

PUBLIC SURVEY ON SOCIOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN LEBANON

Report of Findings

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**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
STIFTUNG** Für die Freiheit.
Lebanon and Syria



Table of Contents

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| I. | Executive Summary | 4 |
| II. | Introduction..... | 6 |
| 1. | Research Background..... | 6 |
| 2. | Objectives..... | 7 |
| III. | Methodology..... | 7 |
| IV. | Profile of Respondents | 9 |
| V. | Government Performance & National Priorities..... | 11 |
| 1. | Performance and Legitimacy of Political Institutions..... | 11 |
| 2. | Government Performance Across Policy Areas..... | 13 |
| 3. | Public Priorities and Reform Agenda | 14 |
| 4. | Core Political Fault Lines | 15 |
| 5. | Civic Space..... | 17 |
| VI. | Electoral Environment and Procedures..... | 18 |
| 1. | Expectations Around the 2026 Elections | 18 |
| 2. | Electoral System and Rules | 19 |
| VII. | Voting Intentions & Political Alignment | 21 |
| 1. | Voter Mobilization and Engagement | 21 |
| 2. | Political Alignment and Party Landscape | 22 |
| 3. | Undecided Voters and Volatility..... | 24 |
| 4. | Belief in Political Change..... | 24 |
| VIII. | Regional Context & Security Outlook..... | 26 |
| 1. | Public Anxiety about Regional Security | 26 |
| 2. | How Lebanese Evaluate Regional Agreements..... | 27 |
| 3. | Lebanon’s Relationship with Syria..... | 29 |
| IX. | External Actors & Influence | 30 |
| 1. | Overall Perceptions of External Influence..... | 30 |
| 2. | Most Influential External Actors | 30 |
| 3. | Images of Key International Actors..... | 30 |
| X. | Key Insights & Strategic Implications..... | 32 |
| 1. | Cross-cutting Themes..... | 32 |

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 2. | Risks and Opportunities | 33 |
| 3. | Policy Relevance for Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation | 34 |
| XI. | Conclusions | 35 |
| XII. | Recommendations | 37 |

I. Executive Summary

Lebanon is approaching the May 2026 parliamentary elections amid a prolonged economic crisis, weak service delivery, and continued institutional paralysis, compounded by heightened regional insecurity. In this context, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) commissioned Ipsos to conduct a nationwide public opinion survey to assess Lebanese citizens' political attitudes, reform priorities, and perceptions of external influence ahead of the elections.

Study Approach

Ipsos conducted **1,200 face-to-face CAPI interviews** with Lebanese citizens aged **21+** across **all eight governorates**. A **stratified sampling design** with quotas ensured national representativeness by geography, age, and gender. Findings reflect public opinion at the time of fieldwork; results may shift as political and security developments evolve. Data collection was carried out between December 23, 2025 and January 26, 2026.

Key Findings

Government performance and leadership perceptions

Public evaluations of the current government remain divided, with a negative balance overall. **A majority of respondents (55%)** rate the performance of Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's government as somewhat or very negative, **including 38% who are strongly critical**, compared to **44% who express a positive evaluation**. Views vary sharply across religious groups and governorates, with stronger negativity concentrated in Nabatiyeh, the South, and Baalbek-Hermel, and more mixed sentiment in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. In contrast, **President Joseph Aoun** enjoys broad approval, with **74%** rating his performance positively (26% very positive). Approval remains strong across communities, though Shia respondents are more divided than others.

Erosion of confidence in reformist representation

Public assessments of the "change" MPs elected in 2022 are overwhelmingly negative: **77%** consider them ineffective, including **52%** who say they have been not effective at all. This indicates growing public frustration with both traditional parties and reform alternatives, and a higher demand for credible platforms and delivery.

Economic and governance reform dominate priorities

A plurality (**40%**) say the government has not handled any sector particularly well. Where strengths are acknowledged, foreign policy and security lead (20% each), while the economy is least likely to be viewed positively (4%). The economy is also identified as the worst-handled area (**35%**), followed by "all areas" (**23%**) and security (**21%**), suggesting dissatisfaction that is both acute and systemic. National priorities are driven primarily by the **economic crisis (34%)** and **security and regional tensions (28%)**, followed by corruption and governance (12%). The reform agenda is overwhelmingly economic: **anti-corruption measures (69%)**, **electricity sector reform (48%)**, **banking and financial reform (44%)**, **judiciary reform (39%)**, and **social safety nets (36%)** rank highest. Support for banking reforms tied to an IMF agreement is near universal (**94%**), reflecting rare consensus on the urgency of financial reform.

High polarization on sovereignty-linked issues

Public opinion on placing all weapons under state authority is divided but leans supportive overall (66% agree). However, views are sharply polarized across communities and regions, with strongest resistance concentrated in Baalbek-Hermel, the South, and Nabatiyeh. On Syrian refugee returns, 76% favor return to Syria as soon as possible, while 18% prefer return once conditions are safe and stable, with notable differences by governorate.

Elections: optimism, strong participation intent, and high volatility

Public expectations that elections will take place as scheduled are relatively high (74%), and 79% consider timely elections important. Support for key electoral reforms is also strong, including **megacenters (86%)** and **full voting rights for expatriates (56%)**. Turnout intentions are high (80% likely to vote; 55% very likely). However, the electoral landscape is fragmented: 19% remain undecided and party preferences are dispersed, leaving room for alliances, campaign dynamics, and turnout differences to shape outcomes.

Regional insecurity and external influence shape perceptions

Concern about regional security is widespread (84% concerned), and 69% perceive a high risk of escalation between Israel and Lebanese actors. When evaluating future agreements, citizens prioritize **security guarantees (68%)**, **economic benefits (52%)**, and **domestic consensus (41%)**, reflecting pragmatic decision-making. Perceptions of foreign influence are divided (56% **negative**; 42% **positive**). The United States is viewed as the most influential external actor (58%), followed by Saudi Arabia (19%), Iran (11%), and France (7%). Germany's image is comparatively subdued (37% positive; 49% negative).

Strategic Implications

Overall, the findings point to a public that is deeply dissatisfied with government performance and political elites, yet still engaged and strongly oriented toward economic and governance reform. The 2026 elections are seen as a key pathway for change, but polarization around sovereignty-linked issues and a fragmented electoral environment create risks of volatility and further disillusionment if expectations are not met.

Recommendations at a Glance

- **Policymakers:** Prioritize visible, economic-first reforms (banking, electricity, anti-corruption), protect electoral integrity and timelines, and frame sensitive issues in national interest terms to reduce polarization.
- **FNF:** Strengthen civic education and reform communication, support reform constituencies, and promote rule of law and accountability as national values through locally rooted dialogue.
- **Civil society and reform movements:** Shift from protest narratives to clear, voter focused reform programs centered on economic recovery, service delivery, and institutional accountability.

- **International partners and media:** Align support and messaging with citizen priorities, avoid approaches that deepen polarization, and promote solutions-focused discourse ahead of the elections.

II. Introduction

1. Research Background

Lebanon is approaching the 2026 parliamentary elections at a moment of profound national crisis. Since the onset of the financial collapse in 2019, the country has experienced one of the deepest economic contractions recorded globally, marked by the collapse of the Lebanese pound, the erosion of purchasing power, and the near breakdown of public services.¹ Banking paralysis, fuel and electricity shortages, and the steady retreat of the state from basic social protection have fundamentally reshaped the relationship between citizens and the political system. For many Lebanese, daily survival has replaced political participation as the dominant concern, while trust in political leaders and institutions has steadily eroded.

This prolonged economic and governance crisis has been accompanied by persistent institutional paralysis. The inability of successive governments to enact meaningful reforms, secure international financial support, or ensure accountability has deepened public frustration and reinforced perceptions of elite impunity. Despite repeated international commitments, progress on banking reform, anti-corruption measures, and judicial independence has remained limited, further undermining confidence in Lebanon's political class and reform trajectory².

These domestic challenges are unfolding within an increasingly volatile regional environment. Tensions along Lebanon's southern border escalated sharply following the outbreak of the war in Gaza in October 2023 and the subsequent intensification of clashes between Israel and Hezbollah³. At the same time, developments in Syria, including shifting political and security dynamics and the continued presence of large numbers of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, continue to weigh heavily on public opinion and policy debates⁴. In this context, Lebanese citizens' views of external actors including regional powers and Western states are closely tied to concerns about sovereignty, security, economic recovery, and the future of the country.

Against this backdrop, understanding public opinion has become more important than ever. The 2026 parliamentary elections represent a critical test of whether Lebanon's political system can

¹ Blair, E. (2022, January 23). *Explainer: Lebanon's financial crisis and how it happened*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/markets/rates-bonds/lebanons-financial-crisis-how-it-happened-2022-01-23/>

² The National Anti-Corruption Strategy outlines Lebanon's roadmap to strengthen transparency, activate accountability, and prevent impunity across public institutions (Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform [OMSAR], 2020).

³ Council on Foreign Relations. (2025, December 1). *Political instability in Lebanon*. Global Conflict Tracker. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/political-instability-lebanon>

⁴ Middle East Council on Global Affairs. (2024). *From exile to uncertainty: Syrian refugees in Lebanon consider returning home*. <https://mecouncil.org/publication/from-exile-to-uncertainty-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon-consider-returning-home/>

respond to citizen demands for accountability, stability, and reform, or whether disillusionment and fragmentation will deepen further. In this environment, reliable data on how Lebanese citizens perceive governance, political actors, economic reform, external influence, and national priorities is essential for informed policymaking and international engagement.

It is within this context that the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) has commissioned a nationwide public opinion survey to capture a comprehensive picture of Lebanese attitudes ahead of the 2026 elections. The study aims to examine public evaluations of political leadership and institutions, levels of political participation and trust, perceptions of economic and governance reform, and views on regional and international actors. By providing a rigorous, evidence-based assessment of citizen priorities and expectations, the survey will support FNF in tailoring its programming, advocacy, and communication to the realities of Lebanon's evolving political landscape, and in engaging more effectively with policymakers, civil society, and international partners.

