Questions
1. Please provide information on the treatment of Alawites in Lebanon by the authorities or others since the recent Syrian withdrawal.

RESPONSE

1. Please provide information on the treatment of Alawites in Lebanon by the authorities or others since the recent Syrian withdrawal.

As no definitive information has been located on the question in a search through the sources consulted, a referral was sent to DFAT on 17 July 2007 (MRT-RRT Research and Information Services Section 2007, Email letter to DFAT, 17 July – Attachment 1).

The Research and Information Services Section received the following response from DFAT on 6 August 2007:

The Alawites are a small sect in Lebanon (estimated 25,000) and are almost all located in the north of Lebanon. As Syrian President Bashar al Assad is an Alawite, Lebanese Alawites are generally identified by other Lebanese as pro-Syrian (though this is not necessarily the case). Following Syria’s withdrawal from Lebanon (May 2005), Lebanon’s political scene has become sharply divided and increasingly tense, affecting all sects in Lebanon. In general terms, the political division is between the anti-Syrian Government of PM Siniora (which includes the Sunni ‘Future Movement’, the Christian ‘Lebanese Forces’ and the Druze ‘Progressive Socialist Party’) and the pro-Syrian opposition (which includes the Christian ‘Free Patriotic Movement’ and the Shiite ‘Hizbollah’). There are prominent Lebanese Alawite supporters of both the Government and the opposition.
2. In legal terms the status of Lebanese Alawites remains as it was before Syrian withdrawal.


List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:
AltaVista, Google, Vivisimo & Copernic 2001 Personal Agent
Asia Society website http://www.asiasource.org/news/special_reports/archive.cfm
ANU Research website http://rspas.anu.edu.au/
Asia Week http://www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/
BBC News website http://www.bbc.co.uk
The Guardian website http://www.guardian.co.uk/
CNN website http://www.cnn.com/
Minorities At Risk (MAR) Project http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/home.htm
Minority Rights Group International http://www.minorityrights.org/

Databases:
FACTIVA (news database)
BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)
REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)
ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)
RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. MRT-RRT Research and Information Services Section 2007, Email letter to DFAT, 17 July.

