stigmatization and discrimination

Religious divisions can lead to the marginalization and stigmatization of individuals belonging to religious minorities within a given community. Stigmatization can negatively affect mental health, leading to feelings of exclusion and alienation.

Social pressure

Religion often sets behavioral norms and expectations for individuals. In traditional Lebanese communities, religion shapes gender roles and norms regarding marriage, which can lead to pressure on individuals who do not meet these expectations. Women, in particular, feel the impact of these norms, which limit their autonomy and life choices.

Religious norms and mental health

The effect of religious norms on behaviour

Religious norms influence the daily behaviors of Lebanese people, including how they cope with emotions. For example, expressing anger or sadness may be seen as contrary to the community's values, leading to the suppression of emotions and an increased risk of mental health disorders.

Religion and access to psychological help

In some religious communities, there is a belief that mental health issues can only be resolved through prayer or spiritual guidance. This attitude can limit individuals' access to professional psychological help, which exacerbates psychological vulnerabilities.

Religion and propaganda

The use of religion for political gains

Religion is often used as a tool of propaganda in Lebanon. Political groups, such as Hezbollah, appeal to religious values to justify their actions and mobilize support within religious communities. Hezbollah, a Shia political-military organization from Lebanon, has effectively utilized religion since its founding in 1982 to achieve its political, military, and ideological goals. Drawing on Shia doctrine and support from Iran, Hezbollah builds its identity as a defender of Islam and the Shia community. Hezbollah bases its ideology on Shia theology, particularly the doctrine of wilayat al-faqih (the rule of the Islamic jurist), which is a central element of the Iranian regime of the ayatollahs. The organization recognizes the Supreme Leader of Iran, currently Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as its spiritual guide.

- **Legitimization of armed actions:** Hezbollah justifies its military actions as a religious duty, referring to the Shia concept of jihad al-difa' (defensive holy war). The organization presents its fight against Israel as a religious mission to protect the lands of Islam.
- **Religious rituals and symbols:** Hezbollah uses Shiite symbols, such as flags bearing the image of Imam Husayn, and organizes mass religious ceremonies like Ashura to strengthen its identity and unite the Shiite community.

Hezbollah presents itself as the defender of the Shia community, especially in southern Lebanon, where Shias constitute the majority. The organization uses religious rhetoric to reinforce the sense of threat from external enemies, such as Israel and the United States.

- **Religious narratives:** In Hezbollah's narratives, Israel is portrayed as the "enemy of Islam," and resistance against it is a religious duty. This rhetoric is reinforced by quotes from the Quran and hadiths, which give the organization's actions moral and spiritual legitimacy.
- **Martyrdom:** Hezbollah cultivates the idea of martyrdom as the highest act of religious sacrifice. Members of the organization who die in battle are portrayed as religious heroes, which mobilizes young people to join the group.

Hezbollah manages schools, religious seminaries, and cultural centers where it promotes its ideological values within a religious context. Children and youth are taught an interpretation of Islam that emphasizes the necessity of resistance against the enemies of the religion.

Control over mosques and political leaders

Hezbollah has strong influence over mosques and religious leaders in Shia communities in Lebanon. The organization uses Friday sermons and religious gatherings to spread its ideology and mobilize political support.

- **Network of religious institutions:** Mosques and religious centers sponsored by Hezbollah serve as propaganda platforms where religious leaders promote the organization's values, such as resistance against Israel and the unity of Shias under Hezbollah's banner.
- **Financing:** Thanks to support from Iran, Hezbollah finances religious institutions, which ensures the loyalty of the clergy and the local community.

Hezbollah's religious rhetoric contributes to divisions between Shias and other religious groups in Lebanon, particularly Sunnis and Christians. Hezbollah effectively uses religion as a tool to achieve its political and ideological goals. The organization combines religious narratives with military and social activities, enabling it to mobilize the Shia community and strengthen its position in Lebanon and the region. However, Hezbollah's manipulation of religion leads to societal polarization and the escalation of both internal and international conflicts.

Manipulating religious values in propaganda can intensify feelings of threat and fear within society, while simultaneously reinforcing intergroup divisions. Such a strategy increases tensions and psychological burdens among individuals.

Conclusions

Religion plays a key role in shaping the psychological sensitivities of the Lebanese. The communal and spiritual aspects of religion can provide support during difficult times; however, the country's religious diversity also leads to tensions, conflicts, and social pressures. Understanding the role of religion in Lebanese society is crucial for developing effective psychological support programs and building interfaith dialogue that could ease tensions and foster a more cohesive social identity.

4.5 Influence of economic and financial situation on psychological vulnerabilities in Lebanon

Lebanon at the brink of crisis

Lebanon, once known as the “Switzerland of the Middle East” due to its financial sector and economic stability, is currently struggling with one of the most severe economic crises in its history. The ongoing economic crisis since 2019, culminating in the currency collapse and the Beirut port explosion in 2020, has caused a dramatic deterioration in the living conditions of its residents. Rising inflation, high unemployment, and lack of access to basic services are affecting the mental health of citizens. This publication analyzes the impact of the economic and financial situation on the psychological vulnerabilities of the Lebanese, taking into account both historical and contemporary factors.

Lebanon has long faced enormous economic challenges resulting from prolonged political instability, currency crises, and armed conflicts. The economic situation deepens poverty and unemployment, which significantly affect the psychological vulnerabilities of the Lebanese.

For years, Lebanon's economy was based on the banking sector, tourism, and remittances from the Lebanese diaspora. After the civil war (1975–1990), the economic reconstruction was rapid but relied on loans and dependence on foreign investors. The lack of structural reforms, corruption, and the consociational political system led to a growing public debt, which exceeded 150% of GDP in 2021.

Currency crisis and widespread poverty

The currency crisis that began in 2019 paralyzed the Lebanese economy. The Lebanese pound depreciated by over 90%, drastically reducing citizens' purchasing power. A 2022 World Bank report indicates that **74% of the population lives below the poverty line, and 82% of society reports difficulties in meeting basic needs such as food, water, and electricity.**

- **Impact on the society's mentality:** Financial stress caused by the inability to meet basic needs is one of the main factors leading to mental disorders. WHO studies (2021) show that 68% of people who lost their jobs due to the crisis exhibit symptoms of severe depression.

Effect of the crisis on psychological vulnerabilities

Economic stress with its implications

The economic crisis has triggered a widespread sense of uncertainty that has negatively affected the mental health of citizens.

- **Unemployment and the loss of income:** High unemployment rate (over 50% in 2023) and the lack of stable sources of income lead to feelings of frustration and helplessness. Many families are unable to cover basic needs such as food, housing, or healthcare.
- **Inflation and the lack of access to basic goods:** The drastic increase in prices of basic goods and limited access to public services such as healthcare and education heighten the sense of threat and stress.

Depression and anxiety disorders

- Research conducted in 2021 by the American University of Beirut found that over 40% of adult residents in Lebanon experience symptoms of depression, and 30% suffer from anxiety disorders related to the economic crisis.
- The high level of stress caused by economic uncertainty leads to an increase in risky behaviors, such as substance abuse.

Groups particularly susceptible to psychological vulnerabilities

Families and children

- **Effect on children:** Many families struggle with financial problems, which affects their children's education. Rising poverty leads to problems such as malnutrition, lack of access to education, and an increase in domestic violence.
- **Parents:** Parents often experience feelings of guilt and stress related to their inability to provide their children with basic needs.

Employees and entrepreneurs

- **Small and medium enterprises (SME):** The crisis has destroyed hundreds of thousands of jobs, and small businesses, which form the backbone of Lebanon's economy, are collapsing due to a lack of capital and customers
- **Public sector employees:** Falling wages and irregular payments affect the standard of living and morale among public sector employees.

Social effects of economic crisis

- Since 2019, Lebanon has been experiencing mass emigration, especially of young, educated people. Emigration causes not only a brain drain but also psychological effects for the families left behind, such as loneliness and separation.
- Poverty and lack of prospects lead to an increase in crime and violence within families and communities. This phenomenon intensifies feelings of insecurity and destabilization.

4.6 Impact of armed conflicts on the mental health of the citizens

Armed conflicts in Lebanon have had a profound impact on the psychological sensitivities of its residents, leaving lasting marks on their emotional and social well-being. Collective trauma, depression, anxiety disorders, and broken social relationships are just some of the effects of years of clashes. The long-term consequences of these conflicts require a comprehensive approach.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1920, the League of Nations granted France a mandate over Lebanon. During this period, the French established Greater Lebanon (Grand Liban), which included regions inhabited by diverse religious groups.

- **Religious divisions:** The inclusion of the Muslim regions of Bekaa, Tripoli, and Sidon into the Christian core of Mount Lebanon intensified tensions between the Maronites and Muslims.
- **Dependence on France:** the French policy of supporting Maronite Christians deepened intergroup divisions, laying the groundwork for future conflicts.

Emergence of the confessional system

In 1943, Lebanon gained independence, and the 1926 constitution was adapted to establish a political system based on religious sectarian division (confessionalism). The highest state positions were allocated to specific religious groups:

- President – a Maronite Christian,
- Prime Minister – a Sunni Muslim,
- Speaker of the Parliament – a Shia Muslim.

Palestinian refugees and the influence they exert

After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, Lebanon accepted a large number of Palestinian refugees, which significantly changed the country's demographics. The presence of armed Palestinian groups, such as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), intensified tensions between Lebanese and Palestinians.

- **Economic burden:** The influx of refugees has burdened the economy and deepened dissatisfaction among the local population.

Civil war (1975–1990)

The civil war in Lebanon was the result of growing tensions between various religious and political groups:

- **Maronites:** They feared losing political dominance to the Muslims.
- **Shiites and Sunnites:** They demanded greater political and social representation.
- **Palestinian fighters:** The PLO established bases in southern Lebanon, which provoked a response from Israel and worsened the situation.

The war ended with the Taif Agreement (1989), which reformed the confessional system but did not eliminate the causes of divisions.

Conflicts with Israel (1982–2006)

1. Israeli invasion of 1982

Israel launched an invasion of southern Lebanon aimed at destroying PLO bases. The conflict ended with the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Beirut and the takeover of power by Maronite militias.

- **The Sabra and Shatila massacre:** In the refugee camps, massacres occurred for which the Israeli forces were partially blamed.
- **Rise of Hezbollah:** Hezbollah was established in 1985 as a Shiite resistance organization against Israel, with the support of Iran.

2. The 2006 war

Israel started this war with Hezbollah after the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers. The conflict lasted 34 days and resulted in:

- **Destruction/damage:** Infrastructure was destroyed as a result of bombings, which further deepened the economic crisis.
- **Psychological effects:** The Shiite community in southern Lebanon experienced mass displacements and trauma, including the development of PTSD.

Contemporary conflicts and challenges

The Beirut Port explosion (2020)

The explosion at the Beirut port, which destroyed a large part of the city, was seen as the result of government negligence and systemic corruption. The blast intensified social frustration and sparked mass protests.

The ongoing tensions

Hezbollah as a military force: Hezbollah remains a key actor in the conflict with Israel and in Lebanese politics, which leads to tensions with Sunnis and Christians.

Foreign influences

Conflicts in Syria and the influence of Iran and Saudi Arabia maintain political and economic destabilization, negatively affecting the sense of security among the Lebanese.

Historical armed conflicts in Lebanon have complex causes and lasting consequences that continue to impact society today. The civil war, interventions by Israel and Syria, and tensions between religious groups have defined the country's social and political structure. For the people of Lebanon, this means living under conditions of uncertainty and chronic stress, which affects their mental health and ability to build a stable society

Displacements and their impact

Mass population displacements resulting from conflicts lead to the loss of homes, communities, and stability. Many displaced persons struggle with feelings of alienation and lack of belonging.

- **Displacement-related trauma:** Forced departure from homes not only destabilizes families but also leads to the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Many displaced persons do not receive psychological support, which exacerbates dysfunction.

4.7 Crime in Lebanon and its impact on psychological vulnerabilities

Lebanon, struggling for decades with political, economic, and social problems, is facing a growing crime problem. The economic crisis, migrations, and lack of stability in state institutions have contributed to an increase in crime rates, which has serious consequences for the mental health and social vulnerability of its residents.

Causes of the increase in crime

Economic crisis

Since 2019, Lebanon has been engulfed in one of the world's most severe economic crises. The devalued currency, unemployment, and rising poverty have contributed to an increase in theft, assaults, and organized crime.

- **Robbery and assault:** Desperate people are increasingly turning to crime as a means of survival. The rise in thefts in cities like Beirut and Tripoli is alarming.
- **Organised crime:** The impoverishment of society fosters the growth of criminal groups that offer "protection" in exchange for loyalty or recruit people deprived of prospects.

Lack of political and institutional stability

Lebanon has long struggled with political instability, which translates into the inefficiency of law enforcement agencies and a lack of citizens' trust in the justice system.

- **Corruption:** The high level of corruption among officials and the police makes criminals feel unpunished.
- **Insufficient funds on law enforcement:** Due to the financial crisis, the police and military suffer from a lack of resources, which limits their ability to effectively combat crime.

Impact of migration and refugees

The massive influx of refugees from Syria and Palestine has created additional challenges, such as overcrowding and competition for resources, which increase social tensions and crime in regions affected by migration.

Impact of crime on the mental condition of society

Fear and social mistrust

Rising crime causes an increased sense of threat among residents. The lack of a sense of security in daily life results in intensified symptoms of stress and social anxiety.

- **Fear of going out:** Residents of cities like Beirut increasingly avoid walking after dark for fear of thefts and assaults.
- **Mistrust of strangers:** The rise in crime weakens social bonds and trust between people, making it difficult to build solidarity during a crisis.

Trauma of the victims of crime

People who have been victims of crimes often experience serious psychological effects.

- **PTSD:** Victims of assaults or thefts often struggle with recurring nightmares, concentration problems, and a constant sense of threat.
- **Stigmatization and isolation:** The social stigma associated with experiencing violence can lead to the isolation and exclusion of victims.

Effect on the youth and children

Children who grow up in environments affected by crime are exposed to many long-term psychological effects.

- **Fear and the lack of sense of security:** The daily experience of threat can affect their emotional development.
- **Proneness to pathology:** Children growing up in criminal environments are more often exposed to addictions, domestic violence, and joining criminal groups.

Crime and the psychological vulnerability of Lebanese People

Crime affects not only individuals but also the collective psychological vulnerability of society. Lebanon, known for its hospitality and solidarity, is now struggling with growing frustration and anger.

- **Sense of injustice:** Many Lebanese believe that the government and international institutions are not doing enough to improve their situation.
- **Escalation of aggression:** Chronic stress fatigue leads to an increase in interpersonal conflicts and aggression in daily life.

- **Weaker community bonds:** Crime destroys the traditional community bonds that were once one of the pillars of Lebanese society.

Example: Crime in Tripoli. Tripoli, one of the largest cities in Lebanon, has become a symbol of the challenges related to crime. Underfunding of the police, tensions between refugees and local residents, and high unemployment have created ideal conditions for the growth of gangs and informal protection groups. Residents often turn to local leaders instead of the state to ensure their safety

4.8 Perception of the administration/state security structures and psychological vulnerabilities

Lebanese people perceive the administration and state security structures as ineffective and corrupt, although the army still enjoys relative social trust. The confessional system, corruption, and external influences weaken the state's ability to provide security and stability.

Lebanon operates under a confessional system that assigns key positions in the administration and security structures to specific religious groups

- President – a Maronite Christian,
- Prime Minister – a Sunni Muslim,
- Speaker of the Parliament – a Shia Muslim.

This system was intended to ensure balance between religious groups, but in practice, it has led to divisions and corruption.

Perception of Lebanon's administration

The Lebanese deem their state administration to be:

- **Inefficient:** Lack of reforms, inability to manage crises, and neglect in infrastructure, such as the Beirut explosion in 2020, have deepened dissatisfaction.
- **Corrupt:** Reports from Transparency International indicate that Lebanon is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. The political system based on patronage reinforces a sense of impunity among the ruling elites, undermining governance and accountability.
- **Unfair:** Confessionalism is perceived as a tool used by religious and political elites to maintain power, excluding younger generations and those outside the system.

Lebanon's security structures: army and law enforcement

Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)

The Lebanese army, although officially neutral, plays a key role in maintaining order and ensuring internal security. However:

Positive perception: The army is one of the few institutions that enjoys relative public trust. Residents often see it as a guarantor of stability amid political chaos.

Negative perception: Critics point to the army's limited operational capabilities and its lack of decisiveness in the armed conflict with Hezbollah. Many believe that the army is underfunded and dependent on foreign donors.

Police

The police in Lebanon are often perceived as ineffective and corrupt. Frequent cases of bribe extortion and lack of action in criminal matters undermine citizens' trust.

Brutality: The use of force during protests in 2019 and 2020 increased tensions between the security forces and society, especially among the youth.

Role of Hezbollah in Lebanon's security structures

- **Hezbollah as an informal security and law enforcement structure:** Hezbollah plays a dual role as both a political and military force. Its position in southern Lebanon is uncontested, but it is also a source of controversy:
- **Perception among the Shia Muslim community:** For many Shiites, Hezbollah is the only defender against Israel and a guarantor of security in the southern regions of the country.
- **Criticism:** Sunnis, Christians, and Druze often perceive Hezbollah as a threat to the sovereignty of the state, particularly because of its close ties with Iran.

Crisis of trust in Lebanon's institutions

Inefficiency in dealing with crises

- The Beirut explosion in 2020 was a turning point that exposed the incompetence of the administration and security structures:
- The failure to take preventive actions against the disaster was widely criticized as an example of negligence and corruption
- After the explosion, many residents expressed frustration over the state's inability to support the victims.

4.9 Psychological vulnerabilities

The analysis of the psychological vulnerabilities of Lebanese society presented in the text focuses on the impact of political and economic instability, war-related trauma, and the complex web of family and social relationships. Lebanon, a country with deep religious and ethnic divisions, faces numerous challenges that directly affect the mental health of its inhabitants.

Main psychological stressors in Lebanon

1. **Political and economic instability:** From the prolonged civil war to the current economic crisis, Lebanon has been a stage of continuous unrest that affects the daily lives of its citizens. The sense of uncertainty and lack of stability weigh heavily on mental health, leading to chronic stress and anxiety.
2. **War trauma and violence:** The history of armed conflicts has left lasting marks of collective trauma. The multigenerational impact of these traumas clearly affects both older and younger generations, resulting in high rates of PTSD and other mental disorders.
3. **Family and social tensions:** Strong family ties, while they can provide support, also carry social and emotional pressure. Intergenerational conflicts and the strictness of traditional social and family roles intensify psychological stress.
4. **Migration and displacement:** Lebanon, home to numerous refugee groups, experiences the effects of overcrowding and competition for resources. The impact of migration on local communities can cause social tensions, increasing feelings of injustice and isolation among both citizens and migrants.