2. Objectives

The overarching objective of this study is to assess Lebanese citizens' political attitudes and perceptions ahead of the 2026 elections, with emphasis on their expectations for change, engagement in the democratic process, and perceptions of foreign influence. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Gauge public sentiment toward the upcoming elections, including voting intentions, likelihood of participation, and perceived obstacles to voter engagement.
- Identify the socio-political topics and policy issues most important to citizens, including governance, economic recovery, corruption, security, and social justice.
- Assess perceptions of political change and reform, examining whether citizens believe meaningful change is possible and through which channels.
- Explore views on the regional political situation, particularly developments in Syria, Palestine, and the broader Middle East, and how these influence Lebanon's internal dynamics.
- Evaluate perceptions of foreign countries and international actors, with specific attention to Germany's image, role, and influence in Lebanon's political and developmental context.

III. Methodology

To achieve the objectives of the study, Ipsos implemented a nationally representative quantitative survey using face-to-face interviews conducted through Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). A total of **1,200 Lebanese citizens aged 21 and above** were interviewed across all eight Lebanese governorates, ensuring full geographic coverage. Data collection was carried out between December 23, 2025 and January 26, 2026.

A stratified random sampling design was applied to guarantee representativeness across key population groups. Sampling was structured in three stages:

- First, **governorates** were used as primary strata, with quotas applied to ensure proportional coverage of each governorate.

- Second, within each governorate, respondents were selected using **random sampling with quotas** based on key demographic variables, including age and gender, to reflect the national population structure.
- Third, within selected households, **one eligible respondent** was chosen in line with quota requirements to maintain demographic balance.

This sampling approach ensured both **geographic and demographic representativeness** while preserving statistical rigor in respondent selection. The design allows Ipsos and FNF to reliably capture national trends and meaningful subgroup differences, providing a robust and nuanced picture of public attitudes toward Lebanon’s political, economic, and security trajectory ahead of the 2026 parliamentary elections.

Study Limitations

While the survey provides a robust and nationally representative snapshot of public opinion in Lebanon, several limitations are taken into account when interpreting the findings.

First, the results reflect attitudes at a specific point in time.

Public opinion in Lebanon is highly sensitive to political developments, economic shocks, and security events. As a result, the findings capture perceptions at the moment of data collection and may change if major domestic or regional developments occur, particularly in the run up to the 2026 elections.

Second, face-to-face interviewing may introduce social desirability bias.

Given the sensitivity of political and security related topics in Lebanon, some respondents may have felt uncomfortable expressing critical or controversial views in the presence of an enumerator. This could lead to underreporting of politically sensitive opinions, especially on issues such as weapons, foreign influence, or political affiliations.

Third, access and security constraints may have affected coverage in a limited number of localized areas.

Although the sample was designed to be nationally representative and fieldwork was conducted across all regions of the country, a small number of specific localities experiencing temporary security or access restrictions at the time of data collection could not be reached. These constraints were geographically limited and did not affect nationwide coverage, though they may have slightly influenced participation rates or response patterns within those particular localities.

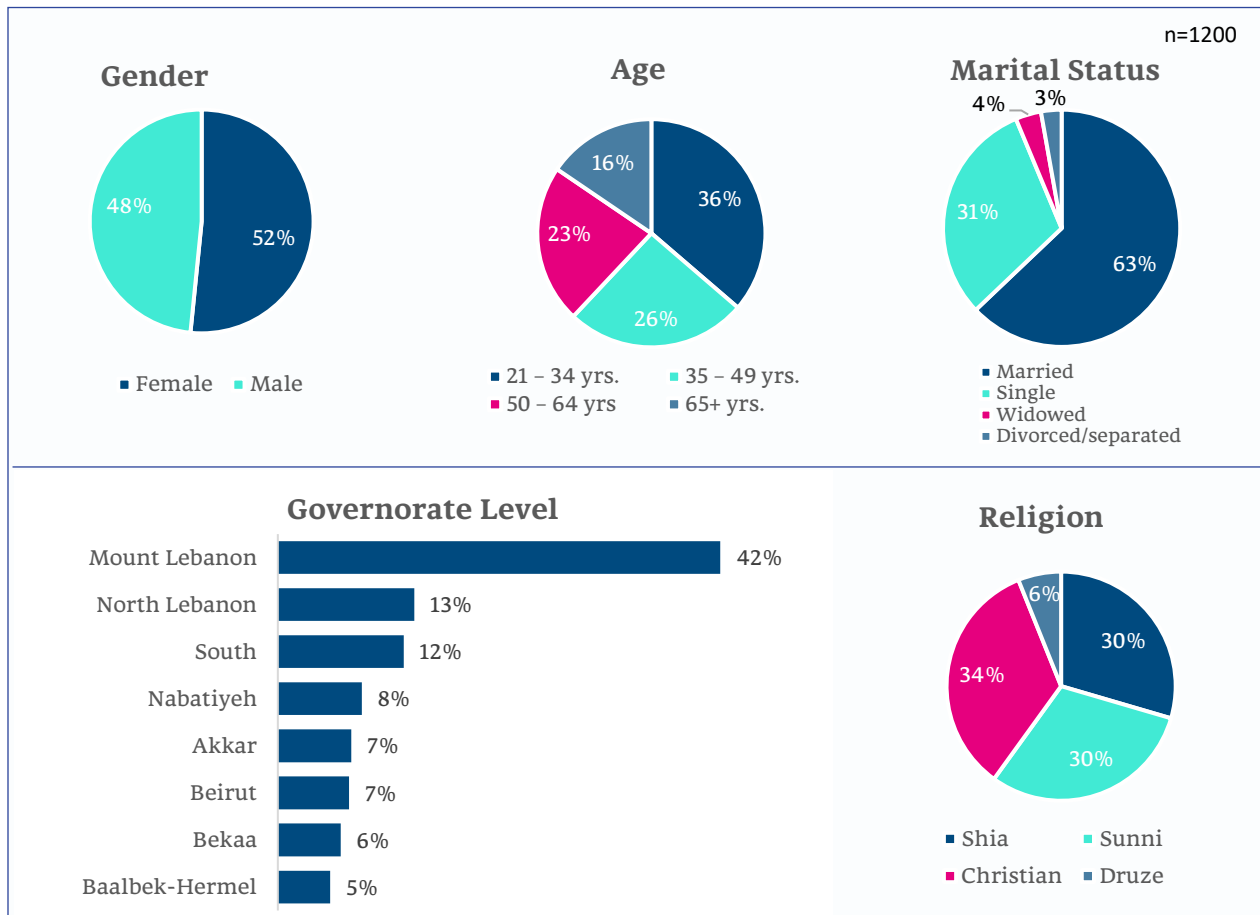
Fourth, survey-based measures rely on self-reported behavior and intentions.

Indicators such as likelihood to vote or support for reforms reflect stated intentions rather than actual future behavior. In contexts of political volatility and uncertainty, there can be gaps between what respondents say and what they ultimately do.

Finally, complex political views are captured through structured questions.

While quantitative surveys are effective for measuring trends and comparisons, they may not fully capture the depth, nuance, or reasoning behind respondents’ attitudes, particularly on issues such as reform, sovereignty, and regional relations. Qualitative research would be needed to explore these dynamics in greater detail.

IV. Profile of Respondents



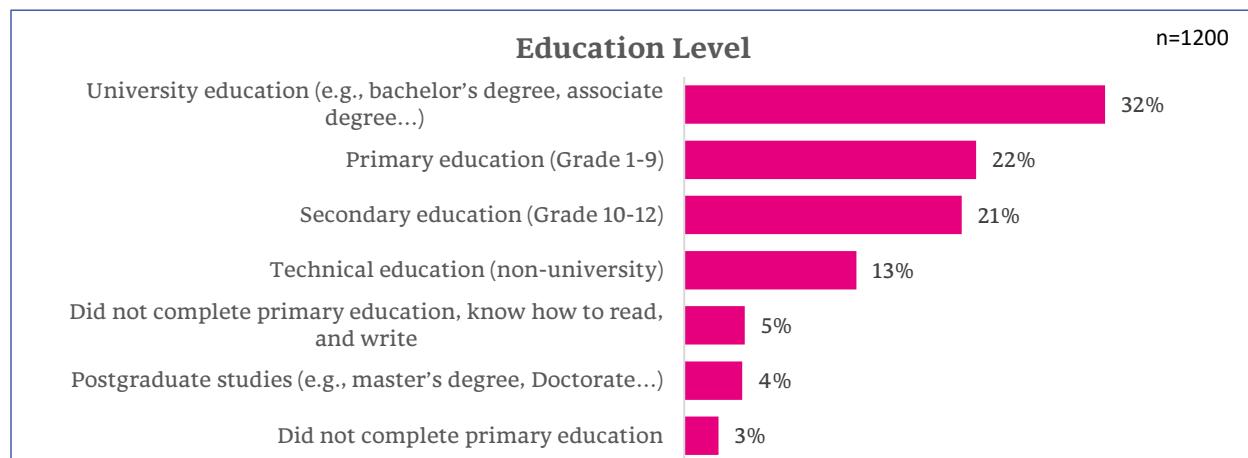
The sample consists of **1,200 Lebanese respondents**, with a **balanced gender split** (52% female, 48% male). In terms of age, **36% are aged 21–34 years**, **26% are 35–49 years**, **23% are 50–64 years**, and **16% are 65 years and above**, indicating a broadly distributed and relatively mature population.

Regarding marital status, **63% of respondents are married**, **31% are single**, **4% are widowed**, and **3% are divorced or separated**. Geographically, respondents are distributed across all governorates, with the largest share residing in **Mount Lebanon (42%)**, followed by **North Lebanon (13%)**, **South (12%)**, **Nabatiyeh (8%)**, **Akkar (7%)**, **Beirut (7%)**, **Bekaa (6%)**, and **Baalbek-Hermel (5%)**.

