



International Foundation  
for Electoral Systems

# **Election FAQs: Lebanon**

## *Municipal Elections*

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Middle East and North Africa

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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## Election Snapshot

- Election Day:
  - May 4: Mount Lebanon;
  - May 11: North Lebanon and Akkar;
  - May 18: Beirut, Bekaa, and Baalbeck-Hermel; and
  - May 24: South Lebanon and Nabatieh.
- Registered voters: 4,093,662 (51 percent women).
- Polling stations: 1,913 voting centers with a total of 13,460 polling stations for both municipal and *mukhtar* elections.
- Seats: 12,840 municipal seats, 3,105 *mukhtars* (mayors) and 4,104 *mukhtar* council members.
- Campaign expenditures: Unlike parliamentary elections, laws related to municipal and *mukhtar* elections do not include a campaign finance component. Therefore, there is no ceiling for campaign expenditures.
- Election observers: around 1,000.

## When is Election Day?

After three consecutive one-year postponements, Lebanon's municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral)<sup>1</sup> elections, initially planned for May 2022, will take place in May 2025.

Lebanese law permits the Minister of Interior and Municipalities either to designate a single Election Day for all municipalities across the country or to assign specific Election Days for individual municipalities or groups of municipalities. All elections must occur within the legally defined deadlines. Municipal and *mukhtar* elections have historically occurred over four consecutive Sundays, with one or more governorates participating in each phase.<sup>2</sup>

On March 24, 2025, Minister of Interior and Municipalities Ahmed Al-Hajjar initially announced the following electoral calendar for the municipal and *mukhtar* elections:

- Mount Lebanon: May 4;
- North Lebanon and Akkar: May 11;
- In Beirut, Bekaa, and Baalbek-Hermel: May 18; and
- South Lebanon and Nabatieh: May 25.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to electing members of municipal councils, Lebanese will also elect *mukhtars* and members of *mukhtar* councils. *Mukhtars* and their councils act as intermediaries between citizens and the state, as their main role focuses on issuing official certificates (for example, for good conduct, identification, and civil status), maintaining population records, authenticating personal events (births, deaths, marriages, and others), and other tasks. Although every village has at least one *mukhtar*, not all villages have municipal councils.

<sup>2</sup> Legislative Decree No. 665/97, Article 23.

The official call for elections must be issued no later than two months before the end of the current term of municipal councils and *mukhtars* and at least 30 days prior to Election Day. The call for elections specifies the election date, number of seats allocated for each municipality, distribution of seats among villages and towns within multi-village municipalities (based on the number of registered residents), and designated polling centers. On April 25, 2024, Parliament extended the current mandate for municipalities and *mukhtars* until May 31, 2025, officially postponing the elections and making May 31, 2025, the final legal date to hold elections for all municipal councils across the country.<sup>3</sup>

On April 2, Minister Al-Hajjar issued the first official call for elections in Mount Lebanon, with Election Day set for May 4. The next official call on April 9 set the elections for North Lebanon and Akkar for May 11. On April 16, the minister signed the call for elections in Beirut, the Bekaa, and Baalbeck-Hermel for May 18. The final call for South Lebanon and Nabatieh was signed on April 23. Instead of setting the election day for May 25 as previously announced, the date was moved to May 24, as May 25 coincides with Resistance and Liberation Day.<sup>4</sup>

Voting commences at 7 a.m. and continues until 7 p.m. The Electoral Law stipulates that the head of the polling station must announce the end voting at 7 p.m. unless voters are present in the courtyard of the polling center who have not yet cast their votes. In such cases, the voting period is extended to allow them to vote, and this must be noted in the official minutes.<sup>5</sup>

## **Why are these elections important?**

Lebanon's planned municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral) elections are critically important as they mark the resumption of essential democratic processes following postponements that spanned three years. Initially scheduled for 2022, the elections were first postponed due to logistical difficulties arising from their overlap with parliamentary elections. Parliament deferred the elections in 2023, citing financial constraints that impeded election administration. In 2024, heightened security concerns stemming from the regional conflict prompted another postponement.