Vulnerabilities related to religion and community:

1. **Religious influence:** Lebanon is a country of great religious diversity, which influences all aspects of social and individual life. Religious divisions often lead to conflicts but also provide a support network in difficult times. Religious manipulation, by both local and external political forces, frequently triggers intergroup conflicts that deepen divisions and affect mental health.
2. **Religious leaders and the influence they exert on the society:** Figures such as Hassan Nasrallah and Patriarch Bechara Boutros al-Rahi play key roles in shaping both the social and individual sense of security and identity. Their actions can both unite and divide society, influencing national tensions as well as individual beliefs and behaviors.

Understanding psychological vulnerabilities in Lebanon requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account historical, cultural, economic, and political factors. Taking effective measures to provide psychological support and foster interfaith dialogue can help alleviate tensions and promote a more cohesive social identity, which is crucial for the mental health and social well-being of the Lebanese people.

PSYCHOLOGICAL VULNERABILITIES OF LEBANESE SOCIETY

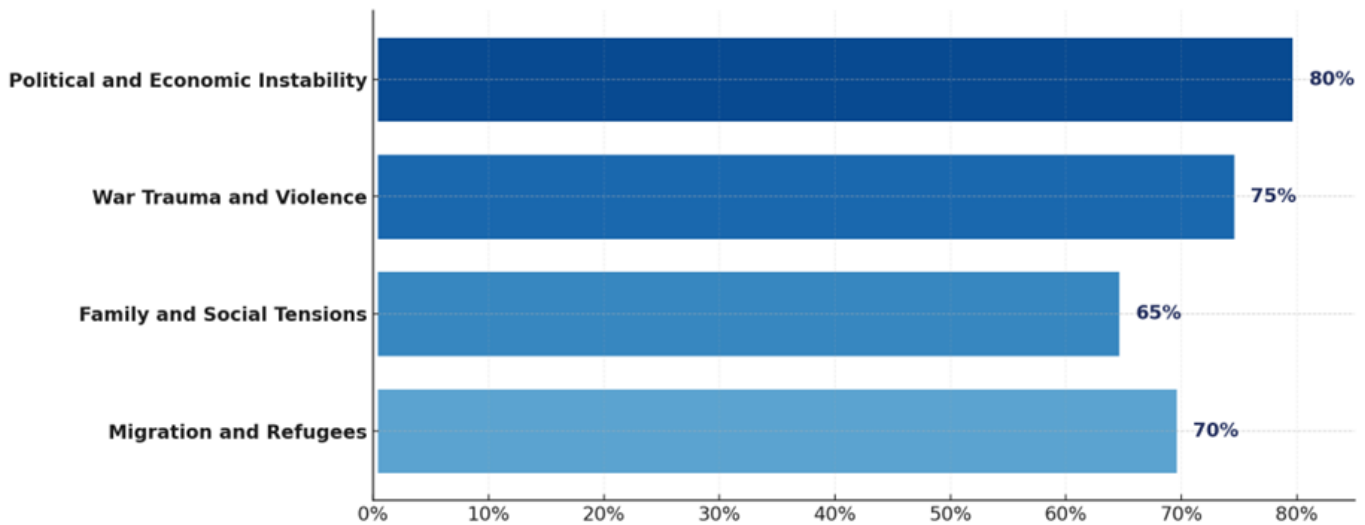


Chart 6. Psychological vulnerabilities of Lebanese society

The chart above presents the psychological vulnerabilities of Lebanese society across four key areas: political and economic instability, war trauma and violence, family and social tensions, and migration and displacement. The values on the chart reflect the relative influence of these factors on the psychological sensitivities of the population, with political and economic instability having the greatest significance. This indicates the substantial role these factors play in the daily lives of Lebanese people.

Analysis of psychological vulnerabilities:

1. Political and economic instability (80%):

- Prolonged instability, exacerbated by the economic crisis that began in 2019, leads to chronic stress, anxiety about the future, and a lack of trust in public institutions.
- The government's low effectiveness in addressing economic problems deepens the sense of helplessness and frustration within society.

2. War trauma and violence (75%):

- The impact of years of armed conflicts, including the civil war and conflicts with Israel, continues to leave its mark on the population, leading to high rates of PTSD and depression.

- The impact of past traumas also manifests in the transgenerational transmission of war experiences, affecting younger generations.

3. Family and social tensions (65%):

- Strong but rigid family and social structures are a source of support but also a cause of tension. Expectations regarding behavior, marriage, and social roles can be sources of stress and internal conflicts.
- Generational conflicts and social pressure to uphold traditions in the face of a changing society also affect mental health, especially among young people striving for independence.

4. Migration and displacement (70%):

- A large number of refugees and migrants in the country, including Syrians and Palestinians, contributes to increased social tensions and competition for resources. This, in turn, leads to feelings of injustice and alienation among both the local population and migrants.
- Family separations related to migration for work or fleeing the country also negatively affect mental health, creating feelings of loss and social isolation.

Exploiting psychological vulnerabilities to shape opinions or behaviors is a complex and ethically sensitive practice that must be approached with great caution, especially in the context of social or political communication.

CHAPTER 5. Key areas of foreign influence

5.1 Economy

Lebanon's economy is deeply dependent on both regional and international factors, with its stability often shaped by a combination of geopolitical risks, trade relations, and foreign aid.

Lebanese trade is primarily focused on the Middle East, with the United Arab Emirates, Syria, Turkey, Egypt, and Iraq constituting the main export markets, collectively accounting for the majority of Lebanon's exports. On the import side, Lebanon heavily relies on countries such as China, Turkey, Greece, Italy, and the United States.

Research indicates that geopolitical risks—such as military confrontations and political instability—directly impact Lebanon's financial stress and economic activity, creating a fragile situation where external shocks trigger crises affecting all sectors, from foreign currency reserves to private sector employment. The country's economic performance has been severely weakened by external geopolitical tensions, particularly those involving Israel and Saudi Arabia. Hezbollah's involvement in regional conflicts and its ties to Iran have exacerbated Lebanon's economic vulnerability, leading to a loss of investor confidence and sharp fluctuations in financial markets.

Lebanon's economic performance has been severely weakened by external geopolitical tensions, particularly those involving Israel and Saudi Arabia. Hezbollah's involvement in regional conflicts and its ties to Iran have deepened the country's economic vulnerability, leading to a loss of investor confidence and sharp fluctuations in financial markets.

Moreover, Lebanon's capital markets are heavily dependent on international factors, particularly foreign direct investments from Gulf countries. While these investments provide some financial support, Lebanon struggles to attract long-term, stable investments due to ongoing political instability and poor governance. Despite efforts by the Lebanese government to improve investor confidence through fiscal incentives and structural reforms, Lebanon still suffers from the image of a country plagued by conflicts, which deters potential investors.

The country's reconstruction is further complicated by internal challenges such as issues with governance, public finances, and infrastructure, which require comprehensive reforms to ensure long-term economic stability. In this context, international financial institutions like the World Bank, the United Nations, and the European Union have played a key role in providing assistance and establishing reconstruction frameworks, including the Reform, Recovery, and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) and the Lebanon Financing Facility (LFF). However, the success of these reconstruction efforts depends on Lebanon's ability to implement the necessary fiscal, social, and governance reforms. Without these changes, Lebanon will

continue to heavily rely on international support to address its economic challenges and achieve sustainable recovery.

5.2 Humanitarianism

The humanitarian landscape of Lebanon is largely shaped by international missions and external aid, particularly from the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU).

The UN presence includes the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), established in 1978 to monitor the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel and to support the Lebanese government in restoring its authority in the area. Additionally, the EU deployed an Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) to monitor the parliamentary elections in 2022. Furthermore, the EU has provided significant financial support, including a €500 million package announced in August 2024 aimed at supporting Lebanon's stability and economy. This aid is intended to meet basic needs such as food assistance, shelter, healthcare, and other essential support for civilians affected by ongoing conflicts. The EU's involvement highlights its role in supporting Lebanon through both immediate relief and long-term development initiatives.

Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of international aid in Lebanon has been a subject of debate. While it is crucial during times of crisis, it often leads to dependency and reinforces existing political structures, failing to promote long-term development or meaningful reforms. In the past, aid was frequently channeled through corrupt political systems, contributing to governance gaps and strengthening the power of entrenched elites rather than addressing Lebanon's systemic problems. This pattern of aid dependency has deepened Lebanon's vulnerabilities, creating a cycle in which foreign donations help maintain the status quo instead of fostering significant change.

In view of the recent Israeli ground invasion, international aid has become crucial. The European Union, along with countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Greece, Egypt, Germany, France, and the United States, has significantly increased its humanitarian contributions. For example, over 100 million euros were allocated for 2024 to provide support including food, shelter, healthcare, and medical supplies for millions of internally displaced people as a result of the attack. This aid has been vital in meeting the humanitarian needs of Lebanese communities, especially in the face of escalating violence and an already fragile infrastructure weakened by previous crises. The total international assistance has been essential to maintaining basic services in the country, preventing system collapse, and helping Lebanon cope with the severe consequences of internal instability and external aggression.

The Polish aspect of humanitarian aid in Lebanon is also worth mentioning – the Polish Center for International Aid (Fundacja Polskie Centrum Pomocy Międzynarodowej, PCPM), which has been implementing aid projects in Lebanon since 2012. Located near the Syrian border, it runs the largest humanitarian aid program carried out by a Polish non-governmental organization in Lebanon. As the only Polish organization registered in Lebanon, PCPM has been assisting victims of the Syrian war since the beginning of the crisis, as well as Lebanese families affected by the most severe economic crisis in decades.

5.3 Religion

External international relations have had a significant impact on shaping Lebanon's religious environment, particularly in the context of religious social welfare organizations (RSWOs) and sectarian dynamics. Due to the state's limited capacity, Lebanese RSWOs largely rely on international non-governmental organizations and foreign governments for financial support, which has enabled them to expand services in areas such as healthcare, education, and emergency aid—functions that ideally should be provided by the state. However, external funding often comes with political or strategic interests, as donor states support specific religious groups to increase their political influence. This international aid has allowed RSWOs to develop beyond their religious mandates, sometimes filling gaps left by the state, but also reinforcing sectarian ties while operating with minimal government oversight.

Lebanon's geopolitical location has attracted further external intervention, with international actors such as the United Nations and neighboring Arab states collaborating with religious organizations to address humanitarian crises. These collaborations have intertwined religion with global politics, further strengthening the role of religious groups in Lebanon. In particular, Iran's support for the Shia community, especially through Hezbollah, has had a significant religious and political impact. The religious authority of Iran, led by figures such as Ali Khamenei, has bolstered Hezbollah's influence and promoted the concept of Wilayat al-Faqih (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist), deepening the religious and political ties of the Shia community with Tehran.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia has historically exerted significant influence over the Sunni community in Lebanon by funding religious institutions and promoting a Sunni version of Islam associated with conservative practices, including Wahhabism (the purification of Islam). However, Saudi Arabia's involvement has weakened in recent years, particularly after its disappointment with the growing power of Hezbollah, leading to a decline in its religious influence. Qatar has also engaged with Lebanon's Sunni community, but in a less sectarian manner, focusing on humanitarian and cultural initiatives while striving to remain neutral between religious groups.

The United States, although not directly involved in religious affairs, has supported Lebanon's pluralism as part of its broader strategy to maintain a diverse, multi-sectarian state. American aid has often focused on religious freedom and the protection of Lebanese Christian and Muslim communities from extremism, particularly in the context of threats posed by groups such as ISIS.

5.4 Geopolitics

Lebanon's geopolitical situation is largely shaped by the long-standing involvement of foreign powers, which have created a complex network of regional and international dependencies. The country's internal divisions, deepened by sectarianism, make Lebanon a stage for competing interests of foreign powers such as the USA, Russia, and Iran, as well as regional players like Saudi Arabia and Israel. Lebanon's energy resources, including potential natural gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean, attract international attention, with countries like Russia and Iran pursuing their economic and strategic goals, complicating Lebanon's ability to maintain full autonomy. Lebanon's foreign policy is often shaped by the alliances of its sectarian groups, which align with powers reflecting their own religious and political interests.

In the context of the recent Israeli ground invasion of southern Lebanon, the country's response reflects its complex geopolitical position. As the conflict escalates, Lebanon faces the challenge of supporting Hezbollah, backed by Iran, while managing relations with Western powers such as the USA and France, which have historically supported factions opposing Hezbollah. This situation places Lebanon in a difficult position, where foreign powers continue to influence its internal politics and security decisions. Lebanon's approach to managing the invasion and the broader regional conflict is based on balancing competing interests—combining national sectarian priorities with external pressures. As Israel attacks Hezbollah's infrastructure, Lebanon must confront not only the direct security threat but also the broader geopolitical consequences of its alliances, especially in the context of Iran and its role in the region.

5.5 Ideology

One of the main factors shaping Lebanon's ideology is its strategic position in the Middle East, its proximity to regional powers, and its involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This geopolitical context fosters the growing influence of groups like Hezbollah, whose ideologies are strongly shaped by Iranian influence, emphasizing resistance and religious identity. At the same time, Western cultural trends such as individualism, gender equality, and social justice have gained importance, especially among younger generations who have begun to adopt them within Lebanese society.

Social media play a key role in amplifying these external ideologies, offering Lebanese youth a platform to challenge traditional norms and promote progressive values. The digital revolution has sparked discussions about mental health, self-expression, and personal empowerment, influencing changes in perceptions of identity and social expectations. Although Lebanon

maintains a strong cultural emphasis on family honor and reputation, younger generations increasingly question these traditional values in the face of global shifts toward personal autonomy and self-actualization. This generational divide reflects broader social changes, where globalization and external cultural forces encourage flexibility and the development of new values, even as the fundamental importance of honor remains deeply rooted, especially among older generations.

The shaping and communication of ideology in Lebanon are influenced not only by cultural and social movements but also by external factors such as military presence and international political alliances. Lebanon's multi-religious society, where power is divided among various factions, along with the presence of foreign military forces as part of UNIFIL, creates an environment in which political narratives are shaped by both local and international actors.

External social and political networks also influence the shaping of ideology within Lebanese militant and political groups. Organizations such as Fatah and Palestinian communities in Lebanon are shaped by both formal doctrines and informal processes. Ideologies spread not only through official channels but also through family ties, social relationships, and peer networks. Social practices such as gossip and emotional appeals help reinforce political engagement. This "practical ideology" allows external political influences to permeate everyday life, where individuals adopt ideological positions primarily based on family and social bonds rather than formal education or manifestos. In this way, external factors—from regional conflicts and global cultural movements to social networks and military influences—play a key role in shaping the ideologies that dominate Lebanon's evolving cultural and political landscape.

5.6 Identity

External factors such as migration, globalization, changing political climates, and cultural norms have a profound impact on identities in Lebanon, often interacting with its complex socio-political landscape. The Lebanese diaspora, especially in places like Montreal, Argentina, and Australia, illustrates how migration influences identity as Lebanese immigrants navigate multiculturalism in host countries. For example, in Canada, Lebanese people (particularly Christians) create a "distance identity" to avoid being identified with the broader Muslim Arab identity. Similarly, Lebanese communities in Argentina and Australia face pressures of ethnic assimilation, while sectarian divisions in the diaspora, especially after Lebanon's civil war, reinforce national and religious identities.

Additionally, external influences such as the presence of Syrians in Lebanon have a significant impact on shaping both local and diaspora identities. The influx of Syrian refugees has deepened social divisions, marginalizing minority identities while simultaneously reinforcing traditional family and sectarian structures.

Lebanon's political instability and patriarchal norms strongly influence the identity formation of its youth, who find themselves caught between traditional cultural values and modern, globalized perspectives they encounter. External pressures, such as the EU's support for LGBTQ+ rights, women, and minorities, highlight the tension between local conservative

religious views and international human rights discourses, making it difficult to publicly express sexual identities.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a significant impact on the identity of Lebanese people, shaping their self-perception and their place in the region. The support that the Lebanese community—especially its political elites—expresses for the Palestinian national movement becomes an important element of national identity, but at the same time it intensifies sectarian divisions within the country. On one hand, the shared struggle against Israel unites different religious groups, but on the other hand, it deepens existing internal tensions, especially in the face of competing political and religious interests. The presence of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon also affects social identity, raising difficult questions about integration, human rights, and equality. The conflict with Israel, combined with local tensions, makes Lebanese identity more fragmented and dependent on affiliation with specific political or religious groups, hindering the building of a sense of national unity.

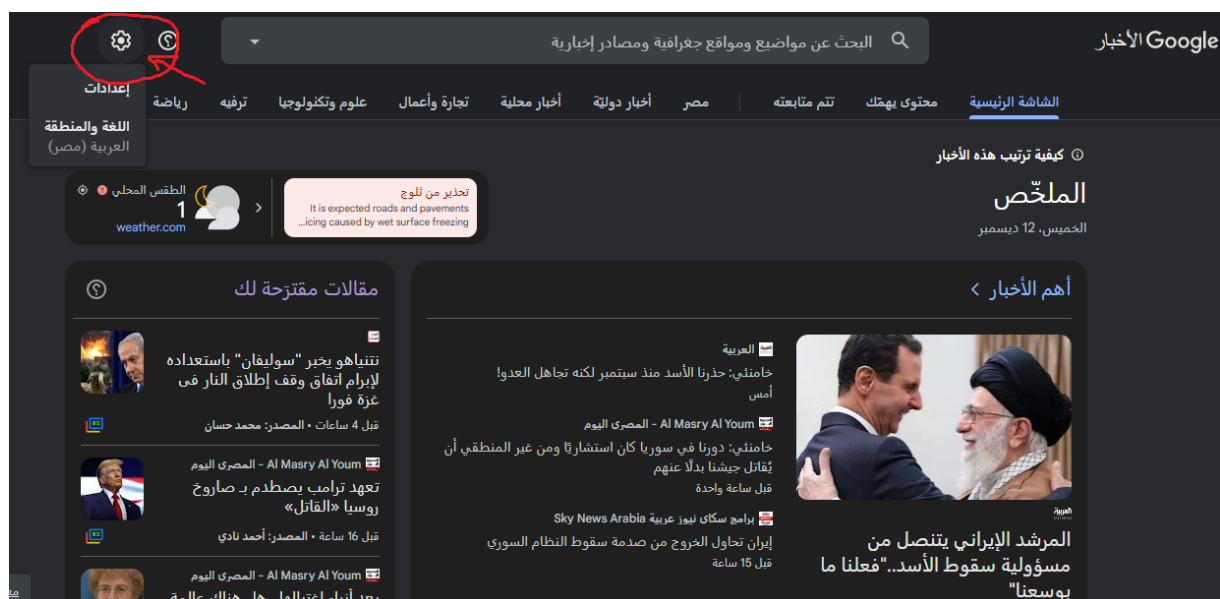
CHAPTER 6. Key FIMI (foreign) assets in Lebanon and their attribution

6.1 Companies

Google

Google, including its tools such as **Google News**, can be used to spread information aligned with a specific political narrative, often favoring international interests. Google employs algorithms that prioritize certain content, sometimes supporting disinformation or blocking access to information that contradicts foreign interests.