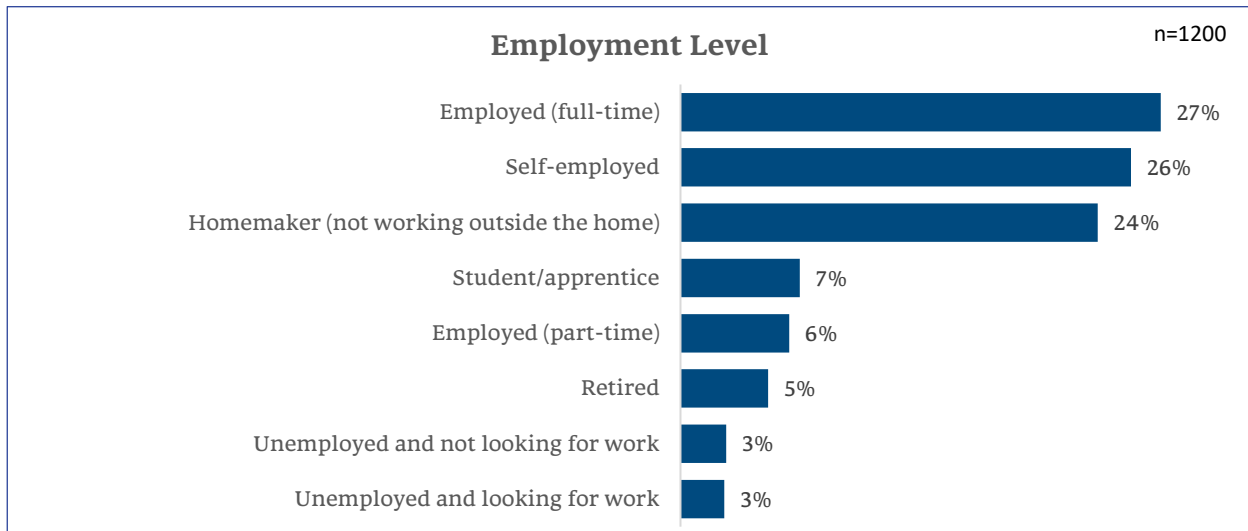
In terms of religion, the sample includes **34% Christian**, **30% Shia**, **30% Sunni**, and **6% Druze**, reflecting Lebanon's diverse religious composition.

Educational attainment is relatively high, with **36% of respondents having completed university or postgraduate education**. A further **43% reached secondary or primary education**, while **13%**

have **technical or vocational training**. **8%** of respondents have **not completed primary education**, including **5% who are literate** and **3% who are not**.

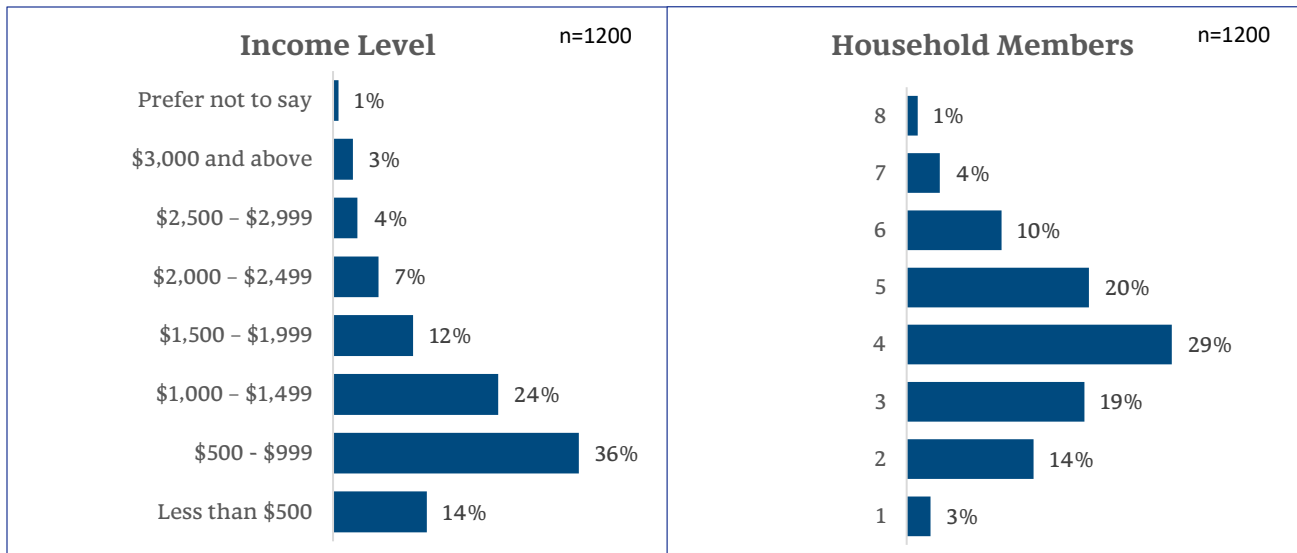


The sample includes a diverse mix of labor market statuses. Just over half of respondents are economically active, with **27% employed full-time**, **26% self-employed**, and **6% employed part-time**. A further **24%** are **homemakers not working outside the home**, while **7%** are **students or apprentices**. **5%** are **retired**, and **6%** are **unemployed** (split evenly between those looking and not looking for work).



The sample is predominantly low to **middle income**, with **50%** of respondents earning below USD 1,000 per month including **36%** who earn between USD 500 and 999 and **14%** who earn less than USD 500, and a further **24%** earning USD 1,000–1,499. Only **14%** report incomes above USD 1,500, highlighting **limited purchasing power across the sample**.

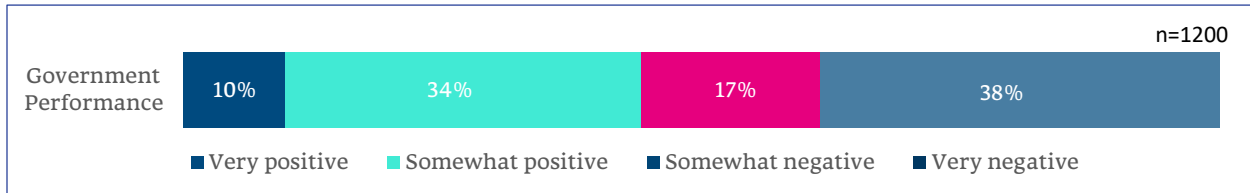
Household sizes are relatively **large**, with **64%** living in households of four or more members, and the most common household size being four persons (**29%**), followed by five (**20%**) and three (**19%**), reflecting typical extended family structures in Lebanon.



V. Government Performance & National Priorities

1. Performance and Legitimacy of Political Institutions

Public evaluations of the current government remain divided, with a negative balance overall.



A majority of **respondents** (55%) rate the performance of Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's government as **somewhat or very negative**, including 38% who are strongly critical.

In contrast, 44% express a **positive view** (34% somewhat positive and 10% very positive), indicating a **deeply divided public**.

Perceptions of the government vary sharply across religious groups. Christians and Sunnis are the most favorable, with **60% of Christians** (10% very positive + 50% somewhat positive) and **65% of Sunnis** (18% very positive + 47% somewhat positive) expressing a **positive evaluation** of the government's performance.

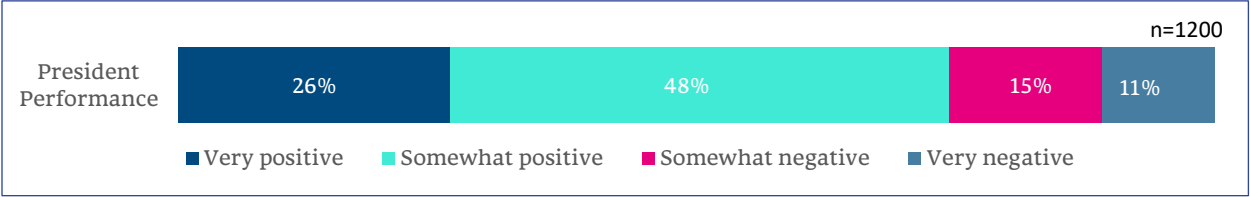
Shia respondents are overwhelmingly negative, with 85% rating the government **very negative** and a further 12% **somewhat negative**, leaving virtually **no positive sentiment** in this group.

Druze respondents are also largely critical, with 53% rating the government negatively (26% somewhat negative and 27% very negative), though a sizable 47% still express some level of approval.

On the governorate level, Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, Akkar, and Bekaa show relatively more positive sentiment, with **around half or more of respondents in these areas rating the government positively** (very or somewhat positive). **Bekaa stands out**, with 60% giving a **somewhat positive** assessment.

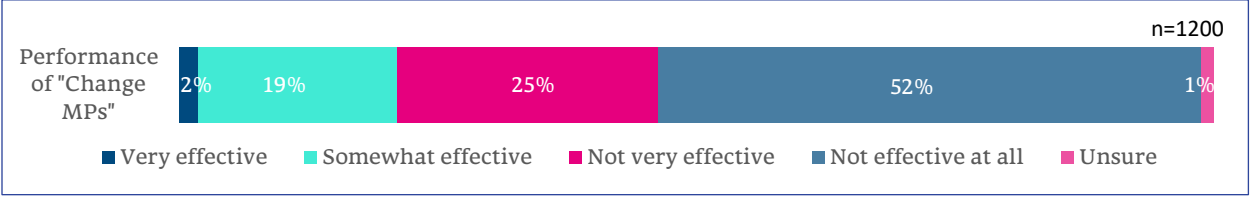
In contrast, **Baalbek-Hermel, the South, and Nabatiyeh are overwhelmingly negative**. **Two thirds of respondents in Baalbek-Hermel (67%), 58% in the South, and a striking 75% in Nabatiyeh** rate the government **very negatively**, indicating deep dissatisfaction in these regions.

Beirut and Mount Lebanon are more polarized, with sizable shares holding both positive and negative views, suggesting a more divided public mood.



President Joseph Aoun enjoys strong public approval nationwide. Nearly **three quarters of respondents (74%)** rate his performance positively, including 26% who express **very positive** views and 48% who are **somewhat positive**. In contrast, 26% hold a negative assessment (15% **somewhat negative** and 11% **very negative**), indicating that while a sizable minority remains critical, **overall sentiment toward the presidency is clearly favorable**.

Approval of the president extends across all religious communities, though its **intensity varies**. Support is **strongest among Christians (82%) and Druze (72%)**, and also remains high among **Sunnis (83%)**. **Shia respondents are more divided**, with 56% expressing approval and a substantial 44% holding negative views (21% **somewhat negative** and 23% **very negative**), making them the most critical group.



