WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEBANON’S NEW ELECTORAL LAW

DEMOCRACY REPORTING INTERNATIONAL
A new electoral law, ratified in June 2017, replaces the 2008 law. After 8 years, parliamentary elections will be held. The 2018 election is based on a proportional law for the first time in Lebanese history. For the first time, Lebanese voters living abroad will be allowed to vote.
Elections are organised by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) that:
- maintains the voter lists
- registers candidates for the elections
- organises polling, counting and publication of the results
- deals with complaints
- supervise voters’ educations

Supervisory Election Commission, appointed by the government:
- ensures that candidates do not overspend for campaign purposes,
- provides voters education and ensures that private and public media provide equal opportunities for all candidates

This is not a new body, it is not independent from the government, but it gained a margin of autonomy compared with its status under the 2009 election, as the Minister of Interior and Municipalities is no longer the president of the Supervisory Election Commission.
WHO CAN VOTE?

**Lebanese citizens of 21 years of age.**

**Naturalised persons can vote only ten years after their naturalisation.**

**Citizens are registered on a permanent electoral register, which is updated once a year by the MoIM (in coordination with local authorities).**

**Citizens are registered in their place of family origin. This means they might have to vote at places where they do not necessarily reside any longer.**

**Citizens have one month between 1 February and 10 March (of every year) to check whether the data contained in the voter register are accurate and complete and if not, to ask correction with a Registration Committee (appointed by the MoIM).**

**Non-retired military personnel (including conscripts) and members of security forces cannot vote.**

**Persons who have been convicted of a felony or a specific offence, and those deprived of their civil rights (including fraudulent bankrupts) cannot vote.**
WHO DO YOU VOTE FOR?

128 members of the Parliament

- Muslim
- Christian

Each seat has a religious affiliation

11 confessional branches
- Sunni, Shiite, Druze, Alawite
- Maronite, Greek-Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, Armenian-Orthodox, Armenian-Catholic, Evangelical, Minorities

Candidates

- Naturalized citizens (minimum 10 years)
- <25 years old
- No criminal record

registration fees for candidates

- Fees have significantly increased compared with 2009 parliamentary elections.
- 8 million LBP

As a voter you can vote for whomever you want

candidates can only compete for seats that match their own religious affiliation

Campaign finance:
- 5,000 LBP may be spent per voter in the sub-district +
- 150 million LBP per candidate +
- 150 million per list

No women quota (only 4 women candidates have been elected at the 2009 elections).
ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Campaigning starts 90 days before E-day

The Commission is also responsible for ensuring "fairness" in access to the media for all candidates. There are also obligations for the media to ensure an overall balance and fairness in their coverage of the campaign.

After the election, candidates have 1 month to submit detailed campaign accounts to be audited by the Commission. Intentional breaches of the campaign financing provisions incur a fine or a prison sentence of up to 6 months.

Candidate lists are assigned specific locations for advertising materials.

Public buildings, private universities, schools and places of worship may not be used for campaigning.

On E-Day, no flyers distribution in or near polling stations is allowed.
Polling Station (opens 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM)
List of polling stations is published 20 days before E-Day

head officer + one or more clerks + two assistants + Authorized observers and agents

> 600 voters registered to vote in one polling station

Only official ballot papers can be used for voting (provided by the Ministry of the Interior and found in polling stations on election day).

Blank votes are counted with valid votes. This provides a means for voters to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the political offer.

Physically impaired persons unable to vote without help can be assisted to vote by another voter of their choice.
Votes are counted in polling stations in the presence of candidate agents and authorised observers. Also, journalists accredited by the Supervisory Commission may be present.

The results at polling station level are posted at the door of the polling station, and the Ministry of the Interior announces the results of the election. Losing candidates may challenge the election results before the Constitutional Council.
Do you want to learn more about the new electoral law?


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