

THE ARMENIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE LEBANESE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS OF 2022 DURING THE PRESIDENCY OF MICHEL AOUN (2016-2022) (PART II)¹

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After the legislative elections of 2018 some significant events shook Lebanon and its citizens.

Prime Minister Saad Hariri's government, which had taken almost eight months to be formed, on January 31, 2019, soon faced difficulties. Hariri's and the Lebanese Forces' (LF) relationships with the Free Patriotic Current (FPC) leader Gebran Bassil, the son-in-law of president Michel Aoun, gradually deteriorated,² especially after Bassil's visit to Shouf and a shooting incident at Qabr Shmoun. Until the consequences of the incident were settled the cabinet did not meet for a few months.

As early as September 2019, before the October 17, 2019 public uprising, it was clear that the LF and the FPC agreement had failed.³ Geagea declared what mattered for the president's son-in-law, MP and minister Gebran Bassil was the presidential seat, and he had done his best to monopolize Christian representation in the administration of Lebanon.⁴ Thus, the Meerab agreement between the LF and the Aounists had failed.

The economic crisis people feared happened. A slight tax to be placed on WhatsApp was the apex of popular resentment. This intended raise created an uproar and immediate spontaneous demonstrations almost all over Lebanon on October 17, 2019. This was called *sawra* in Arabic (an uprising or a revolution). Local TV stations gave live coverage to the events.

The demonstrators blamed all the political class of corruption, from top to the bottom; "*kellon yaani kellon*" (all, that is all) became a daily slogan. The demonstrators demanded the immediate resignation of the president, the PM and his cabinet and others. A few days later the LF ministers (which included

¹ Part I of this article was published in the *Haigazian Armenological Review*, 39:2019, pp. 647-84.

² Scarlett Haddad, "Sans enterrement officiel, la fin attendue du compromis présidentiel," *L'Orient-Le Jour*, February 14, 2020, p. 2.

³ The agreement known as the Méerab Agreement, was signed on June 2, 2015, whereby it was agreed to elect Michel Aoun as president of the Republic after a mutual agreement on common principles (See part I of this article, p. 65).

⁴ Yara Abi AKI, "Entre le CPL et le FL, rien ne va plus," *L'Orient-Le Jour*, September 7, 2019, p. 3.

Richard Kouyoumjian) resigned, to be followed a short while later by PM Saad Hariri. Hariri's resignation angered president Aoun and minister Bassil, who was thus out of the government.

L'Orient-Le Jour's Scarlet Haddad wrote on February 24, 2020 that Hariri was upset and irritated by what he called the tendency of the president and minister Bassil to step upon the prerogatives of the PM, which weakened his popularity in the Sunnite street.

Later in June 2020 Hariri called the presidency of Aoun a failure. Hariri also criticized Geagea, the LF leader, who had not supported Hariri for his return to the premiership after his resignation.

The demonstrations continued for several months, until the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in the first trimester of 2020.

Several attempts to appoint a new PM failed, as candidate after candidate was either prematurely "burnt out" or declined to be a candidate. Hariri's Mustaqbal (Future) parliamentary block, the LF, and some allies of theirs refused to take part in a new government. Eventually, a one-sided pro-Aounist cabinet composed of non-politicians headed by Hassan Diab was formed. The opponents of the new government termed it the Hizbollah government. The Armenian minister in the new cabinet was Mrs. Vartiné Kevorkian-Ohanian, nominated by the Tashnag Party. During the days following October 17, the banks in Lebanon were closed. The stability of the Lebanese currency, the pound, in relation to the US Dollar was shaken, and its devaluation started, at first in a slow manner. People rushed to the banks to take their dollar deposits, so banks set a limit to US dollar withdrawals until March 31, 2020. Especially after Diab's government's decision not to honor Eurobond payments, the Lebanese currency's devaluation increased with it eventually losing 90% of its former value by January 2022. The US dollar, which was valued at 1507 LL. for more than two decades, reached 27,500 LL by late April 2022. The Lebanese Central Bank's reserves declined further during 2020-2022 when it subsidized grain, petroleum, medications, some food products, etc. The President and the FPC, led by Bassil, blamed the Central Bank's director Riad Salamé for wrong policies within the bank and towards the economic crisis.

Yeghia Tashjian, in his article "Parliamentary Elections and the Future of the Armenian Community in Lebanon" wrote, Lebanon "is facing record-high unemployment, poverty, an increasing crime rate as well as severe shortages in water, food (mainly bread), gasoline, medicine and electricity. According to ESCWA, around 82% of people in Lebanon live in multidimensional poverty,

compared to 42% in 2019. The economic crisis is considered to be among the three worst in the world since the mid-1800s.”⁵

On August 4, 2020, there were two explosions at Beirut port, one right after the other. These explosions devastated large areas, mainly in East Beirut, where the port is located. There were 214 dead, 7500 wounded, 100 paralyzed, and 300,000 left homeless, as 70,000 homes were severely damaged.⁶ 110 schools were also damaged. The damages were evaluated at 39 billion US Dollars. The port explosion also caused demographic changes. Thousands left the area, some temporarily, others permanently. As most of the populace of East Beirut belonged to Christian denominations, this fact had an effect in the elections of 2022.

After the Beirut port explosions 8 MPs resigned from the parliament, most calling for early legislative elections. These included MPs from Beirut I constituency, Nadim Gemayel, and Paula Yacoubian, and from Metn, Samir Gemayel and Elias Hankash. Two MPs, including Michel Murr, an MP from Metn, had died from Covid-19. Contrary to the constitution, partial legislative elections were not held. President Aoun and PM Diab postponed the partial elections from September 10, 2020 to after January 1, 2021 due to the situation in the country and the Covid-19 pandemic.⁷ Later on, as there was no new government, the caretaker Ministry of Internal Affairs did not organize these partial elections, although the matter was discussed in the newspapers.⁸

After the port explosions, the president of France, Emmanuel Macron, visited Beirut and called for the formation of a new government composed of independent technocrats.

Diab wanted to call for premature legislative elections; the speaker of the parliament, Nabih Berri, rejected the idea and declared he would call the parliament for a vote of confidence in the government. As some ministers had resigned, Diab presented his resignation, and the MPs voted for Hariri in their consultations with the president, against the wishes of the president. All the government lists Hariri presented to president Aoun were rejected by the latter as, by the Taef Agreement, both the PM and the president should form the government. The two of them could not agree on a joint list of cabinet ministers.

⁵ Yeghia Tashjian, “Parliamentary Elections and the Future of the Armenian Community in Lebanon,” *The Armenian Weekly*, Boston, June 22, 2022.

⁶ *Aztag*, August 4, 2021.

⁷ *Ibid*, September 11, 2020.

⁸ Yara Abi AKI, “Les partielles, une échéance aux enjeux à la fois politiciens et éthiques. Les parties concernées font preuve de prudence en attendant d’y voir plus clair,” *L’Orient-Le Jour*, March 13-14, 2021, p. 2.

Finally, when the last list was rejected, Hariri had no choice but to resign in March 2021.⁹

Hariri and Geagea regretted that they had supported the candidacy of Aoun as president of the republic and made his election possible on October 31, 2016.¹⁰

In the media opposed to the president, attacks on him and his political current increased. *L'Orient-Le Jour* published in July an article "Under the Mandate of Aoun, the Descent of Christians to Hell,"¹¹ which explains itself.

Foreign pressure also increased. Particularly strong was the American stand. The Biden Administration put sanctions on Bassil, for "corruption", which was detrimental to his presidential aspirations.

The former PMs' group, composed of Fouad Siniora, Tammam Salam, Najib Miqati and Saad Hariri, recommended Miqati for the premiership. The parliament members nominated Miqati when president Aoun held obligatory consultations. Miqati formed his cabinet after several months in September 2021.¹² The Armenian minister in the cabinet was George Bouchikian, nominated by the Tashnag party.¹³ The opposition did not participate in Miqati's government as it had not in Diab's government.

Miqati's government had to prepare for the legislative elections. He declared that neither he nor any of the ministers of his cabinet would be candidates in the elections.¹⁴ However there was great doubt among politicians, particularly of the opposition, and some spiritual leaders, particularly Maronite Patriarch Cardinal Raii, as well as the public on the holding of elections. For long months this issue was debated in the media and by declarations. Doubt prevailed even when candidacies were being registered and there was the official announcement that the elections would be held.

The opposition formed by the LF, the Socialist Progressive Party of Jumblat, the Kataeb, the reformists and some independents had as their ideal to achieve the sovereignty of the state. In other words, they were against the hegemony of Hizbollah and its armed militia.

⁹ On March 22, 2021 Hariri met Aoun at Baabda, and when no agreement was reached, Hariri published a list of 18 ministers he had presented to the president one hundred days earlier. The list included Garabet Slikhanian as his proposed Minister of Industry and Displaced Persons (*L'Orient-Le Jour*, March 23, 2021, p. 2).

¹⁰ For Geagea's regrets see *L'Orient-Le Jour*, September 6, 2021 and for Hariri's regrets see *L'Orient-Le Jour*, June 12, 2020, p. 2, and *Zartouk*, June 10, 2020, p. 1.

¹¹ Mounir Rabih, "Sous le mandat Aoun, la descente aux enfers des Chrétiens," *L'Orient-Le Jour*, July 7, 2021, p. 3.

¹² *L'Orient-Le Jour*, September 11-12, 2021.

¹³ *Aztag*, September 11, 2021, p. 1.

¹⁴ All the newspapers of Beirut issued on March 14, 2022.

Within the Armenian denominations of Lebanon there were some changes. On March 12, 2020 Catholicos Aram I announced that he had entrusted another mission to the Prelate of the Armenian Orthodox Community, Archbishop Nareg Alyemezian, and appointed former Prelate, Bishop Shahé Panossian, as his Catholicos vicar to lead community affairs.¹⁵ The latter was elected as Prelate by the community's Representative Body on July 24, 2020.¹⁶

The Armenian Catholic Patriarch Krikor-Bedros XX passed away on May 25, 2021, and in September 2021 the Armenian Catholic Synod of Bishops elected in Rome his successor, Rafayel Bedros XXI. The President of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, Rev. Mgrditch Karageozian resigned in the Spring of 2022 and an interim locum tenens was appointed in the person of Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, president of Haigazian University.

The Tashnag Party of Lebanon held internal elections for a new central committee. *Aztag* announced on February 20, 2019 that the committee was elected and its representative was MP Hagop Pakradouny.¹⁷

The Tashnag Party had a split in California. The District Committee of the West Coast of USA and its organ *Asbarez* acted independently of the Party's Central Bureau (Puro). The latter expelled them on March 8, 2021 and later appointed a new District Committee.¹⁸ However, the membership was divided between the rival committees in California.

