



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		21 June 2005
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Biographies		
Organization Chart	Lebanon: The current status of General Michel Aoun and Samir Geagea; the treatment of members of the Lebanese Forces (LF) by the authorities (January 2004 - June 2005)	
Employment	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa	
Legal and Policy References		
Publications	Status of General Michel Aoun	
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division	General Michel Aoun was Lebanon's interim prime minister until he was fired in 1989 (BBC 13 June 2005). Refusing to step down, Aoun fought back against the Syrians, but six months and thousands of deaths later he was forced into exile in France (ibid.), where he remained until his return to Lebanon on 7 May 2005 (<i>Christian Science Monitor</i> 20 June 2005; see also BBC 27 May 2005).	
Immigration Division		
Immigration Appeal Division	Upon his return to Lebanon, Aoun began putting together	
Decisions	...an intensive electioneering campaign, adopting the color orange and the Greek letter omega (the symbol of resistance in electrical terms), and publishing a 43-page manifesto outlining a comprehensive overhaul of Lebanon's political, judicial, and economic system, ridding it of 15 years of Syrian influence (<i>Christian Science Monitor</i> 20 June 2005).	
Forms		
Statistics		
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National Documentation Packages	In the third electoral round of the parliamentary elections held on 12 June 2005, the "fiercely anti-Syrian" Aoun, representing the Free Patriotic Movement (BBC 27 May 2005), emerged victorious in the Christian heartland of Mount Lebanon (Reuters 20 June 2005). His alliance won 21 seats (ibid.), while Aoun himself became a newly elected member of the Lebanese parliament (AP 19 June 2005). According to two news sources, this victory has turned Aoun into the major Christian political player (BBC 20 June 2005; Reuters 20 June 2005).	
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets		
Responses to Information Requests	Status of Samir Geagea	
Recent Research		
Media Centre		
News	Samir Geagea (BBC 27 May 2005; AI Dec. 2004), whose name is sometimes spelt Ja'ja (US 12 June 2005; <i>Country Reports 2004</i> 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 1.c), is the leader of the Lebanese Forces, a "former Christian militia and anti-Syrian opposition group" (BBC 27 May 2005) that was banned in 1994 (Freedom House 23 Aug. 2004) and, as at December 2004, continued to be banned (AI Dec. 2004). Geagea was imprisoned in 1994 for murdering or attempting to murder politicians during and after the civil war in Lebanon (<i>Country Reports 2004</i> 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 1.c; BBC 27 May 2005). He continued to be imprisoned as at 12 June 2005 (China FBIS 12 June 2005). Geagea was held in solitary confinement in the basement of the	
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Ministry of Defense from 1994 to September 2004, when he was moved to a "more comfortable ground level cell" (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 1.c).

Relationship Between Michel Aoun and Samir Geagea

During Lebanon's civil war, Aoun and Geagea fought against each other (BBC 18 May 2005). However, in May 2005, following his return to Lebanon, Aoun visited Geagea in prison, after 15 years of not having seen one another, as "an expression of solidarity with him [Geagea] in his jail because his continuing imprisonment is injustice" (US 20 May 2005; see also BBC 18 May 2005). Aoun is quoted as saying: "I believe that even if the basis of his imprisonment were right, the period that he has spent in jail is sufficient" (US 20 May 2005).

Treatment of Lebanese Forces Members by Authorities

According to Amnesty International, in 2004,

[s]cores of people, mostly Sunni Islamist activists and members of opposition groups, were arrested for political reasons. Among them were members of two banned opposition groups, the Free Patriotic Movement and the Lebanese Forces, most of whom were released after short periods (2005).

Additional and corroborating information on the treatment of Lebanese Forces members by the authorities could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including : European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), Free Samir Geagea Website, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), Lebanese Forces Official Website.

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