LEBANON COUNTRY ASSESSMENT:

October 2001

Country Information and Policy Unit

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1. SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT

1.10 This assessment has been produced by the Country Information & Policy Unit, Immigration & Nationality Directorate, Home Office, from information obtained from a variety of sources.

1.11 The assessment has been prepared for background purposes for those involved in the asylum determination process. The information it contains is not exhaustive; neither is it intended to catalogue all human rights violations. It concentrates on the issues most commonly raised in asylum claims made in the United Kingdom.

1.12 The assessment is sourced throughout. It is intended to be used by caseworkers as a signpost to the source material, which has been made available to them. The vast majority of the source material is readily available in the public domain.

1.13 It is intended to revise the assessment on a 6-monthly basis while the country remains within the top 35 asylum producing countries in the United Kingdom.

1.14 The assessment will be placed on the Internet (http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/). An electronic copy of the assessment has been made available to the following organisations:

Amnesty International UK
Immigration Advisory Service
Immigration Appellate Authority
Immigration Law Practitioners' Association
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
JUSTICE
Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture
Refugee Council
Refugee Legal Centre
UN High Commissioner for Refugees

2. GEOGRAPHY

2.10 The Republic of Lebanon lies in western Asia, bordered by Syria to the north and east, and by Israel and the Palestinian National Authority to the south. The country has a coastline of about 220 km (135 miles) on the Eastern Shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The country consists of 5 administrative regions (Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Beka'a, North and South and Nabatiyah.) which cover an area of 10,452 square kilometres. The capital city is Beirut. [1,2(a)]

2.11 The population is estimated at between 3.1 and 4.2 million (no official census has been taken in Lebanon since 1932 because of the potentially volatile issue of political power and confessional balance). The official language is Arabic, which is spoken by almost all of the inhabitants. French is widely used as a second language, while Kurdish and Armenian are spoken by small ethnic minorities. [1,2(a), 3,41]

3. HISTORY

POLITICAL HISTORY

3.10 Lebanon became part of Turkey's Ottoman Empire in the 16th century. When the Ottoman Empire was dissolved, following the end of the First World War (1914 - 1918), a Greater Lebanese state was created by the Allied powers. The new state was a response to the nationalist aspirations of the predominant Christian population in the area, but it included territories traditionally considered to be part of Syria, with largely Muslim populations. Lebanon was administered by France, under a League of Nations mandate, from 1920 until independence was declared on 26 November 1941. A republic was established in 1943, and full autonomy was granted to the new state in January 1944. [1,3]

3.11 Lebanon is characterized by great religious and cultural diversity. At the time of independence, Christians formed a slight majority of the population, the largest single community (nearly 30% of the total) being the Maronite Christians, who mostly inhabited the north of the country and Beirut. Other Christian groups included Greek Orthodox communities, Greek Catholics and Armenians. The main Muslim groups were the Sunnis (living mainly in the coastal towns of Tyre, Sidon and Beirut), the Shi'as (a predominantly rural community in southern Lebanon and the northern Beka'a valley) and the much smaller Druzes, an ancient community in central Lebanon with unorthodox Islamic beliefs. Inter-community rivalries have been endemic, but until the 1970's were generally kept within bounds by a complex confessional system, enshrined in the 1943 National Pact. Under this system executive and legislative posts were to be shared in the ratio of six Christians to five Muslims, and seats in the Chamber of Deputies (renamed the National Assembly in 1979) were distributed on a religious, rather than an ideological basis. By convention the President was a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim and the Speaker of Parliament a Shi'a Muslim. [1,3]

3.12 The demographic justification for Christian Maronite domination of the system has long since disappeared with a rapid increase in the Shi'a population. At the end of the civil war in 1990 the estimated population breakdown was: Shi'as 32 per cent, Maronites 24 per cent, Sunnis 21 per cent, Druzes 7 per cent, others 16 per cent. [2(a), 3]

3.13 Following the establishment of Israel in 1948 and during the subsequent Arab-Israeli wars, thousands of Palestinians sought refuge in camps in Lebanon. The creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 led to military training centres for Palestinian guerillas being established in these camps. These guerillas or 'fedayeen' (martyrs) began making raids into Israel in 1968, with the Israeli forces retaliating with attacks against targets in southern Lebanon. In 1969 there were clashes between Lebanese security forces and the fedayeen, and many Christians, particularly the Maronites, advocated strict government control over the Palestinians' activities. In contrast, the majority of Muslims were strong supporters of the Palestinians' operations against Israel. [1]

3.14 An influx of Palestinian fighters who had been expelled from Jordan in July 1971 led to further destabilisation of the population. Conflict between Israeli forces and Palestinians based in Lebanon intensified, while Christian groups began their own armed campaign to control the fedayeen. In July 1974 there were clashes between Palestinian forces and the armed members of the Phalangist Party (the Phalanges Libanaises, also known as al-Kata'eb, a militant right-wing Maronite Christian group). [1,3]

3.15 In April 1975 there was further conflict between Phalangists and Palestinians. The government was unable to control the violence and the conflict quickly developed into a

full-scale civil war between the religious communities. Although the initial cause of the violence was the status of Palestinians, the constitutional order of the state soon became the main divisive issue. The Muslim groups advocated an end to the confessional political system, which they claimed favoured Christians. [1]

3.16 Numerous attempts to mediate in the civil war were made by Arab and Western states, but no durable cease-fire was achieved until October 1976, after the Syrian forces intervened at Lebanese request initially to prevent a Christian defeat. The presence of the Syrian forces was subsequently authorised by an Arab League mandate as the "Arab Deterrent Force." However, intermittent fighting continued and an estimated 10% of the population was killed or wounded between 1975 and 1982. The militias of the various warring factions were left in control of most of the country. [1,3]

3.17 In June 1982 Israeli forces entered Lebanon with the declared objective of finally eliminating the PLO's military threat to Israel's northern border. A Multinational Force (MNF) of US, French and Italian contingents was deployed in Beirut after the Israeli siege of the city, to supervise the evacuation of the PLO fighters to various Arab countries. The MNF returned in September following the assassination of Bashir Gemayel (the President-elect) and the subsequent massacres committed by Christian Phalangist forces in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila. A British contingent (of approximately 100) joined the MNF in February 1983. In early 1984 fighting erupted even more intensely than before, and in response to this deterioration of the security situation the MNF was withdrawn in the Spring. [1,3]

3.18 The new Israeli Government, formed in September 1984, pledged to withdraw Israeli forces from Lebanon. The Lebanese government demanded that the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) be permitted to police the Israeli-Lebanese border. However, when the last phase of the Israeli withdrawal was completed in June 1985, Israel maintained a buffer zone along the border, between 10 km and 20 km wide, to be policed by the pro-Israeli South Lebanese Army. With the Israeli presence in Lebanon reduced to a token force, Syria withdrew 10,000-12,000 troops from the Beka'a valley in July, leaving some 25,000 in position. [1,3]

3.19 In December 1985 the leaders of the three main Lebanese militias (the Druze forces, Amal and the military arm of the Christian Phalangist Party, the LF) signed an accord in Damascus, providing for an immediate cease-fire and for the cessation of the civil war within one year. However, tension within the Christian community over the Accord led to the Lebanese Forces (LF) coup of January 1986 in which the pro-Accord leaders of the LF were replaced, ending any hope that the Accord could be implemented. [1,3]

3.20 The period 1986-1988 saw numerous militia clashes. Heavy fighting in February 1987 in West Beirut between Amal (Shi'a group) and a coalition of left-wing forces headed by the Druze militia, led to Syrian military intervention. Other clashes were mainly between Amal, Hizbollah (Shi'ite fundamentalist groups) and the Palestinians. These encounters were refereed by the Syrians (who controlled arms supplies to both Amal and Hizbollah) with occasional Iranian intervention. [3]

3.21 Lebanon slipped further into crisis in September 1988 when the Parliament failed to elect a successor to Maronite President Amin Gemayel, after the required quorum was not achieved. Gemayel's final act was to appoint the Maronite commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, General Aoun, as Prime Minister. The legitimacy of this government was disputed by the acting Prime Minister of the previous administration, Selim Hoss (a Sunni). This led to the establishment of two rival governments in Lebanon

and virtual partition along sectarian lines. The Christians held East Beirut and the Muslims West Beirut. [1,2(a), 3]

3.22 The rivalry erupted into fighting in March 1989 following Aoun's blockade of the ports in South Beirut. There was heavy shelling of the Christian enclave by Syrian forces, returned by Aoun's troops. [1,3]

3.23 In September 1989 the Tripartite Arab Committee on Lebanon announced a new peace plan. A seven point "charter of national reconciliation" was approved by the Syrian Government and the leaders of Lebanon's Muslim militias. Aoun reluctantly approved the charter when he found himself to be diplomatically isolated. A cease-fire accordingly took effect on 23 September. The National Assembly subsequently met and approved the charter in Taif, Saudi Arabia. Known as the Taif Accord, the charter provided for the transfer of executive power from the presidency to a cabinet, with portfolios divided equally among Christian and Muslim ministers, while the number of seats in the National Assembly was to be increased from 99 to 128 and divided equally among Christian and Muslim deputies. The Taif Accord also included an outline timetable for Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon and the disbandment of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias. [1,2(a), 3]

3.24 The Taif Accord was ratified by a meeting of the National Assembly in Kleat, Northern Lebanon, on 5 November which also elected Rene Moawad, a Maronite Christian, as President. Aoun, however, declared the presidential election unconstitutional and announced that he would hold elections himself in 1990. Following the assassination of Moawad on 22 November his successor, Elias Hrawi, immediately removed Aoun from his command of the Lebanese Armed Forces, surrounding the Christian enclave with Syrian troops. [1,3]

3.25 An anticipated Syrian attack on the enclave did not materialise as, from January 1990 until mid-May, East Beirut was locked in an intra-Christian war between the Lebanese Armed Forces loyal to Aoun, and Samir Geagea's Lebanese Forces militia. Aoun remained in the enclave, resisting all pressure to accept the Taif Accord or join a national unity government, until 13 October 1990 when Syrian forces, invited by President Hrawi, launched an air attack to force Aoun's surrender. Aoun took refuge in the French Embassy in Beirut where he stayed for nearly a year before going into exile in France. [1,3]

3.26 Since the overthrow of Aoun, great progress has been made towards implementing the Taif Accord and restoring stability in Lebanon. Beirut has been unified, the port officially re-opened and militias expelled or disbanded (with the exception of Hizbollah who maintained armaments in the Beka'a valley and in southern Lebanon, in order to continue the struggle against Israel's occupation). President Hrawi made determined efforts to extend the Government's authority through the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces under the widely respected General Lahoud. The Lebanese Armed Forces now control many positions in the South and took over UNIFIL positions when the UN peacekeeping force cut back its operations. The government in Beirut, however, remains heavily under the influence of the Syrians and it is still doubtful if the Lebanese Armed Forces could control the whole of the country without the Syrian army's presence. Under the Taif and subsequent agreements Syrian troops were to have withdrawn to the Beka'a Valley on the eastern frontier with Syria by mid-1992, however, some 35,000 Syrian troops remain stationed in much of the country. [1,2(a), 3,4(a)]

3.27 Syria has consolidated its position in Lebanon through a series of accords between the two countries. On 22 May 1991 the Syrian/Lebanon Fraternity Treaty was signed which established formal structures for the creation of links in a wide variety of fields but with particular emphasis on security and foreign policy. [1,2(a), 3]

3.28 Elections were held in August 1992 for the first time in 20 years. The elections passed off peacefully though not without controversy. There were many irregularities reported and the Maronite community boycotted them, on the grounds that the continued Syrian presence would prejudice their outcome. The overall turnout was low, at about 30%. [1,2(a), 3,5(a)]
3.29 Following the elections Rafik Hariri was appointed Prime Minister. A Lebanese born Saudi businessman, he had no previous political experience. [1,2(a), 3]
3.30 In March 1994, following terrorist attacks on Christian targets in Beirut, the Government proscribed the Lebanese Forces - the military wing of the Phalangist Party - for allegedly having promoted the establishment of a Christian enclave and, hence, the country's partition. A trial against the LF leader, Samir Geagea, began in November 1994 in Beirut. Geagea was charged with organizing a terrorist attack on a Maronite church in Beirut in late February 1994. [1,2(a)] It was feared that the trial would provoke further disaffection among Lebanon's Maronite community, which was far from reconciled to the post-Taif, Syrian dominated Lebanese order. [1,3] In July 1996, Geagea was acquitted of charges relating to the bombing, but sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for "maintaining a militia in the guise of a political party" and "dealing with military weapons and explosives". [5(a), 8(c)] (See Paragraph 3.44)
3.31 Hariri reacted to the difficulties presented by Lebanese politics by tendering his resignation on a number of occasions. Each time, a Syrian-brokered compromise allowed him to return with a strengthened position, but this confirmation of Syria's controlling influence was not welcome to many Lebanese. In September 1993 Hariri threatened to resign as a result of being publicly rebuked by Damascus for his decision to deploy troops in southern Lebanon. In May 1994 he "resigned" in protest at not getting his way over a proposed cabinet reshuffle and in December 1994 he resigned due to his frustration at perceived attempts within the National Assembly to obstruct Lebanon's economic reconstruction. Hariri resigned again in May 1995 because of clashes with Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri over the issue of the presidential succession. On this occasion he was able to form a new Cabinet which omitted two of his main opponents. [1,3]
3.32 On 19 October 1995 the Lebanese National Assembly voted to amend Article 49 of the Constitution and thereby extended for a further three years the term of office of President Hrawi, which would otherwise have concluded in November 1995. [1]
3.33 Fighting in southern Lebanon continued throughout the 1990s. Israel continued to occupy part of south Lebanon until May 2000 - its self-declared “security zone” - and control the area through Israeli Defence Force soldiers and a Lebanese militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA). UN troops (UNIFIL) were deployed in Lebanon outside the security zone but could intervene in the fighting. Hizbollah remained armed and active in its war of resistance against Israeli occupation. Violence and tension in the South periodically escalated in a series of attacks and reprisals by both sides. On 25 July 1993 Israeli Armed Forces launched their heaviest artillery and air attacks on targets in southern Lebanon since 1982, with the declared aim of eradicating the threat posed by Hizbollah and Palestinian guerillas. The Israeli operation displaced as many as 300,000 civilians towards the north and caused many civilian casualties. On 11 April 1996 Israeli armed forces began an intense, sustained campaign of artillery and air attacks on Hizbollah targets. These included, for the first time since 1982, attacks on the southern suburbs of Beirut. The declared aim of the campaign, code-named "Grapes of Wrath", was to achieve the complete cessation of rocket attacks by Hizbollah on settlements in northern Israel. The campaign ended with an US-French brokered cease-fire, which took effect on