The Henschag Party also held elections, re-electing some executive body members and electing new ones as well. Former MP Sebouh Kalpakian was re-elected as chairman of the body.¹⁹

The Ramgavar Azadagan Party (RAP) split became more accentuated. Sevag Hagopian, editor of the party's organ *Zartonk*, was elected Lebanese District Committee chairperson. He refused the leadership of Mike Kharabian, elected in the Party's convention held in Yerevan, as the Party's Central Council chairperson. The latter had a committee appointed in Lebanon by Dr. Avedis Dakessian, the party's candidate in the 2018 legislative elections and former co-chair of the Lebanon District Committee, as chairman of a rival District Committee.

The District Committee led by Hagopian and the Ramgavar Azadagan Supreme Council and its organ *Baykar Weekly* became closer to each other. *Baykar Weekly* ran a series of favorable articles on former MP Hagop

¹⁵ The Beirut Armenian newspapers of March 13, 2020.

¹⁶ Ibid, July 25, 2020.

¹⁷ *Aztag*, February 20, 2019.

¹⁸ Ibid., March 9, 2021.

¹⁹ *Ararad*, July 6, 2020.

Kassarjian, who was close to Hagopian, and his party activities.²⁰ All the Ramgavar press of the world, *Azk* (in Armenia), *Abaka* (in Canada), *Arev* (in Egypt), *Nor Ashkhar* (in Greece), *Zartonk* (in Lebanon), *Sardarabad* (in Argentina) and *the Armenian Mirror Spectator* (in the USA) held an online meeting in February 2021 and reached a preliminary understanding on joint or united work.²¹ Only *Nor Or* weekly of California remained faithful to the Central Committee led by Kharabian. A call by party veteran leaders, mainly of the Supreme Council and former MP Kassarjian, for party unity was made and was immediately rejected by Kharabian²² and his colleagues.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the economic crisis along with the devaluation of the Lebanese pound affected the Armenian media. *Aztag* started to publish its newspaper with 4 pages instead of 10 (though some time after it started to publish with 8 pages), *Zartonk* for a time continued normally, then started to publish online only in mid-January 2021 and resumed occasional printed issues as of April 24, 2021. *Ararad* started to publish thrice a week, then went online, publishing printed issues on various occasions. On June 1, 2020 Radio Sevan, directed by Ara Siserian, ceased its broadcasts while maintaining an online presence.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused the deaths of many people in Lebanon. Some Armenians of importance died, such as Bishop Meghrig Parikian, director of the Bikfaya Cilician Seminary, writer and owner of a publishing house Aram Sepetjian, party leaders Karnig Mgrditchian, Dr. Sahag Keshishian, Dr. Vazken Jamgotchian, and the Armenian Orthodox Representative Body member Dikran Kalayjian, to name only a few.

After the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as in the aftermath of the port explosions, special committees were formed. The Tashnag Party had the Extraordinary Conditions Body entitled Gamk; AGBU also was very active as well as the Hunchag Party.

The Beirut Port explosion also had claimed the lives of 14 Armenians and left many wounded. Amongst the dead was Nizar (Nazar) Nadjarian, secretary of the Kataeb Party and candidate in the legislative elections of 2000. A good number of the damaged houses were inhabited by Armenians who lived in the Medawar, Rmeil and Ashrafié quarters of Beirut, as well as in Bourj Hamoud. Archbishop Panossian formed a "Recovery Body" in August of 2020. In it all the major Armenian parties and associations or unions were represented.²³ Dr.

²⁰ Baydzig Kalayjian, "Enger Hagop Kassarjiani Azkayin Gusagtsagan Oughin" (Comrade Hagop Kassarjian's National party path), *Baykar Weekly*, July 2021 issues.

²¹ *Baykar Weekly*, February 28, 2021, p. 1.

²² *Baykar Weekly*, December 13, 2021, p. 1; *Zartonk*, December 21, 2021, p. 1.

²³ *Aztag*, August 14, 2020, p. 1; *Ararad*, August 14, 2020, p. 1.

Vazken Jamgotchian (a short time before his death) was selected as representative of the RAP. As he was from the DC led by Dr. Avedis Dakessian, *Zartontk* did not publish any of the Body's communiques and ignored its presence.

According to the Armenian government's Diaspora Commissioner, more than one thousand Lebanese of Armenian origin had left Lebanon to settle in Armenia after the Beirut Port explosions.²⁴ Naturally this would affect the Armenian participation numbers in the forthcoming elections.

The Lebanese TV station AlJadeed had an interview with MP Hagop Pakradouny in February 2022. The interviewer mentioned that the role of the Armenians of Lebanon seemed diminished. The Tashnag Party representative replied that this was an impression; he said during the last four years 1100 Armenians had passed away, and it was true that some Armenians had emigrated but that was a general Lebanese issue. Like other citizens some had emigrated to the USA or Canada, but the greater part had left for Armenia. He said that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the acute economic crisis and the Beirut Port explosions, one could not forbid departures. He said the Tashnag Emergency Body had helped 6000 people during the pandemic and, through its "together" card, 8000 families.²⁵

Events in Armenia also had an impact on the Armenian community of Lebanon.

In April-May 2018 a "velvet revolution" led by Nigol Pashinian and his followers had forced the resignation of PM Serge Sarksian and the election by the parliament of Pashinian as PM.

In September 27, 2020, Azerbaijan started an aggression against Armenia and Artsakh (Karabagh) in what was later called the 44-day war.

Azerbaijan, aided by Turkey (which brought Syrian Dahesh and other mercenaries to fight for Azerbaijan and provided direct military assistance with ATS and a limited number of troops), Israel (which provided military aid-weapons), and Pakistan (pilots). Armenia lost the war and was forced to sign a humiliating agreement on November 9, 2020. The seven districts around Karabagh were ceded to Azerbaijan. Karabagh also lost Shushi, Hadrout and other areas which were part of the autonomous region of Karabagh.

The Tashnag Party Committee in Armenia along with former presidents Robert Kocharian and Serge Sarksian, as well as the president of the republic, Armen Sarksian and the Catholicos of All Armenians, Karekin II, demanded the resignation of PM Pashinian. Continuous demonstrations were held. However,

²⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, February 27-28, 2022, p. 4.

²⁵ *Aztag*, February 14, 2022.

Pashinian called for fresh elections and won. The demonstrations continued for a while but then lost their force and dwindled in size.

The Tashnag Party of Lebanon and the RAP led by Hagopian took an anti-Pashinian stand, while the Henschag Party supported Pashinian.

Despite the difference in the political scene of Armenia, the three Armenian political parties in Lebanon held occasional meetings, each time in a different party location. They discussed Armenian Genocide commemorations, the political situation in Lebanon and the Armenian community's attitude, etc.

Such were the meetings of March 25, 2019, February 26, 2020, and July 13, 2020 in which participated all three parties.²⁶ The Ramgavar Azadagans were represented by the Lebanese District Committee chairperson Hagopian and his colleagues. However, as of the meeting of October 29, 2021 and the subsequent February 2, 2022 and March 3, 2022 meetings, the rival RAP DC chairman Dr. Avedis Dakessian participated and not Hagopian.²⁷ So *Zartontk* did not publish the communiques of the meetings. On August 8, 2020 the DC led by Hagopian published a communique in *Zartontk* stating that the expelled dentist (i.e. Dr. Avedis Dakessian) was an appointed chairman of a committee appointed by the unrecognized Central Committee and that he and his group did not represent the RAP.²⁸

Each DC made separate visits to Catholicos Aram I, who received them both on separate days, and exhorted unity.²⁹ Each side held elections for a new DC. Thus the party was really split.

On April 17, 2021 the RALDC led by Hagopian, by then left out of the "three political parties" meetings, published along with Paula Yacoubian and Gen. Nareg Aprahamian a declaration announcing the creation of the "Rally of Free Thinking Lebanese Armenians (RAFTLA)." ³⁰ This was a public indication that the said RALDC would cooperate with the two individuals who had signed the communique. *Baykar Weekly* also published the same, indirectly indicating support for such cooperation.³¹

Such was the situation within the Armenian parties of Lebanon when they were faced with the legislative elections, particularly where the Armenians were allotted seats in the electoral lists of Beirut I, Northern Metn and Zahlé.

²⁶ *Ararad*, *Aztag* and *Zartontk* issues of March 26, 2019, February 27, 2020 and July 14, 2020.

²⁷ *Ararad* and *Aztag*, October 30, 2021, February 3, 2021 and March 4, 2022 issues.

²⁸ *Zartontk*, August 8, 2020, p. 1.

²⁹ For examples of such visits, see *Hask Monthly*, July 2019, p. 550; *Ibid.*, December 2020, p. 639; *Zartontk*, December 23, 2020; *Baykar Weekly*, July 21, 2019, p. 1; *Hask*, January-February 2022, p. 123; *Zartontk*, January 18, 2022.

³⁰ *Zartontk*, April 7, 2021.

³¹ *Baykar Weekly*, April 11, 2021, p. 11.

Aztag announced that by April 2022, Gamk had helped 9246 families with 4,391,850,000 LL.³² Its motto was “Always Together”. The AGBU as well as the Henschag party had helped injured families and provided shelters or renovated damaged houses.

A writer in *Aztag* blamed some whom he called “the ungrateful people” who were “falsely saying all this was a lie in order to secure votes for the elections.”³³

In *Aztag* another party commentator wrote “our public should make their choice above narrow personal interests or subjective causes. The fact that his name was not found in the “one million [aid] list” or that someone who was better off than him obtained or did not obtain an aid-box should never be the cause of his orientation, in the election.”³⁴

The parliament debated the electoral law and its various aspects. On October 19, 2021 the parliament decided by vote, to the dismay of Aounists, to have only 128 MPs and not to reserve 6 more seats for overseas Lebanese, and set March 27, 2022 as election day. However, president Aoun sent back the law to the parliament. The latter, on October 28, by 77 votes against 61 of the 128 MP’s the parliament then had, decided to keep the elections on March 27.

By amendments to the electoral law, the registration fee for candidacies increased from 8 million to 30 million LL and electoral expenses were permitted up to 750 million LL. The Supervisory Committee, whose membership included Dr. Arda Ekmekji and which had supervised the elections of 2018, would do so again in 2022.

The FPC presented a legal case against the parliament’s vote to have only 128 MPs and not to add 6 additional MPs from abroad from among the emigrés (*mughtaribin*). The Constitutional Court on December 21, 2021 was deadlocked at 6 to 4 votes and, as 7 votes were needed for a decision, automatically the electoral law as amended by the parliament was to be in effect.