Given the repeated delays, conducting these elections has become essential to restore the legitimacy and functionality of local governance structures. Currently, at least 134 of Lebanon's 1,064 municipalities have been formally dissolved, predominantly due to resignations, deaths, or unresolved internal conflicts. Numerous others were effectively incapacitated due to severe resource shortages and operational dysfunction. Given the deteriorating financial situation and weakened state capacity at the national level,

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<sup>3</sup> Law Nbr. 325/2024 which extends the municipal and *mukhtar* mandate until May 31, 2025: <http://www.pcm.gov.lb/archive/j2024/j18/wfn/n325.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Resistance and Liberation Day is a national holiday in Lebanon, observed annually on May 25 to commemorate the Israeli military withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 97.

municipalities have struggled to address local needs, exacerbating the urgent need for newly elected councils to provide effective leadership and manage resource allocation.

Additionally, these elections are the first major milestone for the new presidency and government, which took office in 2025 following a prolonged political stalemate and a presidential vacuum of over two years. Because they take place shortly after a period of regional conflict, the elections carry heightened significance for post-conflict recovery and reconstruction efforts. The World Bank estimates that recovery efforts will cost \$11 billion (USD).<sup>6</sup> The national government will need municipal councils and *mukhtars*' support to address the critical issues of the complete destruction of around 40 villages and a substantial internal displacement crisis.

Finally, given their timing exactly one year before parliamentary elections scheduled for 2026, the municipal and *mukhtar* elections are seen as a political barometer. Their outcomes could influence Lebanon's broader political environment, as municipalities traditionally play pivotal roles in shaping political and electoral outcomes at the national level. These elections are particularly significant for Hezbollah, which has been deeply affected by the recent regional conflict. It has experienced a significant loss of fighters and wide destruction, and many residents have been displaced from areas where it maintains strong support.

## What is the legal framework for conducting the elections?

The legal framework governing local elections in Lebanon is fragmented; no single law governs both municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral) elections. The following laws inform local elections:

- **Municipal Act or Legislative Decree No. 118 of June 30, 1977** regulates the work and powers of municipal councils and includes clauses related to calls for elections, the size of municipal boards, candidate registration, election dispute resolution, and the electoral calendar.
- **Law No. 27/11/1947** details the role of *mukhtars* and governs *mukhtar* and *mukhtar* council elections.
- **Law No. 665 of December 29, 1997** aims to modernize Lebanon's municipal governance by reforming election procedures, streamlining administrative processes, and harmonizing municipal and *mukhtar* elections.

Although these legal instruments include several clauses related to municipal and *mukhtar* elections, they are not comprehensive. To fill gaps in the laws related to implementing municipal elections, Article 16 of the Municipal Act (Decree No. 118 of June 30, 1977) links municipal and *mukhtar* elections with the Parliamentary Elections

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/03/07/lebanon-s-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-estimated-at-us-11-billion>.

Law, stating that “the provisions of the Parliamentary Elections Law shall apply to the municipal elections in conformity with all the provisions of this law.” In this way, the parliamentary law complements the municipal and *mukhtar* council laws. In addition, the State (Shura) Council Law plays a critical role in these elections by detailing the council’s role as the judicial authority for handling disputes and challenges regarding election legality and validity.

## **What is the election management body? What are its powers?**

The administration of elections in Lebanon is primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM), in coordination with governors and *qaemaqams* (district officials).<sup>7</sup> The MoIM is in charge of updating the voter register annually, preparing voter lists, recruiting and training polling staff, issuing accreditations to observers, and announcing election results.

For municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral) elections, governors and *qaemaqams* are responsible for:

- Appointing, within their respective regions, one head officer and one or more clerks for each polling station. These appointments are made from lists of civil servants provided by the Directorate General for Political Affairs and Refugees at the MoIM.
- Receiving and processing candidacies and issuing accreditation for stationary and mobile candidate representatives.
- Coordinating the logistics of receiving election results from heads of polling stations and delivering the final results from higher registration committees (HRC) to the MoIM.

Additionally, preliminary councils and HRCs are appointed for each district or governorate to carry out the tabulation of results.<sup>8</sup>

The electoral reforms of 2009 and 2017 introduced a supervisory commission for elections (SCE) whose mandate is to oversee campaign finance, media regulations, and the accreditation of observer groups. However, the law did not grant the commission a role in municipal and *mukhtar* elections. Therefore, the commission does not play any role in those elections.

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<sup>7</sup> *Qaemaqams* are administrative officials who represent the central government at the *caza* (district) level, overseeing local governance, public services, and coordination between municipalities and the central authorities.

<sup>8</sup> Preliminary registration committees oversee the correction of voter lists and conduct preliminary vote tabulation. HRCs review appeals against preliminary registration committee decisions, verify and consolidate results, and forward the final results to the MoIM. Judges head both committees, and its members are civil officials. The committees are appointed for one electoral cycle only, before February 1 of the year during which the general parliamentary elections are held, by virtue of decrees issued at the suggestion of the Minister of Justice and the MoIM.

## Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

Over the four phases of the municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral) elections, voters will elect 12,840 municipal council members representing 1,065 *baladiyyas* (municipalities) and 3,105 *mukhtars* and 4,104 *mukhtar* council members. The size of each municipal council is determined by the Minister of Interior and Municipalities in accordance with a statutory formula outlined in the law on municipalities.<sup>9</sup>

Number of Council Members by Size of Municipality				
1–2,000 residents	2,001–4,000 residents	4,001–12,000 residents	12,001–24,000 residents	24,001 or more residents
9	12	15	18	21*

\*Beirut and Tripoli have 24 members each

A *baladiyya* is a legally mandated local administration that operates within a specific geographic area, with financial and administrative independence. Each municipality represents one electoral district, and the members of municipal councils are elected directly by popular vote in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the Law on the Election of the Members of Parliament and the Municipal Law. The president and vice president of the *baladiyya* are elected by the winning candidates and not directly by popular vote.

Municipal councils are empowered to undertake activities of a public nature or that serve the public interest within the *baladiyya*'s jurisdiction. *Baladiyyas* may, either directly or through an intermediary, establish, manage, contribute to, or assist in the implementation of works and projects that include building and maintaining roads; monitoring the functioning of public facilities and public and private schools, public hospitals and dispensaries, museums, public libraries, clubs, and stadiums, local public transport networks and public markets; collecting waste; helping those in need, and safeguarding the public interest. The municipal council holds decision-making authority, while the president of the council holds executive authority.<sup>10</sup>

*Mukhtars* serve as crucial links between citizens and the state. Their main duties include issuing official certificates such as for good conduct, identification, and civil status; maintaining population records; and authenticating personal status events such as births, deaths, and marriages. In addition, *mukhtars* are responsible for disseminating laws and regulations, assisting with public safety, reporting crimes or suspicious activities, and facilitating communication between residents and administrative authorities. They also support financial and legal operations – helping with tax collection, legal notifications, and land records – and engage in agricultural, health, and educational

<sup>9</sup> Municipal Act No. 118/1977, Article 9, with its subsequent amendments.

<sup>10</sup> Municipal Act No. 118/1977, Articles, 1, 3, and 49–51, with subsequent amendments.

matters, such as reporting disease outbreaks and promoting school attendance. The role of *mukhtars* gains even more importance in villages where there are no municipalities.