27 April 1996. [1,3] The so-called “April understandings" prohibited acts of war against civilians or the initiation of such acts from civilian areas. [51]
3.34 In July 1996 the first meeting took place of an international committee formed to monitor the cease-fire agreement concluded between Israel and Hizbollah in April. The Israel/Lebanese Monitoring Group (ILMG) consisted of representatives of the US, France, Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Despite the cease-fire agreement, clashes between Hizbollah and the Israel forces and the SLA continued to claim civilian as well as military lives. [1,4(b), 6]
3.35 Parliamentary elections took place in August and September 1996. Some 189 candidates contested the seats and the voter turnout, about 45 per cent, was significantly higher than that in 1992. [1,5(a)]
3.36 In late October 1996 Hariri was appointed for a third term of office as Prime Minister. [1]
3.37 The former leader of Hizbollah, Sheikh Subhi al-Tufayli, re-emerged from political obscurity in the summer of 1997, by launching a "hunger revolt" in the Bekaa valley to press the government to help the poor. He called on Beka'a residents to prevent government ministers and officials from visiting the area until his demands were met, a move that prompted the army to strengthen its presence in the area. [4(g), 7(b)] Tufayli had resigned from the Hizbollah leadership in 1992, in disagreement with the party's decision to join parliamentary elections. [4(g)]
3.38 On 24 January 1998, the Hizbollah leadership announced that it was expelling Tufayli from the party. Tufayli and about 200 of his followers then seized a Hizbollah religious seminary in Baalbek on 30 January 1998. Hizbollah decided to refrain from engaging in a military confrontation with Tufayli and his supporters, and left the Lebanese army to deal with the occupation. The gunmen ignored an ultimatum to evacuate the building and surrender to the authorities, which led to heavy fighting in which at least 8 people died with many more wounded. [7(b), 17(a), 21] Tufayli and 20 of his supporters escaped capture by the army. [17(a), 18(c)]
3.39 In April 1998, a riot erupted in Rumieh Central Prison in Beirut, the country’s largest facility, with prisoners complaining of overcrowding and ill treatment. The incident sparked calls from human rights organisations for urgent reform in prison conditions. [8(d), 9(d)]
3.40 In May and June 1998, the first local elections in 35 years took place. They were held amid strict security measures, with Lebanese army units deployed at strategic points and around polling stations. [12(d), 18(d)] The elections were reported to be relatively free and lively and "one the most civilized and democratic" that Lebanon has ever witnessed. [22(a), 23(a)] Opposition groups made strong gains in the ballot, including right-wing Christian groups, who oppose Syria's presence in Lebanon. [7(c), 12(d), 23(a)]
3.41 On 15 October 1998, the National Assembly formally elected General Emile Lahoud as Lebanon's 11th post-independence president in an election said to be heavily influenced by Syria. Parliament altered the constitution on a one-time basis to allow his election as otherwise his being the then commander of the army would have barred him from running for president. There was broad popular support for Lahoud becoming president. He was sworn into office on 24 November 1998. In his inaugural address he said he would focus on deepening the rule of law and fighting corruption. [5(c), 30(c), 30(d), 35(a), 36(a)]
3.42 Following his swearing in, Gen. Lahoud asked incumbent Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri to form the government. Mr al-Hariri declined the invitation. Following parliamentary consultations the President asked Dr Salim al-Huss to form a government. [18(g), 18(h)]

The new Prime Minister stated that his actions would proceed from the guidelines in the President's inaugural speech, with reducing the budget deficit being the top priority, with other issues mentioned including the liberation of occupied southern Lebanon and Western Biqa and completing the return of the displaced persons. The new government, featuring a 16 member cabinet rather than 30 as previously, is reported to reflect a move away from politicians connected with the different factions who disputed Lebanon during the civil war and a move towards technocrats. [4(s), 18(i), 18(j)]

3.43 Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak was voted into office in May 1999, having pledged to withdraw the Israeli Defence Force from southern Lebanon by July 2000. His stated intention was to do this within the framework of an agreement with Syria and Lebanon. [39]

3.44 Three former Lebanese Forces militiamen were sentenced to death in absentia, and LF leader Samir Geagea to life imprisonment, for the 1987 assassination of former Prime Minister Rashid Karami. Geagea was already serving life sentences for other offences. [5(d)] (Refer Paragraph 6.32)

3.45 In June 1999, the South Lebanon Army withdrew from the enclave of Jezzine, a predominantly Maronite Christian town/area just outside the ‘security zone’, which had been controlled by the SLA for 17 years. Some 220 SLA militiamen and support workers decided to remain and voluntarily surrender themselves to the Lebanese authorities, rather than relocate with the rest of the contingent into the ‘security zone’, and are being tried before a military tribunal in Beirut. Of the 151 who had been sentenced by mid-September, the vast majority had been given prison sentences of one year or less. [24(c), 31(b), 5(d)] The Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF) has assumed responsibility for maintaining law and order in Jezzine. [5(d)] (Refer Paragraph 6.86)

3.46 Sultan Abu Alaynen, who was a PLO commander in the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp and a close associate of Yassir Arafat, was sentenced to death in absentia by a military court in Beirut on 28 October, on charges of “setting up a militia and inciting rebellion”. The *Financial Times* reported that these charges had to be seen in the context of a struggle for supremecy in Ain al-Hilweh, which in turn reflected a broader dispute between Arafat and the Lebanese and Syrian authorities for control of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. [35(b)] In November, the Lebanese Army arrested two Fatah members as they were travelling to meet with Abu Alaynen. Warrants against the two stemmed from sabotage and murder cases in the 1980s. [35(c)]

3.47 A new Election Law, which would determine the conduct of the year 2000 Parliamentary elections, was passed in December 1999. Whereas the Taif Accord provided for elections to be based upon a division of the country into six “governorates”, the new law makes provision for 14 “electoral districts”, of which three are in Beirut. Although critics of the bill had argued that it violated the Taif Accord and/or tended to favour pro-Syrian candidates, only 17 MPs actually voted against it. An attempt to challenge the law on the basis that it violated Article 7 of the Constitution was made in late January but the challenge was signed by only three MPs, whereas ten MPs signatures were required for consideration by the Constitutional Council. [30(i), 30(j), 30(k)] Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri had announced in November 1999 that MP’s elected in 2000 will remain in office until May 2005, rather than the normal four-year period, so as to avoid an ‘overlap’ with the local elections scheduled for 2004. [30(i)]

3.48 Marcel Khalife, a popular singer-songwriter, was acquitted of charges of blasphemy in a trial that was widely seen as a test case for freedom of expression in Lebanon. [48,49,5(d)] (Refer Paragraph 7.28)

3.49 Colonel Aql Hashem, commander of the SLA Western Brigade and heir-apparent to SLA leader Antoine Lahd, was killed in January 2000 when explosive charges laid by Hizbollah went off at his home within the 'security zone'. In apparent retaliation for this and the recent deaths of five soldiers, the Israeli Air Force launched a series of strikes on 7 February against infrastructure targets, including power stations at Baalbek, Deir Nbouh and Jambour. Eighteen people were reported to have been injured. [37(b), 8(f)]
3.50 The Israeli Supreme Court ruled on 12 April 2000 that eight Lebanese prisoners who had been held hostage for several years – some for as long as 14 years – in order to be exchanged for a missing Israeli airman, are to be released. This overturned a 1997 court decision that the detention was lawful. [7(g)] Security officials subsequently decided that the ruling would also apply to five other prisoners, and a total of thirteen men were actually released on April 19. This has left 17 Lebanese nationals still in detention in Israel, including Mustafa Dirani, former security head of Amal, and Sheikh Abdel-Karim Obeid of Hizbollah. [55,31(d)]

Withdrawal of Israeli Defence Force and collapse of the SLA (see section 6)

3.51 On 5 March 2000, the Israeli Cabinet approved a resolution to withdraw Israeli forces from south Lebanon by July 2000, irrespective of whether an overall agreement had been reached with Syria and Lebanon by that time. [45] (Note that UN Security Council Resolution 425 of 1978 called for an unconditional withdrawal.)
3.52 On 22 May, by which time many Israeli troops had already been withdrawn, Hizbollah units attacked and overran a number of defensive positions manned by the SLA. As Hizbollah, followed by thousands of Lebanese civilians, proceeded to advance through the villages and towns of the former "security zone" during the next two days, the SLA totally collapsed and disbanded. The contingent of approximately 1000 Israeli army regulars and 1500 Israeli supported militiamen that had controlled parts of the south disbanded completely by 24 May. [5(e), 60(a), 61(a)].
3.53 Fearing reprisal attacks (a "bloodbath") from Hizbollah and possible arrest by the Lebanese authorities, about 6500 residents of southern Lebanon sought refuge in Israel. These included many former SLA militiamen and their families, and other people who were never in the SLA but many also have feared being branded as "collaborators". A couple of hundred have since returned to face trial in Lebanon, but most are still in Israel or have sought refuge abroad. [63(b), 68(a), 61(a)]
3.54 Approximately 2300 others, who remained in Lebanon and surrendered themselves to the authorities, or were arrested, or were captured by Hizbollah and handed over to the Lebanese Army, are now being tried by the Military Court in Beirut on various charges under the Penal Code. This number includes former SLA members, as well as people who had been employed in the Israeli administration, or who had commuted to work in Israel, or had conducted cross-border trade, or were suspected of having passed sensitive information to Israeli forces or the SLA. [63(b), 61(a)]
3.55 Revenge killings did not occur after Hizbollah entered the former "security zone", as many had feared might be the case. Former SLA members (and those suspected of having "collaborated with the enemy"), who had been detained by Hizbollah, were handed over to the Lebanese authorities for trial. [8(i)]
3.56 Although there was widespread looting and damage to property in May, the following were the only reported serious incidents of violence committed against people resident in south Lebanon, during the period 26 May to end September 2000:
On 27 May a Christian man, Girgis Hajj, was shot by a Hizbollah member in the village of Rmeish, and later died. Police arrested the gunman. [4(y)]

- Human Rights Watch reported that 20 men were seized on the night of 6-7 June in the village of Aitaroun by armed kidnappers who identified themselves as members of Hizbollah. Five were later released after being interrogated for a week, but the other 15 apparently have yet to be accounted for. Hizbollah has denied involvement. [9(f)]
- Two detainees, who had been released by the Military Court for health reasons, were attacked and beaten by a vigilante mob as they returned to their home village of Aitaroun. [43(c)]

(Alleged ill treatment of prisoners in military detention centres has been detailed in section 6.)

Military Court trials of former SLA members and those accused of "collaboration" (see section 6)

3.57 On 2 June the Commissioner for the Military Court declared that a total of 2277 people had been charged with offences under the Penal Code. Trials commenced on 5 June 2000 and by late July 920 defendants had appeared. The Lebanese Bar Association and human rights organisations have been critical of the manner in which the trials have been conducted, and there have been alleged abuses of some detainees prior to trial. [8(i), 63(b)] A full discussion of pre-trial and trial proceedings appears in section 6.

3.58 Several defendants have been 'found innocent' by the Court due to lack of evidence or 'doubt'. However, the majority of those who have stood trial so far have been found guilty of the charges against them and their sentences have taken the form of a combination one or more of the following [63(b)]:

- Prison sentences which, we understand, are served in the Lebanese prison system and not in military detention centres (where previous abuses are alleged to have taken place).
- Fines, generally ranging from 400 000 to 2 million Lebanese Pounds (approx. £185 to £920).
- Restraint orders: Many of those fined or imprisoned have also been given an order preventing them from returning to their home districts for a period of months or years.

Full details of sentencing to date appear in section 6 and source material.

Border delineation, and control of south Lebanon

3.59 Following the announcement in March 2000 that Israeli troops were to be withdrawn, there was controversy as to the exact position of the Israeli-Lebanon border; the border fence did not precisely follow the 1949 Armistice Demarcation Line. [30(o)] The Israeli Government stated on 12 April that it would abide by a United Nations (UNIFIL) ruling on the position of the border, the Prime Minister having rejected a proposal by army commanders to retain certain 'parcels' of land for strategic reasons. [30(q)]

3.60 In June, UNIFIL presented a delineation called the "Blue Line", a border line behind which Israeli forces would have to have withdrawn in order to meet with international recognition that their withdrawal from Lebanon was now complete. Following Lebanese Government objections to certain details, UN Special Envoy Larsen presented a map with a revised Blue Line on 7 July 2000. [30(t)] UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said in a letter of 25 July that he was satisfied that Israel was no longer encroaching into Lebanese territory, following a number of earlier complaints of border violations. [53(e)]

3.61 At the beginning of August, several hundred UNIFIL peacekeeping troops deployed to the south, mainly in positions along the Lebanese-Israeli border. [4(z)]

3.62 On 10 July 2000, the Lebanese Government finally asserted control in the south of the country by moving in a security force of 1000 men: 500 army troops and a further 500 policemen (some Lebanese police/gendarmerie units had been stationed there since May). From the end of May until July, Hizbollah had effectively been in control in the region. [60(b)]
3.63 A further 1000 army and police personnel were deployed in the enclave of Jezzine on 19 September. [31(e)]
3.64 An ongoing territorial dispute involves an area called Shebaa Farms, at the foot of Mount Herman on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Israel's position is that this area was Syrian territory prior to 1967, but Lebanon also claims this land. [62(a)]
3.65 In July 2001 UN Secretary General Kofi Annan asked Lebanon to deploy its army in the south on the Israeli border, where clashes between Israelis and the Hezbollah insurgency continue. In a report to the United Nations Security Council, Annan said that the government of Lebanon had continued to let Hezbollah operate close to the Blue Line - the de facto border since the Israeli withdrawal in May 2000.[75(A)]

Continued presence of Syrian troops

3.66 In September 2000, President Lahoud reacted to a statement by the Patriarch on the need for a pull-out of Syrian forces from Lebanon by stating that the continued presence of Syrian troops was legal and served the country's strategic interests. [70(a)] (There is an estimated 30 to 35,000 Syrian troops currently stationed in Lebanon.) Now that Israel is out, the average Lebanese wants Syrians out, too.
3.67 Until recently, few were willing to say so. When it first deployed its troops there, in 1976, Syria's army came by invitation from Christian warlords to protect the Christians who were losing the first round of the civil war.
3.68 The Lebanese sense of debt for these services, and for providing security during the past decade of reconstruction, was one reason for staying quiet. The main reason would be the fear that by raising the issue of the Syrian presence old sectarian schisms would open.
3.69 However, as the economy has begun to deteriorate over the last three years, anti-Syrian feeling has spread across the subtle boundaries between Lebanon's 18 religious sects. Farmers say their market is being wrecked by uncontrolled imports of cheap Syrian produce. Working class Lebanese complain about the influx of some estimated 750,000 Syrian labourers. Businessmen blame Syria for pervasive corruption.
3.70 Following the statement of the Patriarch (para. 3.65 refers) it came as a surprise when the leading Druze chieftain, Walid Jumblatt, a traditional ally, called for a pullback of Syrian troops. Since then there has been a flurry of attempts to "mediate" between Syria and its critics. [22 (c)]
3.71 Unexpectedly, in June 2001 Syria began withdrawing its troops from Beirut. Witnesses said dozens of Syrian tanks were seen crossing Lebanon's eastern border with Syria. It was also reported that Syrian troops had handed over to the Lebanese army many positions in mainly Christian areas and near government buildings in and around Beirut.
Some Syrian troops have been redeployed to the Bekaa valley in Eastern Lebanon and Syria also has significant troop numbers in Northern Lebanon. It was not clear whether the redeployment would result in an overall reduction in Syria's military presence in Lebanon.[4(ab), 4(ac)]