The government of Miqati had not met since October 12, 2021, first due to a dispute over the port blast investigations and second due to bloody incidents in Ain ElRemmané. However, the government eventually bypassed the parliament’s non-obligatory decision, as it was the privilege of the government to decide, and it decided to hold the elections on Sunday, May 15, 2022, after the Christian and Muslim holidays were over, in a single day, all over Lebanon. On March 4, 2022 the government also postponed the municipal elections by one year.

³² *Aztag*, April 28, 2021.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 1, February 5, 2022

³⁴ *Ibid.*

The Lebanese abroad, who had to register by November 20, 2021 in order to vote in person in Lebanon or in the Lebanese embassies abroad, would vote on Friday, May 6 in countries where Friday was a resting day and on Sunday, May 8 where Sunday was a resting day. Government employees who would be working in the electoral centers would vote by May 12. The law prescribing proportional representation was thus maintained.

Information International, a research and consultancy firm based in Beirut, published a report³⁵ in late July 2019 showing the overall growth in Lebanon's population from 1932 until the end of 2018, as well as a breakdown of these figures by denomination or sect. This is given below as it is relevant to the elections, although it includes all citizens and not only the electors.

Change in Demographics, 1932-2018				
Sect	1932 (resident and nonresident)	2018 (resident and nonresident)	Increase in Number	Increase in Percent
Maronite	351,197	934,704	583,507	166.1%
Greek Orthodox	133,343	329,865	196,522	147.4%
Roman Catholic	76,336	213,193	136,857	179.3%
Armenian Orthodox	28,072	94,780	66,708	237.6%
Armenian Catholic	6434	22,344	15,910	247.3%
Syriac Orthodox	2820	21,447	16,068	660.5%
Syriac Catholic	3115	13,105	9990	320.7%
Protestant	4600	20,668	16,068	349.3%
Chaldean	744	3594	2850	383%
Christian Minorities	6463	33,275	26,812	414.8%
Total Christians	614,397	1,686,975	1,072,578	174.5%
Sunnite	194,305	1,721,853	1,527,548	786.2%
Shiite	166,545	1,743,718	1,576,633	946.7%
Druze	62,084	295,664	233,580	376.2%
Alawite	4830	55,677	50,847	1052.7%
Total Muslims	431,767	3,821,717	3,389,950	785.1%
Jewish	4003	4805	802	20%

³⁵ Ghada AlSharif, "New Data Sheds Light on Population Changes in Lebanon," *The Daily Star*, July 29, 2019, p. 2.

Grand Total	1,046,164	5,508,692	4,462,528	426.5%
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The number of Armenian voters in Lebanon, according to government statistics, was: 85,931 Orthodox and 19,373 Catholic.

The Lebanese Foreign Ministry declared on December 1, 2021 that 230,446 overseas Lebanese had registered themselves.³⁶ It was said that 2984 Armenians were among the registered, (i.e. 1.39% of the voters abroad).³⁷

Many of the Lebanese parties were active abroad and encouraged the registration of their sympathizers. Within the Armenian community Hagop Pakradouny and Avedis Gidanian met some Lebanese Armenian voters in Yerevan on November 20, 2021 at the Elite Plaza Business Center as the deadline for registration was over. There Pakradouny declared the Lebanese Armenian community of Lebanon was one of the most important centers in the Diaspora and would stay so. Then he requested those present to give their coordinates to the Repatriation Advisory Office in order to keep communications open.³⁸ Later on it was suggested the Tashnag Party had not encouraged registration at the Lebanese Embassy prior to the deadline in order to get voters from Yerevan to Beirut by special flights to vote in Lebanon.

The Minister of Internal Affairs signed the call for elections on December 27, the PM on the 28th and the president on the 29th.

The Minister of Internal Affairs announced that candidates could register as of January 10, 2022 and the final day for registration was March 15. Withdrawals were by April 5, and lists had to be formed by May 4; any candidate who had not found a place on a list would have their candidacies cancelled by the Ministry, as individual candidacies were not allowed by the electoral law.

Saad Hariri was facing financial difficulties. His Future TV Station was only re-transmitting old programs and had no news broadcasts, commentaries or propaganda, as of September 2019. Rumor had it that he had lost the support of Saudi Arabian authorities.³⁹ There was also the rivalry of his rich brother, Baha.

³⁶ *Aztag*, December 2, 2021, p. 2.

³⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, April 30, 2022. On February 14, 2022 *Aztag* wrote 2988 Armenians were registered and on April 20, 2022 *it* wrote 3200 Armenians were registered.

³⁸ *Aztag*, November 23, 2021.

³⁹ The Saudi Arabian daily *Okaz* in its May 5, 2022 issue slammed Saad Hariri for his political stand, for abandoning electoral districts to Hizbollah and to the FPC at the "expense of the country and his sect." The newspaper urged the Sunnites to boycott the parliamentary election. *Okaz* said Hariri had to bring Lebanon back to its Arab identity instead of "subordinating" it to Iran.

Soon after the electoral call was made, after informing the Mufti of the Republic, former PMs and some political allies, on January 25, 2022 Hariri officially announced that neither he nor his Mustaqbal (Future) Current would participate to the legislative elections of Lebanon. He said by his compromises he had saved Lebanon from a new civil war. He said the fundamental reasons for his withdrawal from politics were the Iranian role, the split within the official bodies and the prevalent corruption. Many of his followers respected his decision and did not present their candidacies. Some who did had to do so under another name than Mustaqbal.⁴⁰

Already before him, former PM Tammam Salam had announced he was not going to participate in the elections. He was later followed by Fouad Siniora, MP from Sidon.

President Aoun visited Mufti Deryan on January 29, urging Sunnite participation in the elections after Hariri's withdrawal. The Mufti, in repetitive calls, called for participation in the elections, as candidate or voter.

In Beirut I Greek Catholic Michel Pharaon, once an ally of Hariri, declared he would not present himself in the elections. In Zahlé Asem Araji, a Sunnite Hariri supporter, also announced he would not be a candidate in the elections.

The non-participation of the Hariri supporters in Beirut I and in Zahlé would have an effect, as Sunnite voters in general would abstain, and this would hurt Hariri allies, like the Henchags and others.

Candidates were slow to register as many thought the elections would not be held, as happened in 2013 and 2014. On March 1, 2022 only 22 candidates had registered themselves. However, though slowly, candidates came forth once it seemed the elections would be held.

The American ambassador Dorothy Shea had declared on February 7, 2022 that the elections would be held at the set time.⁴¹

On March 10, 2022 the council of ministers dropped the idea of a mega center, where electors from any district could vote in the area where they were living and not where they were registered.

PM Miqati declared on March 14 neither he nor any member of his government of technocrats would participate as candidates in the election.

1044 candidates were registered for all 15 electoral districts. Later 42 candidates withdrew their candidacies and 284 had to withdraw as they had not been able to be included on lists. In the 125 electoral districts 103 lists were formed with 718 candidates, which included 118 women.⁴²

⁴⁰ *Zartouk*, January 26, 2022, p. 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, February 8, 2022, p. 1.

⁴² *Aztag*, April 6, 2022, p. 2.

Among the Armenian candidates the first who had declared she would participate in the legislative elections was Paula Yacoubian, as early as September 11, 2021 in a TV interview on AlJadid's ElHadas program.⁴³

As early as November 2, 2021, in an article in *Aztag* Raffi Demirjian mentioned that the resigned MP (without naming Yacoubian) who in a lifetime of 44 years had not said even one word, suddenly spoke about the heroes of the 44 days war on Facebook, wanting to show her national identity to her supporters.⁴⁴ Yacoubian through her lawyer, Liwai Daher Ghandour, succeeded in obliging *Aztag* to publish in the same column a rebuttal on December 7, 2021 which cited Yacoubian's activity in favor of the Armenian Cause including ICN's Armenian news, a program on the Armenian Genocide on May 8, 1996 in which Hagop Pakradouny had participated along with others from the Armenian communities and parties, and that she was the daughter of Siragan Yacoubian a prince of Zeitun. It also cited her interview with Hagop Pakradouny on Future TV in 2010 and her demand in the parliament on April 24, 2019 for a moment of standing and silence. The lawyer stated that Yacoubian had invited Maral Nadjarian, who was freed from captivity in Azerbaijan by the demand of the Lebanese Foreign Ministry, but was threatened not to respond to Yacoubian's invitation; and Raffi Demirjian knows who had threatened her. Finally, on the matter of the Bourj Hamoud waste material storage center, the statement inquired who had allowed the daily 1400 tons of waste material to be stored there while the manager of the waste material storage center, Dany Khoury, was subjected to American sanctions for appropriating 140 million Dollars.⁴⁵

By the March 16, 2022 deadline the following Armenian Orthodox candidates had officially registered themselves at the Ministry of Interior.⁴⁶

Below are their names, in the order the ministry gave.

Beirut I Armenian Orthodox: Serouj Apikian, Ani Seferian, Shantal Avedikian, Hagop Terzian, Levon Telvzian, Aram Malian, Jihad Pakradouny, Maggy Nenejian, Alexander Matossian, Levon Semerjian, Diana Ohanian, Talar Margossian, George Joulfalakian, Paula Yacoubian, and Vartiné Ohanian.

Armenian Catholic: Brigitte Chelebian, Harout Shahinian, Serge Melkonian and Jean Talouzian.

Beirut II Evangelical: Haroutioun Geokgeozian.

⁴³ *Tsayn Pazmats*, Beirut, February 2022, Vol. II, # 13, p. 3.

⁴⁴ *Aztag*, October 23, 2021, p. 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, December 7, 2021, p. 3.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Internal Affairs of Lebanon, list of candidates placed on their website on March 16, 2022.

Dr. Ara Sanjian published on the internet an article on the Armenian candidates in the elections of Lebanon in Armenian.

Northern Metn Armenian Orthodox: Hagop Pakradouny, Hagop Dantsigian, Ricardo Melekian, Krikor Mardikian, Ara Bardakjian and Shant Sarafian.

Zahlé Armenian Orthodox: George Bouchikian, Vicken Parseghian, Pierre Demirjian, Boghos Kurdian, Nazareth Kaprielian, Raffi Madeian, Armen Isfahani, Lina Geokjian, Nareg Aprahamian, and Martin Demirjian.