Public assessments of the “change” MPs are overwhelmingly negative. More than **three quarters of respondents (77%)** believe that the reformist Members of Parliament elected in 2022 have been **ineffective**, including a majority (52%) who say they have been **not effective at all**.

Only 21% rate their performance as **very or somewhat effective**, indicating that **public confidence in the reformist bloc has eroded significantly** since their election.

2. Government Performance Across Policy Areas

When presented with a list of policy areas including **foreign policy, security, social protection, transparency, and the economy**, and asked to select the areas the government has handled best, **40% of respondents chose “none of the above.”** This points to **broad dissatisfaction** across all sectors and reflects a general **lack of confidence** in government performance.

Among those who do identify a strength, **foreign policy and security** stand out as the **most positively rated areas**, each cited by **20%** of respondents.

Social protection (9%), transparency (6%), and especially the **economy (4%)** receive far less recognition, indicating that **economic management is seen as the government’s weakest area.**

Perceptions of government performance in **Beirut and Mount Lebanon** are **mixed and polarized**. In Beirut, **49%** say the government has not handled any area well, while positive views are driven mainly by **foreign policy (26%)** and **social protection (11%)**, with **security (10%)** playing a smaller role.

In Mount Lebanon, **39%** express complete dissatisfaction, while those identifying any strengths point mainly to **foreign policy (24%)** and **security (17%)**, with limited recognition of **social protection (8%)** and **the economy (3%)**.

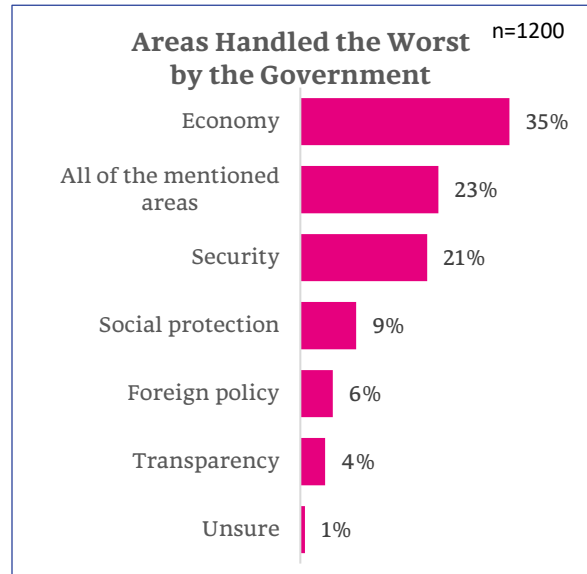
In contrast, **Bekaa, Akkar, and North Lebanon** are far more critical. In **Bekaa**, only **4%** say the government has handled any area best, while **42%** point to **security** and **48% in North Lebanon** also select **security**, suggesting that even when a strength is identified, it is narrowly focused and not broad based.

Baalbek-Hermel and the South show a more polarized picture, with **57% in Baalbek-Hermel** and **59% in the South** citing **none of the above**, reflecting **deep dissatisfaction** with government performance across these regions.

Economic management stands out as the government’s greatest weakness. More than one third of respondents (35%) identify the economy as the **worst-handled area**, making it the single most frequently cited concern.

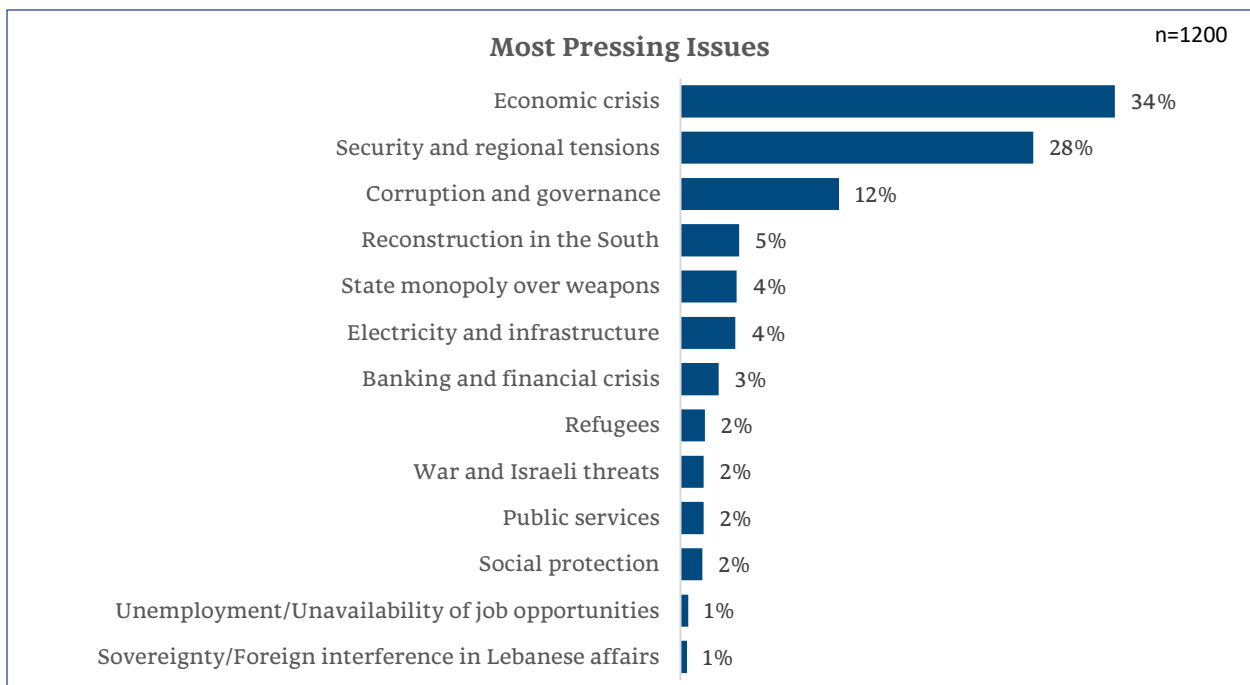
A further 23% select “**all of the above areas,**” indicating that dissatisfaction is **broad and systemic rather than limited to one policy domain.**

Security (21%) also emerges as a major concern, while **social protection (9%), foreign policy (6%),** and **transparency (4%)** are mentioned less often as the government’s weakest areas.



3. Public Priorities and Reform Agenda

Economic and security concerns dominate public priorities. The **economic crisis** is cited as the **most pressing issue** by 34% of respondents, making it the single most important concern nationwide. This is followed closely by **security and regional tensions (28%),** highlighting the dual pressure of economic hardship and instability shaping public anxiety.



A second tier of issues includes **corruption and governance (12%),** indicating persistent frustration with political mismanagement and institutional weakness.

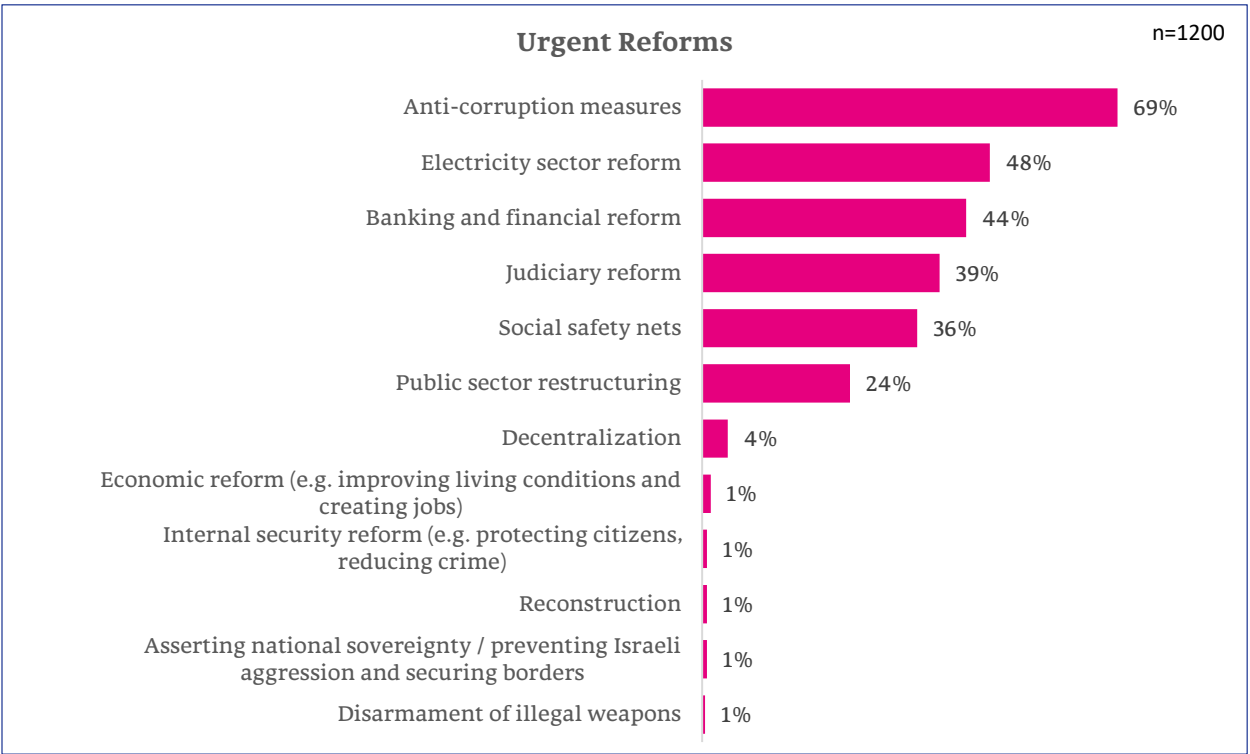
All other issues are mentioned by relatively small shares of the public, including **reconstruction in the South (5%)**, **state monopoly over weapons (4%)**, and **electricity and infrastructure (4%)**, while topics such as **refugees, public services, war-related threats, and social protection** each attract only **2% or less**.

Public priorities are overwhelmingly focused on governance and economic recovery. Anti-corruption measures top the list by a wide margin, selected by **69%** of respondents, making it the **most urgent reform** in the eyes of the public.