*Mukhtar* councils in towns and villages with fewer than 2,500 citizens are composed of one *mukhtar* and three *mukhtar* council members. While the law does not dictate a formula, it has been the practice to allocate one *mukhtar* for every 2,500 citizens. *Mukhtars*, with the members of the *mukhtar* councils, are elected directly through a popular vote.<sup>11</sup> Both *mukhtars* and their council members are elected by direct universal suffrage for six-year terms.<sup>12</sup>

## Who can vote in these elections?

Any citizen who is of 21 years of age,<sup>13</sup> enjoys full civil and political rights, and has been a Lebanese national for the past 10 years, is allowed to vote.<sup>14</sup> Naturalized Lebanese citizens may vote or run for office once they have been naturalized citizens for 10 years; however, this condition does not apply to non-Lebanese women who obtain Lebanese citizenship through marriage to Lebanese men, as they gain political rights automatically.<sup>15</sup>

Individuals denied the right to vote include those who have been judicially stripped of their civil rights, as well as individuals who are permanently barred from holding public office and posts. In addition, persons who are under temporary disqualification from public office and posts, or who are convicted of a felony offense or a major offense are barred from voting.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, voting rights are also stripped from persons placed under judicial interdiction throughout the duration of the interdiction period, or those who have fraudulently declared bankruptcy or sentenced to the penalties specified in the penal code.<sup>17, 18</sup>

Finally, non-retired military personnel of all ranks, including members of the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Internal Security Forces, General Security, State Security, and Customs Control, or persons of similar status, are prohibited from voting.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Article 24-32 of Law No. 27/11/1947

<sup>12</sup> Legislative Decree No. 118 of June 30, 1977, Article 10.

<sup>13</sup> Lebanese Constitution, Article 21.

<sup>14</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 3.

<sup>15</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 5.

<sup>16</sup> These offenses include burglary, fraud, bad credit, embezzlement, bribery, perjury, rape, intimidation, forgery, the use of forged documents, false testimony, crimes against public morals listed in Chapter 7 of the Penal Code, and crimes related to the cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotics.

<sup>17</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 4.

<sup>18</sup> The relevant articles of the Penal Code are 329–334 and 689–698.

<sup>19</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 6.

## How many registered voters are there?

Lebanon has a passive voter registration system through which the Directorate General for Personal Affairs at the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities updates and then publishes the voter register yearly between February 1 and March 10.<sup>20</sup> The 2025 voter register lists 4,093,662 voters, of whom 2,003,439 (49 percent) are men and 2,090,223 (51 percent) are women.

## What is the electoral system?

Lebanon's Parliamentary Elections Law of 2017 shifted parliamentary elections from majoritarian-based bloc voting to a proportional representation system.<sup>21</sup> However, the bloc vote system is still used for municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral) elections. Under this majority-based system, voters can cast as many votes as there are seats available, with the highest-scoring candidates securing seats. When two candidates receive an equal number of votes, the older candidate prevails; if the candidates are of the same age, a lottery determines the winner.

If the number of candidates equals the number of available seats at the close of the candidacy nomination period – set at ten days before Election Day – those candidates are automatically declared winners. If, at the close of the candidacy nomination period, the number of candidates is fewer than the required number of seats, or if such a shortage results from the withdrawal of one or more candidates, additional nominations may be accepted up to three days prior to the election date.

There are no quotas for women or young people, and, unlike for Lebanon's parliamentary elections, no religious quotas are applied to the distribution of seats.<sup>22</sup>

## Who is eligible to run as a candidate?

To run for municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral) councils, a citizen should be listed on the voters' list, be 25 years of age at the time of candidate registration, and enjoy full civil and political rights.<sup>23</sup> The law also includes several articles regarding candidates who are ineligible to run for office or whose status may impact their ability to serve as elected candidates.

- Article 27 of the Municipal Act stipulates that individuals are ineligible to run for municipal council membership if they do not know how to read and write; have been stripped of civil rights or disqualified civilly; have been convicted of felonies,

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<sup>20</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 32.

<sup>21</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 99.