According to an article in *Nouvelles d'Arménie* magazine published in France, in January 2022 the Tashnag Party "was ready to quit the alliance of Aoun-Hizbollah until president Assad [of Syria] summoned them to Damascus to request that they remain in this camp."⁴⁷

On January 26, 2022 Hagop Pakradouny announced in a Lebanon Files interview that there was no divorce with the FPC of Aoun and refuted the news circulating the day before of a divorce with this current. However, he said, the current electoral law obliged them to study the proportion of votes and for the elections all possibilities were open.⁴⁸

On January 29, 2022 the Tashnag Party Central Committee of Lebanon received a delegation of the Murr family, including the former minister Elias Murr and the Metn Municipalities confederation president Myrna Murr. Pakradouny declared they had had strong relations since 1957 with the Murr family and would examine all the possibilities with all political forces.⁴⁹

On February 2, in an interview with Lebanon 24, Pakradouny said nothing was yet firm and that they were studying all the numbers, averages and proportions.⁵⁰ On February 24 the TLDC representative MP Hagop Pakradouny visited president Aoun, and afterwards in a declaration he said the party was examining the givens and details to be able to fix its attitudes and choices.⁵¹ On March 19, Pakradouny visited Speaker Berri to discuss current matters and the forthcoming elections. They both stressed the necessity of holding the elections on the set date.⁵² It was only on March 24, at Zalka's Amarat Shalhoub Center, that the alliance "Together Strong" between the Tashnag Party and the Murr family was formally announced. The candidates of the joint list were Hagop Pakradouny, Michel Elias Murr, Antoine Khalil, Randa Abboud, Maroun Abou Diwan, Lea Abou Shaya, Maroun Rezkalla and Joyce Jammal. The Syrian Popular party candidate (Qawmi Sourî) was included in the list.⁵³

⁴⁷ Zaven Djanjikian, "Liban. Des législatives qui ne règlent rien," *Nouvelles d'Arménie*, Paris, July-August, 2022, p. 39.

⁴⁸ *Aztag*, January 27, 2021, p. 1.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, January 31, 2022, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, February 3, 2022, p. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, February 25, 2022, p. 1.

⁵² *Ibid.*, March 20, 2022, p. 1.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, March 25, 2022, p. 1.

The Tashnag Party decided to continue its alliance with the FPC in Beirut I and in Zahlé.⁵⁴

In Beirut I the registered candidates were the incumbent, Hagop Terzian, Alexander Matossian and former minister of sports Mrs. Vartiné Ohanian-Kevorkian. On March 31, *Aztag* announced that she had withdrawn her candidacy.⁵⁵

In Zahlé the alliance included the FPC and Hizbollah.⁵⁶ The Tashnag candidate was Minister of Industry George Bouchikian, who had failed to secure a seat in the previous election. He was the only minister of Miqati's cabinet to participate in the election, despite the understanding that ministers would not be candidates in the election.

Bouchikian, born in 1965, graduated in industrial artisanship from a Canadian Institute. He was the president of the Council of Reforms in Anjar, a member of the syndicate that imported medical items and a member of the Lebanese-Swiss Traders Council. He had established many business firms. He is married and has two sons.⁵⁷

During the electoral campaign verbal criticism of Paula Yacoubian was made, without naming her, by Hagop Pakradouny in an NBN TV interview in relation to waste storage. He said she must not have visited Bourj Hamoud for a long time, hardly knowing where it was located, and on Sundays going and taking pictures of the streets. They naturally would be full of waste materials, as they are gathered on Mondays. As for the waste material center, the picture she had was that of four years ago. Let her go to the Jdeidé waste material center and compare them, and if she accused him of stealing, let her go and present her evidence in court.⁵⁸

Yacoubian's activities in the Dafa benevolent organization and her public commemoration of the Armenian Genocide on April 23, 2022 in the presence of former MP Hagop Kassarian and Nareg Aprahamian were also reported in the Ramgavar Azadagan *Baykar Weekly*⁵⁹ by Baydzig Kalayjian, who was on her team of collaborators and had announced her candidacy in its March 20, 2022 issue⁶⁰ after the RALDC led by Hagopian had announced in *Zartonk* on March

⁵⁴ Ibid., April 7, 2022, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Ibid., March 31, 2022, p. 1.

⁵⁶ Hasan Nasralla, leader of Hizbollah, declared that in all districts, including Beirut I and Northern Metn, Hizbollah would vote for their allies, other than in Zahlé, where they were in one list (*Aztag*, March 17, 2022, p. 2).

⁵⁷ *Aztag*, September 11, 2022, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid., April 28, 2022, p. 3.

⁵⁹ *Baykar Weekly*, May 1, 2022, p. 6.

⁶⁰ Ibid., March 20, 2022.

12 that Yacoubian represented the RA Party.⁶¹ On April 3 Yacoubian visited the Tekeyan Center with the other candidates on her list, which she had declared earlier on March 27.⁶² Later on *Zartouk* published the picture of her list and declared once again the Party's support for her.⁶³

Yacoubian held a public meeting on April 18 at Fiat.

The Henschag Party was the only Armenian party to suffer from Hariri's withdrawal from the political scene as they had maintained close relations with him. In Beirut I, the Sunnites of the Qarantina area had given Sebouh Kalpakian more than 300 preferential votes in the 2018 elections. Kalpakian, as chairman of the Henschag Party Executive Body, in an interview in the party organ *Ararad* on January 22, 2022 declared that it was not convenient for the Armenian political parties to be on the same list due to the electoral law, that some confused Armenian political parties' unity with domination. Unity was just a motto as they had experienced it in the 2018 elections. As to the Henschag party, they were to decide their alliance in February⁶⁴ after a visit to Catholicos Aram I on January 24.⁶⁵ On February 10, 2022 the Henschag Party Executive body, accompanied by Beirut Municipal Council member Aram Malian, met the LF leader Samir Geagea in the presence of former minister Richard Kouyoumjian,⁶⁶ and on February 24 *Ararad* announced at a gathering in Homenmen's Beirut club that the party candidate would be Aram Malian, the chairman of the Armenian Educational Benevolent Union.⁶⁷ On March 15, 2022 the Henschag Executive Body and Aram Malian met Geagea again and announced their alliance in Beirut I.⁶⁸

The RAP did not have candidates of its own. Dr. Avedis Dakessian, the party candidate in 2018 who had split from the Lebanon District Committee led by Sevag Hagopian, declared in one of the three party meetings that he would not be a candidate. Hagopian's District Committee and *Zartouk* supported the candidacies of Paula Yacoubian in Beirut I and Dr. Ara Bardakjian in Northern Metn and Gen. Nareg Aparahamian in Zahlé.⁶⁹

⁶¹ *Zartouk*, March 12, 2022, p. 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*, April 5, 2022, pp. 1-2.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, April 26, 2022, p. 5.

⁶⁴ *Ararad*, January 22, 2022, p. 2.

⁶⁵ *Hask*, January-February 2022, p. 125; *Ararad*, January 25, 2022, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Voice of All Lebanon (Sawt Lubnan ElKell) radio broadcast of February 10, 2022, 9:15 am.

⁶⁷ *Ararad*, February 24, 2022, p. 1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, March 17, 2022, p. 1.

⁶⁹ *Zartouk* at first supported Yacoubian and soon after Aparahamian and as of April 26, Bardakjian.

Dr. Avedis Dakessian's RA District Committee of Lebanon published a communique in the Tashnag organ *Aztag* on April 5, 2022 advising people to vote for the Armenian Party candidates (i.e. Henchag Party candidate Malian in Beirut I, Tashnag candidates in Northern Metn and in Zahlé, Hagop Pakradouny and George Bouchikian) without naming them.⁷⁰ *Zartouk* published a declaration signed by Hagopian as chairman of the RA Lebanon District Committee, as well as the secretary, Jackie Dervishian, saying that the declaration did not belong to the party. Furthermore, any party publishing the dissenters' declaration encouraged the split of a national party, so they would adopt a similar attitude towards "the given party".⁷¹

Although it was not declared publicly, the AGBU supported the candidacies of the incumbent Armenian Catholic MP Gen. Jean Talouzian and his list in Beirut I, in Metn Michel Murr's list with Murr as the preferred candidate and on whose list also was H. Pakradouny, and in Zahlé George Bouchikian.

Talouzian was not only among the guests⁷² at the official opening of AGBU's Berge and Vera Setrakian Hall at the Zabel Movsessian Center on March 17, 2022 but one of the speakers too. The next day Talouzian was present at the AGBU banquet for its Central Council Chairman Berge Setrakian.⁷³ Talouzian announced there his intended contribution for the improvement of the Eghramjian Center of AGBU. He was also present when AGBU-AYA leadership visited the Genocide Memorial at the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate on April 23, 2022.

Talouzian's list was announced on March 29, 2022. He allied with Nadim Gemayel of the Kataeb Party. His list included Ani Seferian, daughter of dissident Henchag former leader, and twice parliamentary election candidate Mihran Seferian.

There was a lot of talk from the Northern Metn district on the possible participation of Laury Haytayan, the wife of TV/radio talk show commentator Zaven Kouyoumjian, to be presented by the *Taqaddom* (progress) Party of the *Taghyiryyun* (change makers) as she was their coordinator.

There were rumors that the TLDC was upset by her possible candidacy. She was well known in native Lebanese circles, as she was an expert on the sea border dispute between Israel and Lebanon and appeared a lot on local TV speaking in perfect Arabic. In an Al-Jadid TV interview in February 2022 Hagop Pakradouny said about her possible candidacy

⁷⁰ *Aztag*, April 8, 2022, p. 2.

⁷¹ *Zartouk*, April 12, 2022, p. 1.

⁷² Among the guests was also former RAP MP Hagop Kassarian.

⁷³ *Khosnag Monthly*, January-March 2022, pp. 3-6.

that she was not an unknown personality for the Tashnags and had the right to present her candidacy and participate in the elections.⁷⁴

However, Haytayan did not register as a candidate. On March 8, 2022 Lebanon Files announced she would not present herself as a candidate. Rumors said Civil Society and the Kataeb Party had not reached an agreement. However, she was present at a Kataeb rally in the front row on March 12. There were unconfirmed rumors of threats as well.

Among the Armenian Orthodox Candidates Jihad Pakradouny was the son of former Kataeb Party leader and former minister Karim Pakradouny. Except for his surname he had no connection with the Armenian community. On March 19, 2022 Geagea received him in the presence of Ghassan Hasbani, and he was included in the LF list as an Armenian Orthodox candidate, despite the arguments of the Henschag Party. The latter considered him to be sponsored by the Egyptian Embassy.⁷⁵

The LF list was officially proclaimed on April 18, 2022 with both Aram Malian and Jihad Pakradouny present for the official proclamation and photograph.⁷⁶

Dr. Ara Bardakjian, who presented himself on the “Metn AlHurriya” list of the LF, visited the Tekeyan Center on April 25 and was accompanied by Hani Saliba of the same list. Bardakjian was received by the vice-chairman of the RA Lebanese District Committee, former MP Hagop Kassarian and others. Dr. Bardakjian presented his program. The RALDC decided to support his candidacy.⁷⁷

Retired General Nareg Aprahamian, in 1990 commander of the Lebanese army Special Forces (*Maghawir*) and formerly a Tashnag, who was close to the RALDC’s Hagopian and Yacoubian, with whom he had created the RAFTLA, presented himself as a candidate in Zahlé on Miriam Skaff’s list.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ *Aztag*, February 14, 2022.