Parliamentary elections

3.72 Voting for the 128-member National Assembly took place in two rounds:
27 August. Mount Lebanon area and North Lebanon: 6 districts, 63 seats

3 September: Beirut, Beka'a, South Lebanon: 8 districts, 65 seats
[see Appendix C]
3.73 On 4 September, Prime Minister Selim al-Hoss conceded defeat after unofficial results showed an "opposition coalition" winning a decisive victory. Dr Hoss had also lost his own parliamentary seat. (Detailed results, by electoral district and confession, are contained in the source material.) [53(b), 30(r), 30(s)]
3.74 Interestingly, candidates loyal to Rafik al-Hariri, who served as Prime Minister from 1992 to 1998, won 18 out of the 19 seats in the three Beirut electoral districts. All 23 seats in the South Lebanon electoral districts (both Muslim and Christian) were won by candidates running on a joint Amal-Hizbollah list - 12 of these 23 are Hizbollah members. [30(s), 68(b)]

Hizbollah "captures" Israeli soldiers

3.75 Hizbollah guerrillas attacked an Israeli border position on 7 October 2000 and abducted 3 soldiers. Hizbollah has demanded the release of Arab prisoners detained in Israel, including 17 Lebanese nationals. [53(f)]
3.76 On 16 October, Hizbollah leader Sheikh Nasrallah announced that his organisation was holding an Israeli army colonel in Beirut. The subject is said to be Elhanan Tannenbaum, a businessman who is also a colonel in the army reserve. [17(f)]
3.77 In April 2001 Hizbollah guerrillas killed an Israeli soldier at Shebaa Farms [see para. 3.64]. Israels answer was to rocket a Syrian radar post on the Beirut-Damascus highway. This was the first direct Israeli attack on a Syrian target in Lebanon since 1996, and a marked escalation from Israel's usual tit-for-tat exchanges with Hizbollah. [22 (c)]

Appointment of a new Prime Minister

3.78 The new Parliament convened on 17 October 2000 and Nabih Berri, leader of Amal, was elected Speaker for a third consecutive term with an overwhelming majority. [30(v)] On 23 October, Rafik al-Hariri, the billionaire real estate developer who served as Prime Minister from 1992 to 1998, won the support of a majority of members of parliament to become the new Prime Minister. During two sessions of consultations with President Lahoud, 107 of the 128 members named Hariri as their preferred candidate for the post [68(b)]
3.79 President Lahoud named Hariri Prime Minister in October. [5e] Although it is generally believed that Lebanese Parliamentary democracy is open, it is influenced by the careful management of rival candidate election lists. However, it is considered that whilst not entirely free the election was on the whole fair. Independent observers were allowed and little evidence of tampering or undue influence was reported.
3.80 The formation of a 30-member Cabinet was announced on 26 October. Issam Fares was named, as Deputy Prime Minister while Sulayman Franjiya became the Minister of Public Health. One notable appointment was that of Elias Murr, the son-in-law of President Lahoud and a non-parliamentarian, who replaced his father, Michael Murr, as Minister of the Interior and of Municipal and Rural Affairs.[1b]

RECENT ECONOMIC HISTORY

3.81 Prior to the 1975-1990 hostilities, Lebanon was an important regional financial and commercial centre. The war weakened its commercial leadership and inflicted massive damage on the economic infrastructure. [5(a)] Estimates put the Republic's GNP per capita at about US$ 820 in 1990, barely one third of its 1975 level in real terms. [58]
3.82 Since the end of the civil war in 1990, the aim of the Government has been to guide the country's reconstruction while maintaining monetary stability, and to facilitate the participation of the private sector in economic recovery. Hariri's government had considerable success in revitalising the Lebanese economy. Substantial foreign

investment was secured and by 1996 the Government had successfully reduced interest rates and brought inflation down to single-digit levels. [1,2(a)(c), 3,5(a), 12(c), 16(b), 18(a)]
3.83 However, the Government's success in improving stability and its focus on establishing the conditions for Lebanon's regeneration have been at the cost of increased budget deficits, and consequential borrowing. [58] It is reported that total public debt reached 136% of GDP at the end of 1999, one of the highest levels in the world. [30(p)] In order to restructure debt, some US $2000m. was borrowed on international capital markets between mid-1998 and February 1999. [1(b)]
3.84 The economy has been in recession since 1998. Almost all economic indicators pointed to decline. The budget deficit stood at 46% of expenditure compared with 37% for the corresponding period in 1999, and foreign investments dropped by 13%. The per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated at £4700 and unemployment is estimated to be as high as 20%. [5(e)]
3.85 On 16 September 2000, Central Bank Governor Riad Salameh painted a fairly bleak picture of the economy, predicting zero growth for the current year. However, he said that the country was on course to maintain a positive balance of payments for the year, after a $US20 million surplus up to August. [4(aa)]
3.86 Public debt has increased to more than $US22 billion, equivalent to about 140 per cent of GNP. The cost of financing this debt is starving the private sector of much-needed credit, and putting considerable pressure on Government budgets, such as for health and education. A relatively high public service payroll is also driving up public debt; public servants' salaries are estimated to account for around 35 per cent of budget spending. [30(u)]
3.87 The return of Rafic Hariri to the Lebanese premiership in October afforded further optimism, particularly in the construction sector. The new government pledged to stimulate growth by reducing taxation and import duties, by encouraging the de-regulation of state owned enterprises (targeting particularly the telecommunications, utilities and transport sectors), and by controlling public expenditure in order to reduce the state debt. None the less the Governments draft budget for 2001 projected increased expenditure and thus a wider budget deficit. The new administration also decided to postpone by one year proposals to introduce a value added tax by 2001. In early 2001 international donors were reported to have agreed to provide Lebanese authorities with$458m. in order to assist the economic reform programme. Such funding, in addition to the willingness of the Lebanese to tolerate economic austerity, as well as progress towards a Middle East peace settlement, will be essential to the restoration of international competitiveness and enhanced investment. [1b]

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4. INSTRUMENTS OF THE STATE

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

4.10 Under the 1926 Constitution (as subsequently amended), legislative power is held by the National Assembly, with 128 members elected by universal adult suffrage for four years. Seats are allocated on a religious basis, divided equally between Christians and Muslims. The President of the Republic is elected for six years by the National Assembly. The President, in consultation with the deputies and the President of the National Assembly appoints the Prime Minister and other Ministers to form the Cabinet, in which executive power is vested. According to the unwritten "National Pact of 1943", the

President is a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the President (also known as the Speaker) of the National Assembly a Shi'a Muslim. [1,2(a), 5(a)]
4.11 A Presidential election was held on 15 October 1998. [30(c)] Officially, the President is chosen by the 128 members of parliament. However, the opinion of Syrian President Assad became paramount. On 29 September, the Lebanese Foreign Minister, Fares Boueiz, stated that President Hrawi, and the Prime Minister and Parliamentary speaker had authorised Assad to choose Lebanon's next president. [4(h), 24] The candidature of the leading contender, General Emile Lahoud, was approved by Syria and he was duly elected with 118 votes from the 128 member National Assembly. [7(d), 30(c)] (Rival candidates included the Liberal Nationalist Party leader, Dori Chamoun, who is a hardline opponent of the government, and Boutros Harb, who announced his candidacy with an implicit message to Syria to stay out of Lebanon's internal affairs) [15(a), 25]
4.12 Following his election, General Lahoud asked incumbent Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri to form the government. Rafik al-Hariri declined. Following consultations with the Chamber of Deputies' Speaker and the Lebanese parliament the President asked Dr Selim al-Hoss to form a government which subsequently won a vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies with 85 votes out of the 116 deputies present [4(r), 18(h), 18(j)]. The resulting cabinet was composed of 16 rather than the former 30 members, with some former warlords reportedly being removed or marginalised and more emphasis in the cabinet on technocrats. [4(s), 12(h), 18(g), 18(j)]
4.13 A new Election Law, approved by Parliament in December 1999, determined the conduct of the parliamentary elections in August/September 2000. Whereas the Taif Accord provided for elections to be based on a division of the country into six “governorates”, the new law provides instead for 14 “electoral districts”. [30(i), 30(j), 30(k)]
4.14 Parliamentary elections for the year 2000 were duly held in two rounds, on 27 August and 3 September. On 4 September, Prime Minister Selim al-Hoss conceded defeat after unofficial results showed an “opposition coalition” winning a decisive victory. [53(b)] The new Parliament convened on 17 October and Nabih Berri, leader of Amal, was elected Speaker for a third consecutive term with an overwhelming majority. [30(v)] On 23 October, President Lahoud consulted individual members of parliament on their preferred candidate for the post of Prime Minister. Rafik al-Hariri, who had served as Prime Minister from 1992 to 1998, was named by 107 of the 128 members and was called upon by President Lahoud to form a new cabinet. [68(b)]
4.15 Members of Parliament elected in 2000 will remain in office until May 2005, so that the next parliamentary election does not overlap with the 2004 local elections. [30(i)]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

4.16 The first municipal elections since 1963 were held in May and June 1998. Political crises and the civil war prevented holding the ballot for nearly 35 years. [23(a)] The elections were held amid strict security measures, with Lebanese army units deployed at strategic points and around polling stations. [12(d), 18(c)] In general they were judged as a success with violence being limited to a handful of scuffles. The feared outbreak of fighting between Hizbollah and Amal supporters in the South failed to materialise. [12(d), 23(a)]
4.17 The press was allowed to enter all polling stations during the voting process, as a transparency measure to show the government's commitment to an honest ballot. Very few irregularities were reported during the ballot, with most consisting of technical matters that did not affect voting results. [5(c), 23(a)]

4.18 Reports described the elections as relatively free and lively and "one the most civilised and democratic" that Lebanon has ever witnessed. [22(a), 23(a)] Opposition groups made strong gains in the ballot, including right-wing Christian groups, who oppose Syria's presence in Lebanon. [7(c), 12(d), 23(a)]
4.19 Twenty-one towns whose residents who were evicted during the civil war and have yet to return, and the towns and villages in the Israeli occupation zone in the South were excluded from the polls. [12(d), 17(b)]

THE JUDICIARY

4.20 Law and justice in Lebanon are administered in accordance with the following codes, which are based upon modern theories of civil and criminal legislation:
(1) Code de la Propriété (1930)
(2) Code des Obligations et des Contrats (1932)
(3) Code de Procédure Civile (1933)
(4) Code Maritime (1947)
(5) Code de Procédure Pénale (Code Ottoman Modifié)
(6) Code Pénal (1943)
(7) Code Pénal Militaire (1946)
(8) Code d'Instruction Criminelle [1]
4.21 The following courts are now established:
(a) Fifty-six **'Single-Judge Courts'**, dealing in the first instance with both civil and criminal cases.
(b) Eleven **Courts of Appeal**, dealing with civil and criminal cases.
(c) Four **Courts of Cessation**, three dealing with civil and commercial cases and the fourth with criminal cases.
(d) **The Council of State**, which deals with administrative cases.
(e) **The Court of Justice**, which deals with matters affecting the security of the state.
In addition to the above, **Islamic, Christian and Jewish Religious Courts** deal with affairs of personal status (marriage, death, inheritance, etc.). [1]
4.22 The judiciary is generally impartial and independent. However, parts of the system are open to influence from politicians and Syrian intelligence officers, who intervene to protect their supporters from prosecution. [5(a)(b)(d), 11]

PRISON CONDITIONS

4.23 There were no reports of political prisoners in Lebanon in 1996, 1997, 1998 or 1999, although the Lebanese authorities often detained without charge for short periods of time political opponents of the Syrian and Lebanese Governments. [5(a)(b)(c)(d)]
4.24 Prison conditions are poor and do not meet minimum international standards. The Ministry of Interior operates 18 prisons with a total capacity of 3,840 inmates. However, prisons are overcrowded, with a total population of about 8,375. Inmates lack heat, adequate toilet facilities, and proper medical care. The Government has not budgeted funds to overhaul the prison system. In September the Beirut bar Association organised a conference composed of local and international participants to underscore the need for local penal reform. The head of the Association described the country's prison facilities as "unfit for animals." The Government made an effort to carry out rehabilitation for some inmates. Inmates at Roumieh prison participated in vocational activities such as computer training courses in order to provide them with skills upon release. In September 36 inmates in Roumieh prison received certificates of accomplishment following completion of a computer training program.

Three SLA detainees died of natural causes in custody during the year; however, one detainee died allegedly because prison officials refused to provide him with his medicine, which was manufactured in Israel. One Sudanese detainee died of malaria during the year after prison officials reportedly refused to offer him medical assistance. The Surete Generale, which mans border posts, operates a detention facility. Hundreds of foreigners, mostly Egyptians and Sri Lankans, are detained there pending deportation. They reportedly are held in small, poorly ventilated cells. [5(e)]

HEALTH SERVICES

4.25 In the World Health Organisations "World Health Report 2000" Lebanon's health system ranked 91st (out of 191 countries) in the World. (UK ranked 18th) The WHO assessed five indicators: overall level of health; health inequalities; patient satisfaction; how the systems respond to need; and how well served people of different economic status feel. [7(h), 14(a)]

4.26 Public healthcare is centred on the National Fund for Social Security and the Co-operative of Public Service Employees. However, the inefficiency of the public health system has meant that over 15% of Lebanese rely on private insurance companies. Lebanon's medical services were badly affected by the war. Hospitals were destroyed and many doctors left Lebanon. At present there are four medical training faculties attached to hospitals in Beirut.

4.27 The government is committed to establishing well-equipped government hospitals with the latest technology all over Lebanon. In 1994 there were 104 private and 15 public hospitals with a total of 8000 beds. More than 60% of the hospitals are in Beirut and the Mount Lebanon area but most lack advanced diagnostic equipment and function more as basic health stations.

4.28 The government actively encourages local pharmaceutical companies in local production, either under licence, as a joint venture or on a subcontracting basis. [74]

EDUCATION

4.29 There are state controlled primary and secondary schools, but private institutions provide the main facilities for secondary and higher education. Education is not compulsory, but state education is provided free of charge. Primary education begins at six years of age and lasts for five years. Secondary education beginning at the age of eleven years, lasts for a further seven, comprising a first cycle of four years and a second of three years.

4.30 In 1998 Lebanon secured a loan of US$60m. from the World Bank, in order to restructure the country's system of technical and vocational education. Lebanon has the highest literacy rate in the Arab World. In 1995 UNESCO estimated the adult illiteracy rate at 7.6%. Expenditure on education by the central Government in 1998 was £L1695, 600m (8.3% of total budget) [1]

SECURITY FORCES

4.31 **Conscription** was first introduced in 1983 but for years this law was not implemented. During the civil war the Lebanese government only controlled a small part of the country and some of the men already served in one of the armed groups. In 1992 the government formally reintroduced conscription but it is not clear how far it is enforced. All men between the ages of 18 and 29 are liable for service for a period of 12 months.