This is followed by **electricity sector reform (48%)** and **banking and financial reform (44%)**, reflecting deep frustration with service delivery failures and the ongoing financial crisis.

Judiciary reform (39%) and **social safety nets (36%)** also rank highly, underscoring strong demand for both **accountability** and **protection for vulnerable households**.

In contrast, **institutional and political reforms** such as **public sector restructuring (24%)** and **decentralization (4%)** receive far less emphasis, while issues related to **security, sovereignty, reconstruction, and disarmament** are mentioned by **only 1% each**, indicating that **economic governance overwhelmingly dominates the reform agenda in public opinion**.

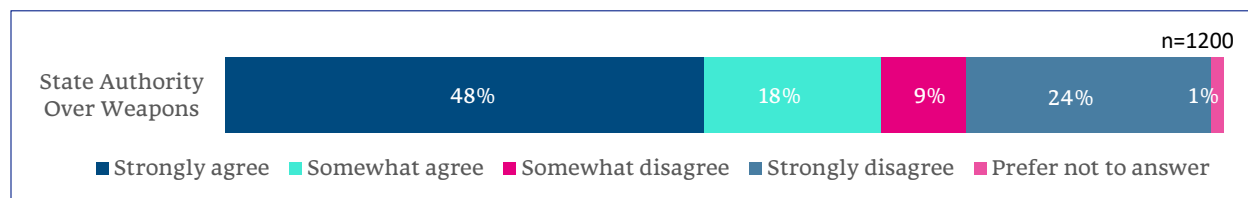


4. Core Political Fault Lines

Public opinion on state control of weapons is sharply divided, but leans toward support. A majority of respondents (66%) agree that all weapons in Lebanon should be under the

authority of the Lebanese state, including 48% who strongly agree and 18% who somewhat agree.

At the same time, 33% oppose this principle, with nearly a quarter (24%) strongly disagreeing, highlighting deep polarization on this sensitive issue.



Support for placing all weapons under state authority is highly polarized along religious lines. Christians (78%) and Sunnis (59%) are the strongest supporters of the principle, with majorities in both groups strongly agreeing that the Lebanese state should have sole authority over weapons. Druze respondents also lean clearly in favor, with 59% strongly agreeing and a further 32% somewhat agreeing.

In stark contrast, **Shia respondents overwhelmingly reject this principle. Only 8% agree (1% strongly and 7% somewhat), while an extraordinary 91% oppose it, including 76% who strongly disagree, making this the most polarized issue in the survey.**

Support for placing all weapons under state authority is highest in central and northern Lebanon. In North Lebanon, an overwhelming 89% strongly agree with the principle, followed by Akkar (68%), Mount Lebanon (58%), and Bekaa (54%), indicating strong endorsement of the state’s monopoly over arms in these regions.

Beirut shows more mixed views, with 28% strongly agreeing and 44% somewhat agreeing, but also a notable 16% strongly disagreeing, reflecting greater political pluralism and polarization in the capital.

In sharp contrast, **Baalbek-Hermel, the South, and Nabatiyeh are overwhelmingly opposed. 62% in Baalbek-Hermel, 46% in the South, and 62% in Nabatiyeh strongly disagree that all weapons should be under state authority, making these areas the core centers of resistance to this principle.**

Public support for banking sector reforms is overwhelming. An extraordinary 94% of respondents say it is very or somewhat important for Lebanon to implement banking sector reforms as part of an IMF agreement, including 60% who view them as very important.



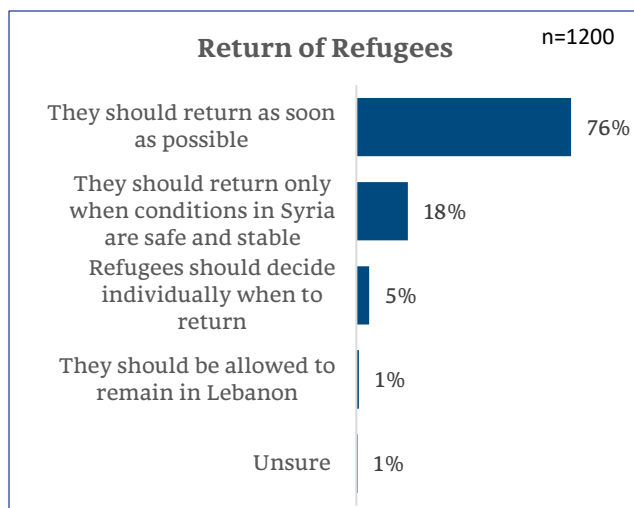
Only 6% consider these reforms not very or not at all important, indicating broad national consensus on the urgency of financial reform.

Public sentiment strongly favors the return of Syrian refugees. An overwhelming **76% of respondents** believe refugees should return to Syria as soon as possible, reflecting intense public pressure for repatriation.

A smaller but notable group (**18%**) supports return **only once conditions in Syria are safe and stable**, indicating some concern for humanitarian and security conditions.

Very few respondents **prioritize refugee choice or long-term stay in Lebanon** (5% say refugees should decide individually, and only 1% support allowing them to remain in Lebanon).

Support for the immediate return of Syrian refugees is strongest among Shia, Christians, and Druze. An overwhelming **93% of Shia and 93% of Druze**, as well as **83% of Christians**, believe refugees should return to Syria as soon as possible.



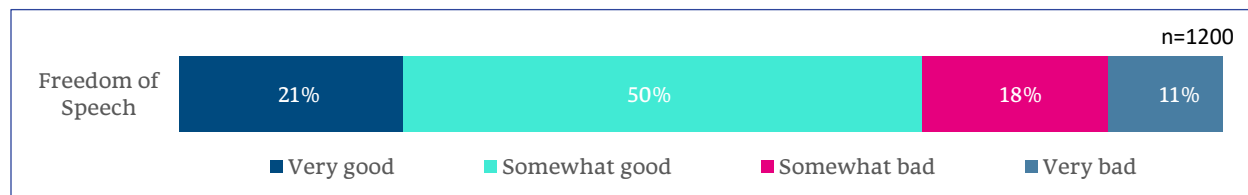
Sunnis are more divided. While **48%** support immediate return, a substantial **40%** say refugees should return **only when conditions in Syria are safe and stable**, and **9%** believe refugees should **decide individually**, indicating a more cautious and humanitarian stance.

Support for the immediate return of Syrian refugees is strongest in the South and eastern governorates. Nabatiyeh (**94%**) and Baalbek-Hermel (**83%**) show the highest shares calling for refugees to **return as soon as possible**, followed by **Mount Lebanon (85%)**, **Bekaa (72%)**, and **North Lebanon (71%)**.

Akkar stands out as the most cautious governorate. Only **33%** there support immediate return, while a plurality (**42%**) believe refugees should return **only when conditions in Syria are safe and stable**, and **17%** say refugees should **decide individually**, reflecting greater humanitarian and security sensitivities in this border region.

5. Civic Space

Public perceptions of freedom of speech are generally positive, but not without concern. A clear majority of respondents (**71%**) rate the current state of freedom of speech in Lebanon as **very or somewhat good**, including **21% who say it is very good**.



At the same time, **29%** describe it as **somewhat or very bad**, indicating that **nearly one in three Lebanese perceive meaningful restrictions or deterioration** in free expression.

Key Takeaways

- **The government faces a severe crisis of confidence:** 55% rate its performance negatively and 40% say it has not handled any sector well, while President Joseph Aoun remains widely popular with 74% approval.
- **Economic collapse dominates public priorities:** 34% cite the economy as the country's most urgent problem, and 69% demand anti-corruption reform, while only 4% think the government is managing the economy well.
- **Lebanon is deeply polarized on core political issues:** 66% support state control of weapons, but 91% of Shia oppose it, and 76% want Syrian refugees to return immediately, showing sharp sectarian and regional divides.
- **Reformist “change” MPs have lost public trust:** 77% say they are ineffective, including 52% who say not effective at all, leaving a leadership vacuum ahead of the 2026 elections.

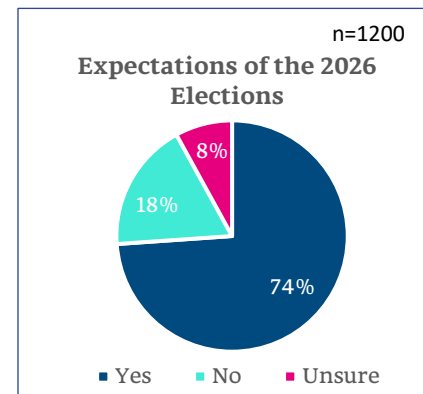
VI. Electoral Environment and Procedures

1. Expectations Around the 2026 Elections

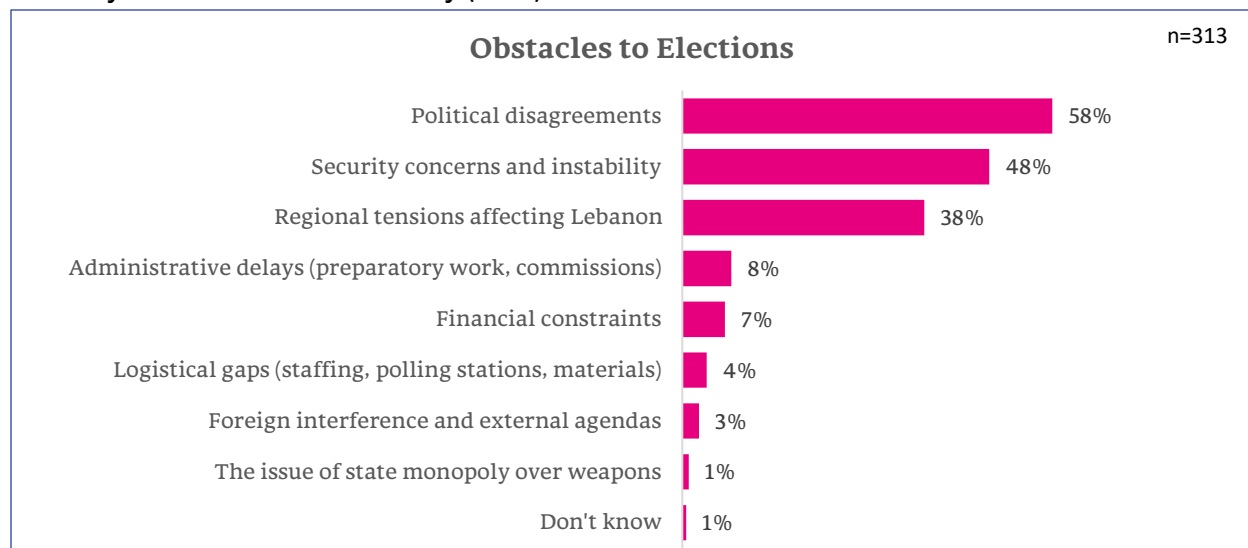
Public expectations around the 2026 elections are largely **optimistic**. Nearly three quarters of respondents (74%) believe that the parliamentary elections will take place as scheduled in May 2026, indicating a relatively high level of confidence in the electoral timeline.

