

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	368
Land:	Libanon
Kilde:	Minority Rights Group International
Titel:	State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010 – Lebanon
Udgivet:	1. juli 2010
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	10. september 2010

[Home](#) [Lebanon](#)

Search

Text size [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)[Email this document](#)[Printable version](#)Enter a word or phrase [Advanced Search](#) | [Search Tips](#)

Regions

[Africa](#)[Americas](#)[Asia](#)[Europe](#)[Oceania](#)

Countries

Categories

[Country Information](#)[Legal Information](#)[Policy Documents](#)[Reference Documents](#)

Browse by

[A-Z Index](#)[Topics](#)[Publishers](#)[Document Types](#)

Resources

[Special Features](#)[Standards and Training](#)[Information Alerts](#)[Protection Starter Kit](#)[Library](#)[News](#)[Refworld Personalization](#)[External Links](#)

Title	State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010 - Lebanon
Publisher	Minority Rights Group International
Country	Lebanon
Publication Date	1 July 2010
Cite as	Minority Rights Group International, <i>State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010 - Lebanon</i> , 1 July 2010, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4c333110.html [accessed 2 September 2010]

State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2010 - Lebanon

The 15-year Lebanese civil war ended with the signing of the 1989 Ta'if Agreement. Twenty years on, Lebanon continues to be divided along sectarian lines. Post-independence, Lebanon's political system was institutionalized in the National Pact of 1943. The National Pact had introduced a confessional formula, which provided for the representation of Christians and Muslims in a six to five ratio throughout government. Furthermore, the offices of president, prime minister and speaker of the parliament were allocated to the Maronite, Sunni and Shia sects respectively. Following a bloody internal conflict, the Ta'if Agreement replaced the six to five ratio of parliamentary seats, which had previously favoured Christians, with a more equitable division of parliamentary seats between Muslims and Christians. Accordingly, nine new Muslim seats were added to the Chamber, creating a 54-54 seat balance. The Agreement, however, maintained the distribution along religious lines of the country's offices of state. Appointments in the public sector are similarly based on a sectarian quota system.

Although the Ta'if Agreement provided for the eventual abolition of political sectarianism, little progress has been made in this regard. In a televised address, President Michel Suleiman proposed to establish a national committee charged with the abolition of the country's confessional political system. His proposal was seconded by Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri, who vowed to set up the committee and implement the Ta'if Agreement's provisions on the abolition of political sectarianism. The president's proposal was met with resistance and scepticism in Lebanon's wider political circles, thus casting doubt on whether the country is indeed ready to part with its confessional political system.

Sectarian tensions continue to underlie Lebanon's fragile balance of power. The assassination of Lebanon's Sunni Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri, in February 2005 created a rivalry between pro-Syrian political groups (otherwise known as the March 8 Alliance), and pro-Western political parties (otherwise known as the March 14 Alliance). The March 8 Alliance consists mainly of the Hezbollah and Amal Shi'ite groups, and followers of the Free Patriotic Movement's Maronite leader Michel Aoun, while the March 14 Alliance consists of the Future Movement led by Saad Hariri, the son of the slain prime minister, and the Lebanese Forces led by Maronite leader Samir Geagea. A tight race during the parliamentary elections of 7 June 2009 ended with the victory of the March 14 Alliance and the appointment of Saad Hariri as prime minister. After five months of intense negotiations with the opposition, Hariri was finally able to form a national unity government on 10 November 2009. He also made a landmark visit to Syria in December 2009, which marked the end of five years of animosity between Damascus and the March 14 Alliance, led by Hariri.

Although its confessional distribution of public offices may be viewed as inherently discriminatory, Lebanon's government generally respects religious rights. Lebanon's Constitution protects religious freedom and the freedom to practise all religious rites, provided that the public order is not disturbed. Religious groups are, however, legally required to register with the government in order to conduct most religious activities. There are 18 officially recognized religious groups in Lebanon. The two largest Muslim groups are Sunnis (28 per cent of the population) and Shias (28 per cent of the population), according to the most recent demographic study conducted by Statistics Lebanon, a Beirut-based research firm. There is also a smaller community of Alawites and Ismailis. Christians make up over a third of the population (21.5 per cent are Maronites, 8 per cent are Greek Orthodox and another 4 per cent are Greek Catholic), while Druze amount to 5 per cent. Lebanon is also home to a declining Jewish minority, which is now estimated to have just 100-150 members.

Lebanon's Jews have been without a place of worship since Israeli shelling destroyed their synagogue in 1982. Plans to repair the capital's remaining synagogue were suspended in 2009 as funding failed to materialize, thus forcing the Lebanese Jewish Community Council to appeal to

the international community for help to carry on the work.

Israel's military assault on the Gaza Strip, along with anti-Israeli literature published and distributed mainly by Hezbollah, have served to blur the lines between Israelis and Jews. USCIRF 2009 reported continued acts of vandalism committed against a Jewish-owned cemetery in downtown Beirut. Government documents referring to Jewish Lebanese citizens as 'Israelis' have added to this confusion, and to the increasing level of hostility towards Lebanon's Jewish community. In April 2009, Interior Minister Ziad Baroud submitted a proposal to the cabinet to amend legislation by referring to 'Jewish Lebanese' citizens instead of 'Israelis'.

The government does not, however, require citizens' religious affiliations to be indicated on their passports. A circular issued by the Ministry of Interior on 11 February 2009 removed the requirement to inscribe a citizen's religious affiliation on national identity cards and civil registry records. HRW viewed this move as a step in the right direction, while noting that further steps were needed for Lebanon to meet its international human rights obligations. USCIRF 2009 highlighted the disadvantaged status under the law of unrecognized religious groups, such as Baha'is, Buddhists and Hindus, who are required to register as part of another recognized religious organization in order to marry, divorce or inherit property in Lebanon.

According to UNRWA, Lebanon is home to about 422,000 Palestinian refugees, or an estimated 10 per cent of the population. These refugees continue to be denied basic social and civil rights, such as the right to own property. Considered as foreigners under Lebanon's current labour law, they are prohibited from working in any syndicated profession. This has forced many Palestinian refugees to work illegally, rendering them vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination. The Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), established in 2005 by the Lebanese Council of Ministers, has recently submitted a detailed plan to the government reforming Lebanese labour law to facilitate Palestinian employment. The plan is still being reviewed by the government.

Copyright notice: © Minority Rights Group International. All rights reserved.