4.32 Exemption is possible for those who are physically disabled, are students, for those having a brother who died during military service, are married, are an only son or have lived abroad for more than five years.
4.33 Conscientious **Objection** has no legal provision although it is believed that "alternate service" may be an option.
4.34 Evasion **and Desertion** failure to respond to a call-up is punishable by 12 months imprisonment. There is no information available on the actual practice of this provision. [76] [See also paragraphs on Military service evaders at 6.95]
4.35 In August 1996, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) numbered an estimated 48,900; some 47,500 of these personnel belong to the army. [1] Since the end of the civil war, the Lebanese Army is reported to have emerged as a unified, competent fighting force capable of maintaining order. [2(a), 17(d)] An important feature of this achievement has been the successful integration of former militias into the Lebanese Army. [2(a)]
4.36 The Lebanese Army works in close coordination with the Syrian Army and together the two forces maintain a presence throughout the country. It is understood that Syria has some 30,000 to 35,000 troops stationed in Lebanon, predominantly in the Beka'a Valley. [1,2(a), 5(a)]
4.37 The security forces also consist of the Internal Security Forces (ISF), which enforce laws, conduct searches and arrests, and refer cases to the judiciary; and the State Security Apparatus and the Surete Generale, both of which collect information on groups deemed a possible threat to state security. The Surete Generale is also responsible for issuing passports and residency permits, and the censoring of foreign periodicals, television programmes, films, plays, documentaries, etc. [5(d)]

UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON (UNIFIL)

4.38 UNIFIL is made up of some 4,500 troops from six countries, and was established in 1978 to restore the Lebanese government's authority over the southern part of the country after an Israeli incursion against Palestinian guerrillas. Militarily, the force is not equipped to separate warring sides or enforce peace. Nevertheless, UNIFIL's presence in the south has had a stabilising effect over the years. [1,2(a), 4(e)]
4.39 Following the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from Lebanon in May 2000, UNIFIL officers prepared a delineation of the Lebanese-Israeli border known as the 'Blue Line'; this was subsequently amended in July following representations from the Lebanese Government. At the beginning of August, several hundred UNIFIL troops deployed to the south, mainly in positions along the border.
4.40 The Daily Star reported in October 2000 that 26 Nepalese soldiers were to be court-martialed for selling ammunition to Hizbollah while serving with UNIFIL. [30(y)]
4.41 By its resolution 1337 (2002) of January 2001, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNIFIL for a further period of six months and decided to return its military personnel to the level of 4,500 all ranks this down from a level of 5,800 which was the number of troops serving with the force after it was augmented during 2000 as a result of Israel's withdrawal from Southern Lebanon.
4.42 It was further expected that a further 1000 troops would be withdrawn during Autumn 2001 bringing the total strength of the force to about 3,600. [77]
4.43 Also monitoring the situation in south Lebanon, territorial violations in particular, are 51 unarmed officers of the **UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO)**, originally set up in 1948 to police the armistice agreements after the first Arab-Israeli war. [51,77]
4.44 The UNIFIL mandate was further recommended for extension until 31 January 2002. [77]

CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION

4.45 The level of violence in Lebanon has receded immensely since 1991, ceasing almost entirely after the withdrawal of Israeli forces in May 2000 (refer to section 7). It has been reported that the level of violence in major Lebanese cities is significantly less than in cities such as New York, Los Angeles or Chicago. [2(b)(c)] Beirut has been described as considerably safer than most cities in the West. [26] State protection has greatly increased in terms of police presence in the streets during both the day and night. As a result it is reportedly safe to go out at all hours of the night. [2(b)(c)]

4.46 In August 1997, the US State Department lifted its 10 year ban on US citizens travelling to Lebanon. Since then, dozens of American businesses have established offices in Beirut, some as regional headquarters for their operations in the Middle East. [12(f)]

4.47 Lebanese nationals who spent the war years in exile have begun returning to Beirut. There is also a free flow of Christians and Muslims across the "green line", which divided Beirut into confessional enclaves during the war. In addition, the once thriving tourist industry is being redeveloped, with the construction of hotels and other facilities. [1,12(c), 14]

4.48 In January 2000 there were clashes between Sunni fundamentalists and the army in Dinnieh, Northern Lebanon. Eleven servicemen, three civilians and at least 20 rebels were killed in the fighting. Leading Muslim clerics urged the country's Christian and Muslim communities to rally behind the government and the armed forces to foil any attempts to sow sedition and order was quickly restored. [30(ae) 30(af)]

4.49 In August 2001 the Lebanese army troops arrested around 250 members of two Christian groups, which represent the main force in the opposition to the Syrian presence in Lebanon. Those arrested were mainly followers of two parties. One was the FNC - the Free National Current, which is tied to the exiled Christian leader Michel Aoun.

The other is the Lebanese Forces - a disbanded Christian militia whose leader, Samir Geagea is in jail.

Most of the arrested were students, but there were also several well-known party officials.

The majority of those arrested were released, practically immediately. Some seventy-seven were held for a longer period and were then released on bail. Of all those arrested only four are still being held to face criminal charges.

4.50 Earlier in the day, the army had issued a statement in which it warned against those who exploit the atmosphere of freedom to carry out acts of disorder, that have nothing to do with patriotism.

4.51 The arrests also come two days after the Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir toured the Shouf mountains in a reconciliatory move towards Lebanon’s Druze community.

During one of the masses of the weekend tour, Lebanese President Emile Lahoud was booed very loudly by supporters of the two Christian parties, who also clashed with security forces. [53(j)]

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5. HUMAN RIGHTS: GENERAL ASSESSMENT

5.10 It has been said that Lebanon’s record on human rights could be described as average by absolute standards, but becomes laudable when compared to that of most other countries in the region.

5.11 The US State Department Report on Human Rights Practices (1999) stated that the Government uses “arbitrary arrest and detention”. [5(d)] FHHRL reported in their “State of Human Rights in Lebanon, 1999”, that:

The law requires security forces to obtain warrants of arrest before making arrests. However, military prosecutors, with their extensive jurisdiction, reportedly issue blank warrants of arrest to be completed after a suspect has been arrested. Arresting officers must refer a suspect to a prosecutor within 24 hours of arrest, but this provision is often disregarded. The law requires the authorities to release suspects after 48 hours of arrest if they do not bring formal charges against them. Some prosecutors flout this requirement and they detain suspects for long periods in pre-trial confinement without a court order. … Security forces continue to practice arbitrary arrest … The authorities often detain for short periods (often for just a few hours), and without charge, political opponents of the Syrian and Lebanese governments. [63(a)]

5.12 Human rights organisations have reported that, in 1999, there were instances of **abuse** – in some cases, **torture** – carried out on detainees by Lebanese security forces, the Military Intelligence and Securité Generale in particular. [5(d), 63(a), 8(g)]

There have been allegations of torture and beatings during the preliminary investigations that are conducted at police stations or military installations, where suspects are interrogated, in some cases, in the absence of an attorney. [There is no law, which states that someone cannot be interviewed without a lawyer]. Such abuse occurs despite laws that prevent judges from accepting any confession extracted under duress. [5(e)]

5.13 In December 1998, the Government lifted its decree banning all demonstrations and various political groups, including Amal, Hizbollah and supporters of exiled General Aoun, held rallies in 1999. However, **freedom of assembly**, although provided for in the Constitution, is limited by the requirement for a group wishing to hold a rally to first obtain a permit from the Interior Ministry. (See section 7) [5(d), 63(a)]

5.14 Four persons died in custody during the year. In January a Sudanese asylum seeker died of malaria in Zahle prison. Prison officials reportedly did not offer him medical treatment before his death. An elderly SLA member died in custody in June because prison officials refused to provide him with his medicine, as a result of its Israeli manufacture. Two other SLA detainees died during the year as a result of heart attacks. [5(e)]

5.15 There were **no reports of political or extrajudicial killings** by government authorities in 1999 or 2000. [5(d) 5(e)]

5.16 There were **no reports of politically motivated disappearances** in 1999 or 2000. [5(d) 5(e)]

5.17 An unknown number of Lebanese nationals remain in **detention in Syria**. In 1997, President Hrawi stated that there were 210 such prisoners. The Syrians released 121 detainees in March 1998, but 14 of them were subsequently prosecuted in Lebanese courts. [5(c), 6(c)] There were no allegations during 1999 of Lebanese citizens being transferred by the Lebanese authorities to Syria. [5(d)]

5.18 There has been criticism of the manner in which **trials in the Military Court** in Beirut are conducted, in particular the series of trials commencing in June 2000 of former SLA members and others accused of “collaboration with the enemy” – see section 6.

5.19 Conditions in Lebanese **prisons** are described in the 1999 US State Dept Report as “poor”: there is severe overcrowding and the Report also makes mention of inadequate heating, toilet facilities and medical care. [5d)] Members of a delegation from Prison Reform International, who visited prisons in Lebanon in July 2000, also referred in a press

conference to the problem of overcrowding, but it should be noted that that the full PRI report has not yet been published.
5.20 Although Lebanon retains the **death penalty**, **no executions** have actually been carried out since President Lahoud took office in November 1998. [8(h)]
5.21 Lebanon has a long history of **freedom of opinion, speech and the press**, but journalists censor themselves on matters related to the Syrian president, the Syrian army, or corruption in Syria (see section 7). [63(a)]
5.22 In general, **human rights organisations** operate without hindrance, and in 1999 the Government was said to be more willing than in the past to discuss human rights problems with foreign governments and NGOs. [5(d)] However, Dr Muhamad Mugraby, a well-known human rights lawyer, was charged with various offences under the Penal Code after he gave a press conference on 19 April 2000 in which he made serious criticisms of the judiciary and made allegations of professional misconduct against five named judges. [8(i)]
5.23 **Palestinian** groups are reported to operate an "autonomous and arbitrary system of justice" in the refugee camps, and to threaten and harass their political rivals. According to the US State Department Report on Human Rights Practices, there were instances in 1999 of members of the various groups that 'control' the camps detaining political rivals, and there is reference to an official of the PLO and his wife being killed in a shooting near Ein Al-Hilweh in May 1999. [5(d)]
There were no reports that this occurred during the year (2000)[5(e)]
5.24 **Hizbollah** has been accused of maintaining its own ad hoc judicial system based on Islamic law. According to Human Rights Watch, human rights violations associated with Hizbollah have included beatings, abductions and summary executions. [2(a), 5(a)(c), 8(a), 9(a)]
5.25 Human Rights Watch called on the Lebanese Government in April 2000 to "commit adequate time and resources" too effectively investigate the cases of an estimated 17 000 civilians who were kidnapped or **"disappeared" during the civil war** of 1975-1990. The organisation also called on Syria to account fully for all "disappeared" individuals in its custody and release those detained. [9(h)] On 26 July 2000, the Government commission investigating the fate of those who had disappeared ended an 11-month investigation by asking relatives to accept that their loved ones are probably dead, and to obtain death certificates for them. The commission also said that it had found none of the missing Lebanese subjects jailed in Syria. [31(f)]

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6. HUMAN RIGHTS: SPECIFIC GROUPS

PALESTINIANS

6.10 According to UNRWA, there are approximately 400 000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, about half of whom live in 12 official refugee camps. Over time, many of the refugees moved into surrounding neighbourhoods. The Lebanese government has often stated that it will not accept the permanent settlement of Palestinian refugees, and has thus prevented the expansion of the borders of the camps, and has inhibited construction of buildings within the camps. [71,5(d)]

Historical background

6.11 The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, and the war that followed, prompted large numbers of the Palestinian population to seek refuge in neighbouring Arab countries. It is estimated that approximately 120,000 Palestinian refugees entered

Lebanon in 1948 and their descendants now number about 330,000. A further 60,000 or so Palestinians have settled in Lebanon since then, mainly after the Six-Day War in 1967 when Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

6.12 In June 1969, Lebanon and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation concluded the Cairo Agreement, which established a Palestinian right to engage in "armed struggle" against Israel from Lebanon, and described conditions for the Palestinian presence generally.

6.13 Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was primarily intended to eliminate the PLO as a military threat and resulted in many PLO members being evacuated from Lebanon in 1983, mainly to Tunis. However, following Israel's withdrawal from most of Lebanon in 1985, several thousand PLO members returned to Lebanon. The reintroduction of PLO forces met with opposition from Syria, who used the pro-Syrian Amal to oppose the PLO in refugee camps in Beirut and the South. Amal abandoned its combat against the PLO in 1988 at Syria's prompting.

6.14 Phalangist militiamen carried out a massacre in the Sabra and Shatila camps during 16 to 18 September 1982, leaving an estimated 2400 people dead.

6.15 The internal dispute in 1973 between PLO leader Yasser Arafat and others brought about a split in the PLO's largest component, Fatah, and led to the formation of a splinter group, the Fatah Revolutionary Council, led by Abu Nidal. In 1983, a Fatah power struggle between Arafat and Abu Musa (Moussa) caused Musa to form a further splinter group, Fatah al-Intifada, which is pro-Syrian.

6.16 The Oslo Accord entered into by Yasser Arafat's PLO and Israel in September 1993, which provided for limited Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza, brought about a further major rift between the various Palestinian political factions in Lebanon – between those who support and those who oppose dialogue with Israel.

Palestinian Refugee Camps

6 6.17 There are 12 refugee camps in Lebanon, as follows:

Camp	Location	Population*
Mar Elias	Beirut	1,542
Burj el-Baraineh	Beirut	16,923
Dbayeh	Beirut	4,062
Shatila/Sabra	Beirut	9,788
Ein el-Hilweh	Saidon (south of Beirut)	40,896
Mieh Mieh	Saidon	5,120
El-Buss	Tyre (south of Lebanon)	8,673
Rashidieh	Tyre	23,283
Burj el-Shamali	Tyre	16,982
Nahr el-Bared	Tripoli (north)	26,061
Beddawi	Tripoli	14,447
Wavell	Baalbek (east)	6,890

*Registered refugees
Source: UNRWA

UNRWA

6.18 In 1949, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians in the Near East (UNRWA) was set up as a special UN agency, with a remit to assist Palestinian

refugees in their host countries. Such assistance covers health care, education and training, and social and emergency aid. [71]

6.19 There were 362,000 Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA in Lebanon by the end of 1997. [72] Only those who originally arrived in 1948-9, and their descendants, are entitled to register with UNRWA. [5(a)]

6.20 In Lebanon, UNRWA runs 74 schools and estimate that about 95 per cent of Palestinian children receive primary and lower secondary education. The agency also operates 18 full-scale health centres located in refugee camps, as well as 6 smaller clinics, and has also reached agreement with 12 private hospitals for the treatment of refugees. In addition, UNRWA provides emergency aid to families unable to support themselves. [72]

6.21 UNRWA is dependent on donor support, and there is reported to be a widening gap between the financial capacity of the Agency and refugee needs in all of the countries in which UNRWA operates. In particular, a budget deficit of $90 million was projected for 1999. This funding crisis has resulted in UNRWA recently having to reduce services in a wide range of educational, health and social service programs. [73(a)]

Main political organisations

6.22 Different refugee camps tend to be "controlled" by different political factions. Fatah, led by Yasser Arafat, is the main component of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). Fatah is currently believed to be in overall ‘control’ of the largest refugee camp, Ein el-Hilweh, but various groups opposed to Fatah also have a presence in Ein el-Hilweh. Fatah is also reported to be active in the camps in the south, around Tyre. However, there is said to be virtually no support for Arafat in the northern camps. [2(k), 5(d), 72]

6.23 The main organisations in opposition to Arafat/PLO, and all pro-Syrian, are collectively known as the ‘ten factions’; these are:

- DFLP (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Naif Hawatmeh)
- PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by George Habash)
- PFLP-GC (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, General Command, led by Ahmad Jibril)
- Fatah al-Intifada (led by Abu Musa)
- Hamas
- Islamic Jihad
- Al-Saiqa
- a faction of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front
- a faction of the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF)
- a faction of the Palestinian Communist Party, commonly known as the People’s Party.