When entering the keyword "Lebanon" in Google News, articles mainly from foreign media such as Al Jazeera, BBC, and France24 appear. If we want to make our searches more accurate and focused on Lebanon, we should use the option to select language and region:



Google Maps – vulnerable to disruption

In Lebanon, there are GPS signal disruptions which, according to authorities, result from Israeli actions related to the conflict with Hezbollah. These disruptions affect service quality, including navigation applications like Google Maps. The Lebanese government is considering implementing an alternative navigation system to reduce vulnerability to such interference

More details:

<https://www.dearborn.org/preview/lebanon-is-considering-replacing-google-maps-and-gps-with-another-non-american-system-after-the-israeli-confusion-57034>

Problems with the functioning of Google Maps are also disadvantageous for the Lebanese themselves; however, tutorials can be found on platforms like TikTok that explain what to do to make the maps work more smoothly.

Video tutorial:

<https://www.tiktok.com/@digitalmarketingacademy/video/7426075290952109332>

NSO Group (Israel)

Known for the Pegasus software. Lebanon has issued numerous accusations against Israel regarding the use of Pegasus.

A widely-known case of the hacking of a Lebanese Human Rights Watch employee:
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/26/human-rights-watch-among-pegasus-spyware-targets>

DarkMatter (United Arab Emirates)

Engaged in cyber operations and surveillance. They are responsible for the Karma spyware used on phones, which was employed to track, among others, the former Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri.

6.2 NGOs

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

Human Rights Watch is an international organization that monitors and documents human rights violations worldwide, including in Lebanon. The organization consistently calls on Lebanese authorities and the international community to take steps to address the country's systemic problems and ensure justice for victims of human rights abuses.

Example of information activities:

Calling on UN member states to establish an impartial international investigation into Israeli bombings of Lebanon due to attacks targeting the civilian population.

Article:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/25/lebanon-israeli-strikes-kill-hundreds-hostilities-escalate>

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a global organization that also works to protect human rights in Lebanon. The organization investigates cases of political repression, detention without trial, abuses against minorities, and other forms of human rights violations.

Example of information activities:

A letter regarding compliance with international law under the migration agreement between the EU and Lebanon, concerning Syrian refugees.

Article:

<https://www.amnesty.eu/news/lebanon-joint-statement-respect-international-law-in-eu-lebanon-migration-deal/>

Save the Children

Save the Children is an international humanitarian organization that works to protect children, provide education, health care, and aid in refugee camps, especially in the context of the Syrian crisis. Save the Children operates in refugee camps in Lebanon and also runs campaigns to improve the living conditions of children and families.

Example of information activities:

Posts demanding an end to the ongoing conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, framed under the slogan “stop war on children,” highlight the suffering and deaths of children as a result of the war actions.

Post on the X platform:

<https://x.com/SaveChildrenLEB/status/1860370728421302487/photo/1>

Official website:

<https://lebanon.savethechildren.net/>

The Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR)

AIHR is an organization dedicated to promoting human rights in the Middle East, including Lebanon. It conducts research on human rights violations and organizes educational programs. The institute receives ongoing support from entities such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the European Commission.

Example of information activities:

Summary of the organization's activities for the years 2022-2023

https://www.aihr-iadh.org/uploads/FCK_files/23-2022%20المعهد%20نشاطه%20تقرير.pdf

Helem

Helem is a non-governmental organization that advocates for the rights of LGBTQ+ people in Lebanon. Helem fights for the legalization of same-sex marriages, combats discrimination, and provides support for LGBTQ+ individuals. Helem is often supported by foreign organizations and international human rights groups that promote the rights of sexual minorities.

Example of information activities:

The list of information campaigns conducted by Helem can be found at the following link: <https://www.helem.net/advocacy>

Lebanese Women's Rights Organization (LWRO)

LWRO is an organization focused on women's rights in Lebanon, including combating domestic violence, fighting discrimination, and promoting equal rights. Its activities are supported by UN Women.

Example of information activities:

The latest report on LWRO's national strategy for combating discrimination against women can be found at the following link: <https://nclw.gov.lb/en/publicationsp/>

Official website:

<https://arab.org/directory/league-for-lebanese-womens-rights/>

International Rescue Committee

Funded by the U.S. government, IRC warns that spreading false narratives about Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, such as accusations of depleting public resources, can lead to escalating social tensions and repression against these groups.

Link to Lebanon's evaluation on the IRC website: <https://www.rescue.org/eu/country/lebanon>

Lebanon Humanitarian and Development Forum

An independent entity uniting over 85 local and national non-governmental organizations operating in the humanitarian and development sectors. LHDF facilitates coordination among its members and other stakeholders to ensure an effective response to Lebanon's current needs. The full list of forum partners is available at this link: <https://www.lhdf-lb.org/partners.php>

Official website:

https://www.lhdf-lb.org/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum (LHIF)

An informal, independent forum bringing together 65 international NGOs working to meet the needs of individuals, families, and communities throughout Lebanon.

Official website:

<http://lhif.org/>

KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation

Lebanese organization striving to achieve gender equality and eliminate violence and exploitation of women and children.

Cyclical reports describing current statistics and analyses conducted by KAFA are available at the following link: <https://kafa.org.lb/en/taxonomy/term/166>.

Animals Lebanon

The largest organization of its kind working for animal welfare. It strives to improve their well-being by conducting protective and rescue missions for various animals, including those affected by the conflict.

Official website:

<https://www.animalslebanon.org/>

Amel Association International

It provides healthcare, education, and social services for marginalized communities throughout Lebanon, including refugees and people affected by the war

Official website:

<https://amel.org/>

Food Blessed

A volunteer-based organization whose goal is to combat food poverty by redistributing edible leftovers from restaurants and stores to those in need and providing free meals in canteens.

Official website: <https://foodblessed.org/>

Marsa Sexual Health Center

It offers social, psychological, and medical services related to sexual health, including free testing for sexually transmitted diseases and counseling.

Official website:

<https://www.marsa.me/>

6.3 Opinion leaders

Marcel Ghanem

A journalist. He is known for the program "Sar el Wa'et," often addresses controversial topics for which he is criticized by the authorities

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/marcel_ghanem_official/

Dima Sadek

An independent journalist and activist, critical of corruption and Hezbollah.

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dimasadekofficial/reels/?locale=pl>

Nizar Hassan

Activist and political commentator, particularly involved in the 2019 protests. Hassan criticizes the political establishment and actively publishes content that can be used in campaigns against the government and in promoting protests.

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/nizar_hsn/

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@tafkeek-2780/videos>

Aya Majzoub

A lawyer and human rights activist who frequently writes about the situation in Lebanon for international media.

X: https://x.com/aya_majzoub

Ziad Abi Chaker

He comments on ecology and waste management, and his actions inspire pro-environmental movements.

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/ziad_abichaker/

Wadad Halawani

Halawani, a distinguished human rights activist, has for decades led a campaign to uncover the fate of those who disappeared during Lebanon's civil war, emphasizing issues of justice and accountability.

<https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/stories/in-the-words-of/2024/02/in-the-words-of-wadad-halawani-we-are-women-of-peace-we-fight-for-the-truth>

Paula Yacoubian

Being journalist and independent member of parliament, Yacoubian is known for her activism against corruption and her involvement in civil society movements

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/paulayacoubian/?hl=en>

Gino Raidy

As a known blogger and activist, Raidy focuses on political and social issues, advocating for secularism and civil rights. His blog, Gino's Blog, is widely recognized for its critical perspective on Lebanese politics

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ginoraidy/?hl=en>

Assad Thebian

An activist associated with the "You Stink" movement. Thebian uses social media to campaign against government corruption and mismanagement, playing a significant role in mobilizing public protests.

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/beirutiyat/?hl=en>

Nadine Njeim

As a well-known actress and former Miss Lebanon, Njeim boasts a significant number of social media followers. She uses her platforms to address social issues and promote women's rights, influencing a wide audience.

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/nadine.nassib.njeim/?hl=en>

Amanie Geha

A Lebanese journalist and television presenter. Known for her influential work on programs such as "Menna w Jerr" and "She Talks." In "Menna w Jerr," a weekly show featuring guests from the worlds of art, media, and politics, Geha engages in dynamic discussions on various social and cultural topics. As the host of "She Talks," she delves into issues such as women's financial independence and access to education, celebrating the achievements of women who have succeeded despite adversity.

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/amaniegeha/?hl=en>

6.4 Religious leaders

Patriarch Béchara Boutros al-Rahi

The head of the Maronites, he often speaks out on political matters.

Patriarch al-Rahi is the target of information manipulation by pro-Russian and pro-Iranian media, which attempt to discredit him in the context of his opposition to the growing influence of Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Al-Rahi uses his position to promote a vision of Lebanon as an independent and neutral state, free from external influences. His calls for neutrality and sovereignty are often interpreted and manipulated according to the interests of external powers, especially in the context of political struggles between Iran, Syria, and the West.

Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Latif Deryan

A leading Sunni Muslim cleric in Lebanon, serving as the Grand Mufti of the Lebanese Republic. He oversees the religious and administrative affairs of the Sunni community, providing guidance on Islamic jurisprudence and playing a significant role in Lebanon's socio-political landscape. Known for his moderate stance, he often advocates for unity and dialogue within the country's diverse and complex sectarian context.

Like other religious figures in Lebanon, he is the target of information manipulation attempts that seek to exploit his image within competing religious and political narratives. Pro-Russian and pro-Iranian groups may try to discredit him by portraying him as an ally of the West and Gulf states, while opponents of Hezbollah may use him to mobilize the Sunni community against Shia influence.

Catholicos Aram I

An Armenian, the Catholicos of the Cilician Armenian Apostolic Church, the highest spiritual leader of this community in Lebanon and the Cilician diaspora. Known for an active role in interreligious dialogue and defending the rights of Armenians, especially in the context of the memory of the Armenian Genocide. In the Lebanese political-religious landscape, he is regarded as a moderate voice supporting the coexistence of different religious communities.

Sleiman Frangieh

A Maronite Christian and leader of the Lebanese Marada party.

He is considered a presidential candidate preferred by Hezbollah and the Shia Amal party, which underscores his significance in Lebanon's political landscape.

6.5 Political leaders

Naim Kassem (Hezbollah)

The new leader of Hezbollah has enormous influence over the Shia community as well as on international discussions about Lebanon.

Kassem and his organization are often targets of disinformation campaigns conducted by Israel, the USA, and Western countries, which seek to undermine their credibility. At the same time, Hezbollah runs its own disinformation operations, promoting narratives about an alleged struggle for Lebanon's sovereignty against imperialist and Zionist forces.

Saad Hariri (Future Movement)

Hariri, supported by Saudi Arabia and the USA, has been the target of numerous attacks from pro-Russian and pro-Iranian media. As the leader of the Sunni political movement, his decisions and policies are often promoted by Western media while simultaneously being attacked by groups affiliated with Hezbollah.

Michel Aoun / Gebran Bassil (Free Patriotic Movement)

They represent the interests of the Christian community associated with the Maronites. Aoun is criticized by Western media mainly for his alliance with Hezbollah. At the same time, his political camp is promoted by pro-Russian media as an alternative to American and Western influences.

Samir Geagea (Lebanese Forces)

A prominent political figure and a voice of Christian opposition to Hezbollah. Geagea, who has long criticized Hezbollah and its dominance in Lebanon, is frequently targeted by disinformation attacks, especially from pro-Hezbollah and pro-Russian media

Walid Jumblatt

Leader of the Druze Community and head of the Socialist Party. Jumblatt, a pragmatist, often finds himself at the center of competing regional influences (Iran, Syria, USA, Saudi Arabia). As the leader of the Druze, he faces both internal criticism and attacks from foreign media.

Nabih Berri (Amal Movement)

Speaker of the Parliament since 1992, a Shia, and leader of the Amal Movement. Berri, as the leader of one of the main political forces in Lebanon, is also a target of attacks from Western media and opponents of Hezbollah.

Gebran Bassil (Free Patriotic Movement)

He has served as Minister of Telecommunications, Energy and Water, as well as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, and since 2018 has been a member of parliament representing the Batroun district.

6.6 Military leaders

Joseph Aoun

Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces. He is widely seen as a neutral figure who strives to keep the army away from direct political conflicts. He supports international military partnerships, especially with the USA, which provide equipment and training for the Lebanese army. He is regarded as a potential candidate for the presidency of Lebanon.

Fadi Daoud

Brigadier General, responsible for operations in the southern part of the country, where the Lebanese Armed Forces cooperate with UNIFIL forces.

Sheikh Naim Qassem

After the death of Hassan Nasrallah in September 2024, Sheikh Naim Qassem, previously the deputy leader, took over the leadership of Hezbollah. He has been a senior figure in the organization for over three decades.

Haitham Ali al-Tabtabai (Abu Ali al-Tabtabai)

Commander of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Forces, al-Tabtabai played a significant role in the group's military operations in Syria and Yemen. He is designated by the United States as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

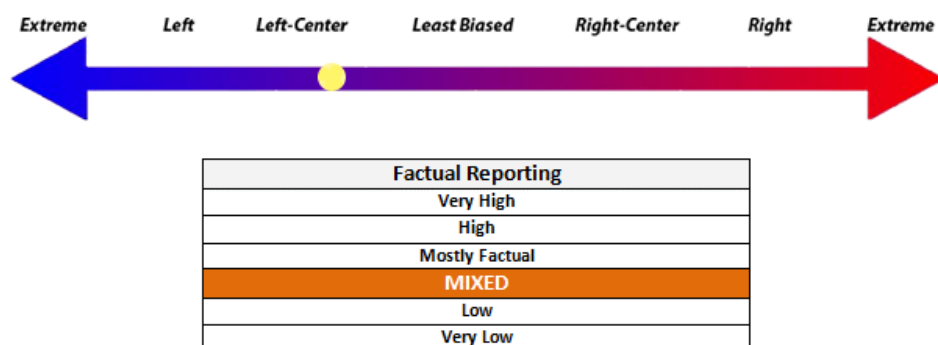
Munir Ali Naim Shaito (Hajj Hashem)

As the commander of Hezbollah's Golan Front, Shaito oversees military operations along Syria's southern front, coordinating them with Iranian and Syrian forces.

6.7 Traditional media

Websites such as Media Bias Fact Check or AllSides prove helpful in this case, as they check the bias and credibility of various media outlets.

Al Jazeera – Bias and Credibility



6.7.1 Financed by foreign governments

Al-Mayadeen

A television channel promoting pro-Iranian and pro-Syrian narratives, supporting Hezbollah.

Official website: <https://www.almayadeen.net/>

Al-Arabiya

A Saudi media network promoting Sunni interests in Lebanon and criticizing Iran and Hezbollah.

Official website: <https://english.alarabiya.net/>

Press TV

An Iranian television that works to promote Iran's influence in the region.

Official website: <https://www.presstv.ir/>

Al-Manar TV

Funded by Hezbollah, it promotes pro-Iranian and pro-Syrian narratives

Official website: <https://www.almanar.com.lb/>

RT Arabic (Rosja)

It promotes pro-Russian narratives, while heavily criticizing Western influences in the region.

Official website: <https://forum.rtarabic.com/tags/washington/>

Al-Jazeera (Katar)

It supports Qatar's interests and promotes its own regional narratives. Wspiera interesy

Official website: <https://www.aljazeera.com/>

Al-Akhbar

A newspaper known for pro-Russian and pro-Iranian narratives.

Official website: <https://www.al-akhbar.com/>

Sputnik News

A Russian government-controlled news agency, wholly owned by the Russian state media company Rossiya Segodnya.

Official website: <https://sputnikglobe.com/>

Future TV

Future TV, owned by the family of the late Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, previously received support from Saudi Arabia and aligned its content with Saudi interests.

Official website: <https://futuretvnetwork.com/>

OTV

Owned by the Free Patriotic Movement, it reflects the views of this party and maintains relations with other countries, especially Syria.

Official website: <https://otv.com.lb/>

An-Nahar

A leading newspaper with historical ties to the March 14 Alliance, supported by Saudi Arabia.

Official website: <https://www.annahar.com/>

Sawt al-Nour (Voice of Light)

A Lebanese radio operated by Hezbollah, receiving support from Iran.

Official website: <https://www.alnour.com.lb/>

Lebanon Debate

A journal known for its pro-Syrian government content, indicating Syrian influence.

Official website: <https://www.lebanondebate.com/>

6.7.2 Western media outlets

BBC Arabic

A British television channel with an informational profile, broadcasting in Arabic and owned by the BBC

France 24

Separate for each of the four language versions, including Arabic. It promotes Western/French interests.

The New York Times

The New York Times is an American newspaper recognized as left-center leaning. In its coverage of Lebanon, it focuses on issues such as human rights, political instability, and refugee challenges. The newspaper is primarily funded through subscriptions and advertising. While it strives for objectivity, it has been criticized for its liberal tendencies

Reuters

Reuters is an international news agency known for its pursuit of neutrality and fact-based reporting. It is funded by subscriptions and advertising, and its reports are widely used by other media outlets around the world. The agency enjoys a reputation for being independent and impartial, with minimal political influence.

Associated Press (AP)

An American news agency provides up-to-date news about political events in Lebanon, social issues, and regional affairs.

Financial Times

A British international newspaper reports on Lebanon's economic conditions, political events, and business environment, offering in-depth analyses.

Deutsche Welle (DW)

A German international broadcaster offers coverage of Lebanon's political, economic, and cultural events, providing a European perspective.

Al Jazeera

Although it is not a Western station (headquartered in Qatar), Al Jazeera offers extensive coverage of Lebanon, focusing on political events, social movements, and human rights issues, often presenting a Middle Eastern perspective.

6.8 Non-traditional media

Facebook (Meta)

Facebook, as one of the largest social media platforms in the world, plays a huge role in shaping public opinion in Lebanon. It is used by both local and foreign political actors to carry out disinformation campaigns

In 2023, a study was conducted, entitled „**Using Facebook advertising data to describe the socio-economic situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon**⁵“. It elaborates on the possibilities of using data from Facebook's advertising platform to analyze the socio-economic conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. By analyzing demographic data and users' interests, the study provides information about the standard of living, employment status, and education level of this group. Through access to such data, interested parties can use it to influence political and social narratives, promoting their own agendas.

During ongoing conflicts in Lebanon, there are often manipulations of images and videos. For example, a photo of burning solar panels became popular on social media, claiming that it originated from recent explosions in Lebanon. Sharing the photo on Facebook, a user wrote: "Solar panels belonging to Hezbollah also exploded today in Lebanon."

Websites like **FACT Crescendo**⁶ help determine whether a viral photo is truly authentic.

⁵ <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/big-data/articles/10.3389/fdata.2022.1033530/full>

⁶ <https://afghanistan.factcrescendo.com/english/>



Whatsapp us

9049053770

Follow us

Result : FALSE

CLAIM

The image shows the solar panels explosions in Lebanon recently.

FACT CHECK

The images in the viral collage are old and not related to the recent explosions in Lebanon. The image on the left side is there on the internet since at least 2019 and the image on the right side shows a house fire in West Side, Okanagan, British Columbia in 2020.

YouTube

Videos on YouTube can be uploaded by anyone, and algorithms match them to audiences interested in the given topic. Like in other non-traditional media, content published on YouTube often goes without any verification; only when such material is reported does it come under scrutiny and possible removal by the platform.