<sup>22</sup> Law No. 665/1997, Article 26.

<sup>23</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 7.

specified misdemeanors, or crimes related to membership in secret societies;<sup>24</sup> have been judicially declared incompetent for “madness or insanity;” or have been declared bankrupt and not been reinstated.

- Article 28 of the Municipal Act prohibits one person from serving on multiple municipal councils and forbids concurrent membership within a single municipality by close relatives, such as a parent and child, a married couple, candidates who are related by law (such as a father-in-law and his daughter-in-law), siblings, and other close relatives from the same family. If two relatives are elected and neither resigns, the younger must be dismissed; if they are of the same age, a lottery shall determine which one remains.
- Article 26 of the Municipal Act states that it is impermissible to serve as both the president or a member of the municipal council and in any of a number of prohibited positions or roles.<sup>25</sup> In this case, a candidate must choose between his or her position and municipal membership within two weeks; otherwise, municipal membership is automatically forfeited by the governor's decision.

## Who is running in these elections?

While municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral) elections in Lebanon are often shaped by family ties and local dynamics, political parties play a significant role in forming electoral lists and supporting candidates. Candidates are not required to declare a political affiliation when submitting their candidacy.

In 2016, municipal elections offered an opportunity for “change groups” to challenge traditional parties. *Beirut Madinati*, a local political movement launched shortly before the elections, succeeded in pressuring all traditional parties to form a united front against it, aiming to prevent new actors from entering municipal councils. Although *Beirut Madinati* secured approximately 40 percent of the vote, it failed to win any seats due to the majority-based electoral system. However, the campaign sparked the wider use of independent lists to contest municipal elections against candidates backed by established parties.

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<sup>24</sup> “Secret organizations” or “secret associations” refer to groups that have not notified the public authorities as required under the Lebanese Law of Associations (1909). According to this law, any association that fails to submit a formal declaration, including its address, purpose, leadership, and statutes) to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities is considered a “secret association” and is subject to legal action. This process is not an application for registration, but rather a notification, as the association is presumed to have been established prior to any contact with public authorities.

<sup>25</sup> Holding a ministerial position; serving on the Parliamentary Council, as a *mukhtar* or a member of the *mukhtar* council; serving in the judiciary; holding state positions or positions in independent agencies, public institutions, or other municipalities; presiding over or serving as a member of the management boards of independent agencies and public institutions; owning a franchise or holding any positions related to it within the municipal jurisdiction; or membership in or holding positions within bodies or committees responsible for managing projects of public benefit within the municipality.

Looking ahead to 2025, parliamentarians, politicians and religious figures have raised their concerns about the possibility that the elections may produce municipal councils that do not respect the unwritten rule of the equal representation of Christians and Muslims.<sup>26</sup> Even though the legal framework does not dictate any religious quotas, this balance has been maintained by the most influential political party in Beirut, the Future Movement, since 1998. Following its withdrawal from politics in January 2022, there have been calls to postpone the elections<sup>27</sup> and amend the electoral law in a way that ensures equal representation. Proposals include adopting a closed-list or winner-takes-all system or allocating seats by neighborhood. On April 24, 2025, Parliament convened to discuss various proposals aimed at addressing the municipal election issue. The session - scheduled less than two weeks prior to the first phase of municipal elections - was marked by sharp disagreements among Members of Parliament, prompting Speaker Berri to postpone discussions and send the municipal election laws to a specialized committee to reach a compromise that preserves sectarian balance.<sup>28</sup>

### **What are the campaign expenditure and donation limits?**

While Lebanon has established campaign finance regulations and maintains a supervisory commission for parliamentary elections, no campaign finance rules govern local elections. The Supervisory Commission for Elections, which oversees campaign expenditures and media regulations for parliamentary candidates, has neither the legal mandate over municipal elections nor the capacity to monitor campaigning and media at the municipal or *mukhtar* (mayoral) levels. This gap is partly due to significant differences in nature and scale: While parliamentary elections involve fewer than 2,000 candidates, municipal and *mukhtar* elections typically see participation by around 30,000 candidates.