(The Fatah Revolutionary Council, led by Abu Nidal, does not form part of the ‘ten factions’.)

The DFLP and PFLP, which are said to be roughly equal in strength, are secular, whereas Hamas and Islamic Jihad are fundamentalist. [72]

6.24 With the exception of Ein el-Hilweh, the camps in the central and northern regions of Lebanon are currently 'controlled' by pro-Syrian/anti-Arafat political organisations. However, the general political climate in the Middle East has become fluid (October 2000), and this could cause residents of the camps in Lebanon to switch their allegiance suddenly.

6.25 In principle, Lebanese jurisdiction operates within the refugee camps, but in practice the authorities are limited in their ability to assert their authority and enforce the law within camp boundaries. However, although there are many accounts of individual camp residents being threatened and harassed by political opponents, there are few reports of killings or serious assaults - there has been no actual armed conflict within the camps since the period immediately after the split within Fatah in 1982. [5(d), 72]

Freedom of movement

6.26 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are free to relocate from one camp to another (previously they were required to obtain the permission of the Lebanese Ministry of the Interior, but this requirement has now been lifted). They only need to inform UNRWA of their move if they wish to continue claiming UNRWA services in the camp to which they have moved. There is also no obligation for Palestinians to live in any one of the 12 refugee camps; nearly half of all Palestinian refugees in Lebanon live outside the camps. In practice, however, there are certain barriers to their freedom of movement. Whilst Palestinians can live outside the camps, it is often too expensive for them to do so. Their ability to move to another camp depends on whether they can find appropriate accommodation. In the already overcrowded southern camps (El-Buss, Burj el-Shemali and Rashidieh) construction work is prohibited and there is little habitable space for newcomers. In Beirut, the North and the Beka'a, living space is more plentiful and rents tend to be less. [69]

6.27 The Government issues laissez-passers (travel documents) to Palestinian refugees to enable them to travel and work abroad. In January 1999 the Government eased the tight travel restrictions that it had previously imposed on Palestinians resident in Lebanon and those entering from other countries, by revoking a decision that had required all Palestinian refugees who hold Lebanese travel documents to obtain entry and exit visas when entering or leaving the country. [5(d), 30(l)]

Employment Opportunities

6.28 The Government officially ended its practice of denying work permits to Palestinians in 1991. However, in practice, few Palestinians receive work permits, and those are mainly for unskilled occupations. [5(d)] The PLO formerly employed as much as 50 per cent of the Palestinian workforce, but in recent years it has closed many of its offices in Lebanon. [2(a), 5(d)]

Residence Status and Documentation

6.29 In effect, there are four categories of residence status in Lebanon [72]:

- 1948 refugees registered with UNRWA, the Directorate-General for Palestinian Affairs (DGPA) and the Sureté Générale;
- 1948 refugees not registered with UNRWA, but registered with the DGPA and the Sureté Générale;
- 1967 refugees also not registered with UNRWA, but only with the authorities;
- refugees not registered with UNRWA or with the authorities.

There are apparently 310,000 Palestinians registered with UNRWA and the Sureté Générale and DFPA (1948 refugees). Between 20,000 and 40,000 Palestinians are registered only with the DGPA and Sureté Générale, i.e. 1967 refugees. The number of Palestinians not registered with either UNRWA or the authorities is considered to be very small. [72] (Note that UNRWA only registers those made refugees by events in 1948-9, and their descendants.)

6.30 The DGPA issues blue identity cards to all Palestinian refugees, both from 1948 and 1967. These cards, if lost, can be replaced without difficulty upon request. The DGPA

also issues birth, family and civil status certificates. The only exceptions are 1948 refugees registered only with the Sureté Générale and the DGPA, who are issued with white identity cards.

6.31 The Sureté Générale issues 1948 refugees, registered with UNRWA, 5-year travel documents, renewable without difficulty for further 5-year periods. 1967 Palestinians (who are registered with the Lebanese authorities but not with UNRWA) are issued 1-year laissez-passers, as are white-card holders.

LEBANESE FORCES (LF)

6.32 The Lebanese Forces (LF) were, during the 1980s, the largest and most powerful Christian militia in Lebanon. [2(a)] The LF was the military arm of the Lebanese Front, a coalition of Maronite leaders, in which the Phalangist Party was dominant. [1,31] The LF, backed by Israel during the 1975-1990 civil war, was accused of political assassinations and numerous sectarian killings during the conflict. [2(d), 4(i)]

6.33 In 1991, the Lebanese Forces were officially disarmed and became a political party. Following terrorist attacks on Christian targets in Beirut, the LF was banned in March 1994, for having promoted the establishment of a Christian enclave and, hence, the country's partition. Eight top LF members, including leader, Samir Geagea, were charged with the bombing of a Maronite church in Beirut in late February 1994. [1,2(a)] In July 1996, Geagea was acquitted of charges relating to the bombing, but sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for "maintaining a militia in the guise of a political party" and "dealing with military weapons and explosives". [5(a), 8(c)]

6.34 A car bomb in June 1998 killed two former LF members. The two men were reported by a government security source to be planning to plant the device in a church in mainly Christian east Beirut, when it prematurely exploded near to the target. A spokesperson for LF supporters said the former militia group had no link to the bombing or its two victims, and added: "The Lebanese Forces formed a big slice of Lebanese society, around 38,000 people. We can't control everyone and we don't put the incident in the framework of the Lebanese Forces. It was a personal action." [4(j)]

6.35 Eighteen former members of the Lebanese Forces were charged in July 1998 by Lebanon's military prosecutor, with carrying out a 1996 bus bombing in Syria that killed 11 people. They were also accused of plotting to assassinate Interior Minister Michel al-Murr and the (now former) Electricity and Water Resources Minister Elias Hobeika. [4(i), 17(c), 18(e)] Murr and Hobeika are Christian allies of Syria and opponents of the Lebanese Forces. Hobeika is a former LF leader who defected to the pro-Syrian camp. [2(d), 4(i)] A statement by the Political Council of the Lebanese Forces on 8 July 1998, denounced "acts of violence and sabotage by any individual, group or party", stressing that the LF became a political party in 1991. [32]

6.36 Supporters of the LF made gains in the local elections in June 1998, emerging on the political scene for the first time since the group was officially banned in 1994. [4(i)] In Beirut, LF supporters were included in a candidate list backed by the then Prime Minister Hariri and Parliament Speaker Berri. [15(b)]

6.37 In June 1999 the Judicial Council sentenced three former Lebanese Forces militiamen to death in absentia, and leader Samir Geagea to life in prison, for the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami in 1987. The court also sentenced former LAF Brigadier Khalil Matar to ten years in prison for his involvement in the assassination. The trial, which lasted for just over two years, was public and considered by the media and human rights groups to be fair. [5(d)]

Geagea, who already was serving life sentences for other offences, is still the only sectarian militia leader from the civil war to have faced trial. Several former militiamen are in the government or hold high office, although some (including Elias Hobeika who was allegedly linked to the 1982 massacres in the refugee camps and former Druze leader Walid Jumblatt) were dropped following the formation of the new government in December 1998. Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri has, however, remained in his post. [4(i)(j)(s), 12(h)]

On 3 March 2000, Beirut's Military Court passed sentence on three former LF members found guilty of throwing hand grenades at Syrian Army checkpoints more than three years previously. One was sentenced to five years in prison with hard labour, while the other two were given three-year terms. [30(g)]

6.38 Lebanese Front supporters staged two major rallies in September 2000, with speakers calling for the withdrawal of Syrian forces, the return of Gen. Aoun, and the release from prison of Samir Geagea. At least 10,000 people are said to have attended on the second occasion, a "Martyrs' Mass" held in Jbeil. Six LF supporters were arrested at this event; two were subsequently released and the remaining four referred to the Military Court for trial. Of interest was the ability of the LF still to mobilise such a large crowd, more than six years after their banning. [30(w), 64(a)]

AOUN SUPPORTERS

6.39 General Aoun, a Maronite Christian, has lived in exile in France since 1991 after leading an unsuccessful attempt to drive Syrian forces from Lebanon. [4(k)]

6.40 In 14 December 1997, security forces used tear gas and clubs to disperse Aoun supporters who had gathered at a television station, which the authorities had barred, from broadcasting an interview with the former army commander. Sixty-three people were detained during the protest, all of which were released the next day. [4(l), 8(b)] 10 of those arrested were subsequently charged with fighting with security agents who had ordered the protestors to leave. Their trial began on 18 December 1998 but the hearing was swiftly adjourned while appeals proceeded on two legal technicalities. If convicted the suspects face up to a month in jail or a maximum fine of LL100, 000. [18(j)] The government lifted its long-standing ban on demonstrations in December 1998, although a rally or demonstration must still receive the prior approval of the Interior Ministry. [4(l), 5(b)(c)]

6.41 Some 5,500 Lebanese lawyers staged a three-day strike in response to the arrests. A further demonstration was held on 15 December with no arrests reported. [4(a)(l)] In January 1998, the government stated there would be no restrictions on interviews carried on terrestrial television channels. The television interview with General Aoun, his first in seven years, was subsequently broadcast on Murr TV. [16(a)(c)]

6.42 A report in January 1996 stated that supporters of former General Aoun were still active and conducting political activities in Lebanon. Some of Aoun's supporters were reported to have had difficulties with the Lebanese authorities in the past, but there had been no such reports in the previous two years. Well-known pro-Aoun candidates ran during the last elections to the Lebanese Doctors' Association and the Lebanese Engineers Association, including the winner of the poll for the president of the Doctors' Association. Several professional associations have active well-known Aounist members. [2(e)] Former Aoun supporters are reported to have been welcomed into the Lebanese Army and are able to advance. [2(c)]

6.43 Supporters of Aoun took part in the local elections in June 1998. They were among right-wing Christian groups who made strong gains in the ballot. [7(c), 12(d), 23]

6.44 In April 2000, two Aoun supporters were sentenced to prison terms of one month and ten days respectively for staging an unauthorised demonstration. [67(a)] On 25 June,

nearly 200 Aoun supporters staged a rally at Nahr al-Kalb to protest against the continued Syrian presence in Lebanon. Internal Security Forces troops prevented them from erecting two plaques, one plaque commemorated the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and the second plaque was left blank in anticipation of a withdrawal of Syrian troops but none of the protesters was arrested. [5(e), 30(x)]

6.45 Gen. Aoun, in August, called for a boycott of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. [66(a)]

6.46 State Prosecutor Adnan Addoum confirmed on 22 September 2000 that investigations were continuing following charges against Aoun of alleged embezzlement of public funds, usurping power, and instigating sectarian strife. Aoun is still resident in France. [65(a)]

FORMER MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH LEBANON ARMY (SLA) AND OTHERS ACCUSED OF "COLLABORATING" WITH ISRAEL

Historical Background

6.47 For 22 years, until 24 May 2000, the Israeli Defence Force had occupied a strip of land in the south of Lebanon referred to as the "security zone". This strip was roughly 10 to 15 kilometres wide and extended along the Israeli-Lebanese border for about eighty kilometres, accounting for some 10 per cent of the area of Lebanon. The northern sector of the ‘security zone’ consisted of a string of fortifications and bunkers along a strategic mountain ridge. The zone contained about 150 small towns and villages, with an estimated resident population of just under 100,000, rising to about 150,000 in summer. Approximately 40 per cent of the population in this area is Christian; most of the balance is Shi'a Muslim. [1,2(a), 3,51]

6.48 The SLA was a militia force of approximately 2500 members which was armed, trained and financed by Israel to help patrol and defend the 'security zone'. In 1998-9, there were about 1,000 to 1500 Israeli troops also stationed within the zone. [1,2(a)(f), 31(b), 44(a)] The SLA began as a mainly Christian Phalangist movement but later included a substantial number of Shi’a Muslims [2(a)(f)] Israeli and SLA forces were locked in an ongoing cycle of attack and counterattack with Hizbollah, Amal, and some Palestinian guerrillas. Under Lebanese law, serving in the SLA has been a treasonable offence. [5(d)]

6.49 An estimated 3000 people resident in the 'security zone' commuted to Israel each day to work. Another 500 were employed in the local Israeli Civil Administration. [51]

6.50 The security arm of the SLA ran the al-Khiam detention centre. According to an Amnesty International report, at least 150 people were still being held without charge or trial in al-Khiam by January 2000; some prisoners had been held for up to 14 years, and former detainees described torture and ill-treatment in the detention centre. [8(e)]

6.51 The organisation Human Rights Watch reported that, during 1998 and 1999, several families were expelled from their homes in the 'security zone’ because a member of their family had defected from the SLA, or because they had failed to co-operate with the SLA in another way. [9(e)]

6.52 Gen. Antoine Lahd, the 71 year old leader of the SLA, was sentenced to death *in absentia* by a Lebanese military court in 1996 on charges including ‘forming a hostile army’ and ‘carrying weapons on Israel’s side’ He is currently believed to be living in France. [4(u)] In August 1997, 87 former Lebanese Army soldiers, all now members of the SLA living in the ‘security zone’, were sentenced *in absentia* by a military court to prison terms of 15 years each for ‘collaboration with Israel’. (Under Lebanese law, people sentenced in absentia have to be retried when they surrender or are arrested.) [4(u)(v)]

6.53 Following the withdrawal of the SLA from Jezzine in June 1999 (see paragraph 3.45), 220 SLA members and support workers who surrendered themselves to the Lebanese authorities were held for trial by the Military Court in Beirut. Of the 151 who had been sentenced by 16 September, two had been sentenced to 15 year terms and one to seven years; 20 had been acquitted for reasons of old age or poor health; all of the rest were given prison terms of up to two years, the vast majority of these being for three months to one year. [24(c), 31(b)] The sentences imposed were considerably more lenient than the seven-year sentences proposed in the indictments; defence lawyers had argued that the defendants were victims of circumstance, not traitors, who joined the SLA under duress or due to financial necessity. [43(b)]

6.54 It had been feared that Hizbollah elements might enter Jezzine following the SLA evacuation to carry out revenge attacks on those who had been collaborating with the SLA. However, no such attacks took place. [43(b)]

6.55 On 5 March 2000, the Israeli Cabinet approved a resolution to withdraw Israeli forces from south Lebanon by July 2000, irrespective of whether an overall agreement is reached with Syria and Lebanon by that time. [45]

Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and the collapse of the SLA

6.56 On 22 May, by which time many of the Israeli troops had already been withdrawn, Hizbollah units attacked and overran a number of defensive positions manned by the SLA. As Hizbollah, followed by thousands of Lebanese civilians, proceeded to advance and enter the villages and towns of the former 'security zone' over the next couple of days, the SLA totally collapsed and disbanded. Israeli forces accelerated their withdrawal, completing it on 24 May. [60(a), 61(a)]

6.57 Fearing reprisal attacks (a “bloodbath”) from Hizbollah and possible arrest by the Lebanese authorities (“collaboration” with the enemy/Israel is a criminal offence in Lebanon), about 6500 residents of southern Lebanon sought refuge in Israel. These included many former SLA militiamen and their families, and other people who were never in the SLA but may also have feared being branded as 'collaborators'. A couple of hundred have since returned to face trial in Lebanon, but most are still in Israel or have sought refuge abroad. [63(b), 68(a), 61(a)]

6.58 Approximately 2300 others, who remained in Lebanon and surrendered themselves to the authorities, or were arrested, or were captured by Hizbollah and handed over to the Lebanese Army, are now being tried by the Military Court in Beirut on various charges under the Penal Code. This number includes former SLA members, as well as people who had been employed in the Israeli administration, or who had commuted to work in Israel, or had conducted cross-border trade, or were suspected of having passed sensitive information to Israeli forces or the SLA. [63(b), 61(a)]

Acts of retribution reported

6.59 Revenge killings did not occur after Hizbollah entered the former "security zone", as many had feared might be the case.