Press TV⁷ - A channel supported by the Iranian government. It often promotes narratives supporting the Iran-Hezbollah alliance and spreads disinformation about events in Lebanon.

X (Twitter)

X is a platform that prides itself on freedom of speech and, consequently, is also an ideal medium for spreading false information. It is no coincidence that on X we find pages promoting false narratives as well as those attempting to debunk these myths.

Regarding issues related to Lebanon, influential accounts are those connected with the United Nations, for example:

- UNOCHA, which mobilizes and coordinates humanitarian aid for the disaster-affected population of Lebanon: <https://x.com/ochalebanon>
- UN Development: <https://mobile.x.com/UNDP>

It is also worth paying attention to accounts that have a large number of followers and are associated with specific views on Lebanon:

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpgY6MdWk3iNSMb5JwoZGbw>

- **Dr. Maalouf**

Anti-Hezbollah, strong Christian views.

https://x.com/realMaalouf?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

- **Raylan Givens** – former IDF soldier, Zionist, supporter of USA and Israel, pro-Trump, anti-Hezbollah.

https://x.com/JewishWarrior13?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

- **Mount Levnon** – A profile advocating for a free Maronite state engaged in a Mediterranean alliance with Israel, Cyprus, and Greece.

<https://x.com/mountlevnon>

- **New York Post** – the profile of an influential American tabloid, focusing on US-Israel relations regarding the conflict in Lebanon, supports Israel's narrative. The owner of the New York Post is Rupert Murdoch—a vocal supporter of Jews and the State of Israel

<https://x.com/nypost>

- **Dr. Eli David** - A researcher, lecturer, entrepreneur, and investor, ranked among the top 100 most influential accounts on the X platform. He holds pro-Israel views.

<https://x.com/DrEliDavid>

- **Sarah Idhan** - Founder of Humanity4ward, activist. She Holds anti-Hezbollah views.

<https://x.com/RealSarahIdan>

Based on the analysis of the X platform, the most active group posting about the current situation in Lebanon consists of people originating from or somehow connected to Israel.

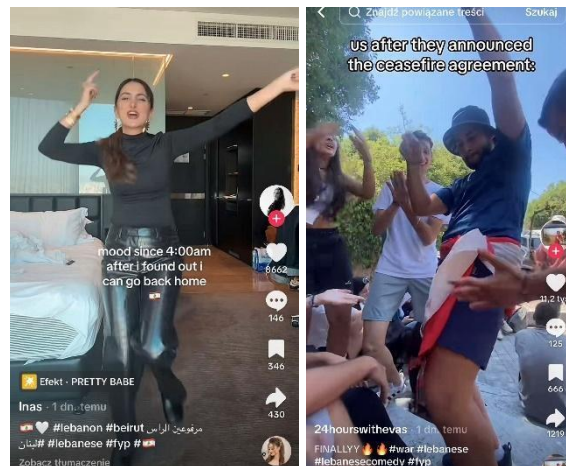
Instagram

Instagram is popular among the younger segment of Lebanese society, and its popularity is utilized by both public figures and political organizations to promote ideas, campaigns, and images. Similarly to Facebook, on Instagram you can also find photos or videos that may spread disinformation.

TikTok

TikTok is gaining popularity in Lebanon, especially among younger users. The platform is used both for creating entertainment and for expressing political opinions. When important events occur in the region, they are widely discussed by TikTok users in the form of short videos.

The joy of TikTok users after the announcement of the ceasefire in November 2024



Since 2021/2022, Israel has been conducting intensified propaganda activities on the TikTok platform by posting videos featuring attractive women serving in the Israeli army. These efforts influence the perception of the Israeli military as friendly and strengthen support for Israeli military actions. This strategy uses appealing content to shape public opinion positively toward the Israeli army.

WhatsApp

Since 2019, the WhatsApp platform has become a target of disinformation attacks aimed at Lebanese people. False information was spread in the form of voice messages.

A **study**⁸ published by Harvard Kennedy School of 35 voice notes circulated in Lebanon between October 2019 and October 2020 showed that misleading voice notes on WhatsApp have a similar structure: an emotionally charged sender establishes an interpersonal connection

8

<https://misinforeview.hks.harvard.edu/article/audio-misinformation-on-whatsapp-a-case-study-from-lebanon/>

with the initial recipient, then verifies their credibility as an eyewitness, expert, or someone with access to confidential information before ultimately conveying misleading information. One-third of the voice notes analyzed also contained a clear call to action. The voice notes covered the following topics: the October 2019 protests, the economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, the August 4 explosion in Beirut, and religiously motivated clashes.

Podcasts

Podcasts are gaining popularity as an alternative medium, offering deeper political, social, and economic analyses. In Lebanon, podcasts are becoming a tool for debate on reforms, corruption, as well as the regional situation.

Middle East Focus – The Middle East Institute podcast discusses political and social issues in the Middle East, including the situation in Lebanon. It analyzes, among other things, U.S. foreign policy and regional dynamics.

Link: <https://www.mei.edu/podcast/middle-east-focus>

The Take (Al Jazeera) – This podcast often addresses topics related to Lebanon, such as political, social, and economic crises. Through interviews, it provides deeper context to current events.

Link: <https://open.spotify.com/show/4Xpy9wOEFHmASLqKGOHHcq>

Today, explained – A podcast owned by Vox, an American media company with left-leaning views.

Link: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6SEnN61YdAOMonyYWssW4U>

TBN Israel Podcast – TBN Israel is part of the international Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), the largest Christian television network in the world. The podcast discusses current events in the region, including presenting their perspective on the conflict with Hezbollah.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2gRfOcqeIFUknH7DHBBOpARuTIIE3DiS>

6.9 Academic and scientific cooperation

6.9.1 Universities

Liban is home to a number of prestigious higher education schools:

American University of Beirut (AUB)

A private university registered in New York, with a campus in Beirut. The main academic partners of the university are European universities within the EU framework (Erasmus+) as well as American universities.

Official website: <https://www.aub.edu.lb/>

La Sagesse University

It is an institution affiliated with the Maronite Archdiocese. It is part of the AUF, a global association of French-speaking higher education institutions and research organizations.

Official website: <https://www.uls.edu.lb/>

Lebanese University

The Lebanese University is a member of, among others, the International Association of Universities (IAU), the Association of Arab Universities (AAU), the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World (FUIW), and the Mediterranean Universities Union (UNIMED).

Official website: <https://www.ul.edu.lb/>

University Saint-Joseph (USJ)

A private Catholic research university in Beirut, founded in 1875 by French Jesuit missionaries.

Official website: <https://www.usj.edu.lb/anglais/>

Lebanese American University (LAU)

Founded in 1924, it offers American-style education on campuses in Beirut and Byblos. The university is distinguished by its programs in business, engineering, computer science, and pharmacy, which are accredited in the USA.

Official website: <https://www.lau.edu.lb/>

University of Balamand (UOB)

Founded in 1988 in northern Lebanon, the University of Balamand (UOB) is affiliated with the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch. It offers diverse programs, particularly excelling in engineering, medicine, environmental sciences, and fine arts. The university conducts innovative research in marine biology and renewable energy.

Official website: <https://www.balamand.edu.lb/home/Pages/default.aspx>

Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK)

Founded in 1938, USEK is affiliated with the Maronite Church and is located in Kaslik. The university is known for its programs in theology, music, engineering, and business. It stands out for its emphasis on cultural heritage and innovation, possessing one of the largest libraries and archives in Lebanon.

Official website: <https://www.usek.edu.lb/en/home>

Beirut Arab University (BAU)

Founded in 1960, it offers education mainly in Arabic, with integration of English and French in its programs. The university is known for strong faculties of law, medicine, dentistry, and engineering. BAU also excels in social sciences and architecture, emphasizing practical applications and community-oriented research.

Official website: <https://www.bau.edu.lb/>

6.9.2 International research centers and think-tanks

International research institutes also operate in Lebanon, conducting projects across various fields ranging from social sciences to technical research

Middle East Institute

It is a non-profit, non-partisan think tank and cultural center founded in 1946 in Washington, D.C. Its mission is to "increase knowledge of the Middle East among the United States citizens and promote a better understanding between the people of these two areas." The MEI collaborates with Lebanese research centers, examining issues related to the politics, society, and culture of the Middle East.

Official website: <https://www.mei.edu/podcast/middle-east-focus>

Transparency International

As part of its cooperation with international organizations, Lebanon participates in projects aimed at combating corruption and improving the transparency of public institutions. The main funding for Transparency International (TI) comes from the European Commission.

Official website: <https://www.transparency.org/en/>

Carnegie Middle East Center

Part of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, this think tank conducts research on the political and economic challenges of the Middle East, including Lebanon.

Official website: <https://carnegieendowment.org/middle-east>

Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS)

An influential Lebanese research institution engaged in political analysis and advocacy, focusing on political reforms, governance, economic development, and public policy in Lebanon.

Official website: <https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/>

Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (AUB)

Part of the American University of Beirut (AUB), the institute conducts research on a wide range of topics, including international relations, public policy, and regional governance.

Official website: <https://www.aub.edu.lb/ifi/Pages/default.aspx>

Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies

(Doha, Katar, with regional focus on Lebanon)

This influential think tank conducts research on political and social issues in the Arab world, including Lebanon, focusing on topics such as governance, human rights, and political reforms.

Official website: <https://www.dohainstitute.org/en/pages/index.aspx>

Friedrich Ebert Foundation

A German political foundation that promotes political dialogue and development in Lebanon. It works to support democracy, social justice, and political participation.

Official website: <https://www.fes.de/en/>

UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Based in Beirut, ESCWA is a regional United Nations body focused on economic and social development in the Arab region, including Lebanon. It conducts research and provides recommendations on topics such as sustainable development, regional integration, and policy frameworks.

Official website: <https://www.unescwa.org/>

6.9.3 Possible threats related to academic and scientific cooperation

Dependence on foreign funds

Many research projects in Lebanon are financed by foreign organizations and governments, leading to dependence on external interests and influences.

Manipulation of research results

Due to international academic ties, research conducted in Lebanon is sometimes used to promote specific political interests. Studies addressing sensitive issues such as conflicts, government reform, or minority rights can become tools to influence political decisions.

Use of scientific cooperation to foster foreign political narratives

Some foreign academic organizations introduce particular political narratives into Lebanon that align with the interests of international actors. For example, scientific projects on democracy, political reforms, or human rights may be used to pressure the Lebanese government on internal matters.

Issues related to data and information security

The collaboration between different institutions involves the exchange of data that may be confidential or sensitive. The lack of proper safeguards can lead to data breaches, violations of research participants' privacy, or theft of intellectual property.

6.10 Military cooperation and non-state military actors

The Lebanese Army depends on international support, particularly from the United States (training and armament), France (logistical support), and Saudi Arabia (financial aid, although limited in recent years due to Hezbollah's activities). Besides these states, the United Nations is also involved in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

Lebanon's crucial military partners:

1. USA

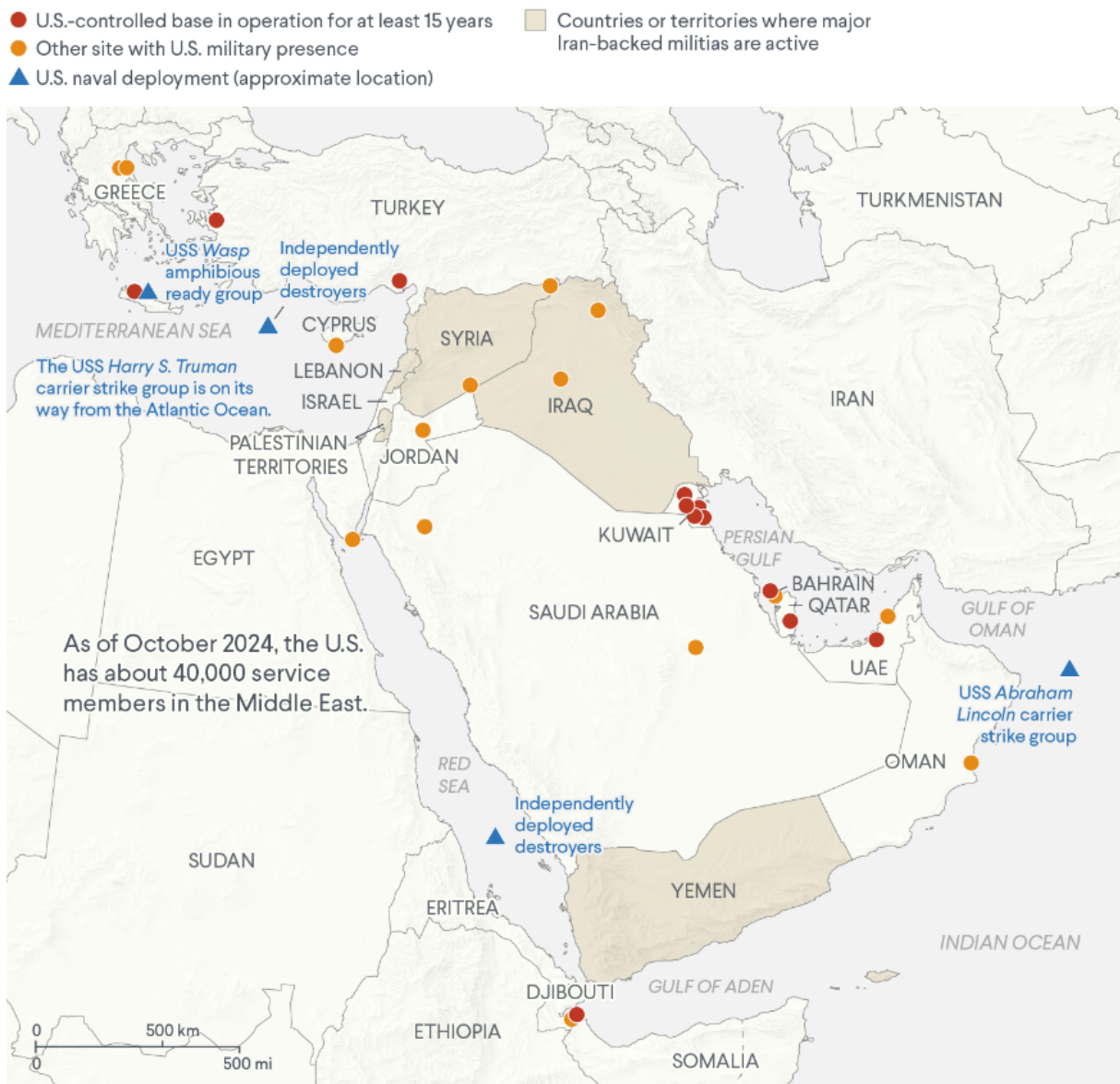
Military cooperation with the USA mainly includes the provision of military equipment, training for the Lebanese Armed Forces, as well as assistance in combating terrorism and militant organizations such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda. The United States is one of Lebanon's key military allies.

As read on the official website of US State Department:

American security assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) is a key element of U.S. policy toward Lebanon, aimed at strengthening Lebanon's sovereignty, securing its borders, countering internal threats, and disrupting terrorist facilitations. Key areas of cooperation include border security, maritime security, building defense institutions, arms transfers, and counterterrorism efforts

The map below shows the presence of American troops in the Middle East as of October 2024:

U.S Military Presence in the Middle East as of October 1, 2024



Note: Locations of U.S. bases and sites are based on unclassified sources and do not include all bases and sites in the region.

Sources: Congressional Research Service; U.S. Naval Institute; Department of Defense; CFR research.

COUNCIL ON
FOREIGN
RELATIONS

2. France

France is also involved in military assistance to Lebanon, especially following crises and disasters such as the 2020 Beirut explosion. Additionally, France has an interest in maintaining stability in Lebanon, which is largely dependent on its military and political support.

On March 12 of this year, Lebanon and France signed an agreement aimed at strengthening cooperation between their armed forces. The agreement allows France to support the

Lebanese army in training medical personnel, providing medical supplies and equipment, and developing military clinics.

In October 2024, France pledged to allocate 100 million euros to support Lebanon, with President Emmanuel Macron stating that the country needs "massive aid" as Israeli attacks have displaced over one million people.

3. UN (UNIFIL)

The United Nations peacekeeping forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) aim to monitor compliance with the ceasefire agreement and ensure stability along the southern border between Lebanon and Israel. Their presence is crucial in maintaining the balance of power in the region and monitoring the situation related to Hezbollah.

UNIFIL is a UN peacekeeping mission, which means its military actions are limited to self-defense and preventive measures.

UNIFIL's objectives:

- Monitoring of the so-called Blue Line, which is the demarcation line between Lebanon and Israel
- They support the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in maintaining security in southern Lebanon
- They ensure the safety of the civilian population

4. Syria

Military cooperation with Syria was particularly strong before the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005. For many years, Syrian forces were present in Lebanon, and their cooperation included joint military operations, intelligence sharing, as well as support for Lebanese political groups loyal to the Syrian regime.

Syria has provided Hezbollah with support for many years, supplying weapons and enabling the transport of Iranian arms through its territory to southern Lebanon.

Non-state military actors in Lebanon

Military cooperation with Syria was particularly strong before the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005. For many years, Syrian forces were present in Lebanon, and their cooperation included joint military operations, intelligence sharing, as well as support for Lebanese political groups loyal to the Syrian regime.

Syria has provided Hezbollah with support for many years, supplying weapons and enabling the transport of Iranian arms through its territory to southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah

Hezbollah is the main paramilitary force in Lebanon, operating as a militant, political, and social organization. Supported by Iran and Syria, it is designated as a terrorist organization, with influence extending beyond Lebanon through involvement in conflicts in Syria and other parts of the Middle East.

Military cooperation with Iran and Syria forms the foundation of Hezbollah's military development, enabling it to maintain a powerful army equipped with advanced weapons and technologies. Hezbollah also has strong ties with local organizations and communities in Lebanon, especially among the Shia population.

ISIS

ISIS sought to exploit Lebanon's economic collapse in an attempt to revive itself in the country. Thanks to training provided by the U.S. military, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) detect and counter terrorist activities, which often have links to Palestinian refugee camps. ISIS fighters try to recruit Lebanese nationals and also acquire weapons and access through refugees and vulnerable citizens.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad

A Palestinian paramilitary and terrorist organization with an Islamist profile. Most of the PIJ's (Palestinian Islamic Jihad) structures are located in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. Fighters have often been recruited from refugee camps in southern Lebanon and trained by Syrians and Hezbollah.

Fatah al-Islam

A Sunni Islamist militant group founded in November 2006 in a Palestinian refugee camp located in Lebanon. It has been described as a jihadist militant movement inspired by Al-Qaeda.

Islamic Unity Movement

Also known as the Islamic Unification Movement, it is a Lebanese Sunni Muslim political party. It has played an active role in Lebanese internal politics since the Lebanese Civil War in the 1980s. The militia, numbering about 1,000 members and also called "Tawheed," was established in 1982 and trained by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), initially receiving light weapons from the stockpiles of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Internal Security Forces (ISF) or purchased on the black market. After the withdrawal of Palestinian factions, this enabled the IUM militia to develop mechanized armed forces.