⁷⁵ Telephone conversation with Alexan Keoshgerian, Henschag Party Central Council Member, on July 11, 2022.

⁷⁶ *Ararad*, April 20, 2022, p. 1.

⁷⁷ *Zartouk*, April 26, 2022, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Telephone conversation with Aprahamian, April 2, 2022.

On May 9, the RA party Zahlé Azad Club, chaired by Krikor Megerian, organized its spring banquet. Among those present were those responsible at AGBU-AYA and Armenian priests from the Orthodox and Catholic communities. The banquet was in honor of Gen. Aprahamian and Mrs. Skaff. Both candidates and Dr. Bardakjian spoke to the attendees.⁷⁹

Zartonk propagandized for Yacoubian, Bardakjian and Aprahamian. *Baykar Weekly* reiterated this support.⁸⁰

Among the Evangelical candidates in Beirut II there was an Armenian candidate, retired Gen. Haroutioun Geokgeozian, born in 1960. He had attended Shamlian-Tatigian secondary school and graduated from the Armenian Evangelical United College; in 1982 he was commissioned as an army officer upon his graduation from the Lebanese Armed Forces Military Academy. He later continued his studies in the USA and graduated from the US Army Armor School, School of Fort Knox. He had also attended universities in the UK, Germany and the USA. Since October 17, 2019 he had been active in many groups of the “*Sawra*”, giving support and advice to the grassroots activists in the uprising and was active in social and cultural rights in the framework of human rights.⁸¹

He presented himself in the “Hayda Beirut” list, led by Muhammad Nabil Osman Badr. The list included Imad ElHout and was launched on April 8, 2022 in a meeting at Movenpick Hotel.⁸²

On April 5, 2022 the Ministry of Interior announced the electoral lists, after the voluntary and involuntary withdrawals of candidates. Below are the lists in the order the Ministry published.⁸³

Beirut I

Beirut Madinati (Beirut is my city) List

Armenian Orthodox: Aram Malian and Jihad Pakradouny, Minorities: Elie Shorbaji, Greek Orthodox: Ghassan Hasbani, Greek Catholic: Fadi Nahar, Maronite: George Shahwan.

Qadirin (We are able to) List

⁷⁹ *Zartonk*, May 10, 2022, p. 1.

⁸⁰ *Baykar Weekly*, April 24, 2022, p. 1; *Zartonk*, April 28, 2022, p. 1.

⁸¹ Interview with Geokgeozian, April 5, 2022.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Lebanon Elections, Ministry of Internal Affairs on the internet.

Minorities: Roy Ibrahim, Greek Orthodox: Mary Jreydini, Greek Catholic: Charbel Nahhas, Maronite: Moussa Khoury.

Kunna wa Rah Nebqa Beirut (We were and will stay Beirut) List

Armenian Orthodox: Hagop Terzian, Alexander Matossian, George Juvelekian, Armenian Catholic: Serge Melkonian, Maronite: Shamoun Sleiman, Greek Orthodox: Carla Boutros, Greek Catholic: Nicola Sahnaoui, Maronite: Elie Assouad.

Lubnan ALSiyada (Lebanon the sovereign) List

Armenian Orthodox: Ani Seferian, Levon Semerjian, Talar Margossian, Armenian Catholic: Jean Talouzian, Greek Orthodox: Asma Andraos, Greek Catholic: Najib Hlou, Maronite: Nadim Gemayel.

LiWatani (For my fatherland) List

Armenian Orthodox: Maggy Nenejian, Diana Ohanian, Paula Yacoubian, Armenian Catholic: Brigitte Chelebian, Minorities: Cynthia Zarazir, Greek Orthodox: Ziad Absi, Greek Catholic: Charles Fakhoury, Maronite: Ziad Shaker.

In Beirut II the Evangelical candidates in various lists were: Amr Dabaghi, George Haddad, Maha ElRassy, Huda AlHasan, Marie AlJalkh, Dallal Richani, Haroutioun Geokgeozian and Edgar Traboulsi.

Northern Metn

Kunna Wa Nabqa LilMetn (We were and will stay for Metn) List

Armenian Orthodox: Ricardo Melkonian, Greek Orthodox: Elias Abou Saab, Greek Catholic: Edgar Maalouf, Maronite: Nasri Lala and Ibrahim Kanaan.

Metn EITaghyir (Metn the change) List

Armenian Orthodox: Krikor Mardikian, Greek Orthodox: Samia Saliba, Greek Catholic: Rima Njeim, Maronite: Semaan BouFadel, Elias Hankash and Sami Gemayel.

Metn ElHurriye (Metn the freedom) List

Armenian Orthodox: Ara Bardakjian, Greek Orthodox: Hani Saliba, Greek Catholic: Melhem Riachi, Maronite: Farid Zeinoun, Razi ElHajj and Salim ElJalkh, Romanos Raad, and Paul Nakouzi.

Metniyoun Siyadiyoun (Sovereign Metnites) List

Armenian Orthodox: Shant Sarafian, Greek Orthodox: Shadi Beshara, Greek Catholic: Alfred Riachi, Maronite: Wael Sakr.

Maan ElAqwa (Together the strongest) List

Armenian Orthodox: Hagop Pakradouny, Greek Orthodox: Jossi Jawad and Michel Murr, Greek Catholic: Lea Abou Shaya, Maronite: Maroun Rezkallah, Maroun Abou Diwan, Antoine Khalil and Paul Abboud.

Nahwa Dawla (Towards statehood) List

Greek Orthodox: Shady Maalouf, Greek Catholic: Yousef Bou Rjeily, Maronite: Firin ElAmil and Myriam Jabr.

Zahlé

Taghyir (Change) List

Armenian Orthodox: Lina Geokjian, Greek Catholic: Khalil Younes, Sunnite: Rida ElMays, Shiite: Husein Khatib, Maronite: Tannous Khoury.

Aqwa Wa Faal (Stronger and effective) List

Greek Orthodox: Omar Maalouf, Greek Catholic: Fouad Khoury, Sunnite: Samar Adham, Shiite: Ali Mahdi, Maronite: Imad Shahwan.

AlKutla AlSha'biyya (Popular bloc) List

Armenian Orthodox: Nareg Aprahamian, Greek Orthodox: Sami Nabhan, Greek Catholic: Myriam Skaff, Sunnite: Muhammad Hammoud, Shiite: Fawzat Dalloul and Maronite: Maroun Makhoul.

Zahlé Risala (Zahlé the message) List

Armenian Orthodox: George Bouchikian, Greek Orthodox: Antoine Ghaziyeh, Greek Catholic: Rabih Assi, Sunnite: Husein Solh, Shiite: Rami Abou Hamdan and Maronite: Selim Aoun.

Zahlé Siyada (Zahlé sovereign) List

Armenian Orthodox: Pierre Demirjian, Greek Orthodox: Elias Estphan, Greek Catholic: Selim Kassouf, Sunnite: Bilal Hashimi, Shiite: Dima Abou Diya, and Maronite: Michel Tannoury.

Zahlé Tantaqid (Zahlé revolts) List

Armenian Orthodox: Armen Isfahani, Greek Orthodox: Eid Azar, Greek Catholic: Jihad ElTurk, Sunnite: Hamze Mita, Shiite: Omar ElSaboury.

Siyadiyoun Mustaqillun (Sovereign and independent) List

Armenian Orthodox: Martin Demirjian, Greek Orthodox: Yousef Qaraouni, Greek Catholic: Michel Daher, Sunnite: Omar Halablab, Shiite: Firas Abou Hamdan, and Maronite: Samir Sader.

Qadirun Nuwajih (Able to confront) List

Greek Catholic: Petra Samaha, Rami Abou Eid, Sunnite: Rina ElMays and Maronite: Ghassan Hamamis.

There was an 8th list in Zahlé led by Fouad Khoury which did not include an Armenian candidate.

Once the lists were released by the Ministry of Interior, the TPLCC published in *Aztag* on April 7, the names of the party candidates and the others on the lists in which they were participating, without biographies or pictures.⁸⁴

On April 17, 2022 in his Easter sermon in the Antelias Cathedral, Catholicos Aram I said, "It is true that all the MPs in the Lebanese parliament under the Lebanese flag represent Lebanon, but they enter there in the name of

⁸⁴ *Aztag*, April 7, 2022.

community... therefore it is not acceptable for us that circumstantial persons represent the Armenian community in the parliament."⁸⁵

In the public electoral meeting on April 20 Hagop Pakradouny reminded the audience of Aram I's opinion.⁸⁶ So did the Henschag in a meeting on May 10.⁸⁷

On April 18, *Zartouk* criticized the catholicos in a gossip column for discriminating between party and non-party members of the community, saying it was mentioned on a holiday of peace and tolerance.⁸⁸

The TPLCC organized several meetings with thousands attending in the weeks and days prior to the elections.

In a public meeting held on April 20, in front of the Arin Center in Bourj Hamoud, Hagop Pakradouny declared that the party had presented five candidates in Beirut I, Northern Metn and Zahlé. These were Terzian, Matossian, Momjian, Pakradouny and Bouchikian, all of whom took turns to speak to the audience. Pakradouny declared the party hoped to win 4 seats, two in Beirut, one in each of Northern Metn and Zahlé.⁸⁹

In a May 8 meeting held by the Tashnag Aghpalian committee at the Armenian College [Djemaran] in Mezher, a speaker, Hovig Bertizlian, said the sector of Armenians who had remained far from the Tashnag Party, had always been insecure, persecuted, humiliated and in the end assimilated, while the people who had the support of the Tashnags were self-confident, strong and secure.⁹⁰

Hagop Pakradouny said millions were being spent to reach a parliamentary seat and to uproot the people from their roots.⁹¹

In another meeting on May 9, Pakradouny declared the followers of the Tashnag Party refused electoral bribes of 100 or 200 dollars. There were Armenian name bearing persons who had allied with the LF, forgetting that the latter had bombarded Bourj Hamoud during the civil war; others had allied with the Kataeb, forgetting that the Kataeb had brought down Tashnags from their homes in Antelias, Zalka and Ashrafié and killed them in the civil war. He added he had received telephone calls that some candidates were paying \$300 to the '*mandub's*' (electoral delegates) and added that there could be 15 or 20 who agree to sell their souls, but on election day these will come to us. He

⁸⁵ All the Armenian dailies of Beirut. *Zartouk* published it on April 19, 2022, p. 2. Aram I reiterated his views with Leylavan representatives (*Aztag*, May 14, 2022, p. 4).

⁸⁶ *Aztag*, May 14, 2022, p. 7.

⁸⁷ *Ararad*, May 13, 2022, p. 1.