### **What provisions are in place that support the equal rights of women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups?**

A significant advancement since the last municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral) elections in 2016 occurred in 2017 with the amendment of Article 25 of Law No. 665. The updated provision allows a married woman (whose civil records are automatically transferred to her husband's municipality upon marriage) to run for municipal elections either in her original hometown or in her husband's municipality.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1455000/derian-stresses-beirut-municipality-cant-be-fragmented-fpm-mps-warn-power-sharing-is-at-risk.html>

<sup>27</sup> More on the proposal to amend the election law as submitted by MPs Mark Daou and Waddah Sadek can be found [here](#).

<sup>28</sup> Khashasho, I. (2025, April 24). [Trans. A tense session and sectarian speeches in Parliament... Approval of banking secrecy and postponement of municipal proposals]. Annahar: <https://shorturl.at/TeZel>

Previously, the automatic transfer of civil status records prevented many women from running in their hometowns and could lead to the loss of municipal seats if women candidates married during their municipal term, effectively excluding them from political participation in their communities of origin.

In parallel, women's groups advocating for greater political representation have long called for the introduction of a quota system for both municipal and parliamentary elections. A draft amendment to the municipal law proposes the adoption of a quota of at least 30 percent for any sex (30 percent for municipalities with 9, 12 or 15 seats and 50 percent for municipalities with 18, 21 and 24 seats). Although several parliamentary blocs endorsed the proposed amendment, and it has reached Parliament, it has yet to be adopted. To increase the number of women contesting the upcoming elections, women's groups launched a campaign to urge political parties and influential families to support the nomination of women candidates. Their advocacy will also focus on securing the adoption of a quota system ahead of the 2026 parliamentary elections.

Law No. 220/2000 recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to participate in elections and mandates measures to facilitate access to polling stations. In addition, Article 96 of Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017 stipulates that voters with disabilities may be assisted by a person of his or her choice under the supervision of polling station officers. It also requires the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities to consider the needs of persons with disabilities when organizing elections and to consult with specialized associations to facilitate their participation. In practice, however, little has been done to address the persistent accessibility barriers that continue to hinder the full participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process. To address this, the Lebanese Union for People with Physical Disabilities (LUPD), in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, launched an initiative on April 30 to improve voting accessibility for persons with disabilities by partnering with the MoIM to ensure polling stations in select municipalities are on the ground floor for voters with limited mobility.

### **Is out-of-country voting allowed?**

Unlike in parliamentary elections, Lebanon's legal framework does not allow for out-of-country voting in municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral) elections. However, Lebanese citizens living abroad who are present in the country on Election Day and listed on the voter roll are eligible to vote in the municipality where their civil records are registered.

### **Who can observe during Election Day?**

Law No. 44/2017 mandates the supervisory commission for elections (SCE) with "[r]eceiving and processing the applications of local and international electoral

observers, issuing their permits and establishing a code of conduct for them”<sup>29</sup> and sets the criteria for domestic civil society organizations to be accredited by the SCE to “observe the elections and monitor their progress.”<sup>30</sup> Since the SCE has no mandate for municipal elections, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities assumes the responsibility of issuing observers’ accreditations.

The law stipulates that domestic civil society organizations that sponsor observers must:

- Be non-political and have proof of registration issued at least two years before the submission of the application to the commission;
- Neither be associated with any political side or party nor have in its general or administrative body any candidate standing for elections;
- Have in its statutes, at least in the past two years, objectives related to democracy, human rights, elections, transparency or a training component related thereto;
- Declare its funding sources to the commission;
- Submit to the commission the closing balance of its dedicated account for election observation activities not later than one month after the end of the electoral process;
- Have duly deposited with the competent official authorities at the date of submission of the application a list of at least 100 members affiliated with the organization in accordance with the regulations; and
- Have its administrative board comply with the code of ethics established by the commission.