Osbat al-Ansar

A Sunni fundamentalist group founded in the early 1990s, with its main operational base in the Palestinian refugee camp Ain al-Hilweh. They adhere to a Salafist form of Islam and seek to overthrow Lebanon's secular government. Osbat al-Ansar received weapons and supplies from the Lebanese Internal Security Forces and militias affiliated with the Siniora government.

Kataeb Regulatory Forces

These forces belonged to the Lebanese Christian Kataeb Party from 1961 to 1977. The Kataeb militia, which fought in the early years of the Lebanese Civil War, was the predecessor of the Lebanese Forces.

Amal Movement

A Shiite political and paramilitary group originally founded to defend the rights of Lebanon's Shiite population. Although politically integrated into Lebanon's system, its military wing has historically operated outside state control.

Lebanese Forces (LF)

Originally a Christian militia during the Lebanese Civil War, the Lebanese Forces are now a political party but maintain a strong military and paramilitary presence in some Christian communities.

Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP)

A political party with paramilitary capabilities, the SSNP has historically been present in Lebanon, particularly in the southern and eastern parts of the country, with a controversial ideology advocating for the establishment of Greater Syria.

Sunni militias in Lebanon

Smaller Sunni militias and Islamist groups, such as Fatah al-Islam and Ahrar al-Sham, have been present in Lebanon, particularly in the northern regions and Palestinian refugee camps.

Shiite militia groups linked to Iran

In addition to Hezbollah, there are smaller Shiite militia groups connected to Iran's influence in the region, sometimes operating alongside Hezbollah.

CHAPTER 7. Selected techniques and tactics of manipulation, linguistic mechanisms of persuasion, actions and psychological effects — identification and analysis

7.1 Vectors and narratives of Russian influence operations

Monitoring of the Lebanese information space has revealed a systematic presence of criticism directed at Western countries and international organizations. Behind this trend are external actors, mainly Russia and Iran, who consistently build a negative image of the West, questioning the sincerity of its aid and the neutrality of global institutions.

In propaganda activities, especially those favoring pro-Iranian and pro-Russian circles, there are often suggestions that the humanitarian or financial aid provided by the West is merely a pretense. In these narratives, such aid is portrayed as a tool of political control and economic dependence for Lebanon. The country is allegedly becoming not a sovereign partner but a "vassal" of European countries or the United States, manipulated through sanctions and selectively distributed funds.

The imposition of sanctions within this set of persuasion shapes a negative narrative about the restrictive West, which, instead of protecting human rights or stability, only deepens the humanitarian crisis. The effect of these manipulations is an attempt to convince the Lebanese that Europe and the USA bear the moral responsibility for shortages of food, medicine, or energy resources—not internal factors or the actions of armed groups.

International institutions under fire: International aid organizations as well as the UN and its agencies have also come under scrutiny. Their role and effectiveness are being undermined, and their neutrality questioned. They are equated with the West, suggesting that powerful Western countries stand behind them. These narratives often include references to the situation in southern Lebanon. The West's passivity or overly lenient stance toward Israeli military actions is distorted through propaganda apparatus into alleged Western approval of regional destabilization.

The domino effect in society

Propaganda efforts find fertile ground in a society weary from successive crises. Fear and frustration, exacerbated by the difficult humanitarian situation, make anti-Western messages easily gain credibility, including those questioning the sincerity of Western aid initiatives. Although the actual involvement of Europe and the United States in Lebanon's reconstruction and stabilization is real, in the propaganda operations of Iran and Russia, it is subjected to disinformation, accusations, and alleged manipulation and Western desire to dominate Lebanon.

The image of the West as a cynical manipulator did not arise spontaneously. It is the result of information campaigns consistently conducted in Lebanese media, which resonate with a receptive social environment. Although the reality is much more complex, this simplifying, critical portrayal contributes to further polarization of opinions and hinders the implementation of effective stabilization measures.

Discrediting the West and international institutions in Lebanon is a complex and multifaceted information process based on manipulating historical grievances, ongoing conflicts, and the emotional reactions of society to suffering and the humanitarian crisis. Using a range of techniques (from selective facts to conspiracy narratives), diverse communication channels (traditional media, online platforms, social media, opinion leaders), and considering the socio-political context of the region, actors interested in undermining Western influence effectively reinforce a worldview in which the West is portrayed as a cynical manipulator responsible for the crises and injustices affecting Lebanon.

Russia's influence apparatus: Russian activity aimed at influencing Lebanese public opinion is multi-layered and closely linked to Moscow's broader strategy in the Middle East. A key element is that Russia has, for several years, sought to play the role of a power broker in the region by actively intervening in disputes, shaping narratives, and building its status as a counterweight to the West.

7.2 Key techniques and tactics employed by Russia

Discrediting the West and international institutions: To effectively discredit the West, the authors of these narratives draw on deeply rooted resentments, distrust, and traumas within Lebanese society stemming from the region's turbulent history. Examples of factors considered in shaping the message include the legacy of colonialism and mandates. Memories of the colonial presence of France and Great Britain in the Levant region remain vivid in the consciousness of parts of the population. Anti-Western narratives refer to this legacy, suggesting that today's attempts at "aid" are a continuation of former imperial policies.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is intensively used in discrediting efforts: Many Western countries are portrayed as biased partners of Israel. Any Western passivity toward Israeli actions in Lebanon or lack of a firm response is exploited to accuse them of double standards and prejudice.

Discrediting is not limited to one type of medium but encompasses a wide range of channels to dominate Lebanon's information space:

- **Traditional media (television, radio, press):** Especially television and radio stations linked to pro-Iranian or pro-Russian actors (e.g., Al-Manar associated with Hezbollah) regularly broadcast content that undermines the intentions and effectiveness of Western actions. News services, public affairs programs, and reports emphasize the alleged lack of neutrality of international forces (e.g., UNIFIL), suggesting that they are passive in the face of Israeli aggression or covertly support certain interests
- **Internet portals and social media:** Articles, posts, and comments on social media, mainly in Arabic, cite anecdotal examples of failures of Western aid or present unverified information suggesting corruption and incompetence of Western organizations in Lebanon. These materials are often amplified through the use of bots, troll farms, and microtargeting campaigns, reaching specific social groups (e.g., unemployed youth, victims of conflicts, or religious minorities)
- **Statements by opinion leaders and religious leaders:** It should be emphasized that not only the media but also clergy, local politicians, militia leaders, and tribal chiefs play a role in shaping public opinion. Their sermons, public speeches, or addresses at political rallies may contain messages about the alleged cynicism and hypocrisy of the West, which are reinforced by the authority and trust their communities place in them.

In order to effectively undermine the reputation of the West and international institutions, a range of sophisticated psychological and rhetorical techniques are employed:

- **Selective fact-picking:** From the entire range of Western actions, those events that look bad when taken out of context (e.g., delays in humanitarian aid distribution or minimal response to specific incidents) are chosen and presented as evidence of bad intentions or indifference.
- **Generalization and hyper-simplification:** Extreme cases or incidents are presented as the norm, constructing an overall image of the West as a monolithic force striving for domination.
- **Personalization and demonization of Western leaders:** Individuals representing Western countries (diplomats, foreign mission representatives, experts) are portrayed as cynical technocrats or spies acting to the detriment of Lebanon. Emphasizing cultural and ideological differences serves to create divisions and strengthen negative emotions.
- **Conspiracy narratives:** Suggesting the existence of “hidden plans” by the West (e.g., desires to control resources, impose Western culture, maintain power imbalances in the region) contributes to deepening information paranoia and lack of trust. Any Western action or gesture can, within this interpretive framework, be seen as part of a broader manipulation scheme.

Creating the image of an alternative protector: The discreditation of the West is inseparably linked with the simultaneous construction of a positive image of other actors—such as Iran, Hezbollah, or Russia. This provides the audience with a simple, dichotomous worldview:

- The West (and international organizations): morally corrupt, manipulative, insincerely helpful, indifferent to Lebanon's suffering.

Alternative partners (Iran, Russia, Hezbollah): brave, independent, genuinely concerned with the fate of the Lebanese people, ready to "call on Israel to withdraw" or provide real protection against external aggression.

In this way, any weakening of trust in the West automatically strengthens the belief that one of its competitors is a better and more reliable ally, allowing for the redistribution of political and economic influence in the region.

In October 2024, when the situation in Lebanon was exceptionally difficult (Israeli ground attacks, humanitarian crisis, health problems, population migration, rising tensions around peacekeeping missions), the discrediting of the West found particularly fertile social ground. In an atmosphere of fear, uncertainty, fatigue from successive crises, and frustration over the lack of effective solutions, it became easier to portray the "others" as not helping or helping insufficiently

- **Exploitation of isolated incidents:** When Israeli airstrikes cause casualties among journalists and the international community's responses are restrained, anti-Western narratives emphasize this passivity. As a result, every subsequent tragedy can be presented as evidence that the West "looks away" or "condones" the atrocities.
- **Linking humanitarian crises to political ones:** Difficulties in access to water, medicine, or shelter are explained as alleged pressure policies, sanctions, or deliberate mismanagement of international aid under the auspices of the West. In this way, the political conflict also becomes a moral conflict.

Snowball effect and reinforcement of beliefs: As these narratives are repeated across various media and echoed by influential opinion leaders, a snowball effect develops, making objective verification of facts increasingly difficult. Society, bombarded with biased messages, builds a simplified worldview in which distrust of the West becomes the norm, and questioning these narratives requires significant intellectual effort and access to alternative, independent sources of information.

The narrative of Lebanon's "vassalization" by the West: Russian propaganda promotes the narrative that Western humanitarian and financial aid is merely a tool for subordinating Lebanon to the economic and political interests of Europe and the USA.

The narrative of Lebanon's "vassalization" by the West is a carefully constructed psychological message that employs a range of manipulation and persuasion techniques: from selective fact-picking to playing on national emotions, from conspiracy narratives to the authority of local leaders. The goal is not only to discredit the West but also to trap Lebanese society in a mental prison of distrust.

- **Construction of the world of the enemy:** The narrative of "vassalization" is based on a binary division of reality: "us" (Lebanese, regional resistance forces) versus "them" (the West – the EU, the USA, often also NATO or the UN and their agencies). The West is defined here as a powerful external force that does not respect Lebanon's sovereignty,

seeks to subordinate it, and to deprive it of agency. Every gesture of aid, peace initiative, or diplomatic effort by the West is interpreted as a manifestation of hidden domination.

- **Moral and emotional foundation:** The strike is aimed at the emotional sphere—pride, national dignity, sensitivity to injustice. The Lebanese public receives the message: “The West treats us condescendingly, like its subjects. We are not equal partners, but pawns in a great power game.” Such framing evokes anger, resistance, and the conviction that relations with the West are inherently unfair.
- **Historical connotations:** The narrative of vassalization is deepened by the use of the region’s historical experiences—colonialism, the League of Nations mandates after World War I, and the interference of external powers in Levantine affairs. In this way, contemporary Western actions are portrayed as a continuation of old forms of domination. Connecting to historical resentments strengthens the message because it appeals to collective memory and national traumas.

During the analyzed period, an increasing number of messages questioning the sincerity and selflessness of actions taken by Western countries (the EU, the USA) and international organizations (the UN, WHO, financial institutions) have appeared in the Lebanese information environment. Humanitarian aid, infrastructure support, and diplomatic initiatives are portrayed as elements of strategic maneuvers aimed at making Lebanon dependent and depriving it of sovereignty. Such a narrative—referred to as “vassalization”—serves as a tool to exert psychological pressure on public opinion and shape a negative image of the West.

The world is presented in terms of a confrontation between “us” (the Lebanese and their regional allies) versus “them” (the West – the USA, the EU, international organizations). The West is portrayed as an entity seeking domination and control, with Lebanon depicted as a victim of this policy. Every form of support from the West (food, medicine, investments, loans) is interpreted as a means to make Lebanon dependent. Humanitarian aid becomes a “tool of control,” and the actions of international institutions are seen as instruments of political pressure. The persuasion also appeals to sensitivities arising from colonial experiences. References to the colonial past and earlier interventions by external powers in the Levant region reinforce a sense of grievance. Audiences are encouraged to view current relations with the West as a continuation of old forms of domination. Alongside criticism of the West, this narrative builds a positive image of other actors (e.g., Iran, Russia, Hezbollah) as true friends of Lebanon, offering support free of “catches.” The key techniques employed involve:

- **Evoking emotions and playing on national identity:** Narratives use pride, fear, and anger to provoke opposition to the alleged subjugation. Slogans about “vassalization” strongly impact emotions, limiting the willingness to engage in rational analysis of facts.
- **Historical context and collective memory:** Recalling colonial and mandate experiences aims to show that today’s Western actions are a repetition of past domination practices, thereby gaining greater credibility in the eyes of the audience.
- **Conspiracy narratives and insinuations:** Every move by the West is presented as part of a larger plan to make Lebanon dependent. This strengthens an atmosphere of suspicion and hinders the building of trust.

The narrative suggesting Lebanon's "vassalization" by the West is the result of coordinated informational and psychological operations aimed at generating distrust and hostility toward Western countries and international institutions.

Contesting sanctions: Russia points out that the sanctions imposed by the West (including the EU and the USA) are morally reprehensible because they deepen the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon. In this way, Russia portrays itself as an actor that does not use similar methods and places the "welfare of the people" above geopolitics.

Contesting sanctions in Russian propaganda involves deliberately shaping the message to give these measures exclusively negative and unjust connotations. Instead of presenting sanctions as a tool used to pressure aggressive, undemocratic, or human rights-violating regimes, Russian information campaigns portray them as an attack on civilians and "innocent" citizens. The goal is to provoke an emotional reaction in the audience, outrage, and a sense of moral grievance inflicted on society by the West.

Key components of this very narrative involve:

- **Reframing guilt and responsibility:** Instead of pointing out that sanctions are intended to compel a country's authorities to change actions that violate international law, Russian propaganda shifts the focus onto society. As a result, it is not the aggressive actions of the authorities that cause the restrictions, but the sanctions themselves become an element of the West's "aggression" against ordinary people.
- **Dehumanization and simplification of the West:** The West is portrayed as a cynical bloc driven solely by its own interests, deliberately inflicting suffering to subordinate other countries. This message reinforces anti-Western sentiments by creating the image of an enemy that uses sanctions as a weapon of mass destruction.
- **The narrative of sanctions as a tool of neocolonialism:** Within this propaganda, sanctions are portrayed as a continuation of old forms of domination and an attempt to "vassalize" countries, including regions such as the Middle East. The message suggests that this is a sophisticated method of maintaining influence and weakening the sovereign decisions of other nations.
- **Reinforcing the sense of moral superiority of Russia and its allies:** By contesting Western sanctions, Russian media portray Moscow and its partners as the aggrieved parties, and at the same time as "morally superior" because they do not employ similar coercive methods. As a result, the audience is meant to perceive that Russia strives for "just" international relations, opposing the West's "heartless" sanctions policy.

The psychological and political effects: Such a narrative aims to consolidate social support around its own authorities and allies, to build negative emotions towards the West, and to strengthen the belief that it is precisely the Western countries that are responsible for the difficult economic and humanitarian situation, rather than the actions of the regimes that the sanctions are intended to restrain or punish. In this way, Russian propaganda tries to neutralize the effects of sanction policies and undermine their legitimacy in the eyes of public opinion.

Undermining the credibility of international organizations: The suggestion that the UN, WHO, and other entities are controlled by the West aims to create distrust within Lebanese

society toward neutral, global aid institutions. This leads to a weakening of their ability to operate effectively, thereby deepening the crisis, which indirectly benefits Russian influence (Russia presents itself as an alternative, independent partner).

Strengthening and supporting pro-Iranian and pro-Hezbollah narratives: Russian media and news channels operating in Lebanon (including Arabic-language media outlets) use narratives from Al-Manar (a pro-Hezbollah channel) and other pro-Iranian sources to portray Hezbollah as a heroic defender of Lebanon.

These actions are intended to reinforce the impression that the common denominator of Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah is opposition to Israel and the "Western manipulators." In this way, Russia builds a front with anti-Western actors, gaining support and sympathy from the local public opinion, especially those oriented against Israel, America, or Europe. The deliberate promotion of messages that portray Iran and its affiliated groups (particularly Hezbollah) in a positive, heroic light aims to present an alternative political-ideological bloc as the proper ally and defender of the interests of local communities.

Key elements of this strategy:

Glorification of pro-Iranian forces as defenders of sovereignty: The persuasion grants Hezbollah and other pro-Iranian groups the status of "heroes," who are the only real counterbalance to Western forces and their allies (e.g., Israel). The narrative emphasizes their role in resisting external aggression and defending the territorial integrity and dignity of the nation.

Highlighting moral superiority over the West: The persuasion contrasts the image of Iran and Hezbollah as united and selfless parties with the portrayal of the West using sanctions, economic pressure, and political interference to "vassalize" the region. In this way, the moral purity of pro-Iranian forces is emphasized, portraying them as an ethical alternative to the cynical practices of the West.

Building a sense of shared interests: Propaganda links the actions of Iran and Hezbollah with the needs and aspirations of local communities. Propaganda materials emphasize that Iran and Hezbollah provide real support, whether through military aid (in defense against the enemy) or humanitarian assistance (in the form of food supplies, medicine, infrastructure), rather than—as the narrative suggests—mere empty promises typical of the West.

Historical and cultural context: Pro-Iranian and pro-Hezbollah actions are placed within a longer historical perspective, recalling earlier interventions by Western powers. This is intended to instill in the audience the belief that pro-Iranian forces are the continuators of an authentic struggle for freedom and national dignity, while the West remains in the role of an unchanging colonial dominator.

In this way, strengthening and supporting pro-Iranian and pro-Hezbollah narratives aims to convince public opinion that only an alliance with these very forces guarantees real sovereignty, security, and prosperity. The audience gradually begins to perceive the West as untrustworthy, and Iran and Hezbollah as true defenders effectively protecting the interests of local communities. This facilitates the expansion of Iran's influence in the region and hinders cooperation with international institutions controlled by Western countries.

Imposing alternative moral frameworks: Russian messages often emphasize the "moral responsibility" of the West for the humanitarian crisis, attributing blame for the region's destabilization to the political and military actions of Western countries. In this way, Russia diverts attention from its own interests and exerts moral pressure on the audience, seeking to build the conviction that it is the West—not Russia—that is causing the escalation of problems.

Building a moral opposition (Russia and its allies as the side of good vs. the West as a cynical aggressor) is a classic disinformation technique that strengthens the emotional basis of event perception. Persuasion in this regard relies on introducing an interpretation of events in which Russia and its allies appear more moral, authentic, and just than Western countries. Instead of adopting generally accepted international standards or humanitarian norms, the Russian narrative attempts to create a new frame of reference—an alternative value scale—where good and bad actions are measured according to criteria favorable to Moscow and its partners.

