



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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Biographies		
Organization Chart	Lebanon: Treatment of members and supporters of the Lebanese Forces (LF) by the Lebanese and Syrian authorities, and by Hezbollah (March 2005 - October 2007)	
Employment	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa	
Legal and Policy		
References	In 10 October 2007 correspondence sent to the Research Directorate, a professor from the Toledo International Centre for Peace in Madrid, Spain, who specializes in the Middle East, indicated that he was unaware of any recent reports of mistreatment of members of the Lebanese Forces (LF) by Lebanese authorities or Hezbollah. The Professor further noted	
Publications	[t]here was a time at the end of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1989) where LF members were arrested, jailed and harassed. This is not the case since Dr. Samir Ja'ja' [also spelled Geagea] the LF commander was released from jail [in July 2005]. (Professor 10 Oct. 2007)	
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division		
Immigration Division		
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Forms		
Statistics	Agence France-Presse (AFP) has stated that Lebanon's Maronite Christian population is divided between supporters of Samir Geagea's LF, a major rival of Hezbollah, and Michel Aoun, who has made links with Hezbollah (AFP 21 Sept. 2006; ICG 25 July 2006). The LF are part of the majority bloc in the Lebanese Parliament, which also includes Saad al-Hariri's Future Bloc, Walid Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party, and the Lebanese Phalanges ( <i>Le Monde</i> 20 Dec. 2006; ICG 21 Dec. 2006). Meanwhile, the opposition is composed of Hezbollah, Amal, Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Front and a collection of smaller pro-Syrian parties (ibid.).	
Research		
Research Program		
National Documentation Packages		
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets	Following Lebanon's June 2005 general elections, three members of the Lebanese Forces (LF) were reportedly shot, two of them fatally, by a supporter of a rival Christian political group led by Suleiman Franjeh, who was allied with Michel Aoun (AFP 3 July 2005). Franjeh had refused to concede his election defeat at the hands of the LF in northern Lebanon (ibid.). Both Franjeh and the LF denounced the shooting (ibid.).	
Responses to Information Requests		
Recent Research		
Media Centre		
News		
Information Sheets	In February 2007, Beirut-based <i>L'Orient-Le Jour</i> reported that an unidentified gunman opened fire at the house of Samir Geagea in Kesrouan while he was being interviewed on television (8 Feb. 2007). There was no indication of any injuries (ibid.); however, further information on the incident could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.	
Media Relations		
Proactive Disclosure		

### Treatment by Lebanese authorities

In 25 October 2007 correspondence with the Research Directorate, an assistant professor of social sciences at the Lebanese American University stated:

[e]ver since the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in April 2005, and the concomitant release of Lebanese Forces (LF) leader Samir Ja'ja' from jail on 26 July 2005, the LF and its sympathizers are no longer a persecuted political party. Its members and sympathizers are free to organize and associate politically without hindrance by any state or extra state organization. (Assistant Professor 25 Oct. 2007)

On 18 July 2005, the Lebanese parliament adopted a law which amnestied LF leader Samir Geagea in the name of national reconciliation (*Le Monde* 20 July 2005). Geagea had already served 11 years of imprisonment for the assassination of Prime Minister Rachid Karamé in 1989 (*ibid.*).

In April 2006, a group of students belonging to the LF were reportedly arrested and assaulted by the Lebanese army during a party that celebrated their election win in student elections at the Lebanese University (*L'Orient-Le Jour* 4 Apr. 2006). *L'Orient-Le Jour* reported that the Lebanese army arrested eight students, some of whom were reportedly assaulted, and detained them at a military centre in Jisr el-Bacha before releasing them that same evening with a warning not to express their political opinions (*ibid.*). Further or clarifying information on this case could not, however, be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In November 2006, Lebanese authorities arrested dozens of LF members during a military training exercise (*Al-Manar* 27 Nov. 2006; *Daily Star* 1 Dec. 2006). Beirut's *Daily Star* reported that this was due to their possession of American and Israeli weaponry (*ibid.*). Hezbollah's *Al-Manar* television station reported that the arrest occurred in the wake of the release by an LF-affiliated student organization of "semi-military statements similar to those made by some of their political leaders" (27 Nov. 2006). *Al-Manar* revealed that members of the LF had been responsible for rioting against the offices of the Free Patriotic Movement (*Al-Manar* 27 Nov. 2006), which is led by General Michel Aoun (*Le Monde* 20 Dec. 2006). The *Daily Star* reported that by the end of November 2006, student members of the LF, the Free Patriotic Movement and Hezbollah, met at Université St. Joseph for conciliatory talks (1 Dec. 2006).

However, tensions persisted in the ensuing weeks and three students were injured in fighting between supporters of the Free Patriotic Movement and the LF (*L'Orient-Le Jour* 19 Dec. 2006).

### **Treatment by Syrian authorities**

AFP reported that in September 2005, a journalist and "supporter of the anti-Syrian Lebanese Forces party," was seriously injured after the detonation of a bomb placed in her car (AFP 25 Sept. 2005). Previously, another anti-Syrian journalist was reportedly killed by a car bomb in June 2005 (*ibid.*).