For international observers, the law states only that “The Commission shall look into the applications of international elections organizations wishing to observe the electoral process in accordance with the terms and conditions established by the Commission at least one month prior to Election Day.”<sup>31</sup> However, unlike with parliamentary elections, no international observation group will deploy international observers to monitor the electoral process.

Civil society organizations are forming domestic observer groups. The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections, for example, will deploy 1,000 observers to monitor the four phases of the electoral process. LUPD will also monitor the process, with a special focus on accessibility.

Candidates have the right to accredit and deploy stationary and mobile agents who have the right to enter polling stations at any time to observe the electoral process, including opening, voting, closing, and counting.<sup>32</sup> Candidate agents are accredited by

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<sup>29</sup> Article 19.

<sup>30</sup> Article 20.

<sup>31</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 20.

<sup>32</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 14.

*qaemaqams* (district officials) at the regional level. Candidate agents and domestic observers also have access to the tabulation centers.

Media outlets interested in covering the electoral process must seek accreditation from the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities before Election Day to be able to access polling stations and tabulation centers.

On Election Day, head election officers at polling stations may not prevent observers or candidates and their agents from “exercising the right to monitor the electoral process” and cannot remove candidates or list agents from the polling station unless they have continued to disrupt the process after a warning. Such an incident must be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the appropriate registration committee.<sup>33</sup>

### **Where are vote counting and tabulation held?**

After voting ends, the polling committee conducts the counting process at the polling station in the presence of permanent and mobile candidate agents, accredited observers, and media representatives authorized by Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) to access the inside of the polling station.

After supervising the arrangement of tables, installation of the projector, preparation of the documents, and assignment of seats for observers and candidate agents, the head of the polling committee counts the signatures of actual voters on the voter list and records that number on the results protocol. The head then opens the ballot box and counts the envelopes inside it before cross-checking this number with the number of voters on the voter list. If there is a discrepancy, it is recorded in the minutes.

The polling committee clerk opens the envelopes one by one and hands each ballot paper to the head of the polling committee, who checks its validity, displays it using the projector, and audibly reads the name or names selected by the voter. Once counting is complete, the polling committee counts the number of invalid and valid ballot papers and records the totals in the minutes. The committee then counts the number of votes received by each candidate and records them in the minutes, which are then signed. The head of the polling station announces the polling station’s results per the results protocol and then displays the results on the door of the polling station and distributes copies to any candidate agents who request them.

The head of the polling committee packs the ballot papers and results protocol, along with other documents and materials, and submits them to the preliminary registration committee, which is usually based in the administrative center of the district or governorate. Observers and candidate agents are allowed to observe the tabulation proceedings.

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<sup>33</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 86.

Preliminary registration committees receive the polling station results, examine the minutes, and take relevant actions related to disputed votes. They double-check the number of votes each candidate received before tabulating the results for a particular race from all polling stations. The tabulated results are then submitted to the relevant higher registration committee (HRC).

The HRC reviews the results submitted by the preliminary registration committee. It is only authorized to correct mathematical errors or typographical mistakes and does so as necessary. It then compiles the final results for municipal and *mukhtar* (mayoral) elections in a final table and generates a minutes form, which is signed by all the HRC members along with the results tabulation. The HRC, which is based at the administrative center of the governorate or district, then announces to the candidates and their agents the total number of votes that each candidate received.<sup>34</sup>

The HRC submits this information to the *muhafiz* (governor) or *qaemaqam* (district official), according to their responsibilities, as well as the final report and general schedule of results. In addition, the HRC prepares a receipt and delivery report to be signed by the *muhafiz* or *qaemaqam* and a member of the HRC designated by the committee's president.

The results, with the final report, are sent immediately to the MoIM, which announces the final official results and names of the winning candidates. The Minister then immediately communicates the results to the Speaker of Parliament and the President of the Constitutional Council.

### **When will official results be announced?**

The legal framework does not specify a timeframe for the announcement of election results. Typically, preliminary results, processed at the level of the higher registration committee, are announced within 24 to 48 hours. The official results from the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities are released within 48 to 72 hours.

### **Can election results be disputed?**

The State (Shura) Council is Lebanon's highest administrative court. It is tasked with adjudicating administrative disputes and providing legal advice to the government. It is a judicial, not legislative, institution.

The State Council is the competent authority responsible for adjudicating all disputes related to the validity of administrative councils, including the municipal and *mukhtar*

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<sup>34</sup> Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44/2017, Article 107.

(mayoral) councils, except in cases where the law explicitly assigns jurisdiction to other courts or authorities.<sup>35</sup>

The following parties are entitled to contest the validity of municipal and *mukhtar* councils:

- Any voter registered in the relevant constituency;
- Any individual who has legally submitted his or her candidacy; and
- The state, upon the request of the Minister of Interior and Municipalities.

Voters and candidates have 15 days from the announcement of results to file their appeals, while the State, represented by the MoIM, has a one-month window to do so.

Violations (particularly those that may influence the voting process or outcome) may lead to the annulment of the election, especially if they are deemed substantial and likely to alter the final result (notably, when the margin between the lowest-ranking winning candidate and the highest-ranking losing candidate is narrow). The State Council only considers such violations, whether criminal or procedural, when the appellant has formally submitted a complaint regarding the offense, or when candidate agents have documented their reservations, observations, or objections in the polling station protocol.

### **How will elections be organized in South Lebanon and Nabatieh, where villages and infrastructure have been destroyed in the recent regional conflict?**

The recent conflict destroyed at least 37 villages in the South and Nabatieh governorates. In addition, Israeli strikes on Hezbollah-linked targets continues, and Israel has maintained a military presence in locations across southern Lebanon.

Special measures are planned to address the challenges of conducting elections in these affected areas. The Minister of Interior and Municipalities had stated that alternative polling centers in nearby villages or pre-fabricated polling stations may be used for villages that remain destroyed, damaged, or unsafe.

On April 28, 2025, the governor of Nabatieh indicated that polling locations have been prepared in the border villages in coordination with the Council for South Lebanon, the municipalities, and the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, with the exception of Kfar Kila, whose residents will vote at an alternative polling location situated Al-Sabbah High School in Nabatieh.

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<sup>35</sup> Decree No. 10434, Article 109 (issued on June 14, 1975) as published in the official gazette on June 19, 1975: <http://77.42.251.205/LawView.aspx?opt=view&LawID=244736>

However, considering the fragile ceasefire, such plans might be modified depending on the security situation. Civil society organizations have expressed hope that this situation might prompt the adoption of “megacenters,” a reform that has been advocated for since 2018.<sup>36</sup>

Two Members of Parliament submitted a draft proposal to postpone the elections for a few months to allow for the implementation of megacenters and other reforms.<sup>37</sup> If elections in the destroyed villages are to be postponed or exempted, Parliament would need to amend Municipal Law No. 118/1977.

## Resources

Official MoIM website on elections: <https://elections.gov.lb/Home.aspx>

Official website for director general of civil status: <https://www.dgcs.gov.lb/>

## Disclosure

These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities as of April 2025 to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any International Foundation for Electoral Systems policy or technical recommendations.

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<sup>36</sup> Voters in Lebanon cast their ballots based on where their family records are registered, rather than where they currently reside or pay taxes. Megacenters – large, centralized polling stations – allow them to vote for races in their native district without having to travel there. Civil society has argued that megacenters would increase voter turnout and reduce the potential for voter influence and intimidation.

<sup>37</sup> <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1454328/municipalities-2025-a-technical-delay-proposal-that-never-stood-a-chance.html>