Key elements of this strategy:

- **Redefining the concepts of good and evil:** According to the alternative moral framework, Russia and its allies (e.g., Iran, Hezbollah) are portrayed as forces defending the sovereignty, dignity, security, and prosperity of local communities. At the same time, the West, the UN, and other international organizations are depicted as cynical manipulators who, while declaring "humanitarian aid" or "peace efforts," are actually striving for domination and exploitation.
- **Replacing universal norms with selective values:** Instead of relying on international standards (human rights, humanitarian neutrality, respect for UN resolutions), Russian propaganda promotes values such as loyalty to allies, resistance to sanctions, and opposition to the West's "imperialist" influences. In this logic, it is not independent humanitarian aid that is considered a moral good, but support for parties openly hostile to the West.
- **Moral responsibility for the crisis lies with the West:** The applied persuasion attributes responsibility for the economic, humanitarian, and political crises in Lebanon—which are also caused by local factors—primarily to the West and its policies of sanctions and selective support. Russia presents itself as the defender of Lebanon, claiming the moral right to criticize the ineffective and selfish actions of its opponents. Imposing alternative moral frameworks is intended to create in Lebanese society the belief that true good does not lie with Western states and international organizations, but with those who dare to criticize and oppose them. This psychological tactic allows Russian propaganda to effectively undermine universal values and the legitimacy of entities striving for stabilization and aid, making it harder to rebuild trust in Western initiatives and strengthening the position of Russia and its allies as the alleged defenders of true morality.

7.3 The use of emotions in Russian psychological operations conducted in Lebanon against the West

Russian informational and propaganda messages in the Lebanese media environment are carefully crafted to tap into deep social emotions, reinforce distrust of the West, and promote a narrative favorable to Russia and its regional allies. Russian propaganda operating in Lebanon often emphasizes the potential negative consequences of Western actions, portraying sanctions as tools that could lead to shortages of food, medicine, and energy. It points to alleged Western attempts to destabilize the political situation—from interfering in electoral processes to covertly supporting terrorist groups. Propaganda and online messages (through social media platforms, news channels, and messengers) repeatedly present "black scenario" visions: deepening chaos, escalating conflict with Israel, rising violence, and the helplessness of international institutions in the face of Western actions.

Initially, fear manifests as concern for the basic physical and economic security of the family, local community, and the entire state. Under the influence of such messaging, recipients begin to perceive any cooperation with the West as a risk rather than an opportunity for stabilization. This fear encourages the search for "defenders" offering alternative paths—this is where Russia steps in, portraying itself as a counterbalance to Western influence. As a result, fear drives the search for a security guarantor, which is supposed to be Moscow or its allies.

Anger and indignation: Russian messages regularly emphasize the moral injustice and hypocrisy of the West. For example, when Israel conducts airstrikes on targets in Lebanon, Russian propaganda highlights the lack of an adequate response from Western governments and international organizations. The viewer or reader may feel outrage upon seeing the stark contrast between the declared ideals (democracy, human rights) and the actual behavior of the West. The media portray situations where sanctions or conditional humanitarian aid appear to deliberately worsen the situation of the civilian population. Suggestions that the West decides who and when to help provoke anger and a sense that the Lebanese are being treated like pawns on a geopolitical chessboard.

Indignation encourages the search for those to blame and can lead to the radicalization of views. Anger makes it easier for recipients to accept narratives that offer a clear-cut interpretation: "The West is the oppressor, and Russia with its allies are the only defenders." In such a social atmosphere, anger can translate into real actions—from anti-Western protests, through boycotts of Western-origin initiatives, to greater acceptance of political and military forces opposing the West.

A sense of grievance and injustice: Russian propaganda appeals to the long-standing feeling that the region has been neglected by the international community. It emphasizes the lack of adequate support for the Lebanese economy and infrastructure while sanctions limit development opportunities. It highlights examples of the West's selective application of moral principles: condemning certain actors for minor offenses while remaining silent about serious violations committed by Western allies. Media coverage spotlights stories of families affected by the crisis, whom the EU or the USA have not helped "enough," evoking empathy and a sense of injustice.

A sense of grievance translates into deep distrust of all Western initiatives. It is an emotion that lingers for a long time, reinforcing the image of the West as a cynical player. A society that feels wronged is more inclined to accept proposals from actors who present themselves as the only genuine allies—here, Russia reappears rhetorically emphasizing its alleged selflessness and readiness to provide support.

Shame and humiliation: The messages portray Lebanon as a puppet of Western interests or a playground for the policies of the USA and the EU. Highlighting the political weakness of the Lebanese elites, who are said to succumb to Western pressure (e.g., regarding sanctions on neighboring countries or accepting foreign dictates), deepens the sense of lost national dignity. Russia constructs a narrative in which the West is responsible for the situation where Lebanon cannot fully decide its own future. In this way, the image of Lebanon as a "client" or "vassal" of the West evokes shame due to the lack of agency.

Humiliation is an extremely powerful motivator for rejecting foreign influences. A society experiencing a sense of degradation begins to demand the restoration of its own dignity. Russian propaganda offers "liberation" from Western influences as a path to regaining national honor.

Hope and pride (in contrast to the West): Despite the dominance of negative emotions, Russian messages also weave in elements of hope—showing that an alternative path exists. It is emphasized that Russia and its allies (e.g., Iran, Hezbollah) are ready to provide real assistance without sanctions or conditions. The media may showcase infrastructure projects carried out or financed by non-Western actors, presenting them as proof that things can be different. By reporting on Russia's diplomatic initiatives, its calls for peace, and investment proposals, a sense is built among recipients that Russia is more than just a counterbalance to the West—it is a guarantor of a better future.

Hope and pride are emotions that cement the anti-Western stance. After the negative deconstruction of the image of the West (fear, anger, shame), a constructive phase follows: strengthening national identity and a sense of worth through an alliance with Russia. National pride here is strongly linked to the rejection of alleged Western paternalism.

Russian psychological operations do not rely solely on one-off messages. Emotions are fueled cyclically and from multiple angles: through articles, reports, expert commentaries, statements by influential public figures, and social media campaigns. It is also important to associate local situations with global patterns—for example, comparing sanctions against Russia to sanctions against Lebanon or other countries in the region. In this way, emotions toward the West become universal—"See, they always act the same way: destroying, sanctioning, and punishing." The hidden goal: emotions are meant to block rational analysis and assessment of facts. Under the influence of strong feelings, recipients stop verifying information, becoming more susceptible to conspiracy theories or simplified explanations.

Russia seeks to evoke positive emotions within Lebanese society in order to build a favorable image and gain the support of public opinion. Unlike messages aimed at the West, which are dominated by negative emotions (fear, anger, a sense of grievance), pro-Russian communications appeal to emotions with a positive or soothing tone, aiming to establish Russia as the preferred partner and guarantor of a better future.

Russian media and information channels operating in the region emphasize Moscow's readiness to assist in rebuilding Lebanon's infrastructure, healthcare, and education systems. They highlight an alternative development path, free from sanctions and political pressure from the West. Russia presents its support as long-term and constructive, without any "hidden agenda" or preconditions.

Psychological effect:

- Hope stems from the suggestion that Russia can help Lebanon emerge from the crisis.
- Optimism arises when the recipient has the impression that there is a possibility of improving living conditions, stability, and security.
- The belief is reinforced that Russia can provide what the West—according to the Russian narrative—does not offer: a real prospect for a better future.

7.4 Chinese influence apparatus

Chinese activities in Lebanon, as presented in the material, are less pronounced and less focused on directly antagonizing parties. China appears more as an actor calling for de-escalation, peace, and the protection of civilians. The difference lies in the absence of intense use of anti-Western and anti-Israeli narratives. China does not take a side in a demonstrative manner. This stance allows Beijing to avoid direct accusations of manipulating the message and to be seen as a balanced player.

Chinese persuasions focus on the alleged need for stability and resolving conflicts through dialogue. This allows China to portray itself as an actor that can potentially support the peace or development process in Lebanon, rather than as a party to the conflict. In the long term, this favors the expansion of Chinese economic influence (e.g., within the Belt and Road Initiative) as well as political influence, since such a state will be perceived as predictable and non-escalatory. By presenting itself as a country not involved in conflicts, China aims to build a reputation as a rational, non-controversial actor seeking solutions.

Chinese informational activities and their effectiveness are supported by Russia's actions, which rely on intensive, confrontational propaganda openly questioning the credibility of the West, supporting local allies (Iran, Hezbollah) in the narrative war against Israel and Western countries, and exploiting every opportunity to discredit international organizations. Russian methods are strongly ideologically and emotionally charged—they are designed to directly provoke distrust and hostility toward the West. The Chinese and Russian sets of persuasions pursue similar goals in different ways and mutually reinforce each other.

The following analysis presents in even greater detail the differences in the mechanisms of linguistic persuasion used by Russia and China within Lebanon's information environment. Specific examples of rhetorical devices, narrative strategies, and the psychological-cultural background influencing the reception of messages from both countries will be discussed.

7.5 Mechanisms of linguistic persuasion used by Russia

Strong linguistic polarization and vivid epithets: Russian messages use clear and confrontational language, describing the West as an "aggressor," "manipulator," "hegemon," or "hidden colonizer." Such epithets are intended to evoke immediate, strong emotions: anger, distrust, and a sense of threat. An example is the portrayal of Western missions as "political pawns" or "instruments of dependency," suggesting that any initiative from that side serves hidden, sinister interests.

Emphasizing the moral superiority of the "Eastern" alliance: Russian messages often feature a binary worldview division: "us" (Russia, Iran, Hezbollah, other anti-Western forces) versus "them" (Western countries and their allies). This language relies on stereotyping and reinforces the belief that the Russian side represents "true values," is courageous, stands in solidarity with civilians, and is sovereign, while the West is cynical and self-interested. Vocabulary such as "heroic resistance," "true ally," and "authentic loyalty" is intended to create the impression that Russia stands on the side of ordinary people.

Use of conspiracy theories and insinuations: Instead of openly making false accusations, Russia often employs insinuating language such as "it is said that...", "there are reports that...", "opinions circulate that...". This linguistic device exploits the blurred line between fact and rumor, allowing the audience to fill in the gaps with imaginations of Western intrigues. The goal is to fuel distrust, create an atmosphere of secrecy, and suggest that there is a "silent information war" in which the West seeks to subordinate Lebanon.

References to historical and cultural traumas: Russian messages often evoke the history of European colonialism and mandates, emphasizing that the West repeats old patterns of domination. The use of words associated with "colony," "occupation," or "vassalization" creates strong associations with past grievances and reinforces the message that the West never changes, and Russia is the only actor that can help break free from these recurrent dependencies.

Highlighting human suffering in emotional narratives: Russia uses language that emphasizes victims and their suffering. Examples include terms like "rescue," "suffering communities," "destroyed homes," and "hungry families." These emotive expressions are designed to evoke compassion and outrage, and then associate these emotions with Western actions or inaction, emphasizing that Russia is the one defending the wronged.

The Russian influence apparatus in Lebanon mainly relies on techniques of aggressively creating an enemy (the West), amplifying negative emotions, undermining trust in aid and sanctions, and supporting local radical pro-Hezbollah and pro-Iranian narratives.

The Chinese influence apparatus is less visible but shows subtle attempts to position itself as an arbiter and an actor that could potentially affect the regional dynamics in a way favorable to Beijing—primarily through a seemingly neutral message.

7.6 Persuasive strategy and linguistic techniques used by pro-Hezbollah circles in the Lebanese information space

The aim of these actions is to shape public opinion in favor of the organization, build its legitimacy, strengthen social support, and reinforce Hezbollah's image as an indispensable, morally justified, and effective actor on the political-military stage. As a result, audiences are less inclined to think critically and more likely to accept the presented content. Emotions play a pivotal role here—pride, gratitude, a sense of dignity, and security—which cement loyalty to the organization. This multi-level persuasion, tailored to local realities, allows Hezbollah not only to maintain but also to increase its influence within the Lebanese information environment.

Building the image of a “defender of sovereignty”: Pro-Hezbollah messages use phrases emphasizing the organization's role as the “first line of defense” for Lebanon, employing terms such as “the nation's shield,” “Lebanon's border guard,” and “defender of the holy land.” These expressions appeal to patriotic feelings, mobilizing national pride. The messages strongly highlight concepts related to independence and freedom. Hezbollah is portrayed as an entity that does not allow “vassalization” or “external diktats”—in this context, phrases about “repelling external interference” and “preserving territorial integrity” frequently appear. The listener or reader is led to believe that without Hezbollah, Lebanon would be an easy target for aggression and pressure. Consequently, the organization is identified with the country's security and stability, which strengthens its acceptance.

Legitimization through religion and moral values: Language with a strong religious charge is often used, such as “the duty of defensive jihad,” “the moral obligation to protect the oppressed,” and “acting in accordance with God's law.” For example, the rhetoric may emphasize that Hezbollah operates in the “spirit of justice,” “God's will,” and “defense of the community's honor.” Since armed resistance is presented as morally justified and necessary to stop evil (Israeli or Western aggression), Hezbollah's violence is rationalized and “whitewashed.” Messages commonly include phrases like “necessary defense” and “a sacred duty to oppose aggression,” which neutralize the negative connotations of military actions. Audiences, especially those from religious and traditionalist circles, are more inclined to accept armed resistance, seeing it as the fulfillment of a moral mandate and religious commandment. This allows Hezbollah to solidify its position as an “ethical warrior” in the eyes of its own community.

Contrast and polarization of opponents: Israel is labeled as an “aggressor,” “occupier,” or “oppressor.” The language is highly emotional, using terms such as “criminal regime,” “apartheid state,” and “mass murderer of civilians.” Hostile actors—the Western countries, particularly the United States, and pro-Western Lebanese parties—are portrayed as agents of “unclean interests,” “enemies of sovereignty,” or “tools of colonial influence.” On one hand, the persuasion identifies defenders of values (Hezbollah) as “heroes,” and on the other hand, enemies as “aggressors” and “traitors.” This simple division leads to a simplified understanding of conflicts, leaving no room for gray areas or nuances. **The listener, confronted with a sharp dichotomy of good and evil, is less inclined to critically analyze the facts. Identification**

with the “good” side—Hezbollah—increases, along with reluctance or hostility toward “the bad ones.” This intensifies loyalty and support for the organization.

Selective presentation of facts and highlighting successes: Emphasizing victories (e.g., the effective defense against the Israeli attack in 2006) as “proof” of Hezbollah’s reliability and strength. Key phrases include “historic victory,” “heroic defense,” and “defeating a powerful enemy.” Terror, crimes, human rights violations, involvement in regional conflicts, or negative impacts on the country’s internal stability are portrayed as “unavoidable costs” or “necessary defense.” Instead of the word “aggression,” terms like “prevention” are used; instead of “repression,” “stabilizing actions” appear.

Socio-economic concern and the image of a caretaker: Portraying Hezbollah not only as an armed force but also as an organization providing assistance in rebuilding homes destroyed during the conflict, supporting healthcare and education. The language is rich with concepts such as “brotherhood,” “humanitarian aid,” and “care for ordinary people.” Through this approach, audiences associate Hezbollah with tangible, felt benefits—which strengthens attachment and gratitude. The emotional bond transcends ideological boundaries, becoming a relationship of practical support.

Strengthening the image of an international ally and a broader front: Hezbollah readily emphasizes that it does not stand alone—behind it stands Iran, with a certain prestige and resources, suggesting a stable support base and resilience against Western pressures. The vocabulary includes terms such as “joint defensive mission,” “strong axis of resistance,” and “regional balance of power,” intended to demonstrate Hezbollah’s significance in a larger geopolitical framework.

Engagement in broader anti-Western and anti-Israeli coalition narratives: In conjunction with other anti-Western and anti-Israeli actors, the pro-Hezbollah message becomes more credible and achieves a wider reach. Language of unity (“united against injustice”), “common cause,” and “international solidarity” creates the impression that support for Hezbollah is support for a larger historical movement. The community feels that it stands on the side of a victorious and growing bloc of actors, rather than a solitary group. This adds moral confidence and strategic reassurance, further deepening support for Hezbollah.

Pro-Hezbollah persuasions in the Lebanese information environment are based on a comprehensive set of linguistic and narrative strategies:

- **Defender identity:** The use of patriotism and sovereignty rhetoric creates the image of Hezbollah as an indispensable force protecting Lebanon.
- **Moral justification:** Religious, ethical, and traditional references give armed resistance the dimension of a legitimate, moral mission.
- **Polarization and demonization of enemies:** Dividing the world into good and evil mobilizes support and hinders criticism.
- **Selective presentation of facts:** Highlighting successes and minimizing failures reinforces the image of effectiveness and professionalism.

- **Socio-economic support:** Portraying Hezbollah as a caretaker of the community emotionally binds people to the organization.
- **Relying on strong allies:** The international context of the anti-Western axis of resistance strengthens Hezbollah's authority and credibility.

As a result, audiences are less inclined to engage in critical thinking and more likely to accept the presented content. Emotions play a pivotal role here—pride, gratitude, a sense of dignity, and security—which cement loyalty to the organization. This multi-level persuasion, tailored to local realities, allows Hezbollah not only to maintain but also to increase its influence within the Lebanese information environment.

CHAPTER 8. Propaganda activities aimed at the perception of the West and democratic values

8.1 Externally motivated

Propaganda fostered by Iran (Hezbollah)

Iran, as a key player in Lebanon mainly through Hezbollah, engages in propaganda campaigns aimed at undermining the democratic values promoted by the West.

Examples of propaganda activities:

Iran supports media outlets such as Al-Manar TV to spread narratives that contradict Western ideas of democracy, liberalism, and human rights.

Al-Manar TV regularly broadcasts content that glorifies Iran as the leader of the “axis of resistance” against the United States and Israel. Iran is portrayed as a state standing guard over the rights of Palestinians and Muslims, opposing Western “imperialism.”

During negotiations around Iran’s nuclear program, Al-Manar aired programs emphasizing Iran’s peaceful intentions and condemning the sanctions imposed by the West. However, content supporting the development of nuclear weapons in Iran can still be observed—for example, a November article reported that Iran possesses full capabilities to build nuclear weapons. It was emphasized that Iran continues to act in accordance with the principles of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and its nuclear program has civilian purposes. Nevertheless, the statement suggested the possibility of a change in strategy in the face of international pressure.

Al-Manar broadcasts religious and political content that supports the Shia version of Islam, aligned with Iranian ideology. This is part of a broader Tehran strategy aimed at strengthening Shia communities in the region.

In Al-Manar’s messaging, Iran is portrayed as the main opponent of the United States and Israel. The channel regularly airs programs accusing the U.S. of supporting “Zionist aggression” and destabilizing the region. Attacks on American interests in the region are presented as “just defense” against imperialism.

Propaganda fostered by Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, as a regional rival of Iran, seeks to promote its values in Lebanon. The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Lebanon can be described as one of conditional friendship. For years, Saudi Arabia has competed with Iran for influence in the region. This rivalry also takes place in Lebanon. Each side supports politicians, parties, and views aligned with their own interests. Saudi Arabia tries to exert pressure on Lebanese politicians to combat Hezbollah's influence in the country, and consequently, Iran's influence.