In October 2005, *L'Orient-Le Jour* reported that unknown assailants severely assaulted an LF supporter in Wadi Chahrour (6 Oct. 2005). From his hospital bed, the victim reportedly stated that at least one of the attackers had a Syrian accent (*L'Orient-Le Jour* 6 Oct. 2005), but further or corroborating information on this case could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In 2006, Samir Geagea was quoted as stating that the LF would [translation] "continue to resist" Syria's non-recognition of Lebanon (AFP 24 Sept. 2006).

In August 2006, AFP cited Syria's official press as alleging that Samir Geagea and his LF received help from Mossad and the CIA and that they were planning to conduct violent acts inside Syria (7 Aug. 2006). However, this information could

not be corroborated among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

### **Relations with Hezbollah**

In 25 October 2007 correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Associate Professor of social sciences at the Lebanese American University noted that he was not aware of any incidents of Hezbollah's treatment of members and supporters of the LF. The Assistant Professor added that "[t]he two parties, and their cadres, are separated geographically" (Assistant Professor 25 Oct. 2007).

During Israel's military campaign against Hezbollah in Lebanon in the summer of 2006, the LF participated in rescue operations to assist Shia Muslims who were fleeing their homes in the south (AFP 13 Aug. 2006). An LF spokesperson said that while they were fully supportive of the Shias [translation] "on a human level," they condemned Hezbollah's geopolitical stance (ibid.).

In September 2006, Samir Geagea issued a statement contesting Hezbollah's self-declared victory in its war with Israel, judging the conflict instead as a national [translation] "catastrophe" (AFP 24 Sept. 2006).

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

Agence France-Presse (AFP). 24 September 2006. "Liban : un chef chrétien antisyrrien conteste la 'victoire' du Hezbollah." (Factiva)

\_\_\_\_\_. 21 September 2006. "Lebanon's Divided Christians Feel Rudderless." (Factiva)

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Al-Manar Television [Beirut, in Arabic]. 27 November 2006. "Lebanese Forces Party Members Said Arrested During Firearms Training." (Factiva/BBC Monitoring Newsfile)

Assistant Professor. 25 October 2007. Lebanese American University, Beirut. Correspondence.

*Daily Star* [Beirut]. 1 December 2006. Iman Azzi. "USJ Student Leaders Agree to Disagree Over Claims of Hizbullah 'Espionage' On Campus; FPM Had Threatened Legal Action Unless an Apology Was Made." (Factiva)

International Crisis Group (ICG). 21 December 2006. "Policy Briefing: Lebanon at a Tripwire."

<[http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle\\_east\\_\\_\\_north\\_africa/arab\\_israeli\\_conflict/lebanon/b20\\_lebanon\\_at\\_a\\_tripwire.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle_east___north_africa/arab_israeli_conflict/lebanon/b20_lebanon_at_a_tripwire.pdf)> [Accessed 22 Oct.

2007]

\_\_\_\_\_. 25 July 2006. *Israel/Palestine/Lebanon: Climbing Out of the Abyss*. (Middle East Report No. 57).

<[http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle\\_east\\_\\_\\_north\\_africa/arab\\_israeli\\_conflict/57\\_israel\\_palestine\\_lebanon\\_\\_\\_climbing\\_out\\_of\\_the\\_abyss.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle_east___north_africa/arab_israeli_conflict/57_israel_palestine_lebanon___climbing_out_of_the_abyss.pdf)> [Accessed 22 Oct. 2007]

*Le Monde* [Paris]. 20 December 2006. "La fracture libanaise." (Factiva)

\_\_\_\_\_. 20 July 2005. "Samir Geagea, l'ancien chef des forces libanaises, est amnistié après 11 ans de prison." (Factiva)

*L'Orient-Le Jour* [Beirut]. 8 February 2007. "Tirs contre la résidence de Geagea à Bzoummar (Kesrouan)." <[l'orient-lejour.com.lb/](http://l'orient-lejour.com.lb/)> [Accessed 9 Feb. 2007]

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Professor. 10 October 2007. Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITpax) [Madrid]. Correspondence.

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** The Association libanaise des droits de l'homme, the Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights Lebanon, and professors of political science at the Lebanese American University and the Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth did not respond to requests for information within the time constraints of this Response.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International (AI), Arabic News, Association libanaise des droits de l'homme, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Canadian Lebanese Human Rights Federation (CLHRF), *Courrier international*, European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), European Institute for Research on Mediterranean and Euro-Arab Cooperation, Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme (FIDH), Forces libanaises (FL), Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights Lebanon, *Haaretz*, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Lebanese Foundation for Peace (LFP), Lebanese Information Center (LIC), *Middle East Report*, Naharnet, United States Department of State, World News Connection (WNC).

**Publications, including:** *Political Handbook of the World 2007*.

  
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