6.60 Apart from the two isolated incidents detailed below, CIPU is not aware of any violent acts of retaliation carried out against suspected 'collaborators' or their families by members of Hizbollah or Amal. Former SLA militiamen and suspected 'collaborators' detained by Hizbollah have been handed over to the Lebanese Army or gendarmerie. [8(i)]

The following are the incidents in which Hizbollah members are alleged to have been involved:

- On 27 May 2000 a Christian man, Girgis Hajj, was shot by a Hizbollah member in the village of Rmeish, and later died. Police subsequently arrested the gunman. [4(y)]
- Human Rights Watch reported that twenty men were seized on the night of 6-7 June in the village of Aitaroun by armed kidnappers who identified themselves as members of Hizbollah. Five were later released after being interrogated for a week but, as far as we are aware, the other 15 have yet to be accounted for. Hizbollah has officially denied involvement. [9(f),30(z)]

6.61 There was widespread looting and destruction of property in many southern communities in late-May. [63(b)]

6.62 There is a report of one vigilante-type attack not linked with any particular organisation: In June, two detainees returning to Aitaroun, after being released by the Military Court for health reasons, were beaten by a mob and hospitalised. [43(c)]

6.63 In spite of certain threatening and inflammatory remarks by Hizbollah leaders, it is evident that former SLA members and their families, or others accused of 'collaboration', are now not at risk of violent retribution from Hizbollah or other armed organisations in Lebanon. However, Hizbollah's stated position is that such people should surrender themselves to the Lebanese authorities to face trial.

6.64 Two houses in the village of Addaisseh belonging to senior members of the former SLA were blown up in August 2001, the first attacks against collaborators with Israel in some weeks. Anonymous leaflets had circulated in the village warning against the return of collaborators but as in similar attacks in the past, no claim of responsibility was issued.

6.65 The reprisals were the first in several months against those accused of collaborating with Israel. A number of revenge incidents earlier in the year, consisting of car bombings, beatings of suspects and arson attacks on houses, caused considerable unrest in the border district.

6.66 It should be pointed out that these attacks are directed primarily at senior members of the disbanded SLA, a reflection that it is accepted that lower level members had little option but to join the SLA.

It was unclear who was behind the assaults. [30(ah)]

Military Court Trials

6.66 By late-July, 920 people had appeared before the Permanent Military Court in Beirut. The Lebanese Bar Association and the human rights organisations, Amnesty International and FHHRL (Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights in Lebanon), have been critical of the manner in which the trials have been conducted, and there have been alleged abuses to some detainees prior to trial. [8(i), 63(b)]

Pre-trial treatment of detainees

6.67 After being arrested, many people were held in military detention centres prior to being transferred to prison in Beirut. Human rights organisations have reported that some prisoners were beaten, or faced other forms of ill-treatment, in certain of these detention centres and that some had been held incommunicado for up to 10 days following their arrest. [8(i), 63(b)] Amnesty International added that most detainees did not appear to have been badly treated, ‘apart from suffering incommunicado detention itself’.

6.68 It is known that there is severe overcrowding in Rumieh Prison in Beirut, to which most detainees were subsequently sent. [5(d)]

Conduct of the trials

6.69 Trials commenced in the Permanent Military Court (PMC) on 5 June 2000 and, barring holidays and a short period of mourning for President Assad of Syria, hearings have taken place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays each week through June and

July. At the beginning of August it was decided, in future, to have just one session per week.
6.70 On 2 June, the Commissioner for the Military Court declared that a total of 2277 people had been charged. [63(b)] The court has issued some additional arrest warrants since that date. [e.g.30 (ab)]
6.71 Court proceedings are open to the press and members of the public. [8(i), 63(b)]
6.72 The legal aid committee of the Beirut Bar Association has provided defence lawyers. (It is noted that most of these are Christian, as Shiite legal aid lawyers have refused to appear in this series of trials.) [63(b)]
6.73 At the first session, on 5 June, 73 people were tried and sentenced; more recently, there have been between 25 and 40 defendants at most sessions. . [8(i), 63(b)]
6.74 Cases are being heard in 'batches'. Amnesty International stated in June that "barely seven minutes are spent on each individual". [8(i)] A Human Rights Watch representative said that, in June, the time allocated to each defendant ranged from a minimum of two minutes to a maximum of fifteen, with the length determined by the complexity of the case and the seriousness of the charges. [9(i)] Court officials and politicians have contended that this pace is necessary to "close a page on this period of occupation so as to leave open the route of reconciliation in Lebanon" [8(i)]
6.75 The presiding judge questions defendants and refers to information in their files that has been collected by military intelligence investigators. HRW observed: “Civilians who visited Israel were asked when and why they travelled there and, if relevant, were questioned further about he type of jobs they held and the dates of employment. Former employees of the civil administration were asked to describe their jobs, salary, length of service, and supervisors, and were also queried about their contacts with Israeli officers. Former SLA militiamen were questioned about circumstances of their recruitment, dates of service, and were asked to describe where they served, the weapons they carried, and military operations in which they participated. They were also asked to provide the names of their immediate commanders and the soldiers who served with them, and describe information that they provided to SLA or Israeli officers about individuals or suspicious movements”. [9(i)]
6.76 Judgements have been handed down late on the night of the defendant's court appearance. No reasons are given for the verdict. [63(b), 9(i)]
6.77 Defence lawyers had earlier complained that they had not been allowed sufficient time to prepare a proper defence for the accused. In particular, they were receiving case files just a day or two before each court date and, in most cases, only met their clients for the first time in the courtroom. This generally meant that the defence consisted mainly of a plea for mercy; no witnesses were called and no detailed evidence presented. [63(b)] More recently, however, defence lawyers have demanded and have been granted adjournments. On 23 August, alone, 147 cases were adjourned in order to allow lawyers time to prepare cases and consult with their clients. [30(ab)]
6.78 FFHRL has commented that the atmosphere in the court has been "relaxed" and, importantly, that defendants "have been spared scorn, insults and disrespect". [63(b)]

Sentences handed down

6.79 Several defendants have been 'found innocent' by the court due to lack of evidence or 'doubt'. In a number of other cases, prosecution measures were dropped on the basis of 'disproof of criminal intent'. In a few cases, the judgement was "condemn and no punishment". Minors and those aged over sixty have been released. [63(b)]

6.80 However, the majority of those who have stood trial so far have been found guilty of the charges against them, and their sentences have taken the form of a combination of one or more of the following:

- Prison sentences which, we understand, are served in the Lebanese prison system and not in military detention centres (where previous abuses are alleged to have taken place).
- Fines, generally ranging from 400 000 to 2 million Lebanese Pounds (approx. £185 to £920).
- Restraint orders: Many of those fined or imprisoned have also been given an order preventing them from returning to their home districts for a period of months or years.

6.81 Sentences handed down to former SLA members have apparently depended on such factors as the rank they held, the circumstances under which they joined, the nature of their duties, and whether they had previously served in the (national) Lebanese Army. It appears that ordinary militiamen ('foot soldiers', cooks, etc) have received prison terms of around 12 to 18 months. However, former senior officers in the SLA, or those who served in al-Khiam prison and may be guilty of torture or other war crimes, would receive much harsher sentences. [63(b)]

6.82 Those convicted of "entering Israel and doing business with the enemy" are generally fined, and may also be imprisoned for a number of weeks or months, depending on the circumstances. [63(b)]

6.83 Much publicity has been given to a number of 15-year and 'perpetual' prison sentences handed down by the court in respect of certain former officers, and men who were in the 'security' arm of the SLA. It should be noted that most of these long-term sentences have been passed *in-absentia* and, under Lebanese law, an individual sentenced *in-absentia* has to be retried in court if/when they are actually detained. [63(b)]

6.84 In June, Amnesty International described the trials as "travesties of justice", adding: "Such summary trials, with barely seven minutes spent on each individual, neither allow the innocent to be acquitted nor ensure that those who may be guilty of war crimes will be discovered". [8(i)] A full and up-to-date assessment of these trials, however, would have to include the following facts:

- Several defendants have been found innocent by the court due to lack of evidence.[63(b)]
- In general, the sentences handed down have been more lenient than many had expected; and certainly more lenient than the prosecution and Hizbollah have been demanding. [30(ac)]
- Many cases have recently been adjourned to allow defence lawyers more time for preparation. In addition, the number of sessions per week has been reduced from three to one.
- There **is** a right of appeal to the Military Supreme Court (although the appeals process is lengthly and expensive and appeals are not covered by legal aid). [30(ad)]
- The judicial process has been transparent; all court sessions have been open to the press and other observers.

6.85 The court has sentenced to death the intelligence chief of the pro-Israeli militia, Simon Choufi, who was tried in his absence. There have been some other instances of sentences of up to seven years; a number of death sentences and terms of life imprisonment imposed on defendants in their absence. [53 (I)] It should be pointed out that these sentences represent only a very small minority of the total number of cases dealt with and that most sentences have been passed in absentia and, under Lebanese

law, an individual sentenced in absentia has to be retried in court if/when they are actually detained. [63(b)][[para 6.81 refers]
6.86 The total number of former SLA members sentenced to death in absentia now stands at 54. [30(ag)]
6.87 However, in considering the apparent leniency of sentencing, it should be remembered that the vast majority of former SLA militiamen tried so far were ordinary 'foot-soldiers'. It is believed that most of the former ranking officers and security or intelligence operatives fled to Israel, or abroad, in May 2000.

Control of south-Lebanon

6.88 During the period immediately following the withdrawal of the Israeli Army from the former "security zone", Hizbollah was effectively in control of this area. Although some Lebanese military police units had been stationed there since May, it was not until 10 August that the Government asserted control by moving in a force of 500 Army troops and a further 500 policemen. [60(b)]
6.89 An additional 1000 Army and police personnel were deployed in the enclave of Jezzine, situated adjacent to the former "security zone", on 19 September. [31(e)]
[See also paragraph 3.65]

HIZBOLLAH: POLITICAL OPPONENTS; REFUSAL TO JOIN...

6.90 Iranian Revolutionary Guards sent to Lebanon founded Hizbollah in 1982. A seven-member Shura Council runs it; Secretary-General is Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah.
6.91 The organisation is not directly controlled by either the Syrian or Iranian governments, but the three are said to share a symbiotic relationship. Iran is the major supplier of arms and funds to Hizbollah and, according to *Janes Intelligence Review*, Iran's spiritual leaders, Ayatollah Ali Khameini in particular, have a strong influence on Hizbollah in political and ideological affairs. There is no ideological or religious foundation to Hizbollah's relationship with Syria. Their relationship is based primarily on shared short-to-medium term goals with regard to Israel. Syria controls the flow of arms from Iran to Hizbollah, via Damascus airport.[54(a)]
6.92 Hizbollah maintains a strong presence in predominantly Shi'a areas such as parts of West Beirut and the southern suburbs of Beirut, Ba'albek and the Beka'a Valley in the east, and throughout southern Lebanon. Lebanese government control over Hizbollah, which has remained legally armed in order to fight against the Israeli occupation forces in the south, is said to be limited. However, Hizbollah has been willing to submit to state authority, especially regarding criminal justice. [2(a)(b)] In Beirut, Hizbollah personnel only wear weapons at the entrance of important Hizbollah buildings, and they do not conduct arrests; if they suspect a person of "collaborating with Israel", for example, they will provide this information to the Lebanese security forces. [2(j)] In contrast, Hizbollah actually did carry out arrests in the former "security zone" in May and June 2000, but then proceeded to hand over prisoners to the Lebanese authorities.
6.93 There have been no reports of Hizbollah harassing or threatening people who publicly disagree with its policies. It does not recruit its members by force. The leadership of Hizbollah is aware that there is a large section of the Lebanese population that disagrees with its ideology, and there have been no known instances where the government has had to provide protection to ordinary citizens because they were afraid of Hizbollah. [2(b)]
6.94 There is a strong separation between the political and military wings of Hizbollah. A party member is not necessarily a military man. The military wing, also known as 'Islamic Resistance', is estimated to consist of a core of 300-400 well-trained, experienced

guerrilla fighters, and around 2000-3000 reserves. [38,54(a)] Recruits for military operations are volunteers and there is apparently no lack of new recruits [2(b)(h)] they pass through a strict screening process to eliminate possible double agents. [2(b), 12(b)] Recruitment for the Islamic Resistance requires strong ideological beliefs, as well as rigorous military training. The principal ideological beliefs are sacrifice to the cause of liberation of Lebanese territory, and martyrdom. The Islamic Resistance leadership must be totally convinced of the person's trustworthiness, something that cannot be ascertained in a short period of time. [2(b), 7(f), 38]

6.95 Since 1992, Hizbollah has increasingly turned its attention towards Lebanese parliamentary politics. In September 2000, 23 candidates on a joint Hizbollah-Amal list, of which 12 are Hizbollah members, were elected to the 128-member National Assembly. [30(s)]

6.96 Secretary-General Nasrallah told reporters in January 2000 that Hizbollah would not be concerned about its future in the event of a Syrian-Lebanese-Israeli peace agreement, because “we have a political, social, cultural and organisational presence in Lebanon”. He added that Hizbollah would “fight against any normalisation of relations between Syria and Israel”. [44(e)]

Hizbollah relations with Amal: On the surface, cordial relations exist between the two major Shi'ite organisations, as witnessed by their cooperation in the 2000 parliamentary elections. However, tensions continue to simmer between their respective supporters in the south. [54(a)] On 15 July 2000, for example, two Hizbollah guerrillas were killed and three wounded in an armed clash with Amal near the southern town of Marjayoun, after the two groups began ripping up posters of their rivals' leaders. [53(g)] There is competition between Hizbollah and Amal for acknowledged leadership of the Shi'ite Muslim community in Lebanon, and for patronage from Syria.