This pressure is evident, for example, in Saudi Arabia's stance on the conditions for supporting Lebanon on the international stage. For Saudi leaders, Lebanon has not benefited and likely will not benefit from any regional agreement unless it implements reforms and reaches an agreement with the International Monetary Fund. Lebanon must choose between subordination to Iran and its Arab identity. This principle has guided Saudi involvement in recent international efforts aimed at pressuring Lebanon to finally elect a new president.

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, the United States, and France have jointly engaged in efforts to select a new president for Lebanon. All these countries agree that the new president cannot be an ally of Hezbollah and must be capable of forming a government that will implement reforms.

For Saudi Arabia, it is also essential to fully implement the Taif Agreement. The urgent need to implement this agreement stems from justified concerns about Hezbollah's plans to amend the constitution, restructure the division of power in Lebanon, and impose a tripartite parliamentary division in which Shias would receive one-third—instead of one-quarter—of the seats. Thanks to Hezbollah's armament and its hegemony over the Shia community, gaining more seats in parliament would mean greater Iranian control over state institutions. Such changes would affect the formation of every new government, including political and security appointments, leaving no room for resistance to Iran's hegemony. Implementing the Taif Agreement could be a way to stop Hezbollah's plans to restructure the division of power in Lebanon, thus preventing Iran from influencing Lebanon's identity and political dynamics.

Saudi Arabia's support for Lebanon, whether in terms of backing on the international stage or providing funds, is therefore conditional upon Lebanon meeting the requirements it sets.

Examples of propaganda activities:

Saudi Arabia supports Lebanese political forces and groups that oppose Hezbollah's influence. In particular, it backs Sunni leaders and parties such as the Future Movement, which was previously led by Saad Hariri.

For years, Saudi Arabia has also provided humanitarian aid in the form of large cash injections. In July of this year, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon signed a cooperation agreement between the King Salman Humanitarian Aid Center and the Higher Relief Committee, with aid from Saudi Arabia amounting to as much as 10 billion dollars.

Information is disseminated through the Al-Arabiya TV station. Al-Arabiya is a fairly popular source of information among Lebanese people and offers programs aimed at the Lebanese population, such as Studio Beirut, a weekly discussion program broadcast on Sundays featuring well-known guests from the Arab world.

Russian propaganda

Russia, in a bid to expand its influence in the Middle East region, uses propaganda to promote narratives opposed to the West, portraying democracy as an unsuitable form of government for Middle Eastern countries.

Examples of propaganda activities:

Russian propaganda activities are visible on the Internet and social media, through which they convey content that undermines Western democracy, portraying it as unstable and unsuitable for regions such as the Middle East. There is a narrative suggesting that Western democracy is a source of chaos, especially in the context of conflicts in Iraq and Syria, while presenting Russia as a stabilizer in the region. Additionally, since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Russia has been trying to promote its narrative to gain the support of Arab countries.

All Russian propaganda activities have been made possible by strengthening its position in the past through the popularization of Russian media such as RT Arabic and Sputnik. Sputnik Arabic particularly influences the Shia segment of Lebanese society.

Many Middle Eastern countries share an appreciation for Russia's stance, including sympathy for Putin's argument that Russia was forced to act to avoid being encircled by NATO. Furthermore, the 2022 Arab Youth Survey, conducted by the consulting firm ASDA'A BCW based in Dubai, showed that more young Arabs (aged 18-24) blame the United States and NATO, rather than Russia, for the war in Ukraine.

To learn more about the Russian information warfare activities in Lebanon see <https://infoops.pl/rosyjska-propaganda-w-libanie/>

Examples of disinformation:

In light of recent events in Syria, Russia claims that Ukraine trained Syrian terrorists. According to an article published on Sunday by the Kyiv Post, some Islamist groups that attacked the northern Aleppo province in Syria this week received training from a special unit of the Ukrainian military intelligence (HUR).

Shortly before the announcement of a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah, the Sputnik news portal reported that a U.S. special envoy warned of a possible U.S. withdrawal from talks between Israel and Lebanon concerning border disputes and regional tensions. The reason cited was prolonged negotiations and a lack of progress in reaching an agreement. The U.S. aims to motivate the parties toward constructive actions, but the threat of withdrawal could also impact regional stability and the future of mediation efforts in the conflict.

Israel

Since the escalation of the conflict with Hezbollah, Israel has started spreading messages via SMS and videos warning people about bombings. In the propaganda videos, images showed weapons hidden under showers and people shocked by this discovery, suggesting that ordinary citizens might have weapons in their homes without being aware of it, and therefore are advised to evacuate.

Additionally, on the official YouTube channel of the Israel Defence Forces, a video was posted showing a 3D cross-section of civilian homes and clever ways Hezbollah hides weapons inside them.

Israel is aware of the power of today's social media and knows how to use it effectively. Using well-known media personalities such as Hen Mazzing, Nas Daily, and Noa Tishby, they promote Zionism and try to divert Western communities from anti-Israeli narratives regarding their actions in Gaza and against Hezbollah.

“Hasbara”—a Hebrew word translated as “explanation” or “persuasion”—is the main strategy of the Zionist movement. This strategy has taken the form of media-trained government spokespersons presenting PR campaigns that advertise the Israeli army not only as moral but also as “cool,” attempting to justify its actions.

8.2 Internally motivated

Propaganda of Hezbollah

Hezbollah, as one of the main political forces in Lebanon, uses propaganda to strengthen its support among Shia communities, but also to spread narratives against the West.

Examples of propaganda activities:

- Speeches and media campaigns that portray the West as an enemy of Islamic values and promote an anti-Western narrative among Lebanese Shias.
- Portraying Hezbollah's actions as a fight against American imperialism and a defense of Lebanon's national sovereignty.

In an article⁹, describes exactly what Hezbollah would like people to believe. So, let's take a closer look at what Hezbollah is trying to convince people of.:

- **Hezbollah is not a terrorist organisation.** Although the United States claims that Hezbollah is a so-called “terrorist” organization, only a small number of countries recognize this rhetoric. Hezbollah's political wing is a registered party and has representatives in Lebanon's democratically elected parliament.
- Israel is conducting a colonial war on Lebanese territory, and it is not only about combating Hezbollah; all of Israel's colonial actions are directly financed by the U.S. government.
- Hezbollah helped defeat ISIS and Al-Qaeda, while the USA and Israel were allied with the terrorists. Hezbollah was also allied with many Christian groups and protected them from extremists from ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

⁹ <https://geopoliticeconomy.com/2024/09/29/hezbollah-nasrallah-lebanon-israel-colonialism/>

- Despite American-Israeli disinformation claiming that Hezbollah is "anti-Semitic," the resistance movement has promoted interfaith dialogue and carefully distinguished between Judaism as a religion and Zionism as a political colonial movement.

Social media are also an integral part of Hezbollah's dissemination of disinformation, for example by sharing propaganda images like this one:



Source: <https://twitter.com/HaiderAli099/status/1846819909021442156>

The photo allegedly shows four Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers surrendering to Hezbollah fighters. However, it is simply a manipulated image: (1) the hands are blurred to hide the fact that the photo was generated by AI—hands remain the Achilles' heel of AI-generated images; (2) the weapon in the lower left corner looks strange and does not resemble those used by the IDF; (3) the Hebrew inscriptions on the vests, when entered into a translator, make no sense; (4) the soldiers' uniforms do not match those of the IDF.

Propaganda of the groups opposing Hezbollah

Opposition groups, including the Lebanese Forces (LF) and other Christian parties that oppose Hezbollah, may use propaganda to present their political agenda as an alternative to Hezbollah's rule, emphasizing the value of democratic institutions, which in their view are threatened by Hezbollah's fundamentalist tendencies.

Examples of propaganda activities:

- Emphasizing the importance of cooperation with the West and international institutions to promote democracy, freedom, and human rights.
- Portraying Hezbollah as a threat to freedom, stability, and democratic values, which may strengthen the positive perception of the West.
- The Lebanese authorities accuse the group of deepening the economic crisis. Direct accusations are made that Hezbollah is the reason for international sanctions on Lebanon, which further exacerbate the financial crisis.

CHAPTER 9. Propaganda activities targeted at the perception of Poland

9.1 Externally motivated

These actions aim to shape the perception of Poland at the international level and may come from states, organizations, or international groups that have an interest in influencing Poland's image in the Middle East region, including Lebanon.

Propaganda fostered by Russia

Poland is a leader in opposing the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Portraying Poland in a negative light by Russian propaganda is not new and is also used in messaging directed at countries in the Middle East region.

- Russian media, such as RT and Sputnik, adopt narratives that portray Poland as a country becoming a puppet in the hands of the West, especially the USA and the European Union.
- Russia promotes the narrative in Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries that Poland is one of the countries contributing to the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine through close ties with NATO and the USA.

The aforementioned bullet points can be substantiated through the analysis of the content posted on Sputnik:

1. An article¹⁰ pointing to the West, including Poland, as the parties that escalate the Russian issue:

Germany's proposal for NATO to send Patriot units to Poland at the beginning of 2025 aims to protect the logistics hub in Poland, ensuring the security of vehicles, weapons, and ammunition delivered to Ukraine. Russia considers that arms deliveries to Ukraine hinder the resolution of the situation in that country. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated that the United States and NATO are directly involved in the conflict. The Kremlin warned that the West is only escalating the conflict by supplying weapons to Ukraine.

¹⁰

<https://sputnikglobe.com/20241129/germany-proposes-nato-redeploys-patriot-systems-in-poland-1121037355.html>

2. Russian fake news about farmers:

What does the news say? A farmers' protest took place near the border related to the import of Ukrainian grain, which they believe negatively affects the domestic agricultural market. Polish farmers announced that they will resume their actions if their demands for market protection are not met. They are calling for an end to the duty-free import of Ukrainian agricultural products and the rejection of the European Green Deal, which aims for zero emissions by 2050.

Facts: The farmers protested because their demand to keep the agricultural tax in 2024 at the same level as in 2023 was not met. The second reason is related to the European Union's trade agreement with the Mercosur countries of South America. Therefore, it was a blockade at the Ukrainian border, but it had nothing to do with Ukraine itself.

Propaganda fostered by Iran (Hezbollah)

Iran and the associated group Hezbollah have an interest in shaping Poland's image as part of the Western coalition opposing their regional interests. Iran and Hezbollah may use propaganda to portray Poland as a country supporting policies that are unfavorable to their allies in the region.

Examples of propaganda activities:

- Poland as a tool of the West in implementing its policy in the Middle East region, especially in the context of the war in Syria and relations with the USA.
- Poland's policy towards the Middle East and its relations with the USA may be portrayed as conflicting with Islamic interests, which could reinforce the narrative in Lebanon of Poland as an ally of countries supporting actions against Iran

9.2 Internally motivated

Media in Lebanon, both pro-government and those associated with the opposition, may shape the image of Poland in the context of its foreign policy and role on the international stage. Depending on the political preferences of different groups, Poland may be portrayed in various ways:

- **As a stable democracy:**

In numerous media outlets in Lebanon, Poland may be presented as an example of a country that underwent a successful democratic transformation after the fall of communism. In the context of political uncertainty in Lebanon, such an image of Poland may be viewed positively as a country that has achieved success in political and economic stabilization.

- **As an ally of the West:**

On the other hand, media closer to the pro-Russian narrative, more critical of the West, may portray Poland as part of an "imperial" international policy that threatens the sovereignty of Middle Eastern countries.

Hezbollah

The main medium for Hezbollah's narrative in Lebanon is their news channel Al-Manar. The topic of Poland appears in Al-Manar's news concerning the situation in Ukraine and Belarus. The channel clearly reflects views sympathetic to the Russian portrayal of the situation in Ukraine.

Fake news concerning a statement by the Polish PM Mateusz Morawiecki:

What does the news say? Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki sharply criticized Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for his speech at the UN General Assembly and warned Ukraine against strengthening relations with Berlin. Morawiecki stated that Warsaw is "no longer transferring weapons to Ukraine."

Facts: Mateusz Morawiecki criticized the words of the President of Ukraine, but there were no threats in the form of warnings about ties with Germany or statements about stopping the supply of weapons to Ukraine. In the fake news, this was exaggerated to show growing tensions between Poland and Ukraine.

Warsaw and Kyiv seek to provoke Russia into a war with NATO by accusing Russia of the explosion. Source: <https://english.almanar.com.lb/1732238>

Poland is conducting military exercises and intends to occupy western Ukraine in order to annex its territory. Source: <https://english.almanar.com.lb/1593099>

Diplomatic policy and activities of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland

Diplomatic activities of Poland, conducted by the Polish embassy in Beirut, aim to promote the image of Poland in Lebanon. As part of these diplomatic efforts, Poland may engage in various initiatives intended to present Poland as a country committed to solving international problems, including humanitarian aid and supporting peace.

CHAPTER 10. Case Study — the analysis of narratives targeted against Poland based on DISARM model

10.1 The DISARM RED Framework — An effort to standardize the description and exchange of information regarding activities in the information space

The history of the DISARM RED framework

DISARM RED (DISinformation Analysis & Risk Management RED) is an analytical model used to describe offensive actions in the information space (infosphere). One of the main challenges in analyzing these actions is the significant conceptual heterogeneity. Entities involved in researching and counteracting threats in this domain have developed their own vocabularies and semantics for describing this type of activity. With the steadily increasing intensity of multidomain informational activities since the mid-2010s, which also include influence operations, there has arisen a need for reliable information exchange between entities engaged in identifying and countering such threats.

At the turn of 2017 and 2018, Sara-Jayne “SJ” Terp, along with a group of cybersecurity specialists, began working on adapting the existing tools that describe strictly digital threats to the reality of hybrid operations. Shortly thereafter, the prototype of DISARM was created—the AMITT framework (Adversarial Misinformation Influence Tactics & Techniques), which was adopted by NATO, the EU, WHO, and the UN. The current version of DISARM RED is the result of merging AMITT with the SP!CE model developed by MITRE Corporation—based on the classic cybersecurity framework MITRE ATT&CK (used to identify and describe tactics and techniques employed in offensive cyber operations).

DISARM is a fully open-source project run by the DISARM Foundation, compatible with the STIX language and the MISP platform, and regularly updated to better describe reality and become increasingly compatible with other models, such as the Meta Kill Chain.

Basic characteristics of the DISARM RED Framework

The DISARM RED framework is divided into several parts arranged in a specific hierarchy that describe the individual stages and tools used in influence operations. The model begins with "phases," marked by tags starting with the letter "P." These phases are assigned tactics (tags starting with "TA"), which include various techniques (tags starting with "T").

The "P" tags describe the four main phases of informational activities—planning, preparation, execution, and evaluation. The tactics ("TA") within these phases indicate the objectives of each phase, which are achieved through the use of various tools—the techniques ("T"). Descriptions of the phases, techniques, and tactics are publicly available on the project's website

Examples of using the DISARM RED Framework

The DISARM RED framework is a tool particularly useful for exchanging information about incidents. It allows for easy and standardized description of the observed reality, leaving no room for ambiguity. It works excellently in the initial reconnaissance phase, that is, the identification of activities in the information space, as well as during attribution analysis, where it serves as a tool for describing characteristic and recurring techniques that may be helpful in identifying the author of an influence operation. One of its advantages is its compatibility with the STIX syntax, which enables its use on platforms such as Open CTI.

An example of using DISARM is a situation where an analyst identifies a network of inauthentic accounts on a social media platform that spread the same meme intended to legitimize a narrative previously present in another medium, such as a news website. Thanks to the framework, the analyst can specify, name, and classify the techniques used, assign them to tactics, and then share this information with another analyst who can further enrich the product as part of the intelligence cycle.

Limitations of the DISARM RED Framework

The DISARM RED framework is a precise and useful tool, but its limitations should be acknowledged. While it is effective for describing and reporting individual incidents in the information space, as well as classifying digital evidence obtained during OSINT investigations, it lacks elements that more precisely describe the psychological effects caused by a given activity and is too distant from the analytical models used in the assessment of psychological operations.

DISARM RED limits the description of psychological impact to a dozen or so techniques in phase 1—planning. The framework describes these as ways to achieve a given objective at the tactical level, whereas in reality, the aforementioned techniques are both a tool and a goal in themselves—part of a much broader range of psychological influence employed by actors on the attacking side in influence operations.

10.2 Russian influence operation conducted in the information space of Lebanon: Creating a false image of Poland and the West as aggressors seeking to annex Ukrainian territories

The analysis of the Russian influence operation conducted in the information space of Lebanon according to the DISARM RED framework v 1.6

Monitored period: From October to December of 2024

Monitored media: websites, social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram), messaging apps (Telegram)

Introduction

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the Kremlin has consistently used disinformation as one of the key tools to “legitimize” its aggressive policies. Russian propaganda, especially in the context of how the war in Ukraine is perceived, is based on a carefully constructed narrative structure aimed at manipulating audiences by mixing facts with fiction, making emotional appeals, and creating a false historical background.

The analysis reveals current disinformation techniques and narrative mechanisms used in this particular infosphere. One of the latest examples is the widely spread narrative about alleged Western plans to divide Ukraine.

The Russian propaganda apparatus continues its disinformation operation, whose main narratives are based on claims that Poland, Hungary, and Romania plan to annex Western Ukraine.

As a result of monitoring the Lebanese infosphere, elements of a Russian influence operation were uncovered that aim to undermine Poland's credibility on the international stage. This operation is based on the false thesis that Poland is an “aggressive and imperialist country,” “seeking to reclaim the lands of the Second Polish Republic and rebuild the lost empire.” Poland is portrayed in this operation as an aggressor, intending, with the help of other Western countries, to partition Ukraine and “reclaim” the territories of Western Ukraine. These actions are intended to give the audience the impression that Poland and the West are unreliable allies of Ukraine and “forces of evil” who, under the guise of assistance, are only waiting to destroy Ukrainian statehood. This operation is being conducted in many countries, with the greatest intensity and level of sophistication observed in Ukraine.

TACTICS AND TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED AS PER DISARM v 1.6:

PHASE	TACTICS	TECHNIQUES	DESCRIPTION
P01 - Plan	TA02 - Plan Objectives Portraying Poland as an unreliable ally of Ukraine and a threat to its statehood	T0066 - Degrade Adversary	Russia uses narratives that portray Poland in a negative light and undermine its reputation.
		T0079 - Divide	Poland is portrayed as an aggressive and neo-imperialist country in order to evoke negative associations with the Republic of Poland among audiences and to deepen divisions within societies.
		T0138 - Motivate to act	Spreading the false claim that Poland and the West are planning the “partition” of Ukraine. Suggesting that Poland will annex parts of Ukrainian territory under the protection of the USA and the United Kingdom; implying that Poland is a “servant” of America and the United Kingdom.
		T0135 - Undermine	Creating the impression that the aid is insincere and that the Republic of Poland is ready to “stab Ukraine in the back.”
P02 - Prepare	TA07 - Select Channels and Affordances	T0152.004 - Website Asset	Websites affiliated with Russia or pro-Russian (RT, Sputnik Arabic), or positioning themselves as neutral but favorable to Russia, e.g., Lebanon24. Websites with pan-Arab reach – Sky News Arabia, Erem News.
		T0151.001 - Social Media Platform	Social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.
		T0151.008 - Microblogging Platform	X (formerly known as Twitter).