⁸⁸ *Zartouk*, April 21, 2022, p. 2.

⁸⁹ *Aztag*, April 21, 2022, pp. 2, 5.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, May 11, 2022.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

concluded their aim was to keep the country secure, united, strong and sovereign and to execute the constitution. We did not steal or take the state's money or sell the country, or kill, or destroy, or loot or kidnap."⁹²

On May 10, 2022 at 8pm. in the Anjar Tashnag party club an electoral meeting took place. Local party leaders, candidate Bouchikian and the chaplain of the Bekaa Armenians Archimandrite, Anania Koujanian member of the congregation of the Catholicosate of Cilicia, spoke to the audience.⁹³

Bouchikian said he would help maintain the Armenianness of Anjar and care for all its needs. The Archimandrite said, "the Tashnag Party was neither mistaken nor wrong when it decided upon Bouchikian's candidacy. This means he is the best, the only one and irreplaceable". Then he urged all to vote for Bouchikian. He concluded saying "what united people today was the Tashnag Party and the blood that spurts from the heart of every Armenian with a steel grasp. It is our will today to secure victory."⁹⁴

The last public meeting was held on May 13 at the Polycarpus station in Bourj Hamoud. Hagop Pakradouny saluted the RAP (i.e. the RALDC led by Dr. Avedis Dakessian) for supporting Armenian party candidates and the Henchag Party, which, with a positive spirit of competition, was participating in the elections with a candidate of its own.⁹⁵

Pakradouny said an attempt was being made to blame the party for everything and asked if they were to blame when the party stressed the need for the Lebanese Armenians to retain their identity, to have our own schools open, to keep the bells of the Armenian churches ringing, to see that our children dance Armenian folk dances and maintain our sports unions and to help the people avoid all sorts of maladies.⁹⁶

The Henchag Party held an electoral meeting on May 10, near the Surp Kevork church in Nor Hadjin (Nahr area). The presence of former minister Richard Kouyoumjian representing the LF, the RALDC led by Dr. Avedis Dakessian, and the representative of the Ararad Sports Union was noted.⁹⁷

Those present heard the recorded sermon of Catholicos Aram I, in which he had appealed to people to assist those candidates who had an active role in the Armenian community of Lebanon. Aram Malian, Richard Kouyoumjian and Sebouh Kalpakian spoke. The latter said there were many Armenian candidates

⁹² Ibid., May 10, 2022, p. 2.

⁹³ Ibid., May 12, 2022, p. 2.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

⁹⁵ Ibid., May 14, 2022, p. 1.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

⁹⁷ *Ararad*, May 13, 2022, p. 1.

in Beirut I, but where were they when people needed them? He added we would find their offices closed the day after the elections.⁹⁸

The party organ *Ararad* entitled its May 13 issue "With National Conscientiousness toward Victory".⁹⁹

Some of the remarks of Hagop Pakradouny at a meeting in Fanar on May 5 were criticized in a communique by the RALDC in *Zartok*, without naming him but calling him the "forever candidate". The communique reported he had said "The Ramgavar Party does not know who its candidate is," while in fact he knew who the candidates the RAP supported were, people whom he was libeling and who were three in number.¹⁰⁰ The communique was also published in *Baykar Weekly*.¹⁰¹

The RAFTLA also published a communique on the Fanar meeting, attacking Pakradouny for libel without naming him and without naming General Aprahamian.¹⁰²

The Tashnag Party brought Lebanese Armenian voters from Armenia on special charter flights on May 11, 2022.¹⁰³ Unverified reports put the number at 2600 people. They were asked to register at the Tashnag Party headquarters. If they did not, they were not issued return tickets.

Just two days before the elections Catholicos Aram I received the visit of the Russian Ambassador, Alexander Roudakov. At the end of the meeting, in the presence of the Catholicos, Hagop Pakradouny had a brief meeting with the ambassador, discussing the situation of Lebanon and matters related to the elections of May 15.¹⁰⁴

Two days before the elections, the Prelate of the Armenian Orthodox community, Archbishop Shahe Panossian, in an appeal, mentioned Catholicos Aram I's advice that circumstantial persons should not represent the Armenian community and to vote for those who had been active within the community, those who were "known and trustworthy".¹⁰⁵ *Zartok* criticized the prelate

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ *Zartok*, May 5, 2022, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ *Baykar Weekly*, May 8, 2022, p. 7.

¹⁰² *Zartok*, May 5, 2022. The communique said Hagop Pakradouny had libeled one of its worthy members for failure in the Lebanese army and in Karabagh. The communique said they would have abstained from referring to the "Nonsense" had the author not been the former principal of Fanar's Souren Khanamirian school, which he had downgraded, eventually causing the school's closure.

¹⁰³ *Zartok* criticized the charter flights. See May 17, 2022, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ *Aztag*, May 14, 2022, p. 2; *Hask*, May-June 2022, p. 393.

¹⁰⁵ *Aztag*, May 13, 2022, p. 2.

without naming him, calling him “an occasional prelate,” for his declaration, in its gossip column.¹⁰⁶

The elections took place on the planned days, first in the Lebanese embassies or other prearranged localities abroad. The participation rate of voters for those who had registered themselves were:¹⁰⁷

Abou Dhabi 77%

Dubai 71.41%

Germany 54%

France 70%

African continent 48.45%

Australia 54.3%

UK and Iceland 75%

Cyprus 79%

The ballot boxes were sent to and deposited in the vaults of the Central Bank in Beirut, to be counted with the votes to be cast in Lebanon.

The elections were held in general in a calm atmosphere on Sunday, May 15.

The participation rate in Beirut I was 33.4% (in 2018 it was 33.19%), in Metn 48.6% (in 2018 it was 51.38%) and in Zahlé 49.3% (in 2018 it was 53.52%).¹⁰⁸ In Beirut I 1915, in Metn 2704 and in Zahlé 2686 votes were annulled. The blank votes were: in Beirut I 395, in Metn 573, and 831 in Zahle.

THE BEIRUT I RESULTS WERE:¹⁰⁹

Lubnan AlSiyada List, 11,271 votes. The preferential votes for the participants were:

Nadim Gemayel (Maronite) 4425

Asma Andraos (Greek Orthodox) 917

Najim Elia (Greek Catholic) 391

Antoine Syriani (Minorities) 558

Talar Margossian (Armenian Orthodox) 277

Levon Semerjian (Armenian Orthodox) 208

Jean Talouzian (Armenian Catholic) 4043

Kunna WaRah Neb'a Beirut List, 10,950 votes.

¹⁰⁶ Zartouk, May 13, 2022, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ Aztag, May 9, 2022.

¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Internal Affairs, Elections site; Jean Nakhoul, 2022...*AIDemocratiyeh AlMuajale: Dirasa fi Intikhabat Lubnan 2022 WaArkamouha WaZouroufouha AlSiyasia (2022...Postponed Democracy: A Study of the Lebanese Elections of 2022, Its Numbers, and Political Conditions)*, Beirut, 2022, pp. 186-87.

¹⁰⁹ elections.gov.lb site on the internet.

Nicola Sahnaoui (Greek Catholic) 4761
Alexander Matossian (Armenian Orthodox) 2216
Hagop Terzian (Armenian Orthodox) 2647
George Juvelekian (Armenian Orthodox) 286
Serge Melkonian (Armenian Catholic) 95
Carla Boutros (Greek Orthodox) 137
Elie Assouad (Maronite) 303
Shamoun Shamoun (Minorities) 230

Beirut Nahna Laha List, 13,220 votes

Ghassan Hasbani (Greek Orthodox) 7080
Jihad Pakradouny (Armenian Orthodox) 2186
George Shahwan (Maronite) 1681
Fadi Nahhas (Greek Catholic) 200
Elie Shorbaji (Minorities) 727
Aram Malian (Armenian Orthodox) 1068

Liwatani List, 8261 votes.

Paula Yacoubian (Armenian Orthodox) 3524
Ziad Absi (Greek Catholic) 514
Ziad Shaker (Maronite) 3142
Cynthia Zarazir (Minorities) 486
Maggie Nenejian (Armenian Orthodox) 80
Diana Ohanian (Armenian Orthodox) 63
Charles Fakhoury (Greek Catholic) 64
Brigitte Chelebian (Armenian Catholic) 129

Beirut Madinati List, 1089 votes

Jack Joundo (Minorities) 226
Pierre Gemayel (Maronite) 160
Tarek Ammar (Greek Orthodox) 158
Nada Sahnaoui (Greek Catholic) 362
Levon Telvizian (Armenian Orthodox) 125

The list Beirut Qadirin led by Charbel Nahhas, which did not include any Armenians, got 1810 votes.

Those elected in Beirut I were: Ghassan Hasbani, Nicolas Sahnaoui, Nadim Gemayel, Jean Talouziian, Paula Yacoubian.

In Beirut II the elected Evangelical candidate was the National Free Current candidate, Edgar Traboulsi, with 2053 preferential votes on the list supported

by Hizbollah-Amal, which obtained 36,962 votes. Harout Geokgeozian received 206 preferential votes and the list on which he was received 20,439 votes.¹¹⁰

THE NORTHERN METN RESULTS WERE:¹¹¹

Metn AlHurriya List, 25,305 votes

Melhem Riachi (Greek Catholic) 15,254

Razi ElHajj (Maronite) 3459

Rashid Abi Jaoudé (Maronite) 279

Hani Saliba (Greek Orthodox) 1404

Selim ElJalkh (Maronite) 112

Farid Zeinoun (Maronite) 107

Ara Bardakjian (Armenian Orthodox) 237

Maan Aqwa List, 15,997 votes

Michel Murr (Greek Orthodox) 8607

Hagop Pakradouny (Armenian Orthodox) 4973

Antoine Khalil (Maronite) 1370

Randa Abboud (Maronite) 198

Maroun Rizkallah (Maronite) 42

Joyce Jammal (Greek Orthodox) 40

Lea Abou Shaya (Greek Catholic) 136

Metn ElTaghyir List, 22,523 votes

Sami Gemayel (Maronite) 10,466

Elias Hankash (Maronite) 6148

Maan Sakr (Maronite) 636

Semaan Abou Fadel (Maronite) 715

Samir Saliba (Greek Orthodox) 3219

Krikor Mardikian (Armenian Orthodox) 211

Qunna WaSanabka LilMetn List, 20,533 votes

Elias Bou Saab (Greek Orthodox) 4050

Ibrahim Kanaan (Maronite) 5513

Edgar Maalouf (Greek Catholic) 10,061

Nasri Lahoud (Maronite) 414

Ricardo Malakian (Armenian Orthodox) 80

The *Nahwa Dawla* (Towards statehood) list had no Armenian candidate on it and got 11,555 votes. Jad Ghosn obtained 8526 votes. The list *Metniyun Siyadiyun* (Sovereign Metnis) obtained 667 votes. Shant Sarafian, who was on their list, got 29 votes.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.; Nakhoul, pp. 66-67.