However, almost one in five (18%) **do not expect** the elections to occur on time, reflecting persistent skepticism rooted in Lebanon's history of political delays and institutional uncertainty. A further **8% remain unsure**, suggesting that a segment of the population continues to perceive the situation as unpredictable.

Men are significantly more likely than women to believe the elections will not take place (21% vs. 16%), indicating greater skepticism among male respondents. Expectations that the May 2026 elections will take place are **highest among Shia respondents**, with 80% believing the elections will occur as scheduled. This level of confidence is significantly higher than among Christians (69%) and Sunnis (74). Druze respondents fall in between, at 73%.



Political and security factors are seen as the main threats to timely elections. A majority of respondents (58%) identify **political disagreements** as the primary obstacle, followed closely by **security concerns and instability** (48%).

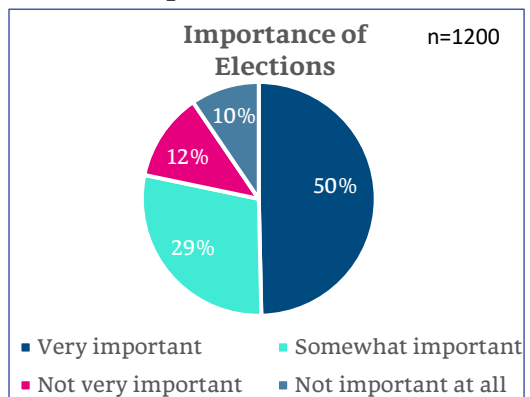


Regional tensions affecting Lebanon are also widely cited (38%), reinforcing the perception that **external and geopolitical dynamics could derail the electoral process**.

By contrast, **technical and administrative issues** are mentioned far less often, including **administrative delays** (8%), **financial constraints** (7%), and **logistical gaps** (4%), suggesting that **the public views the risks as primarily political rather than operational**.

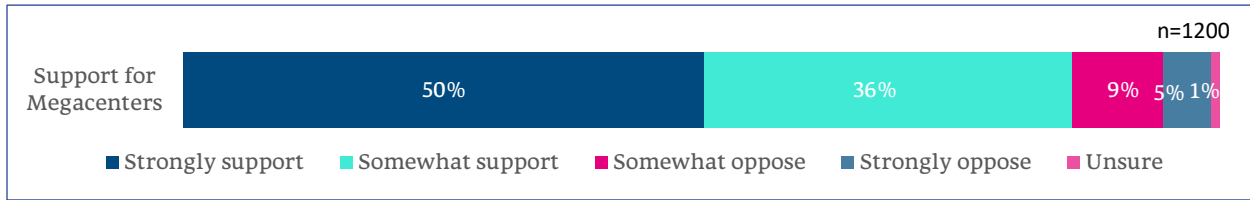
Public demand for timely elections is very strong. Nearly **eight in ten respondents (79%)** say it is **very or somewhat important** that parliamentary elections take place as scheduled, including **50% who consider it very important**.

Only 22% view the timing of elections as **not very important or not important at all**, indicating that postponement would likely face widespread public disapproval.



2. Electoral System and Rules

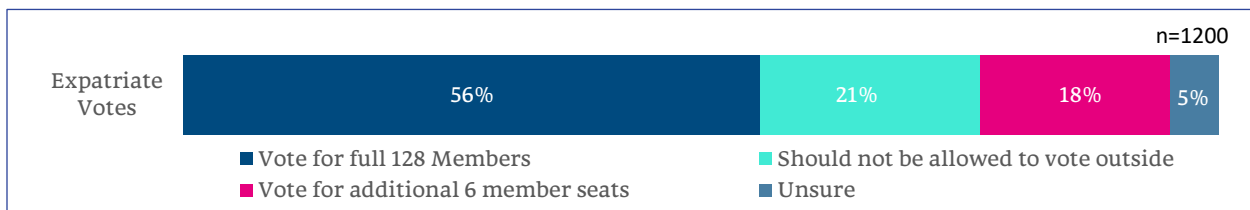
Support for voting megacenters is overwhelming. A large majority of respondents (86%) **support the introduction of megacenters**, including **50% who strongly support** the idea and **36% who somewhat support** it.



Only 14% express opposition (9% **somewhat oppose** and 5% **strongly oppose**), while **just 1%** remain unsure, indicating **broad public backing** for this electoral reform. **Support for voting megacenters is high across all governorates**, but it is **especially strong in North Lebanon and Akkar**. In **North Lebanon**, 79% **strongly support** the introduction of megacenters, the highest level nationally, followed by **Akkar (71%)** and **Baalbek-Hermel (60%)**.

Mount Lebanon shows more moderate intensity, with 53% **strongly supporting** and 30% **somewhat supporting**, indicating broad backing but less polarization.

In contrast, **Beirut is the least enthusiastic**, with only 29% **strongly supporting**, while a majority (54%) express only **somewhat support**, suggesting cautious endorsement rather than strong conviction.



A majority of respondents favor full voting rights for expatriates. Over half of the sample (56%) believe that Lebanese expatriates should **vote for all 128 members of Parliament**, indicating strong support for equal political representation between residents and the diaspora.

However, a **sizeable minority remains restrictive**, with 21% saying expatriates **should not be allowed to vote from abroad**, and 18% preferring that they vote only for the **six additional expatriate seats**, reflecting ongoing divisions over the political role of the diaspora.

Christians and Druze are the strongest supporters of full voting rights for expatriates. Nearly three quarters of **Christians (73%)** and **70% of Druze** believe expatriates should **vote for all 128 MPs**, significantly higher than among **Sunnis (50%)** and especially **Shia (38%)**.

Shia respondents are the most restrictive, with 33% saying expatriates **should not be allowed to vote from abroad** and 26% preferring that they vote only for the **six additional seats**, compared to much lower levels among **Christians (12% and 14%)** and **Druze (19% and 7%)**.

Sunnis fall in between, with half supporting full voting rights, but 21% opposing external voting and 18% favoring the six-seat model, indicating a more divided view.

Key Takeaways

- **Public confidence that elections will take place is high but not absolute:** 74% believe the 2026 elections will occur on time, yet nearly one in five (18%) expect delays, reflecting lingering distrust in Lebanon’s political system.
- **Politics and security, not logistics, are seen as the real threats to elections:** 58% cite political disagreements and 48% security instability as the main risks, compared to fewer than 10% who mention administrative, financial, or logistical problems.
- **Support for electoral reforms is overwhelming:** 86% support voting megacenters, including 50% who strongly support them, showing broad appetite for modernizing and facilitating the voting process.
- **The role of the diaspora remains politically divisive:** While 56% support giving expatriates full voting rights, 44% either oppose external voting or want it restricted, with especially strong resistance among Shia respondents (59% opposed or restrictive).

VII. Voting Intentions & Political Alignment

1. Voter Mobilization and Engagement

Voter turnout intentions are high. A large majority of respondents (80%) say they are **very or somewhat likely** to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections, including 55% who are **very likely to vote**.



Only 20% express low likelihood to participate (8% **not very likely** and 12% **not likely at all**), indicating **strong declared engagement with the electoral process**.

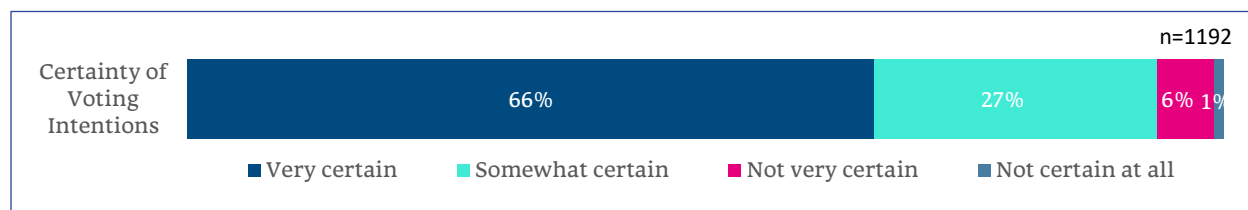
Turnout intentions vary sharply by governorate. Nabatiyeh (78%) and Bekaa (76%) show the **highest shares of respondents who say they are very likely to vote**, followed by Mount Lebanon (60%) and North Lebanon (58%).

Beirut stands out as the least mobilized, with only 26% saying they are **very likely** to participate, while a large share (45%) say they are only **somewhat likely**, and 20% say they are **not likely at all**, indicating weaker engagement in the capital.

Turnout intentions are highest among Shia and Christian respondents. 61% of Shia and 60% of Christians say they are **very likely to vote**, compared to 56% of Druze and only 44% of Sunnis.

Sunnis are more hesitant, with **39%** saying they are **only somewhat likely** to participate, significantly higher than among **Shia (20%)**, **Christians (18%)**, and **Druze (16%)**.

Christians and Druze are also more polarized, with **15% of Christians** and **18% of Druze** saying they are **not likely at all** to vote, compared to **9% of Sunnis** and **10% of Shia**.



Voters show a high level of confidence in their voting intentions. Nearly **two thirds of respondents (66%)** say they are **very certain** about who they intend to vote for, while a further **27%** are **somewhat certain**. Only **7%** express uncertainty (**6% not very certain** and **1% not certain at all**), indicating that **most voters have already formed a clear electoral preference** well ahead of the elections.