MILITARY SERVICE EVADERS

6.97 All men between the ages of 18 and 29 are liable for military service. Exemptions are granted to those who have physical disabilities, those with brothers who have died during military service and those who are the only son in the family. Students, including those resident abroad, can obtain deferments. [2(i), 11] A conscript who fails to report for service would receive a prison sentence of 12 months if caught by the authorities. [2(i)] There have been some cases of conscientious objection among followers of the Jehovah’s Witness faith which “in no way constitutes a refusal to perform compulsory military service”; these people are permitted to wear civilian clothes and are not obliged to perform acts that are contrary to their religious beliefs. [28(b)]

6.98 Lebanon has relaxed its rules governing compulsory military service, with young men now exempt from conscription if they have lived abroad for more than five years. [53 (h)

6.99 Following the civil war the Lebanese Army has been rebuilt into a non-sectarian force. [4(m), 17(d)] It has successfully incorporated the various former militia members, including former Aoun supporters who have been welcomed and are able to advance. [2(a)]

HOMOSEXUALITY

6.100 Section 534 of the 1943 Penal Code states that homosexual acts between men and between women are punishable with a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year. Current gay and lesbian guides indicate that discreet homosexual behaviour is possible, and that the authorities do not actively prosecute homosexuals, but open homosexual relationships are not allowed and there is no visible support for gay rights. [2(l), 2(m), 78]

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7. HUMAN RIGHTS: OTHER ISSUES

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATION

7.10 The Constitution provides for freedom of association and the Government generally respects this. [5(a)(b)(c)]

7.11 In general the government does not interfere with the establishment of private organisations. Persons forming an organisation are required to notify the Interior Ministry, which is responsible for issuing permits for the formation of associations. [5(a)(b)(c)] In April 1997, the Lebanese Bar Association criticised the practice of issuing permits but did not provide any examples of groups that had been denied a permit during 1997. [5(b)]

7.12 The Ministry of Interior also scrutinises requests to establish political movements or parties, and to some extent monitors their activities. The army Intelligence Service monitors the movement and activities of members of opposition groups. Persons opposed to government policies have been subject to arbitrary arrest and detention (see also section VI). [2(a), 5(a)(b)(c), 8(b)]

7.13 All workers, except government employees, may establish and join unions and have a legal right to strike. Worker representatives must be chosen from those employed within the bargaining unit. Forty-two per cent of the 900,000 active labour force are members of 160 labour unions and associations. The major umbrella organisation, the General Confederation of Labour, embraces 22 of the unions and 200,000 workers. [3,5(a)(b)(c)]

7.14 In general the government does not control or restrict unions. However, in 1997 the International Labour Organisation (ILO) voiced heavy criticism of the Lebanese government's policies towards the General Confederation of Labour. The government has been accused of "undue interference" in the union's internal affairs, "excessively close government regulation of union elections", and the unlawful arrest of labour activists. The criticism came after security forces surrounded the Confederation's headquarters in late April, destroyed union property and arrested its re-elected president, Ilyas Abu Rizq. Subsequently, in what has been described as "a sham election organised by a breakaway faction", the defeated candidate, Ghanim Zughbi, was elected president. Abu Rizq has since launched an "independent GLC", which led to him being charged with usurpation of political authority and disseminating false information. His case is pending. In July 1998 elections were held in the GLC for the chairmanship following the resignation of Ghanim Zughbi. [5(a)(c), 6(b), 8(b)]

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

7.15 Although the Constitution provides for freedom of assembly, the Government restricts this right. A rally or demonstration must receive the prior approval of the Interior Ministry, which depends on a number of conditions being met. [3,5(a)(b)(d), 63(a)] In 1996 the Government banned all rallies apart from during parliamentary elections. However, even while this ban was in force, various political factions, both opposition groups and supporters of the Prime Minister, held rallies without obtaining government permission. [5(a)(b)] In January 1998, some 4,000 people defied the ban on demonstrations to protest against the government's proposed budget in front of parliament. It was the largest public demonstration in Beirut since 1991. [4(n)] No arrests were reported. [4(n)(o)]

7.16 In December 1998 the Government lifted the decree banning demonstrations and in 1999 various political groups, including Amal, Hizbollah and supporters of the exiled Gen. Aoun held rallies. [5(c)]
7.17 On 14 March 1999, 21 students demonstrating in support of Aoun were arrested for distributing anti-Government and anti-Syria leaflets, but were released shortly thereafter. [5(d)]
7.18 There were several student demonstrations in March and April 2000 calling for the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, during which a total of 10 students were arrested and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 10 days to 6 weeks for 'distributing anti-Syria leaflets'. [9(g)] Supporters of the banned Lebanese Forces Party staged two mass rallies in September 2000; at least 10,000 people were said to have attended the second one, a 'Martyrs' Mass' in Jbeil. Six LF supporters were detained for questioning – two were released on 19 September, and the remaining four have been remanded for trial. [30(w), 64(a)]
7,19 On occasions during the year, internal security forces have used heavy handed tactics to disperse protesters, sometimes arresting protesters. [5(e)]
7.20 In October thousands of Palestinian refugees and Lebanese citizens demonstrated peacefully on numerous occasions against Israeli government actions in Israel, the West Bank. And Gaza. [5(e)]

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND THE PRESS

7.21 The Constitution provides for freedom of the press, but in practice this right is partially limited by the Government. During 1996, freedom of the press declined as a result of Government prosecution of several newspapers, and the passing of a new media law to regulate radio and television broadcasting. [5(a), 9(c)]
7.22 Lebanon has a strong heritage of freedom of opinion, speech and press. [3,5(a)(b)(c)] Dozens of newspapers are published in Beirut and they are recognised as amongst the freest in the Arab world. [3] The various factions print their own newspapers and also own radio stations. Daily criticism of government policies and leaders continues despite repeated attempts to restrict press freedom through prosecution. The law prohibits attacks on the dignity of the Head of State or foreign leaders, and offending journalists may be tried by the specialist Publications Court. [3,5(a)(b)(c)] Najah Wakim, a Maronite MP for Beirut, has routinely made allegations of corruption and authoritarian excesses on the part of senior government figures. [6(e)]
7.23 Since 1991, there has been very little press criticism of Syria, though it is not clear whether the Syrians enforce this or is self-censorship. The 1991 security agreement between Lebanon and Syria banned the publication of any information deemed to endanger the security of either state. [3,5(a)(b)(c)]
7.24 In June the Military court sentenced a man to 1 year imprisonment for calling on the public to celebrate the death of the late Syrian president Al-Assad. [5(e)]
7.25 Television flourished during the civil war years, with the various militias setting up their own stations. Some 50 channels were established. [22(b)] The government sought to regulate this unlicensed network with the passing of the 1994 Media Law. Only 5 television stations received licenses, three of which are owned by or closely associated to prominent government figures. [4(p), 9(c)] In July 1998, facing mounting protests, the government granted licenses to several additional radio and television stations. The decision raised the number of licensed television and radio stations to 25. [5(b)]
7.26 A Government ban on the transmission of political programmes on satellite television in January 1998 was later partially lifted in October 1998. [4(p), 5(c)] Interviews on terrestrial television do not face restriction. On 11 January 1998, the first television

interview in seven years with exiled Christian leader General Noun was broadcast in Lebanon. The Government originally decided in December 1997 to impose censorship over the broadcast, but this was overturned by its later decision to remove all restrictions from terrestrial television. [16(a), 16(c)]

7.27 Lebanon has a strong tradition of academic freedom and a flourishing private educational system due to inadequate public schools and a preference for sectarian affiliation. Students exercise the right to form campus associations and the Government usually does not interfere with student groups. [5(a)(b)(c)]

7.28 In what was widely seen as a test case for freedom of expression, Marcel Chalice, a popular Lebanese singer-songwriter, was put on trial in December 1999 on a charge of blasphemy. Khalife, who was raised a Christian and now describes himself as secular, had set to music a poem which ends with a short verse from the Koran. The Dar al-Fatwa, Lebanon's senior Sunni Muslim religious authority, explained that 'quoting the Koran is fine, but setting its verses to music and accompanying it with instruments is off-limits'. On 15 December Khalife was acquitted of the charges. [48,49,5(d)]

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

7.29 The Constitution provides for freedom of religion and the Government respects this right in practice. There is no state religion. The Government permits recognised religions to exercise authority over matters pertaining to personal status such as marriage, divorce and inheritance, as well as to maintain private schools. [1,3,5(d)]

7.30 Power is shared between Confessional Groups under the constitution and seats in the Parliament and Cabinet, and posts in the Civil Service, are distributed proportionally among the 18 recognised groups. There are no legal barriers to proselytizing; however, traditional attitudes and edicts of the clerical establishment discourage such activity. [5(e)]

7.31 Partly as a result of the civil war, people tend to live in communities with others of similar religious persuasion. This process of confessional "compartmentalisation" is reported to have negatively affected tolerance of other religions. [1,2(a), 3,11]

7.32 The Government does not require citizen's religious affiliations to be indicated on their passports. [5(e)] New Lebanese identity cards, which became available, in March 1997 also no longer specify the religion or sect of the holder in compliance with the Taif Agreement. [70(b) 75]

FREEDOM FROM RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

7.33 Discrimination based on race is illegal, and is not widespread. [5(b)]

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT/INTERNAL FLIGHT

7.34 In general, travel to most areas of Lebanon has become quite routine. There are still a number of Lebanese and Syrian army checkpoints throughout the country; during the 1975-90 civil war the checkpoints were used to monitor people's movements closely, but since the war ended the checks have become much less rigorous. [3,5(b)] In April 2000, Syrian forces stationed in the Beka'a Valley removed 8 of their checkpoints, leaving only 3 Syrian army roadblocks in the eastern district. [44(g)]

7.35 The Government issues laissez-passers (travel documents) to Palestinian refugees to enable them to travel and work abroad. In January 1999 the Government eased the tight travel restrictions that it had previously imposed on Palestinians resident in Lebanon and those entering from other countries by revoking a decision that had required all Palestinian refugees who hold Lebanese travel documents to obtain entry and exit visas when entering or leaving the country. However, in March the Government decided to stop

issuing visitors' visas to Jordanian nationals who were born in Lebanon and are of Palestinian origin. [5(d), 30(l)]

7.36 In theory, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are free to relocate from one camp to another (previously they were required to obtain the permission of the Lebanese Ministry of the Interior, but this requirement has now been lifted). They only need to inform UNRWA of their move if they wish to continue claiming UNRWA services in the camp to which they have moved. There is also no obligation for Palestinians to live in any one of the 12 refugee camps; nearly half of all Palestinian refugees in Lebanon live outside the camps.

In practice, however, there are certain barriers to their freedom of movement. Whilst Palestinians can live outside the camps, it is often too expensive for them to do so. Their ability to move to another camp depends on whether they can find appropriate accommodation. In the already overcrowded southern camps, construction work is prohibited and there is little habitable space for newcomers. In Beirut, the North and the Beka'a, living space is more plentiful and rents tend to be less. [69]

7.37 Over 600,000 Lebanese were displaced during the civil war. Efforts to return and settle those displaced are ongoing, but tight budgetary constraints, shattered infrastructure, and lack of schools and economic opportunities have slowed the process. [2(a), 5(a)(b)(c)(d)]

7.38 The Lebanese have always been free to travel abroad, but travel to Israel remains prohibited by law. [3,5(a)]

WOMEN

7.39 Violence against women is a problem. The press reports cases of rape with increasing frequency, and cases reported are thought to be only a fraction of the actual number. There are no authoritative statistics on the extent of spousal abuse. Most experts agree that the problem affects a significant portion of the female population. In general battered or abused women do not talk about their suffering for fear of bringing shame upon their own families or accusations of misbehaviour upon themselves. Some religious courts legally can compel a battered wife to return to the house in spite of physical abuse. Many women are compelled to remain in abusive marriages because of social and family pressures. Possible loss of custody of children and the absence of an independent source of income also prevent women from leaving their husbands.

7.40 Women have varying employment opportunities in government, medicine, law, academia, the arts, and to a lesser degree, business. However, social pressure against women pursuing careers is strong in some parts of society. Men sometimes exercise considerable control over female relatives, restricting their activities outside the home or their contact with friends and relatives. Women may own property but often cede control of it to male relatives for cultural reasons and because of family pressure.

7.41 Women have the right to vote and there are no legal barriers to their participation in politics; however, there are significant cultural barriers, and women are underrepresented in government and politics. No woman has ever held a cabinet position. In September 2000 3 women were elected to the 128-seat Parliament.[5(e)]

CHILDREN

7.42 In 1998, Parliament enacted a law rendering education free and compulsory. [59]

7.43 Many children from low-income families are compelled by their parents to seek employment. Because of their age, wages earned by these children are not in conformity with labour regulations. Children between the ages of 10 and 14 constitute 0.6 per cent of the labour force (5,936 children in total), according to the latest official figures. According

to a U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) study, some 60 per cent of working children are below 13 years of age and 75 per cent earn wages below two-thirds of the minimum wage. There are a large number of abandoned children in the streets nationwide, some of whom survive by begging, others by selling services or goods. The Government does not have a child protection law to remove children from abusive situations, nor do the NGO's have adequate legislative authority to litigate on behalf of minor children who are victims of abuse. [5(d)][59].