¹¹¹ Ibid.; Nakhoul, pp. 84-86.

Those elected in Northern Metn were: Melhem Riachi, Sami Gemayel, Michel Murr, Elias Hankash, Ibrahim Kanaan, Hagop Pakradouny, Elias Abou Saab, and Razi ElHajj.

THE ZAHLE RESULTS WERE:¹¹²

Siyadiyun Mustaqillun List, 15,477 votes

Michel Daher (Greek Catholic) 9229

Omar Halablab (Sunnite) 3126

Samir Sader (Maronite) 1300

Samir Qar'ouni (Greek Orthodox) 297

Firas Abou Hamdan (Shiite) 585

Martin Demirjian (Armenian Orthodox) 104

Zahlé Siyadé List, 25,646 votes

George Okab (Greek Catholic) 11,921

Elias Estephan (Greek Orthodox) 6758

Bilal AlHashimi (Sunnite) 3865

Michel Tannouri (Maronite) 1794

Sabin ElKassouf (Greek Catholic) 213

Dima Abou Diya (Shiite) 225

Pierre Demirjian (Armenian Orthodox) 264

Zahlé Risala List, 27,872 votes

Rabih Assi (Greek Catholic) 148

Salim Aoun (Maronite) 5554

Husein Solh (Sunnite) 2465

Antoine Shamieh (Greek Orthodox) 105

Rami Abou Hamdan (Shiite) 16539

George Bouchikian (Armenian Orthodox) 2568

ElTaghyir List, 1440 votes

Khaled Younes (Greek Catholic) 99

Rida ElMeys (Sunnite) 1142

Tannous ElKhoury (Maronite) 32

Husein ElKhatib (Shiite) 13

Lina Geokjian (Armenian Orthodox) 102

Zahlé Tantaqid List, 7713 votes

Jihad ElTurk (Greek Catholic) 258

Hamze Mita (Sunnite) 2387

Omar ElSaboury (Shiite) 259

¹¹² Ibid., Nakhoul, pp. 150-55.

Armen Isfahani (Armenian Orthodox) 108

Eid Azar (Greek Orthodox) 4516

Qadirin Nuwajih and *Aqwa WaFa'el* Lists, which did not include any Armenian candidates, obtained 1316 and 332 votes respectively.

AlKutla AISHa'biyya List, 12,064 votes

Mariam Skaff (Greek Catholic) 4825

Muhammad Hammoud (Sunnite) 5869

Maroun Makhoul (Maronite) 317

Sami Nabhan (Greek Orthodox)

Fawzat Dalloul (Shiite) 83

Nareg Aprahamian (Armenian Orthodox) 133

Those elected in Zahlé were: Rami Abou Hamdan, George Oqays, Michel Daher, Elias Estephan, Salim Aoun, Bilal AlHashimi, and George Bouchikian.

Aztag indicated that in the afternoon of May 16 information had circulated that other than the Tashnag-Murr, FPC, Kataeb and LF there was a fifth list "*Nahwa Dawla*" that could win. In such a case the Maronite candidate on that list, Jad Ghosn, could get elected, which meant that LF Maronite candidate Razi ElHajj would fail, and this would give a chance to a second LF candidate. In this case their Armenian candidate [Dr. Ara Bardakjian] would pass and H. Pakradouny would fail. Finally, at 7:50 pm., Ghosn's victory was unofficially announced, which "upset the Armenian community". The ballot boxes of Sin ElFil, Bauchrie and Biskanta were taken to the Jdeydé justice palace for recounting. At 8:20pm the official results were announced, and it appeared that Ghosn's list had not secured the required number of votes to be considered for proportional representation. Then H. Pakradouny's victory was secured. In an interview on Voice of Van, he said "an attempt was made to destroy our victory".¹¹³

L'Orient -Le Jour wrote that the list of Ghosn had needed less than 100 votes to pass the threshold and obtain a seat.¹¹⁴

On June 16, Ghosn appealed to the Constitutional Court to cancel the election results of Razi ElHajj and Pakradouny.¹¹⁵ However, on December 22, 2022 the court refuted the arguments raised by Ghosn.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ *Aztag*, May 16, 2022, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 17, 2022, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ "Des recours à la pelle en gestation après les législatives", *L'Orient-Le Jour*, May 17, 2022, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ *Aztag*, December 23, 2022, p. 1.

Attached at the end of the present article is a list¹¹⁷ of Beirut I votes for the four major lists and the votes they secured per community.¹¹⁸

A study of the results of voting per community indicates the following:

Hasbani got more Maronite votes than Gemayel, more Greek Orthodox votes and more Greek Catholic votes than Sahnaoui. Among the Armenian Orthodox candidates Terzian obtained the highest number of votes from both Armenian Orthodox and Armenian Catholic voters. Talouzian got the highest number of votes from the Sunnites, while the absolute majority of the Shiites voted for Sahnaoui. The highest number of votes of the Lebanese abroad went to Hasbani. Yacoubian received a good number of votes from the Lebanese abroad, Armenian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox communities. She was among the few candidates along with Talouzian who got votes from all communities. One can also see that Jihad Pakradouny got 208 Armenian Orthodox and Catholic votes and 535 Sunnite votes, while Malian had 810 Armenian Orthodox and Catholic votes, but did not score well among other communities, which was not the case with Jihad Pakradouny.

The scores indicated that 1703 Armenian Orthodox and 575 Armenian Catholics had given their preferential votes to non-Armenian candidates, a total of 2278 votes compared to 7201 votes to Armenian candidates.

On May 16 the Association for Democracy (LADE) mentioned “certain irregularities”. The organization considered the election day “deceiving”. It noted that the Ministry of the Interior was lax in the application of laws. There was aggressiveness towards candidates, electors and delegates of candidates, violation of the secrecy of the votes to the degree of accompanying a voter inside the place of isolation, delegates interfering in the counting of the votes and also influence and intimidation by political parties.¹¹⁹

The RFTLA, in a communique published on May 31, mentioned that in the pre-electoral period and on election day there were irregularities, especially in Bourj Hamoud and Anjar. Electors were threatened, sworn at, deprived of electricity and parking lots, and beaten on streets or in clubs. Thousands of electors were brought in from Armenia and other places paying their air-travel tickets. The dominant party (i.e. the Tashnags – Z.M.) also used the highest

¹¹⁷ The list, upon my request, was provided by Baydzig Kalayjian, who was working with Yacoubian.

¹¹⁸ Upon my request Keoshgerian provided a list of the Armenian (Orthodox and Catholic) votes of the majority of the Armenian candidates: Matossian 2019, Terzian 1919, Malian 856, Talouzian 814, Yacoubian 726, Seferian 216, Pakradouny 212, and Semerjian 135 votes. Except for Seferian’s result the votes of the others do not match those provided by Baydzig Kalayjian.

¹¹⁹ “Observateurs, des ‘centaines d’irrégularité’ selon la LADE”, *L’Orient-Le Jour*, May 17, 2022.

ranking Armenian Church ecclesiasts to make appeals to voters. On election day efforts were made to attract voters and lead them to the voting centers despite their convictions and many others voted without understanding what was going on.¹²⁰

On May 16, 2022, as soon as the results of the Zahlé constituency were known, in the Tashnag club of Anjar the youth of the Tashnag LEM chapter gave a reception.

The mayor, Vartkes Khoshian (who had not succeeded in the legislative elections of 1992) and the newly elected MP George Bouchikian spoke. It was mentioned that due to 30 years of work and struggle the Bekaa Armenian seat had been given to its rightful owner, the Bekaa Armenians and especially the Tashnag Party.¹²¹

The AGBU leadership was glad Talouzian was elected and, naturally, congratulated him.

On May 23, an AGBU delegation led by the Lebanon District Committee chairperson Gerard Tufenkjian and 5 others, including AYA Central Council Chairperson Vicken Charchian, visited Hagop Pakradouny and congratulated him on his re-election and stressed the necessity of cooperation between Armenian organizations.¹²² This was the first time AGBU congratulated a Tashnag MP.

On June 10, 2022 a victory celebration was held by the Tashnag Party in Bourj Hamoud in the presence of thousands. In his speech, Hagop Pakradouny thanked the Henschag Party, which had carried out its electoral campaign in a fair and clean competition, but had not reached parliament. However, if elected, it would have been a victory for the Tashnags and the community. He also thanked the Ramgavar Azadagan Party “comrades” for supporting the Tashnag and Henschag candidates in a public declaration. He added the victory put an additional obligation on their shoulders.¹²³

During the Henschag Party commemoration of the 20 party leaders hanged by the Ottoman Turkish government in June 1915, party Central Committee member Alexan Keoshgerian said, “We did not reach parliament but our credit has risen. We had a 30% increase in Armenian votes, while others had a retreat of approximately the same number. He also blamed people who forgot their oath to support comrades of many years in favor of unknown and unprincipled newcomers..”¹²⁴

¹²⁰ *Zartouk*, May 31, 2022, p. 1.

¹²¹ *Aztag*, May 18, 2022

¹²² *Ibid.*, May 24, 2022, p. 1.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, June 11, 2022, p. 1.

¹²⁴ *Ararad*, June 16, 2022.

Once the election results were clear, *Aztag* headlined, “In the Lebanese Parliamentary Elections the Tashnag Party’s three proposed candidates were elected”.¹²⁵

Zartok headlined “The candidate supported by RAP, Paula Yacoubian, elected deputy of the Lebanese Parliament.”¹²⁶

On May 16, Saad Hariri declared, “Our decision was just”, referring to his and Mustaqbal’s non-participation in the elections.¹²⁷

Zartok, under the title “There are lessons to be learnt if we are apt to study,” compared the results of the preferential votes of the elected Armenian MPs in the 2018 and 2022 elections.¹²⁸

Name	2018	2022	Difference
Paula Yacoubian	2500	3524	+1024
Hagop Terzian	3431	2647	-804
Jean Talouzan	4166	4043	-123
Hagop Pakradouny	7182	4973	-2209
George Bouchikian	1845	2586	+741

Baykar Weekly headlined “Paula Yacoubian registered a spectacular victory, gathering 3524 voices in the Beirut I electoral district”.¹²⁹ The RAP Supreme Council, in a communique dated May 16, congratulated Yacoubian on her victory. The Council promised its full support for her.¹³⁰

On May 16, *Aztag* wrote “After serious and persistent work, the fruits were gathered today; our people continue to be faithful to their party and club. In parallel with this we faced deceptions, as some Armenians whom we had always supported refused to give their vote to the candidates proposed by the Tashnag Party.”¹³¹

L’Orient-Le Jour headlined on page one, “La Thaurora s’envite en force au parlement” and on page two indicated that Hizbollah was the main loser in the elections. 13 MPs including Yacoubian were named “*Taghyiriyyun*” (change makers).¹³²

¹²⁵ *Aztag*, May 17, 2022, p. 1.