2. Political Alignment and Party Landscape

The electoral landscape is highly fragmented, with no single dominant party. Nearly **one in five respondents (19%)** remain **undecided**, making this the largest single group and highlighting a **fluid and unsettled electorate**.

Among decided voters, **Hezbollah** leads with **15%**, followed by the **Future Movement (12%)**, **Change/Independent lists (11%)**, and the **Lebanese Forces (10%)**, indicating a **competitive field with relatively narrow gaps between the main political forces**.

Amal (7%) occupies a second tier, while all other parties and options each attract **4% or less**, including **FPM, PSP, “no one,”** and the **Shia joint list**, underscoring the **dispersion of support across many political actors**.

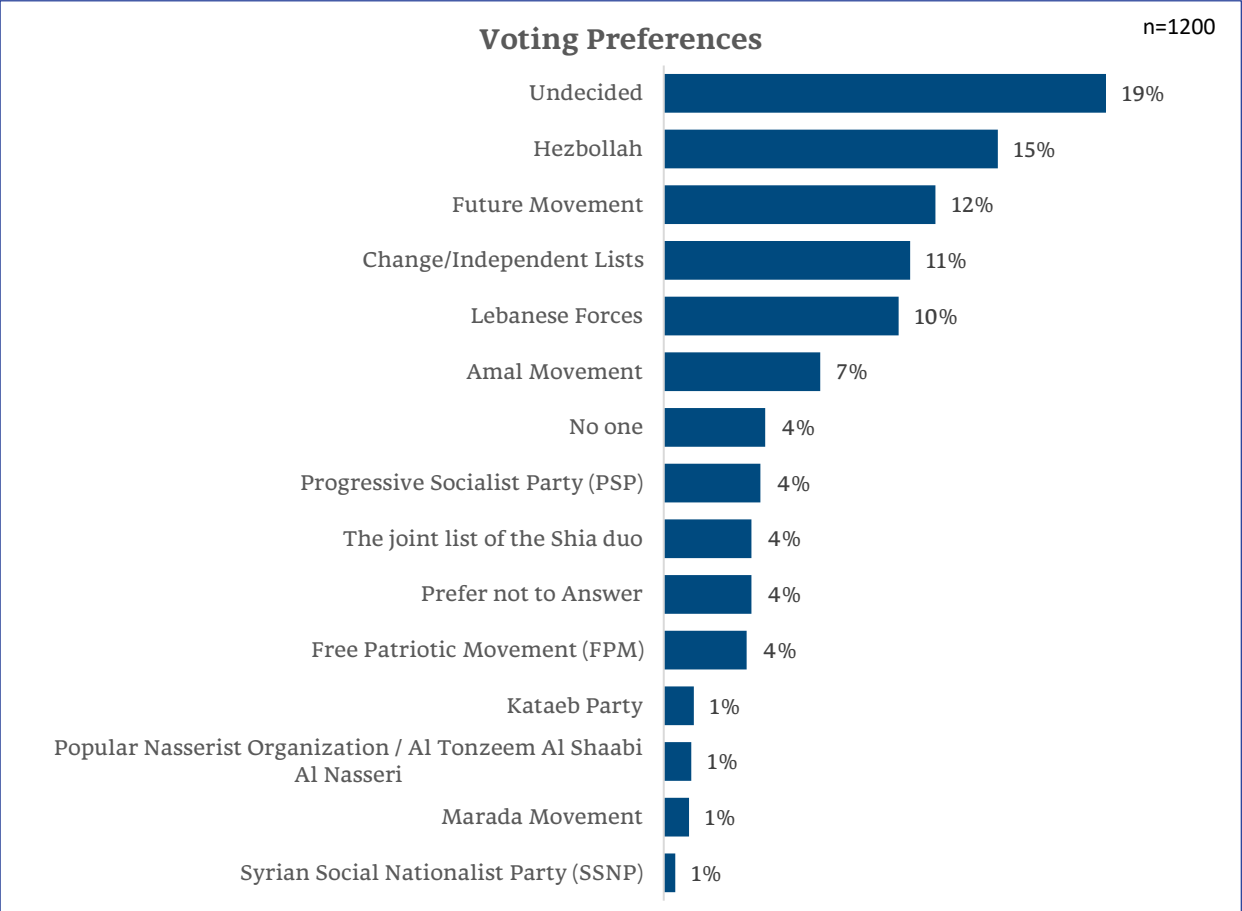
The combination of **high undecided voters** and **fragmented party support** suggests that **voter preferences remain highly volatile**, leaving substantial room for **campaign dynamics, alliances, and turnout differences** to shape the final outcome.

Voting intentions show strong regional variation, with high levels of uncertainty in several areas. **Undecided voters are particularly concentrated in Beirut (42%) and Akkar (35%)**, compared to **only 7% in Nabatiyeh** and **10% in Baalbek-Hermel**, indicating greater volatility in the former and more consolidated preferences in the latter.

Support for **Hezbollah** is **heavily concentrated in Baalbek-Hermel (50%) and Nabatiyeh (28%)**, with notable levels also in the **South (18%) and Bekaa (17%)**, while it remains marginal in **North Lebanon (1%)** and absent in **Akkar (0%)**. In parallel, **Amal’s support peaks in Nabatiyeh (30%) and the South (19%)**, and remains significant in **Baalbek-Hermel (17%)**, reinforcing the concentration of Shia party support in these governorates.

The **Future Movement** records its strongest levels in **Bekaa (24%)**, **North Lebanon (20%)**, and **Akkar (19%)**, while it is absent in **Nabatiyeh (0%)**. Meanwhile, **Change/Independent lists are strongest in Akkar (36%) and North Lebanon (24%)**, indicating that reformist or alternative options resonate most in these regions, while they are negligible in Bekaa, Baalbek-Hermel, South, and Nabatiyeh (0-1%).

Overall, the results point to a landscape split between regions with **high uncertainty and protest-driven preferences** (notably Beirut and Akkar), and regions where voting intentions appear **more politically consolidated**, particularly in Baalbek-Hermel, Nabatiyeh, and parts of the South.



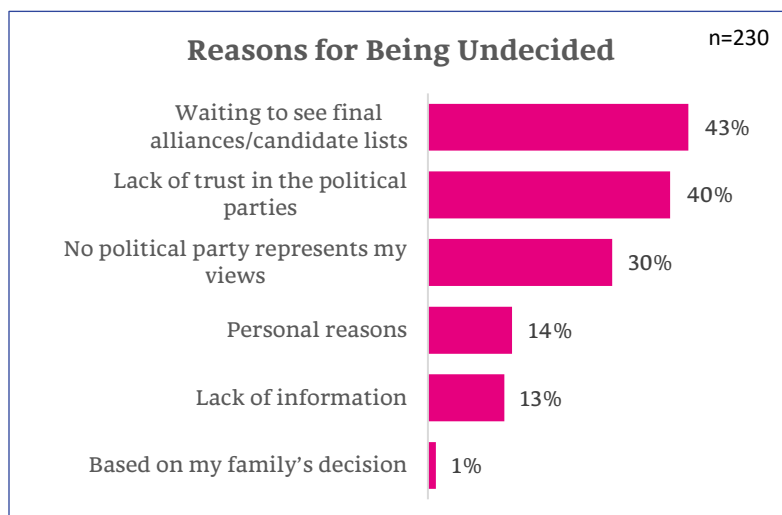
Given Lebanon’s electoral system, nationwide polling on party preferences is inherently limited in precision and should be interpreted primarily as a broad indication of overall political sentiment rather than as a reliable predictor of electoral outcomes.

3. Undecided Voters and Volatility

Undecided voters are driven more by political uncertainty and distrust than by lack of interest. The most common reason for indecision is **waiting to see final alliances and candidate lists (43%)**, indicating that many voters are **strategic and responsive to how the electoral field ultimately shapes up**.

Low confidence in the political system is also a major factor, with **40% citing a lack of trust in political parties** and **30% saying that no party represents their views**, pointing to **deep disillusionment with existing political options**.

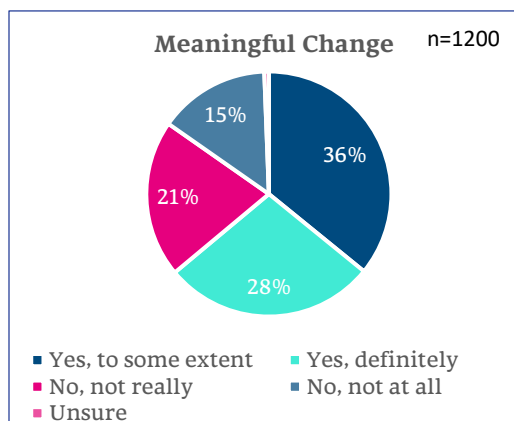
Information gaps and personal considerations play a secondary role, with **13% citing a lack of information** and **14% pointing to personal reasons**, while **family influence is negligible (1%)**.



4. Belief in Political Change

Public opinion is cautiously optimistic about the potential for political change. Nearly **two thirds of respondents (64%)** believe that the next parliamentary elections can bring **meaningful change**, including **28% who are strongly convinced** and **36% who think change is possible to some extent**.

At the same time, **36% remain skeptical**, with **21% saying the elections will not really bring change** and **15% believing they will not bring any change at all**, reflecting continued public distrust in the political system.

