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RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		8 March 2005
About the Board	LBN43422.FE	
Biographies		
Organization Chart	Lebanon: Update to LBN39595.E of 18 July 2002 on the treatment of members and supporters of the Lebanese Forces (LF) by the Lebanese and Syrian authorities and by the Hezbollah (19 July 2002-February 2005)	
Employment	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa	
Legal and Policy		
References		
Publications	According to a document from the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), "the Lebanese Forces [LF] was a coalition of mainly Maronite Christian militias that together made up one of the strongest factions in Lebanon's 15-year civil war between Christian, Muslim, and Druze militias" (United States 6 Nov. 2002). During the civil war, "the Lebanese Forces was regularly accused of politically-motivated killings and arrests and other serious human rights abuses" (ibid.).	
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division		
Immigration Division		
Immigration Appeal Division		
Decisions	However, a report from Amnesty International indicated that " Samir Gea'gea and Jirjis al-Khouri, like scores of other LF members, may have been victims of human rights violations committed in a climate of political repression and intimidation" (23 Nov. 2004). In his speech referring to the incarceration of the LF leader, Geagea, the LF's secretary general said that "the LF are more united than ever, stronger than ever, and will stay forever at the service of Lebanon," even though some had hoped that the movement would "split, divide, and weaken" (LFP 24 Apr. 2004).	
Forms		
Statistics		
Research		
Research Program		
National Documentation Packages	Elections	
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets	The LF plans to name candidates for the spring 2005 parliamentary election (LF 14 Feb. 2005). In June 2004, the LF won all 21 seats on Besharri's municipal council (ibid. 3 June 2004). However, in 2003, the LF was banned as a political party and the Lebanese government refused at that time to address the legality of the 1994 ban (LIC 2003; Freedom House 23 Aug. 2004).	
Responses to Information Requests		
Recent Research		
Media Centre		
News	Arrests, abductions and killings	
Information Sheets	As described in the following paragraphs, LF members have been targeted by arrests, killings and abductions since 2001 (United States 6 Nov. 2002; <i>Country Reports 2001</i> 4 Mar. 2002, Sec. 1c.; <i>Country Reports 2002</i> 31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 1a; LIC 2003; LF 2 May 2004)	
Media Relations		
Proactive Disclosure	In 2001, the government arrested more than 100 LF supporters (United States 6 Nov. 2002; <i>Country Reports 2001</i> 4 Mar. 2002, Intro.). Some of those arrested claimed that they were physically and psychologically abused and that	

their families had been threatened (ibid., Sec. 1c). They also claimed that they were not given access to lawyers (ibid., Sec. 1d). "The authorities allegedly forced most of them to sign affidavits stating that they would abstain from politics and released them within 2 weeks after their arrests" (ibid.). According to the detainees, "some of those who refused [to sign the affidavits] were beaten until they submitted to signing" (ibid.).

Three other people apparently linked to the LF were killed "in suspicious circumstances" in 2002, one of them in Brazil (United States 6 Nov. 2002).

Country Reports 2002 indicated that Elie Hobeiq, former LF Commander and former cabinet member, and three of his bodyguards were killed on 24 January 2002 (31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 1a). According to *Country Reports 2002*, "five men were detained by the authorities for questioning but were later released " (31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 1a).

Also, "on May 21, the body of Ramzi Irani, the officer in charge of the banned Lebanese Forces at the Lebanese University, was found 14 days after he was discovered missing" (*Country Reports 2002* 31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 1a). *Country Reports 2003* indicated that "there were no developments in the 2002 killing of Ramzi Irani" (25 Feb. 2004, Intro.).

In May and June 2003, security forces from the regions of Bsharre, Tripoli and Beirut apprehended and interrogated dozens of LF members for several days about their affiliation with the LF Party (LIC 2003).

In 2004, another LF member was found killed: Pierre Boulos, a former chairman of the LF Student Branch, was found in the trunk of his car two days after he went missing (LF 2 May 2004).

Samir Geagea and Jirjis al-Khouri

Samir Geagea, or Samir Ja'ja (*Country Reports 2001* 4 Mar. 2002, Sec. 1c), leader of the LF, and Jirjis al-Khouri or Girgis Khoury (CLHRF 28 Nov. 2004), member of the LF, have been in detention since 1994, following their conviction for their alleged involvement in an explosion that took place at the Sayidat a-Najat church near Beirut (AI 23 Nov. 2004). Geagea was also charged and convicted for the murder of Dany Cham'oun and his family in 1990 (ibid.). The LF was banned in 1994, following these events (ibid.).

According to an article from Amnesty International, Samir Geagea and Jirjis al-Khouri have been detained in "cruel, inhuman and degrading conditions" at the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre (ibid.; see also CLHRF 28 Nov. 2004). According to an article published in February 2004, Samir Geagea, who is serving combined sentences totalling 120 years, is in excellent physical shape and "maintains constant contact with his lawyers, relatives and wife," who visit him regularly (LF 6 Feb. 2004). *Country Reports 2001* indicated, however, that "he is permitted . . . only periodic visits from his family and lawyers" (4 Mar. 2002, Sec. 1c). An Amnesty International article reported that, in November 2004, Samir Geagea experienced treatment that was "detrimental to [his] physical and mental health" (AI 23 Nov. 2004). The LF leader was still being held in solitary confinement in 2004 (ibid.; see also LIC 2003; *Country Reports 2001* 4 Mar. 2002, Sec. 1c). He has been allowed very few visits from the outside, and the International Committee of the Red Cross has been denied access to the detention centre (AI 23 Nov. 2004; LIC 2003). In 2003, the state prosecutor denied allegations made by the United States Department of State in its *Country Reports 2002* that security agents had tortured the LF leader (*Al-Safir* 21 May 2003).

In 2001, Samir Geagea supporters held a sit-in on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of his detention (*Country Reports 2001* 4 Mar. 2002, Sec. 1e). Several people were arrested; two of them "were . . . found guilty of insulting the

President of the Republic and the president of a neighboring and friendly state" (ibid.).

Samir Geagea's lawyers argued that, because the murder of Dany Cham'oun and his family took place in 1990, it was covered by the General Amnesty Law of 1991 (Law No. 84/91), and therefore Samir Geagea should have been granted amnesty for the crime (AI 23 Nov. 2004). "However, this argument was dismissed by the Justice Council" (ibid.). According the LF Website, "the LF would soon propose an urgent amendment to the 1991 general amnesty law in order to end Geagea's nearly 11 years imprisonment" (LF 14 Feb. 2005).

No information on the treatment of members of the LF by the Hezbollah or by the Syrian forces could be found by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response.

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.

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Oral sources: Center for Arab and Middle East Studies at the American University of Beirut; Centre for Lebanese Studies, Oxford; Lebanese Information Center.

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