	TA14 - Develop Narratives	T0003 - Leverage Existing Narratives	Portraying Poland as a country that dreams of reclaiming lost territories.
		T0022 - Leverage Conspiracy Theory Narratives	Spreading the false narrative that Poland plans to occupy parts of Ukrainian lands. Portraying the West and Poland as “forces of evil” that are aggressive and confrontational. Portraying Poland as an unreliable ally of Ukraine.
		T0068 - Respond to Breaking News Event or Active Crisis	Depending on current political events, Russia places false narratives in various messages.
	TA06 - Develop Content	T0023 - Distort Facts	Creating articles in Russian, pro-Russian, and pan-Arab media that distort reality.
		T0085 - Develop Text-Based Content	Portraying discussions among Western leaders about the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO as expansionist plans. Attempting to depict the potential use of peacekeeping units composed of European forces as occupying forces.
	TA15 - Establish Assets	T0095 - Develop Owned Media Assets	Using Russian propaganda platforms with international and pan-Arab reach, such as RT and Sputnik Arabic.
	TA16 - Establish Legitimacy	T0100 - Co-Opt Trusted Sources	Using the space provided by well-know media outlets, such as Sky News: https://www.skynewsarabia.com/world/1572182-%D8%B6%D9%85-%D8%BA%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%94%D9%88%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%A7
		T0097.108 - Expert Persona	

		T0097.111 - Government Official Persona	%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%94%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D9%88%D9%84%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%9F Quoting the above material in other media with pan-Arab and Lebanese reach. Referring to statements by Sergey Naryshkin, head of the SVR (Russian Foreign Intelligence Service), to lend credibility to false claims. Using the authority of “experts and analysts” whose statements lend plausibility to false Polish ambitions regarding the occupation of Ukrainian territories, citing, for example, historical sentiments.
		T0097.202 News Outlet Persona	
P03 - Execute	TA09 - Deliver Content	T0115 - Post Content	Writing articles on Russian or pro-Russian websites that contain content aligned with anti-Polish narratives. Posting on social media platforms such as X.

Summary

The current phase of this campaign suggests that Poland, Hungary, Romania, and other Western countries are already “planning” the division of Ukraine into specific territories. By attributing alleged preparations for annexation to NATO, the propaganda attempts to discredit Western support for Ukraine and embed these claims into disinformation about NATO’s offensive plans.

These messages are simultaneously used in propaganda efforts that portray Russia in a false light as a state defending itself rather than militarily attacking Ukraine (a strategy of inverted logic).

Russia consistently employs rhetoric comparing Ukraine and the West to Nazism. Such references are intended to provoke an emotional response and “legitimize” Russian disinformation about the aggression against Ukraine as a “denazification” operation or, more broadly, as a defensive operation against the West—implying that Western actions are provocative and offensive in nature and lead to conflict.

Understanding these mechanisms not only allows for better analysis of propaganda but also more effective defense against it. Therefore, we recommend this analytical model to Lebanese institutions and NGOs as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

International involvement in Lebanon is complex and stems from the geopolitical interests of various countries and international organizations. Lebanon, as a country with a multiethnic structure and complicated internal politics, is a place of competition for influence among different regional and international actors. Attribution and involvement of countries in Lebanon can be divided into several categories, taking into account political, military, economic, and cultural interests.

Regional states

Syria

Syria exerted a huge influence on Lebanon for many years, especially after the end of the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990). Although Syria is currently struggling with its own internal crisis, it still maintains some influence in Lebanon, particularly through its alliance with Hezbollah.

- **Military cooperation:** Syria and Hezbollah, supported by Iran, have strong ties, with Syria providing logistical and military support to the organization.
- **Political cooperation:** Syria traditionally held influence over Lebanese political parties, especially among the Shiites, Druze, and some Christian groups.
- **The current political and constitutional crisis in Syria,** along with the change of government, means that its involvement is more limited and it is uncertain whether it will be maintained.

Iran

Iran, through Hezbollah, has an enormous influence on Lebanon's politics, especially in the context of the country's political and security situation.

- **Support for Hezbollah:** Iran provides Hezbollah with military, financial, and training support, which ensures the organization's significant influence over Lebanese politics, especially on security-related matters.
- **Ideology:** Iran promotes its ideas of the Islamic Revolution in Lebanon, which is especially evident among Shiite communities.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, as a major actor in the Persian Gulf region, traditionally has strong ties with the Lebanese Sunni community and political groups that advocate for closer relations with the West.

- **Financial and political support:** Saudi Arabia provides Lebanon with financial support, especially to Sunni political parties. It also supports efforts aimed at political stability in the country, which aligns with its interests in the region.
- **Countering the influence of Iran:** Saudi Arabia seeks to counter Iran's influence in Lebanon, particularly in the context of Hezbollah's role.

Israel

Israel has been engaged in a long-standing conflict with Lebanon, especially regarding disputed territories along the border.

- **Security and defence strategy:** Israel is monitoring the situation in Lebanon, especially in the context of threats related to Hezbollah. The conflict with Hezbollah remains one of the main factors influencing the situation in Lebanon.
- **Military-intelligence capabilities:** Israel engages its intelligence services and armed forces in monitoring and countering Hezbollah's influence as well as other threats from Lebanon.

Turkey

Turkey, although less directly involved in Lebanon than Syria or Iran, has its interests in the region, especially in terms of influence over Sunni political groups and migration issues (due to the large number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon).

- **Engagement in the matters of the Sunni community:** Turkey supports some Sunni groups in Lebanon, and its policy in the Middle East, especially in the context of Syria, can influence the situation in Lebanon
- **Humanitarian aid:** Turkey is also involved in providing humanitarian aid, especially in the context of the Syrian refugee crisis.

Western Countries

USA

The United States plays a key role in Lebanese politics, particularly through financial and military support for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), aimed at countering the influence of Hezbollah and Iran.

- **Military support:** The United States provides military, training, and financial assistance to Lebanon to help build a professional army capable of countering threats, including Hezbollah's activities.
- **Campaigning against Hezbollah:** The United States is conducting an international campaign aimed at isolating Hezbollah and blocking its funding, both in Lebanon and abroad.

France

France, as the former colonial power of Lebanon, has long-standing relations with the country. France is involved in Lebanon's politics, promoting the country's stability and independence

- **Diplomatic involvement:** France regularly engages in mediation between rival political groups in Lebanon. It works to ensure political balance among the country's various religious and ethnic communities.
- **Humanitarian aid:** France is involved in humanitarian aid and civil development in Lebanon, as well as in projects related to post-crisis and disaster reconstruction.

International organisations

The United Nations (UN)

The United Nations plays an important role in ensuring peace and stability in Lebanon, particularly through the UNIFIL peacekeeping mission, which was established after the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war.

- UNIFIL monitors the situation on the Lebanon-Israel border and assists in maintaining peace in the region, despite challenges related to the presence of Hezbollah.
- The United Nations is also involved in humanitarian aid in Lebanon, particularly in the context of Syrian refugees and economic crises.

Recommendations

1. The summary of the information environment involving the psychological vulnerabilities thereof

An analysis of the Lebanese media environment shows that despite the large number of media outlets, the actual diversity of information presented is significantly limited by the politicization of the media sector. Instead of serving as independent watchdogs of democracy, the media often function as political instruments serving the interests of specific groups, political parties, and sects. This connection between the media, politics, and religion not only undermines their credibility but also creates a serious risk of information manipulation, making it difficult for citizens to make informed decisions on social and political issues. Under such conditions, media pluralism, although theoretically valuable, in practice leads to further polarization rather than fostering rapprochement among different social groups.

Although traditional media such as television, radio, and press still play a role in shaping public opinion, their influence is declining in favor of online media. It is digital platforms—blogs, social media, and influencers—that are becoming the main sources of information for younger generations. At the same time, these very platforms, while providing a wide range of information, also create space for misinformation. In the case of online media, the lack of regulation and quality control of content leads to a situation where easy access to unverified information can mislead society, which may have serious consequences for the country's political and social stability.

Psychological vulnerabilities: Lebanon, as a country that has experienced a civil war and repeated external interventions in the past, is vulnerable to information manipulation. Traumatic historical experiences and ethnic tensions serve as tools exploited by external actors to destabilize the region.

Recommendations:

- Supporting initiatives aimed at improving media objectivity and developing independent journalists who are not affiliated with any political party or religious sect.
- Promoting media literacy among citizens to improve their ability to critically analyze information and recognize misinformation.

2. Strategic analysis — the impact of the regional situation on Poland's strategic objectives

The Lebanese media environment presents an interesting opportunity for Polish-Lebanese cooperation, particularly in the areas of media digitization and ensuring cybersecurity for existing media platforms. In this context, collaboration with Polish companies could support the modernization of Lebanon's media landscape. One aspect would be providing protection for journalists against cyberattacks and espionage, which is especially important given the intimidation by armed groups in a country where the use of violence is a significant issue. Additionally, this cooperation could contribute to enhancing competencies in data protection and

information quality, opening opportunities for Polish technology companies to expand into the Middle Eastern market.

Recommendations:

Poland should leverage its historical legacy of defending freedom, democracy, and pluralism to counter disinformation narratives in Lebanon and the broader MENA region. This legacy, particularly embodied by figures such as John Paul II, deeply resonates with audiences who value resistance to oppression and the promotion of democratic values. By emphasizing these connections through targeted cultural diplomacy and public messaging, Poland can strengthen its image as a reliable ally in promoting stability and human rights.

3. The summary of the message fostered by Russia in the region

Although direct encounters with propaganda targeting Poland are limited in Lebanon, disinformation narratives appear through global media supported by Russian and Iranian platforms. Such narratives, including portraying Poland as a NATO pawn or criticizing its migration policy, fit into broader anti-Western and anti-NATO sentiments common in the region. To address this, Poland should focus on creating a narrative that emphasizes its commitment to NATO as a stabilizing force and its role in supporting humanitarian efforts and security in Europe. By collaborating with Lebanese media and establishing partnerships with local opinion leaders, Poland can directly respond to these disinformation narratives.

Recommendations:

Creating counter-narratives that highlight Poland's commitment to NATO as a stabilizing force and its role in supporting humanitarian efforts and security in Europe.

4. Implementation

The following actions are recommended, justified by the observations and conclusions contained in the report:

1) Departure of representatives of the offeror (researchers, experts, trainers) to Lebanon

Description: The trips will enable consultations with local partners, gaining an understanding of the region's specifics, and the direct implementation of activities on the ground.

Substantiation: The direct presence of experts on site strengthens trust in the project and enables more effective adaptation of activities to local realities, which increases the efficiency and sustainability of the results.

2) Conference aimed at discussing the report

Description: Organizing a public event to present the report's findings and discuss key challenges and recommendations for the region.

Substantiation: The conference will become a platform for exchanging knowledge and experiences, engaging decision-makers, the media, and local experts. The event will increase the visibility of the project and its impact on the local public opinion.

3) Joint development of guidelines and best practices with the local partner

Description: Local partners, in cooperation with the offeror, will draft detailed guidelines for countering disinformation, based on local contexts and international standards.

Substantiation: The involvement of local partners will ensure better alignment of the guidelines with the region's realities and strengthen their sense of responsibility for implementing the recommendations.

4) Joint development of teaching materials with the local partner and conducting classes with students.

Description: Preparation and implementation of educational programs for students covering topics such as disinformation, information security, and critical thinking.

Substantiation: University youth is a key target group whose knowledge and skills can positively impact social resilience to disinformation. The direct involvement of local partners will increase the acceptance of educational activities within the community.

5) Creation of a communication channel between local participants and the offeror.

Description: Development of an online platform for project participants that enables experience exchange, mentoring, and joint planning of future activities.

Substantiation: Continuous contact between the offeror and project participants will ensure the sustainability of the results and enable rapid response to new challenges.

6) Development, implementation and evaluation of activities and tools serving civic and media education

Description: Preparation of practical educational materials (leaflets, infographics, white papers, code of good practices) concerning counteracting disinformation and the responsible use of AI technology in social media.

Substantiation: These materials will support local communities in recognizing manipulation and the impact of Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI), thereby increasing their awareness and ability to counteract these phenomena.

7) Development of further steps as a follow-up activity after the grant project is finished

Description: Creation of a long-term project development strategy, including planning subsequent activities, building a collaboration network, and identifying additional sources of funding.

Substantiation: The long-term strategy will ensure the sustainability of the achieved results and will enable local partners to further develop initiatives in the field of information security.

5. Trainings

The following actions are recommended, the undertaking of which is justified by the observations and conclusions contained in the report. These actions should be implemented at least in the main academic centers, with a plan to expand the activities in the future to other regions, adapting to their specific characteristics and vulnerabilities.

1) A series of training sessions on information environment security.

Topics: The DISARM model, detection of external interference operations (FIMI), fact checking, media education.

Substantiation: The training will provide participants with practical tools for identifying and countering disinformation, which will enhance their analytical and operational capabilities.

2) A media project promoting good practices

Topics: Creating local information campaigns, analyzing and responding to propaganda campaigns.

Substantiation: Involving local media in project activities will increase their credibility and help in promoting reliable information.

3) Civic education and critical thinking

Topics: Workshops aimed at developing the ability to recognize manipulation and formulate responses to disinformation.

Substantiation: The development of critical thinking skills will enable participants to better cope with propaganda narratives and build social resilience.

4) AI technologies and their use in countering disinformation

Topics: The use of AI in detecting information manipulation, responsible use of technology in the media.

Substantiation: Boosting the awareness about AI will help local leaders make better use of modern technologies while preventing their misuse.

5) Long-term and legislative strategies

Topics: Creating anti-disinformation policies and promoting legislative initiatives to support information security.

Substantiation: The training will enable participants to actively engage in legislative processes, which will strengthen the institutional foundations for countering disinformation.

6. Information activities and education

The implementation of informational and educational activities within the project should be based on a wide range of tools and methods that enable reaching a diverse group of recipients. The key objective is to raise public awareness about the threats related to disinformation and to build social resilience against its impact. The beneficiaries of these activities will include both creators of the information environment and its recipients, such as policymakers, journalists, opinion leaders, academic communities, non-governmental organizations, and experts operating in Lebanon, Poland, and Europe

One of the first elements of the informational activities should be the launch of a media project focused on promoting good practices in the field of information environment security. This project should regularly publish reports and analyses concerning key disinformation campaigns that threaten the security and stability of regions such as Lebanon. As a result, media activities will become a tool for social education as well as support for policymakers and opinion leaders in their daily work. Additionally, information campaigns should be conducted in local languages as well as in English, which will allow reaching the English-speaking infosphere and increase the project's impact beyond the region.

Another key aspect of the activities is the organization of workshops and training sessions for journalists, influencers, and opinion leaders, which will focus on practical skills such as fact-checking, analysis of information sources, and identification of manipulation techniques used in disinformation campaigns. Such activities will enhance participants' competencies, enabling them to respond more effectively to information threats and strengthening their role in shaping the information environment. Additionally, involving academic and research communities through specialized seminars will facilitate the development of innovative methods for analyzing disinformation that can be implemented in practice.

Reports and analyses prepared within the project will also form the foundation of educational campaigns aimed at the public. Infographics, audiovisual materials, and opinion articles should be distributed through both traditional media and social media platforms to reach the widest possible audience. An important element of the campaign should be explaining the mechanisms of disinformation and presenting concrete examples of its impact on security, political stability, and international relations.

It is also crucial to ensure the long-term impact of the project by creating a platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange among participants. Such an online platform can enable regular consultations, the organization of webinars, and the development of joint research projects. Through this, experts and opinion leaders will be able to continue their activities after the project's completion, contributing to the sustainability of its outcomes.

The ultimate goal of these informational and educational activities is to strengthen social resilience to disinformation, which will translate into greater political stability and security in the regions covered by the project. By building awareness and developing practical skills among key target groups, the project will lay the foundation for effectively countering information threats at both the local and international levels.

7. Countering disinformation and social polarisation

The Lebanese media environment is dependent on numerous external geopolitical and economic influences, which significantly hinder access to reliable information and introduce the risk of disinformation. Sectarian media, reliant on the interests of foreign states, often manipulate public opinion, leading to regional destabilization. Poland should focus on countering disinformation narratives and promoting democratic processes in Lebanon and the MENA region, leveraging its historical heritage in defending freedom and pluralism. Cooperation with Lebanese media and partnerships with local opinion leaders can help create counter-narratives that emphasize Poland's commitment to NATO and its role in humanitarian and regional stability. Poland should also remain vigilant in monitoring disinformation on media platforms such as RT Arabic and Al-Mayadeen, and support collaboration with local journalists and universities to effectively debunk false narratives and strengthen its position on the international stage.

Recommendations:

- Supporting initiatives for the development of independent journalists and media that are not affiliated with any political party or religious sect, as well as promoting pluralism in the information sphere.
- Development of educational programs that enhance citizens' ability to recognize disinformation and analyze information. Promoting these initiatives among the public is crucial for improving the quality of public debate.
- Creating new media platforms that offer an alternative to traditional media and can effectively combat the growing social polarization.
- Strengthening the role of women in the Lebanese media environment, eliminating barriers to gender equality, and ensuring equal access to power in the media sector.

8. Additional monitoring efforts

Poland must remain vigilant in monitoring and analyzing disinformation trends in Lebanon and the MENA region. Creating dedicated resources to track these narratives, especially on platforms such as RT Arabic and Al-Mayadeen, will allow for rapid responses. Cooperation with local universities, journalists, and policymakers to analyze and debunk disinformation can further strengthen Poland's credibility as a reliable partner in the fight against propaganda.

Recommendations:

- Creating resources to monitor disinformation narratives, cooperating with local universities and journalists to debunk them.

9. Development of R&D in the NGO sector in Lebanon

The development of research and development (R&D) in Lebanese non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the government sector is a key element in effectively combating external disinformation. Lebanese NGOs should focus on developing or at least adopting advanced technologies for monitoring and analyzing informational content, as well as increasing public awareness about the threats associated with disinformation.

The creation of specialized research centers will allow for in-depth analysis of manipulation techniques used by external actors such as Russia and Iran. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) tools for the automatic detection of fake news, analysis of propaganda patterns, and monitoring of social media can significantly enhance the effectiveness of efforts to combat disinformation. Additionally, the development of training programs for local specialists, funded by international grants, can contribute to building sustainable competencies in the region.

Recommendations:

- The creation of research centers specializing in the analysis of disinformation and influence operations.
- International cooperation in the transfer of technology and knowledge for Lebanese NGOs.
- Promoting grants and training programs that support the development of competencies in the area of countering disinformation.

In summary, Poland's strategic engagement in Lebanon and the MENA region can contribute to strengthening regional stability, countering disinformation, and building a positive image of Poland as a reliable partner on the international stage.

Shaffafiya | shafafiyat.com

Information environment analysis: LEBANON



INFO OPS
POLSKA



infoops.pl | pulaski.pl