¹²⁶ *Zartok*, May 17, 2022, p. 1.

¹²⁷ *L’Orient-Le Jour*, May 17, 2022.

¹²⁸ *Zartok*, May 24, 2022, p. 1.

¹²⁹ *Baykar Weekly*, May 22, 2022, p. 3.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹³¹ *Aztag*, May 16, 2022.

¹³² *L’Orient-Le Jour*, May 17, 2022, p. 1.

Certain statistics indicated that there were 67 MPs elected from the various opposition lists out of the 128 available seats.¹³³ However, the Iranian ambassador to Lebanon, Mohammad Jawad Firouzina, on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of Imam Khomeyni's passing away said, "The Lebanese parliamentary elections proved that the people rest faithful to the agenda of the resistance."¹³⁴

In a post-election article Yeghia Tashjian wrote in *The Armenian Weekly* of Boston an article entitled "Parliamentary Elections and the Future of the Armenian Community in Lebanon." He wrote this concerning the results of the elections:

Nevertheless, despite this, the voting share of the Armenian political parties has slightly improved. In 2018, Armenian political parties brought 12,924 preferential votes out of the 24,707 total Armenian voters. In 2022 Armenian political party candidates brought 13,567 preferential votes out of the total votes. In an interview with the policy and research specialist at Information International, Muhammad Shamseddin, the researcher highlighted that the number of Armenian voters in 2022 was around 21,000. It is worth mentioning that not all of the remaining Armenian votes went toward independent candidates; non-Armenian candidates took a share as well. This trend was new for the Armenians. On the other hand, for the sake of comparison, by counting the sectarian preferential votes for the three ARF (i.e. the Tashnag – Z.M.) elected MPs and the candidates, we see that 70 to 90% of their voters were Armenians. Armenian MPs and candidates who were supported by non-Armenian parties or civil society opposition groups gathered less than 10 to 20 percent of Armenian votes and were elected mainly by non-Armenian voters. In this context, it is important to mention that non-Armenian candidates have also attracted a large number of Armenian voters. This trend has been increasing over time either due to vote buying or political affiliations.¹³⁵

After the elections two separate events are to be noted:

First, the new parliament in its first meeting reelected Nabih Berry as its speaker with 65 votes (which included the votes of Jumblat's party) and Elias Abou Saab of the FPC as vice-speaker with 64 votes (without Jumblat's party votes). The latter's election showed that at least 3 opposition MPs voted for him. In other words, it was not clear then who held the majority, the loyalists of Aoun's regime or the opposition, which included the change makers.

Second, after Michel Aoun's presidential term was over on October 31, 2022 the government of Miqati, which had resigned right after the elections, became a caretaker government. Miqati decided to hold a government meeting on December 5; 9 ministers including George Bouchikian signed a joint

¹³³ The Constitutional Court invalidated the elections of two opposition MPs and gave their seats to the contenders, thus the opposition had only 65 MPs out of 128.

¹³⁴ *Aztag*, June 7, 2022.

¹³⁵ Tashjian.

declaration stating that they would not participate in the meeting.¹³⁶ However, the next day Bouchikian participated in the meeting, thus making a majority of 16 ministers out of 24, against the wishes of the Tashnag Party Lebanon District Committee.

On December 6, the TPLDC decided that Bouchikian had disobeyed the party's decision not to participate in the government meeting. Thus, he was declared to no longer be a member of the Armenian Deputies bloc.¹³⁷ Therefore, from that time the TP had two MPs in the parliament.

¹³⁶ *Aztag*, December 5, 2022, p. 8.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, December 7, 2022, p. 1.

Detailed per Community Voting Results in Beirut I															
Candidates	Maronite	Greek Orth.	Greek Cath.	Arm. orth.	Arm. cath.	Syr. Orth.	Syr. Cath.	Latin	Minorities	Protestant	Sunnite	Shiite	State officers	Emigrés	Total
Nadim Gemayel	1128	1204	559	265	102	7	111	103	59	28	244	26	2	587	4425
Asma Andraos	113	198	59	28	23	8	32	21	13	1	274	2	2	123	917
Najib Elia	8	40	19	18	0	3	4	1	6	0	262	1	0	29	391
Antoine Syriani	26	46	26	111	23	22	12	4	0	7	260	0	0	21	558
Ani Seferian	5	19	5	185	31	0	2	4	0	10	12	0	0	4	277
Talar Margossian	6	5	2	10	6	0	1	0	1	4	5	0.	0	3	43
Leon Semerjian	7	8	14	108	26	0	3	3	1	1	24	0	1	12	208
Jean Talouzan	434	921	320	618	158	12	120	64	47	60	1160	51	14	64	4043
Nicola Sahnaoui	960	1313	459	293	129	41	155	108	52	15	216	585	11	444	4781
Aledxsander Matossian	10	39	9	1175	212	4	3	33	6	75	6	12	0	32	2216
Hagop Terzian	16	42	18	2002	231	17	26	52	7	80	4	11	0	141	2647
George Juvelekian	20	65	22	105	17	2	5	6	1	7	16	3	0	17	286
Serge Melkonian	4	10	0	50	17	0	0	4	1	5	3	0	0	1	95
Carol Boutros	22	32	16	6	4	2	3	4	0	0	9	5	0	34	137
Elie Assouad	109	89	23	11	3	7	15	10	4	0	3	2	1	26	303
Shamoun Shamoun	42	101	30	13	4	4	7	6	3	6	3	4	1	6	230
Ghassan Hasbani	1460	2326	803	442	126	56	185	137	59	29	210	11	7	1229	7080
Jihad Pakradouny	332	532	251	169	39	35	101	25	11	10	535	87	6	53	2186
George Shahwan	324	349	135	101	27	33	49	36	17	14	395	13	5	186	1684
Fady Nahhas	34	51	30	9	3	0	0	5	2	1	8	0	0	57	200

Elie Shamassy	98	135	60	37	10	15	225	21	6	6	9	2	0	103	727
Aram Malian	16	35	9	720	90	0	0	14	2	38	101	1	0	42	1068
Paula Yacoubian	308	551	166	662	137	33	55	38	37	45	611	52	4	825	3524
Ziad Absi	52	167	50	253	5	3	21	4	4	3	37	9	1	135	514
Ziad Sahker	537	655	342	144	83	6	66	62	60	16	116	34	1	1020	3142
Cynthia Zarazir	67	129	46	6	12	13	35	18	2	1	56	6	0	95	486
Maggie Nenedjian	2	5	2	38	8	8	1	0	0	1	5	2	0	8	80
Diana Ohanian	10	14	0	27	2	1	2	1	0	4	1	0	0	1	63
Charles Fakhoury	4	11	17	2	4	0	0	1	0	1	9	0	0	15	64
Brigitte Chelebian	9	5	5	29	36	0	4	1	2	10	7	0	0	21	129
Total															42504

ՀԱՅՈՑ ՄԱՍՆԱԿՑՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ ԼԻԲԱՆԱՆԻ ՆԱԽԱԳԱՀ ՄԻՇԷԼ ԱՈՒՆԻ (2016-22) ՆԱԽԱԳԱՀՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՇՐՋԱՆԻ 2022Ի
ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՐԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԸՆՏՐՈՒԹԻՒՆՆԵՐՈՒՆ (Բ. ՄԱՍ)
(ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ)

ԶԱԻԷՆ ՄՍԸՐԼԵԱՆ

Հեղինակը Հայկազեան հայագիտական հանդեսի 39րդ հատորին մէջ անդրադարձած էր նախագահ Միշել Աունի նախագահութեան շրջանի 2018ի ընտրութիւններուն, իսկ այս գրութեան մէջ՝ 2022ի խորհրդարանական ընտրութիւններուն:

Հեղինակը նախ նկարագրէ նախագահ Միշել Աունի վարչակարգին դիմագրաւած կառավարական եւ տնտեսական տագնապները եւ յատկապէս 17 Հոկտեմբեր 2019ի շարժումը, Պէյրութի նաւահանգիստի 4 Օգոստոս 2020ի պայթումը եւ անոնց յառաջացուցած հետեւանքներն ու մէջտեղ եկած բարեկարգչական շարժումը:

Այսպիսի նախադրեալներով կայացան 15 Մայիս 2022ի երեսփոխանական ընտրութիւնները, գործող համեմատական օրէնքին վրայ: Լիբանահայութիւնը եւս իր յատուկ պայմանները ունէր, որոնց կ'անդրադառնայ հեղինակը, ապա կը ներկայացնէ թեկնածութիւններու յառաջադրանքը, ցանկերու կազմութիւնն ու ընտրապայքարը:

ՀՅԴ ներկայացուց հինգ թեկնածուներ, ՅՐԴ՝ Պէյրութի մէջ, մէկական՝ Մեթնի եւ Զահլէի մէջ, յուսալով որ ասոնցմէ 4ը կ'ընտրուին: Մեթնի մէջ Ան ցանկ կազմեց Մըր ընտանիքին հետ, Պէյրութի մէջ՝ Ազատական հոսանքին հետ, իսկ Պեքայի մէջ՝ այս վերջիններուն եւ

Հըզպալլայի հետ: ՀՅԴ յաջողեցաւ 3 երեսփոխան ունենալ, սակայն, ասոնցմէ մին՝ Ճորճ Պուճիքեան, դուրս դրուեցաւ Հայկական երեսփոխանական պլոքէն:

ՍԴՀԿն ունեցաւ սեփական թեկնածու եւ Պէյրութի մէջ զինակցեցաւ Լիբանանեան ուժերուն հետ: Վերջինս պնդեց Ժիհատ Բագ-րատունին նոյն ցանկին վրայ պահել ու վերջինս ընտրուեցաւ, ստանալով նաեւ 208 հայկական քուէներ:

Պառակտուած էր ՌԱԿը: *Հարթօնք* զօրակցեցաւ երեք թեկնածուներու, որոնցմէ Փոլա Եագուպեան, իր անհատական ջանքերով յաջողեցաւ ընտրուիլ: Իսկ «ՌԱԿի Շրջանային վարչութիւն» անունով գործողները հայ կուսակցութիւններուն զօրակցեցան:

ՀԲԸՄի Լիբանանի շրջանակը զօրակցեցաւ Ժան Թալուզեանին, որ յաջողեցաւ 779 հայկական քուէներու կողքին մեծ թիւով քուէներ ապահովել սիւննի համայնքէն եւ երեսփոխան ընտրուիլ: