

THE LEBANESE CONSTITUTION

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London

BUREAU OF LEBANESE AND ARAB DOCUMENTATION
1973.

THE LEBANESE CONSTITUTION

promulgated on 23 May 1926
modified by the constitutional laws of:

17	October	1927
8	May	1929
9	November	1943
7	December	1943
21	January	1947

TITLE 1. - FUNDAMENTAL PROVISIONS

CHAPTER 1. - THE STATE AND THE TERRITORY

Article 1. - (as modified by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943
article 1)

Lebanon is an independent State, unitarian and sovereign. Its fr
are those which now limit it:

IN THE NORTH: from the mouth of Nahr El Kebir, the line followin
course of this river up to its junction with its tributary the Ouade K
at the height of Jisr El Kamar.

IN THE EAST: the top line separating the valleys of Ouade Khalec
Ouade Nahr-El Assi (Orontes) and passing through the villages of Meays
Harbaana, Hait, Ebbech, Faissan, at the height of the villages Brifa a
Matrebeh. This line follows the northern limit of the caza of Baalbeck
towards the Northeast and Southeast, then the Eastern limits of the ca
of Baalbeck, Bekaa, Hasbaya and Rashaya.

IN THE SOUTH: the present southern limits of the cazas of Tyre :
Marjeyoun.

IN THE WEST: the Mediterranean Sea.

Article 2. - No part of the Lebanese territory may be alienated or ced

Article 3. - The limits of the administrative districts may not be
modified except by law.

Article 4. - The Greater Lebanon is a Republic. Beirut is its capital city.

Article 5. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 7 December 1943 sole article).

The Lebanese flag is composed of three horizontal stripes two red stripes framing a white one. The top of the white stripe is equal to double of the red stripes. In the center of the white stripe figures a green tree the width of which occupies the third of the latter and which, at top and base, touches each of the red stripes.

CHAPTER 2. - THE LEBANESE NATIONALS, THEIR RIGHTS AND THEIR DUTIES

Article 6. - The Lebanese nationality, the way it is acquired, is retained and forfeited, shall be determined by law.

Article 7. - All the Lebanese are equal before the law. They enjoy equal civil and political rights and are equally subjected to public charges and duties, without any distinction whatever.

Article 8. - Individual liberty is guaranteed and protected. No one can be arrested or detained except in accordance with the provisions of the law. No infringements and no sanctions can be established except by law.

Article 9. - Liberty of conscience is absolute. By rendering homage to Almighty, the State respects all creeds and guarantees and protects their free exercise, on condition that they do not interfere with public order. It also guarantees to individuals, whatever their religious allegiance, the respect of their personal status and their religious interests.

Article 10. - Education is free so long as it is not contrary to public order and to good manners and does not touch the dignity of creeds. No derogation shall affect the right of communities to have their schools subject to the general prescriptions on public education edicted by the State.

Article 11. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943 article 2).

Arabic is the official national language. A law shall determine where the French language is to be used.

Article 12. - All Lebanese citizens are equally admitted to all public functions without any other cause for preference except their merit and competence and according to the conditions set by law. A special statute shall govern Civil Servants according to the administrations to which they belong.

Article 13. - Freedom of expression by word or pen, freedom of the press, freedom of holding meetings and freedom of association are equally guaranteed within the framework of the law.

Article 14. - Domicile is unviolable. None can enter it except in the cases provided by the law and according to the form it prescribes.

Article 15. - Property is under the protection of the law. None can be deprived of his property except in cases established by the law and in return of public utility, in cases established by the law and in return of public utility and fair compensation.

TITLE II. - POWERS

CHAPTER I. - GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 16. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1993, Article 1)

Legislature lies with a single assembly: the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 17. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, Article 2)

Executive power is entrusted to the President of the Republic who exercises it with the assistance of Ministers, according to conditions established by the present constitution.

Article 18. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1993, Article 50)

Initiative for legislation belongs to the President of the Republic and the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 19. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1993, Article 50)

In order that a law may be promulgated, it must have been voted by the Chamber.

Article 20. - Judicial power functioning within the framework of the law and ensuring essential guarantees to judges and the disputing parties is exercised by courts of different order and degree. The law fixes the limits and the conditions of the magistrates' tenure of office. Judges are independent in the exercise of their functions. The awards and judgments of all courts are rendered and executed in the name of the Republic.

the Lebanese people.

Article 21. - Any Lebanese citizen aged 21 who meets the conditions of the electoral law is entitled to vote.

CHAPTER 2.- THE LEGISLATURE

Article 22. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990 article 50)

Article 23. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990 article 50)

Article 24. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1990 article 1)

The Chamber of Deputies is composed of elected members: their number and conditions of their election are determined by the electoral laws in force.

Article 25. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1990 article 1)

In the event of the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies, the President of the Republic must convene the voters for new elections which shall be held in conformity with article 24 and within a time-limit not exceeding three months.

CHAPTER 3. - GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 26. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990 article 3)

The Chamber and the Executive sit in Beirut.

Article 27. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1990 article 1)

The Chamber member represents all the Nation. No imperative mandate is given him by his electors.

Article 28. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 8 May 1990 article 1)

No incompatibility exists between a deputy's mandate and ministerial office. Ministers may be taken indistinctively either from the Chamber or from outside.

Article 29. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990 article 6)

Cases of inaptness to the quality of deputy are determined by law.

Article 30. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1990 article 1)

The Chamber of Deputies is solely competent to adjudicate the validity of its members' mandate. No mandate may be invalidated except by a two-thirds majority vote of the whole Assembly.

Article 31. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990 Article 8)

Any sitting of the Chamber outside the legal time of session is null and void as a matter of course.

Article 32. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990 article 9)

The Chamber convenes every year in two ordinary sessions. The first opens on the first Tuesday following the 15th March and terminates at the end of the month of May. The second opens on the first Tuesday following the 1st October. It is devoted before any other business to budget debate and It lasts until the end of the year.

Article 33. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990 article 10)

The opening and winding up of ordinary sessions take place as a matter of right on the dates fixed by article 32.

The President of the Republic may convene the Chamber to an emergency session. The opening and winding up of emergency sessions are fixed by decree.

The day's Agenda thereof is fixed by the decree of convocation.

The President of the Republic is bound to convene the Chamber of Deputies if so requested by the absolute majority of its members.

Article 34. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990 article 11)

The Chamber may not be validly constituted except with the attendance of the majority of the members legally composing it.

Resolutions are adopted by majority vote. In the event of a tie under debate is rejected.

Article 35. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October article 12)

Debates in the Chamber are public. However, the Chamber convenes committee upon Government request or of five of its members. It then decides if the debate must be resumed in public on the same subject.

Article 36. - Voting is expressed in a loud voice or by sitting standing, except in the event of an election, in which case ballot is secret. On laws as a whole and on the matter of confidence voting is a by nominal call and in a loud voice.

Article 37. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 8 May 19 article 2)

The right of every deputy to question the responsibility of Ministers absolute during the ordinary and emergency sessions.

No motion of this nature may be debated and voted upon except if least after it has been tabled before the Chamber of Deputies and communicated to the Minister of Ministers concerned.

Article 38. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October article 14)

Any Bill which has not been rejected by the Chamber may not be tabled more in the course of the same session.

Article 39. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October article 15)

No member of the Chamber may be prosecuted for his expression of opinion or votes during the term of his mandate.

Article 40. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October article 16)

No member of the Chamber may, while the session is in progress, be prosecuted or arrested for breach of the penal law - barring cases of flagrante delicto - except with the approval of the Chamber.

Article 41. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January article 1)

When a seat in the Chamber has become vacant, the vacancy shall be filled within a time-limit of two months. The term of office of the new member

shall run up to the expiry of the term of office of his predecessor.

No steps shall be taken to fill the vacancy if the Chamber is less than six months away from the expiry of its powers.

Article 42. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1994, article 1)

General elections for the renewal of the Assembly are held within sixty days which precede the end of its term of office.

Article 43. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1994, article 19)

The Chamber drafts its own internal regulations.

Article 44. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1994, article 1)

At the first sitting which follows every renewal and on the opening October session, the Chamber meeting under the presidency of its senior member, the two youngest members acting as secretaries, elects separately by secret ballot and the absolute majority of the expressed votes, a president (Speaker), a vice-president, and two secretaries. At the second ballot, relative majority is sufficient.

In the event of a tie, the oldest is declared elected.

Article 45. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1994, article 21)

The members of the Chamber do not vote except if they attend the session. Voting by proxy is not admitted.

Article 46. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1994, article 22)

Only the Chamber is entitled to maintain its own order, through its president.

Article 47. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1994, article 23)

Any petition to the Chamber must be made out and communicated in writing. It is forbidden to hand in petitions in person or on the floor.

Article 48. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1994, article 24)

Indemnity to the members of the Chamber is determined by law.

CHAPTER 4. THE EXECUTIVE

Article 49. - (As modified by the constitutional laws of 8 May 1947, article 3, and 21 January 1947, article 2)

The President of the Republic is elected by secret ballot at a majority of the votes, by the Chamber of Deputies. After the first ballot, an absolute majority suffices. The President's term of office is of six years. He may not be re-elected except after a break of six years.

None is eligible as President of the Republic if he does not meet the conditions required to be eligible to the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 50. - Before entering upon his duties, the President of the Republic takes the oath of allegiance to the Lebanese Nation and the Constitution, before Parliament, in the following terms:

"I swear by Almighty God to observe the Constitution and the laws of the Lebanese people, to safeguard the independence of Lebanon and the integrity of its territory. "

Article 51. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1947, article 26)

The President of the Republic promulgates laws when they have been adopted by the Chamber; he sees to their execution; he is vested with regulatory powers though he may not modify the laws themselves nor exempt from their execution.

He has the power of pardon. Amnesties may not be granted except in cases provided for by law.

Article 52. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 9 November 1947, article 3)

The President of the Lebanese Republic negotiates and ratifies international treaties. He brings them to the knowledge of the Chamber as soon as the interest and safety of the State permit.

Treaties involving State finances, trade agreements and in general international treaties which cannot be denounced at the end of each calendar year, are not definitive except after they have been voted by the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 53. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1)

The President of the Republic appoints and dismisses the Ministers of State whom he designates a President for the Council of Ministers; he nominates to all posts for which the mode of appointment is not otherwise determined by law; he presides over national official functions.

Article 54. - Each of the acts of the President of the Republic : counter- signed by the Minister or Ministers concerned, except however the case of the nomination or revocation of a Minister.

Article 55. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 8 May 19 article 4)

The President of the Republic may, by motivated decree taken on favourable advice of the Council of Ministers, dissolve the Chamber of Deputies, before the expiry of its term of office.

In this case, the electing bodies are gathered as provided in a and the new Chamber is convened within the fifteen clear days following proclamation of the election results.

Article 56. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October article 30)

The President of the Republic promulgates laws within the calendar which follows the communication to the Government of the law definitively passed; he must promulgate within five clear days those laws whose promulgation has been declared a matter of urgency by special vote of Chamber.

Article 57. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October article 31)

Within the time-limit fixed for promulgation, the President of the Republic may once ask for a new debate which may not be denied him.

When the President of the Republic uses this right, he is not bound to promulgate a law unless this law has been passed by the Chamber after second debate by absolute majority of the members legally composing the Assembly.

Article 58. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 32)

By decree already taken on the favourable advice of the Council of Ministers, the President of the Republic may render executory any project of law which has previously been declared urgent by the Government by the decision of transmission taken on the favourable advice of the Council of Ministers and on which the Chamber has not adjudicated within the forty days following its communication to the Assembly.

Article 59. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October article 33)

The President of the Republic may adjourn the Chamber for a period

exceeding one month. He may not do so twice in the same session.

Article 60. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947 article 1)

The President of the Republic is not responsible for the acts or functions except in cases of breach to the Constitution or high treason.

His responsibility for offences of common law is submitted to ordinary laws.

For such offences, as for breach of the Constitution and high treason, he may not be impeached except by the Chamber of Deputies deciding by a two-thirds majority of the members of the whole Assembly; he is tried by the Higher Court provided in article 80. Public prosecutorship before the Higher Court is exercised by a magistrate appointed by the highest jurisdiction, with all the chambers meeting.

Article 61. - When indicted, the President of the Republic is suspended from his functions and the Presidency is vacant until the Higher Court adjudicates.

Article 62. - In case of vacancy of the Presidency of the Republic for whatever reason this may be, executive power is exercised, provisionally, by the Council of Ministers.

Article 63. - The civil list of the President of the Republic is determined by law. During the President's tenure of office it may be neither increased nor reduced.

Article 70. - The Chamber of Deputies is entitled to arraign Ministers for high treason or for serious dereliction of their incumbent duties. Committal for trial may not be decided except by a two-thirds majority of the whole Assembly. A special law shall determine the civil responsibilities of Ministers.

Article 71. - The Minister committed for trial is judged by the Higher Court.

Article 72. - The Minister relinquishes his post as soon as he has been committed for trial. A Minister's resignation does not preclude the initiation or pursuance of proceedings against him.

TITLE III. -

a) ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Article 73. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990)

article 38)

At least one month and at the latest two months before the expiration of the powers of the President of the Republic, the Chamber convenes on the invitation of its Speaker, for the election of a new President.

In default of a convocation, the meeting shall be held as a matter of right the tenth day before the end of the President's term of office.

Article 74. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1959, article 39)

Article 64. - Ministers assume the higher management of all the services pertaining to their respective departments. Each, within his competence, sees to the enforcement of the laws and regulations.

Article 65. - No one may be a Minister if he is not a Lebanese.

Article 66. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1959, article 34)

Ministers are severally responsible before the Chamber for the general policy and individually for their personal acts. The Government's overall program is prepared and presented to the Chamber by the President of the Council or by a Minister acting in his name.

Article 67. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1959, article 35)

Ministers may come to the Chamber without let or hindrance and may be themselves heard whenever they please. They may seek the assistance of one or several Civil Servants of their department.

Article 68. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1959, article 36)

When, in conformity with article 37, the Chamber declares it has no confidence in a Minister, this Minister is required to resign.

Article 69. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 8 May 1929, article 5)

Should the presidency become vacant through death, resignation or any other cause, the Assembly meets immediately and as a matter of right to elect a new President. If at the time the vacancy occurs, the Chamber happens to be dissolved, the electoral bodies are summoned without delay and, soon after the elections are held, the Chamber meets as a matter of right.

Article 75. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990, article 40)

The Chamber meeting to elect the President of the Republic consists of an electing body and not a deliberating assembly.

It must proceed solely, without delay or debate, with the election of the Head of the State.

b) REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Article 76. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990, article 41)

The Constitution may be revised on the initiative of the President of the Republic.

In this event, the government shall table before the Assembly a constitutional law.

Article 77. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990, article 42)

The Constitution may equally be revised on the initiative of the Assembly of Deputies. This right is exercised in the following manner:

In the course of an ordinary session and on the proposal of at least one-tenth of its members, the Chamber may voice the desire, by a two-thirds majority of the members legally composing it, that the Constitution should be revised. The articles and questions covered by this desire are to be specifically enumerated and clarified.

The Speaker conveys the wish to the Government, requesting it to draft a constitutional law.

If the Government approves the Assembly's desire, it must prepare a relevant draft law and table it before the Assembly within four months. If the Government is at variance with the Assembly, its desire is sent back to the Assembly for a further deliberation. If the Chamber maintains its desire at a two-thirds majority of the members legally composing it, the President of the Republic is at liberty, either to acquiesce to the Assembly's desire or issue a decree of dissolution, and take steps for new elections within a time-limit of three months.

Should the new Assembly insist on the need for revision, the Government is compelled to acquiesce to the wish of the Assembly and to table a draft law within a time-limit of four months.

c) OPERATION OF THE ASSEMBLY

Article 78. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990)
Article 43)

When the draft constitutional law has been tabled before it, the Assembly must engage itself in no other business but that of revision, until the final vote.

It may not deliberate and vote except those articles and issues which have been set down for the sake of limitation and clarified in the project communicated.

Article 79. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1990)
article 44)

The Chamber of Deputies, with a draft constitutional law before it, may not validly deliberate and vote except when a two-thirds majority of its members legally composing it attend. Deliberations are carried by a two-thirds majority of the members legally composing the Assembly.

The President of the Republic is bound to promulgate the constitutional law in the same conditions and forms as ordinary laws. He may, within the time-limit fixed for promulgation, require a new deliberation. This shall equally be proceeded with by a two-thirds majority.

TITLE IV. - VARIOUS PROVISIONS

a) THE HIGHER COURT

Article 80. - (As modified by the constitutional Law of 17 October 1990)
article 45)

The Higher Court is composed of seven deputies elected by the Chamber of Deputies and by eight of the highest Lebanese magistrates, selected by order of hierarchy or, at equal rank, by order of seniority, under the chairmanship of the top grade magistrate.

Verdicts of condemnation by the Higher Court are rendered by a majority of six votes. A law shall determine the procedure to be followed in this Court.

b) FINANCE

Article 81. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1990)

article 1)

Taxes are established for public utility. No taxes may be levied in the Lebanese Republic except in conformity with a uniform law applicable to the whole territory without exception.

Article 82. - No tax may be modified or suppressed except by law.

Article 83. - Every year, early in the October session, the Government submits to the Chamber of Deputies, for examination and approval, the general budget of State revenue and expenditure for the following year. The budget is voted article by article.

Article 84. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1959, article 46)

In the course of the budget debate and the discussion of the Bill providing for the opening of supplementary and emergency credits, the Chamber may not increase the credits proposed in the draft budget or in the above-mentioned projects, either through amendment or through independent proposals. But once this debate is over, the Assembly may pass laws providing for new expenditures.

Article 85. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1959, article 1)

No emergency credit may be opened except by special law.

However, when unpredictable circumstances have made urgent expenditures necessary, the President of the Republic may, by decree passed on the favourable advice of the Council of Ministers, open emergency or supplementary credits, or operate credit transfers. Such credits may not exceed 15,000 pounds per article.

The measures so enacted are submitted to the ratification of the Assembly at the first session following,

Article 86. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1959, article 48)

If the Chamber of Deputies has not definitively dealt with the draft budget project before the expiry of the session devoted to the examination of the budget, the President of the Republic shall summon the Assembly to an extraordinary session expiring at the end of January to proceed with the budget debate; if at the end of that extraordinary session the budget has not been finalised, the President of the Republic may, by decree passed on the favourable advice of the Council of Ministers, make the draft budget executive in the form in which it was tabled before the Chamber.

The President may not exercise this power except if the draft has been tabled before the Chamber at least fifteen days before the beginning of the session.

In the course of that extraordinary session, taxes, contributions, fees and other revenue continue to be levied as previously.

The expenditures of the month of January are initiated on the basis of a provisional twelfth of the preceding financial year, increased by permanent additional credits and reduced by the permanent credits withdrawn.

Article 87. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1959, article 49)

The final account of the finance administration for the closed financial year must be submitted to the Chamber and approved before the promulgation of the budget of the second financial year following that to which the account refers. An Audit Department shall be created by special law.

Article 88. - No public loan and no commitment likely to burden the Treasury may be transacted except by virtue of a law.

Article 89. - No concession aiming at the exploitation of a natural resource of the country or a public utility service, nor any monopoly, may be granted except by virtue of a law and for a limited period.

TITLE V

Article 90. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 9 November 1959, article 4)

Article 91. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 9 November 1959, article 4)

Article 92. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 9 November 1959, article 4)

Article 93 - Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 2)

Article 94. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 9 November 1959, article 4)

TITLE VI. - FINAL AND TRANSITORY PROVISIONS

Article 95. - (As modified by the constitutional law of 9 November 1959, article 4)

article 5)

As a transitory measure and for the sake of even justice and co
communities shall be equally represented in public posts and in minist
composition, without damage to State interest resulting therefrom.

Article 96. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January
article 2)

Article 97. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January
article 2)

Article 98. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January
article 2)

Article 99. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January
article 2)

Article 100. - (Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January
article 2)

Article 101. - As from 1 September 1926, the State of "Greater Le
shall bear the name of "Lebanese Republic", without change or modifica
of any other kind.

Article 102 - (As modified by the constitutional law of 9 Novemb
article 6)

All legislative provisions contrary to the present constitution
abrogated