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

7.44 During the year, the Parliament passed amendments to the law on disabled persons, which stipulates that at least 3 per cent of all government and private sector positions should be filled by persons with disabilities, provided that such persons fulfil the qualifications of the position. The amendments provide the private sector with tax reduction benefits if the number of disabled that were hired exceeded the number specified in the law. The amendments also impose new building codes in all government buildings and require that public transportation be accessible for disabled persons. [5(e)]

CITIZENSHIP

7.45 Acquisition of Lebanese citizenship is two fold, through descent from the father (jus sanguinis) and marriage. Marriage, though, does not automatically confer citizenship. Birth within the Republic of Lebanon does not confer citizenship. [79]

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(ad) Trial opens for suspected SLA members 12/10/00
(ae) Lebanon: Muslim leaders rally behind armed forces
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(ah) Homes of SLA officers blown up in South 08/08/01

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(c) Barak, Peres Reject Plan to Keep Israeli Posts in Lebanon 17/3/00
(d) Israel Says it Won’t Accept SLA “Refugees" 19/3/00
(e) Israel Releases 27 Lebanese Prisoners, including Guerrillas 13/1/00
(f) France could give Refuge to Israeli Proxy Militiamen: Defence Minister 14/4/00
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ANNEX B:

PRINCIPAL POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

Ad-Duster (Constitutional Party): Led by Michel Bechara al-Khoury.
Amal (Hope): Shi'ite politico-military organisation led by Nabih Berri.
Al-Hizb ad-Damuqratiya al-Ishtiraqi al-mashi (Christian Social Democratic Party): Secretary General; Walid Faris.
Al-Jabha ad-Damuqratiya al-Barlamaniya (Parliamentary Democratic Front): Mainly Sunni Muslim support.
Al-Katae'b (Phalanges Libanaises, Phalangist Party): Nationalist, reformist, democratic social party. Largest Maronite party. Pres. Mounir El-Hajj Sec.Gen. Joseph Abou Khalil
An-Nida' al-Kawmi (National Struggle): Led by Kazem as-Solh.
Bloc National Libanais: Right wing Lebanese party led by Raymond Eddé.
Free Patriotic Movement: Christian anti Syrian Headed by the exiled Michel Aoun.
Hizbollah (the Party of God): Militant Shi'ite faction. Strong separation between political and military wings. Secretary General; Hassan Nasrallah.
Islamic Amal: Breakaway group from Amal led by Hussein Moussavi.
Lebanese Forces: Banned party that supports the imprisoned Samir Geagea.
Lebanese Front: Grouping of right wing parties (mainly Christian). Secretary; Dory Chamoun.
National Front: Grouping of left wing parties (mainly Muslim). Secretary General; Kamal Shatila.
Parti Communiste Libanais (Lebanese Communist Party): Led by Faruq Dahruj.
Party Démocrate: Supports secular, democratic policy, private enterprise and social justice. Secretary General; Joseph Mughaizel.
Parti National Libéral (Al-Wataniyin al-Ahrar): Liberal reformist secular party. President; Dory Chamoun.
Parti Socialiste Progressiste (At-Takadumi al-Ishteraki): Progressive Party. Mainly Druze support. President; Walid Joumblatt.

INFORMATION ON **PALESTINIAN** POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS IS TO BE FOUND IN **SECTION 6**

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ANNEX C:

RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (Electoral Law 2000)

Districts	Seats											
BEIRUT	Shi'ite	Sunni	Druze	Alawite	**Total Muslim**	Maronite	Greek Orthx	Greek Catholic	Armenian	Other Christian	**Total Christian**	**TOTAL**
Achrafieh+Mazraa+Saifi		2			2	1	1	1		1	4	6
Bashoura+Msaitbeh+Rmeil	1	2			3		1		1	1	3	6
Ain elMraisseh+Medawar+Mina el-Hosn+Port+Ras Beirut+Zokak el-Blat	1	2	1		4				2	1	3	7
Total Beirut	2	6	1		9	1	2	1	3	3	10	19
MOUNT LEBANON												
Chouf		2	2		4	3		1			4	8
Aley+Baabda	2		3		5	5	1				6	11
North Metn						4	2	1	1		8	8
Jbeil+Kesrwan	1				1	7					7	8
Total Mount Lebanon	3	2	5		10	19	3	2	1		25	35
NORTH LEBANON												
Akkar+Bsharreh+Dennieh		5		1	6	3	2				5	11
Batroun+Koura+Minieh+Tripoli+Zghorta		6		1	7	6	4				10	17
Total North Lebanon		11		2	13	9	6				15	28
SOUTH LEBANON												
Bint Jbeil+Saida+Tyre+Zahrani	9	2			11			1			1	12
Hasbaya+Jezzin+Marjeyoun+Nabatieh	5	1	1		7	2	1	1			4	11
Total South Lebanon	14	3	1		18	2	1	2			5	23
BEKAA												
Zahleh	1	1			2	1	1	2	1		5	7
Baalbeck+Hermel	6	2			8	1		1			2	10
Rashaya+West Bekaa	1	2	1		4	1	1				2	6
Total Bekaa	8	5	1		14	3	2	3	1		9	23
TOTAL	27	27	8	2	64	34	14	8	5	3	64	128

ANNEX D:

GLOSSARY

IDF	- Israeli Defence Forces
ILMG	- Israel/Lebanon Monitoring Group
ISF	- Lebanese Internal Security Forces
LF	- Lebanese Forces (distinct from LAF)
LAF	- Lebanese Armed Forces
MNF	- Multinational Force (see UNIFIL)
PLO	- Palestinian Liberation Organisation
SLA	- South Lebanon Army
UNHCR	- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFIL	- United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon
UNRWA	- United Nations Relief and Works Agency

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ANNEX E:

CHRONOLOGY

26 November 1941
Independence declared
1943
Unwritten "national pact" established system by which government power shared on confessional basis.
1957
Considerable unrest, mainly among Muslims who advocated Lebanon's closer alignment with Syria and Egypt.
1958
US forces deployed in July to restore peace at Lebanese government's request. Peace was restored by October and the US forces were withdrawn.
1969
Clashes between Lebanese security forces and Palestinian guerrillas.
July 1971
Palestinian fighters expelled from Jordan enter Lebanon. Subsequently, the conflict between Israeli forces and Palestinians based in Lebanon intensified, while Christian groups began their own armed campaign to control the Palestinian guerrillas.
July 1974
Clashes between Palestinian forces and Christian militias.
April 1975
Further conflict between Christians and Palestinians.
May 1975
Unable to control the growing violence the government resigned and the conflict quickly developed into a full-scale civil war between the religious communities.
October 1976
Cease-fire achieved largely as a result of intervention in the conflict by Syrian forces in mid-1976. Following the cease-fire a 30,000-strong Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) entered Lebanon and prevented hostilities for a short time.
March 1978
Renewal of fighting followed raid by Palestinian forces which provoked Israeli retaliation. Israeli forces advanced into southern Lebanon but withdrew after intervention of UN, which established a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. The withdrawing Israeli forces, however, maintained a buffer zone along the border.
June 1982
Israeli forces entered Lebanon with declared objective of finally eliminating Palestinians' military threat to Israel's northern border. Israeli troops surrounded western sector of Beirut trapping more than 6,000 Palestinian fighters there. In late August 1982 US diplomacy achieved an agreement that allowed the dispersal of the Palestinian fighters from Beirut to various Arab countries, and the deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force in the city.
August 1982
The National Assembly elected Bachir Gemayel to succeed President Sarkis.
14 September 1982
President-elect was assassinated.

16 September 1982
In retaliation for assassination of Gemayel, Christian forces massacred many inhabitants of the Palestinian refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila.
October 1983
241 US and 58 French marines were killed in "suicide bombings", perpetrated by Muslim groups suspicious of the multinational forces role in supporting the Christian-led Government.
December 1983
Israeli forces redeployed to south of Beirut along Awali River, reducing their presence in Lebanon from 30,000 to 10,000.
Early 1984
USA, Italy and United Kingdom decided to withdraw their peacekeeping troops.
September 1984
Israeli government pledged to withdraw its forces from Lebanon. However, when the last phase of the Israeli withdrawal was completed in June 1985, Israel maintained a buffer zone along the border.
1986
Palestinian guerrillas resumed attacks on settlements in northern Israel, and Israel responded with air attacks on Palestinian targets in Lebanon. Meanwhile, Hizbollah escalated its attacks on SLA positions within the Israeli security zone.
May 1986 - January 1988
Fighting between Palestinian guerrillas and Shi'ite Amal militiamen for control of the refugee camps claimed over 2,500 lives.
August/September 1988
Failure of the National Assembly to elect a President results in a constitutional crisis, with two governments claiming legitimacy. One the Muslim-dominated civilian Government of Selim Hoss, and the other the military administration of General Aoun.
March 1989
Violent clashes in Beirut between Aoun's Lebanese army and its allies on the one hand, and Syrian troops and their local militias on the other.
May 1989
A Tripartite Arab Committee was formed to produce a peace plan.

June 1989
Tripartite Arab Committee announced a peace plan, which was immediately rejected by General Aoun.
September 1989
Tripartite Arab Committee announced a new peace plan, "the charter of national reconciliation", which Aoun reluctantly agreed to. A cease-fire accordingly took place on 23 September.
22 October 1989
The National Assembly met in Taif, Saudi Arabia, and approved the charter. However, General Aoun immediately denounced the endorsement of the charter (the Taif agreement).
November 1989
The National Assembly elected René Mouawad as the new President. General Aoun declared the election unconstitutional and declared himself President.
22 November 1989

President Mouawad was assassinated. Two days later, the National Assembly elected Elias Hrawi as the new President.

January 1990

Violent clashes took place between the Christian communities, who were divided over the Taif agreement. By March more than 800 people had been killed and over 2,500 wounded.

August 1990

The National Assembly approved amendments to the Constitution granting an equal share of the seats in the Assembly to Muslim and Christian deputies.

13 October 1990

General Aoun and his forces were expelled from East Beirut by Syrian forces and units of the Lebanese army loyal to President Hrawi.

December 1990

Lebanese army began to deploy in Beirut, all militia forces having withdrawn from the city.

Mid-February 1991

Lebanese army established in most southern Lebanese towns.

Late May 1991

Lebanon and Syria signed a bilateral treaty providing formal structure for links between the two countries, particularly with regard to security.

June 1991

Israel mounted fierce attacks on Palestinian bases in southern Lebanon.

February 1992

Escalation of the conflict in southern Lebanon followed the assassination of Sheikh Abbas Moussawi, the Secretary-General of Hizbollah, by the Israeli air force. Retaliation by Hizbollah fighters prompted an Israeli incursion beyond the buffer zone to attack Hizbollah positions.

April and May 1992

General strikes took place amidst deterioration in Lebanon's economy.

August/September 1992

First legislative elections since 1972.

22 October 1992

Rafik Hariri was invited by President Hrawi to form a government.

October/November 1992

Serious escalations of the conflict in southern Lebanon between Hizbollah fighters, the SLA and Israeli armed forces.

25 July 1993

Israeli armed forces launched a heavy attack on targets in southern Lebanon, with the declared aim of eradicating the threat posed by Hizbollah and Palestinian guerrillas. The Israeli operation displaced as many as 300,000 civilians towards the north and caused many civilian casualties.

1994

Violence remained at a high level in south Lebanon.

March 1994

The Government proscribed the LF (military wing of the Phalangist Party).

May 1994

Prime Minister Hariri resigned but later resumed his duties following the intervention of President Assan of Syria.

December 1994

Hariri resigned but later withdrew his resignation.

February 1995
Israel imposed a blockade on southern Lebanese fishing ports, in retaliation for the imposition of stricter controls between the southern Lebanese security zone and the sovereign Lebanese territory by the Lebanese army.
May 1995
Hariri again resigned and later withdrew his resignation.
June 1995
LF leader Samir Geagea was found guilty of a terrorist attack on a Maronite church and of the murder of Maronite leader, Dany Chamoun. Geagea was sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour.
19 October 1995
The National Assembly voted to amend Article 49 of the Constitution and thereby extended President Hrawi's term of office for a further 3 years.
February 1996
The Government placed the army in charge of national security and imposed a curfew in the country's principal cities and towns in response to a general strike.
11 April 1996
Israeli armed forces began an intense, sustained campaign of air and artillery attacks on what they claimed to be positions occupied by the Hizbollah militia. The declared aim of the Israeli campaign (code-named "Grapes of Wrath") was to achieve the complete cessation of rocket attacks by Hizbollah on settlements in northern Israel. As a result of the operation some 400,000 Lebanese were displaced northwards.
18 April 1996
An Israeli attack on a UN base at Qana resulted in the death of more than 100 Lebanese refugees who had been sheltering there.
27 April 1996
A US brokered cease-fire agreement between Israel and Hizbollah took effect.
July 1996
The first meeting took place of an international committee formed to monitor the cease-fire agreement concluded between Israel and Hizbollah.
August/September 1996
Legislative elections held.
October 1996
Hariri was appointed for a third term of office as Prime Minister.
1997
Continued fighting in south Lebanon resulted in the deaths of 39 Israeli soldiers, 22 SLA soldiers, 60 Hizbollah guerrillas and 47 civilians.
14 December 1997
63 supporters of exiled General Aoun were detained following a demonstration outside a television station, which was held in protest at the government's decision to bar the station from broadcasting an interview with Aoun.
15 December 1997
5,500 Lebanese lawyers called a three-day strike following the detention of Aoun's supporters. Further demonstrations by Aoun supporters took place without further arrests.
7 January 1998
The Lebanese cabinet decided to ban the transmission of news and political programmes on satellite television, but to allow all kinds of interviews on terrestrial television.
13 January 1998

The first interview in 7 years with exiled General Aoun is broadcast on Lebanese terrestrial television.

22 January 1998

Some 4,000 Lebanese protested in front of parliament against tax rises in the proposed 1998 budget, making it the largest public demonstration in Beirut since 1991.

30 January 1998

Heavy fighting took place in Baalbek, in the Beka'a Valley, between the Lebanese Army and followers of Sheikh Subhi al-Tufayli, the former leader of Hizbollah. The Lebanese Army expelled the group by force from a Hizbollah religious seminary, which they had seized.

May and June 1998

The first local elections in 35 years were held across the country.

15 October 1998

General Emile Lahoud was elected as Lebanon's 11th post-independence president.

November - December 1998

Lahoud asks incumbent Prime Minister Rafik Hariri to form a government, but he declines the offer. Lahoud approaches Salim al-Huss to replace him. Huss forms the new government.

December 1998

The Government lifts the ban on demonstrations, although they still require prior notification and authorisation.

15 June 1999

South Lebanon Army withdraws from Jezzine. 220 SLA members voluntarily surrender themselves to the Lebanese authorities and are subsequently tried by a military tribunal.

June 1999

Three former Lebanese Forces militiamen sentenced to death, and leader Geagea to life imprisonment, for 1987 assassination of Prime Minister Rashid Karami.

15 December 1999

Singer-songwriter Marcel Khalife is acquitted of charges of blasphemy.

December 1999

A new Election law divides the country into fourteen “electoral disricts” for future parliamentary elections.

5 March 2000

The Israeli government announces that an Israeli Defence Force withdrawal from southern Lebanon will take place in July 2000.

12 April 2000

The Israeli Supreme Court orders the release of several Lebanese detainees who had been held hostage for several years in anticipation of a prisoner exchange.

22 May 2000

Hizbollah overruns defensive positions manned by the SLA. Over the following two days, the Israeli Defence Force withdraws from southern Lebanon, and the SLA collapses and disbands.

5 June 2000

Trials of former SLA members and 'collaborators' commence in the Military Court.

27 August and 3 September 2000

Parliamentary elections take place in two rounds. Prime Minister al-Hoss concedes defeat.

March 2001
Lebanon begins pumping water from a tributary of the River Jordan to supply a southern border village despite opposition from Israel.
April 2001
Israeli warplanes bomb Syrian radar station in Lebanon, killing at least two Syrian soldiers.
24 May 2001
Israel shoots down light aircraft which crossed over from Lebanese border.
01 July 2001
Israel attacks Syrian positions in Lebanon responding to a Hezbollah attack.

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Other sources as quoted in Section 3

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