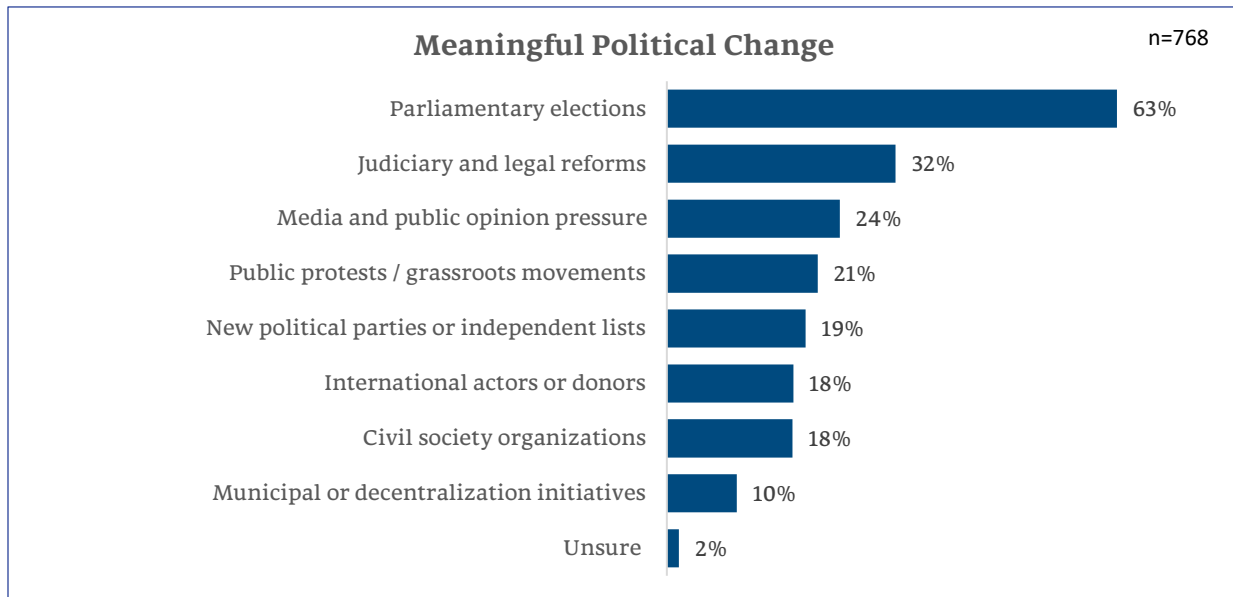


Among respondents who believe that the upcoming elections can bring meaningful change, the majority point to the electoral process itself as the main pathway. **Nearly two thirds (63%)** say that **parliamentary elections** are the most likely channel through which political change can occur in Lebanon, far ahead of any other option.

Institutional reform also features prominently, with **32%** pointing to the **judiciary and legal reforms** as key mechanisms for change.

Public pressure and alternative political forces play a secondary but still significant role. Around **one quarter** cite **media and public opinion pressure (24%)** and **public protests or grassroots movements (21%)**, while **19%** see **new political parties or independent lists** as drivers of change.

External and civil society actors are mentioned by similar shares (**18% each** for **international actors and civil society organizations**), suggesting that while these actors matter, they are **not viewed as the primary engines of reform**.



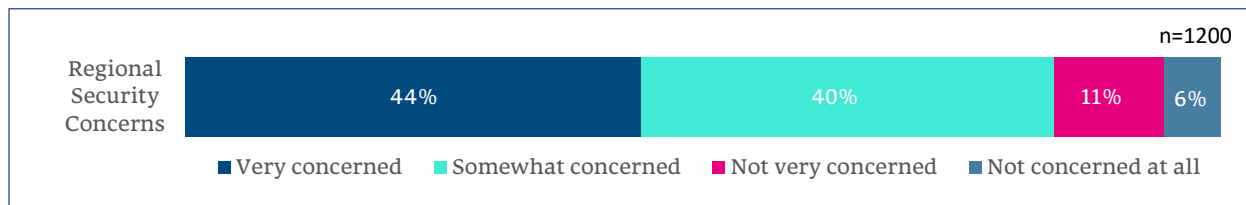
Key Takeaways

- **Voter engagement is high but uneven:** 80% say they are likely to vote, and 66% are already very certain about their choice, but Beirut stands out as weakly mobilized, with only 26% very likely to vote and 42% still undecided.
- **The party landscape is fragmented and volatile:** 19% of voters are undecided, making this the largest single group, while Hezbollah leads among decided voters with just 15%, underscoring how no party holds anything close to a dominant position and how fluid and competitive the race remains.
- **Voting intentions are sharply regionalized:** Hezbollah and Amal dominate Baalbek-Hermel, Nabatiyeh, and the South, while Change/Independent lists are strongest in Akkar (36%) and North Lebanon (24%), and Beirut remains highly uncertain.
- **Despite deep distrust, hope for change remains:** 64% believe the 2026 elections can bring meaningful change, with most seeing elections and institutional reform as the main pathways, rather than protests or foreign actors.

VIII. Regional Context & Security Outlook

1. Public Anxiety about Regional Security

Concern about regional security is widespread and intense. A very large majority of respondents (**84%**) say they are **very or somewhat concerned** about the broader regional security situation, including **44% who are very concerned**.

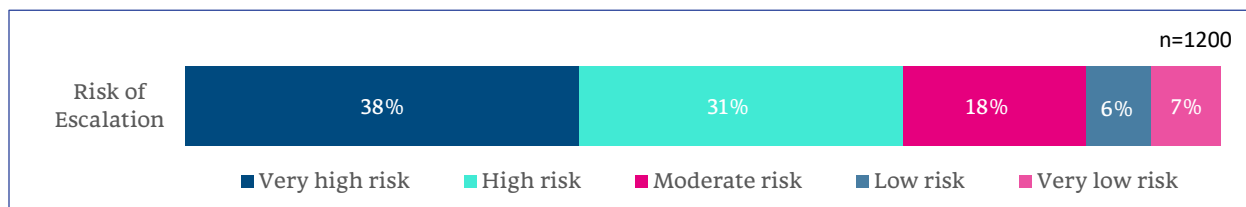


Only **17%** report being **not very or not at all concerned**, indicating that **regional instability is a dominant public anxiety**. Women express higher levels of anxiety about regional security than men. Nearly half of women (**47%**) say they are **very concerned**, compared to **40%** of men, indicating stronger emotional and security-related apprehension among female respondents.

Concern about regional security increases with age. Respondents aged **50–64** are the most alarmed, with **51%** saying they are **very concerned**, significantly higher than among **21–34 year olds (40%)**. Those aged **65+ (45%)** and **35–49 (43%)** also show high levels of concern.

Younger respondents are more likely to downplay the threat, with **19%** of those aged **21–34** saying they are **not very or not at all concerned**, compared to **15%** among those aged **35–49** and **17%** among those aged **50–64**.

Additionally, public perceptions point to a high risk of escalation. Nearly **seven in ten respondents (69%)** believe that the risk of escalation between **Israel and Lebanese actors is high or very high**, including **38%** who describe it as **very high**.



A further **18%** see the risk as **moderate**, while only **13%** consider it **low or very low**, indicating that **the prevailing public mood is one of serious alarm rather than reassurance**.

Women perceive the risk of escalation as significantly higher than men. **43%** of women describe the situation as a **very high risk**, compared to **33%** of men, indicating **greater threat perception among female respondents**.

Shia respondents perceive the highest risk of escalation. Nearly **half of Shia (48%)** describe the situation as a **very high risk**, significantly higher than among **Sunnis (36%)**, **Christians**

(33%), and Druze (32%). Druze respondents tend to see the risk as high rather than extreme, with 45% rating it as high risk rather than very high, suggesting concern but slightly less alarmist framing. Christians are more polarized, with a relatively large share (16%) describing the risk as very low, significantly higher than among the other groups, indicating greater confidence or emotional distance from the conflict.

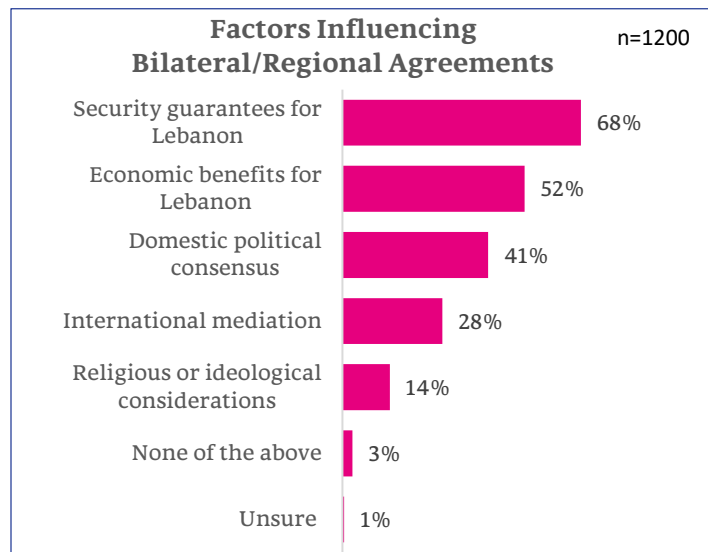
2. How Lebanese Evaluate Regional Agreements

Security and economic considerations dominate public thinking about regional and bilateral agreements. The most influential factor is **security guarantees for Lebanon**, selected by 68% of respondents, highlighting that **protection and stability are the primary public priority** when evaluating any future agreements.

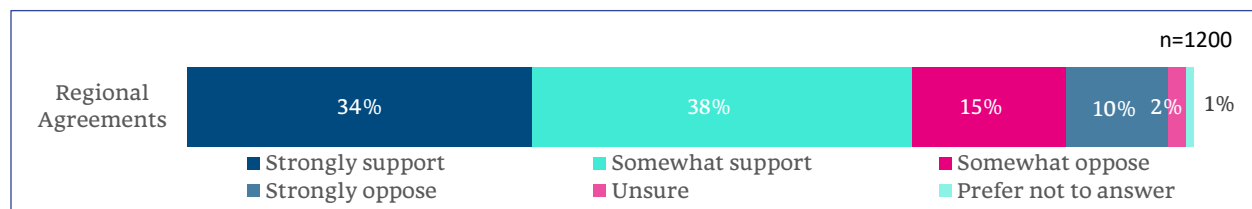
Economic benefits come next (52%), showing that Lebanese citizens are strongly motivated by **the potential for recovery, growth, and improved living conditions**.

Domestic political consensus is also critical (41%), indicating that **people want major agreements to be backed by broad internal agreement rather than imposed by elites or foreign actors**.

International mediation (28%) plays a supporting role, while **religious or ideological considerations** (14%) are far less influential, suggesting that **pragmatic concerns outweigh identity-based factors** in shaping public opinion.



There is broad public support for Lebanon engaging in future bilateral or diplomatic agreements. Nearly three quarters of respondents (72%) express support, including 34% who strongly support and 38% who somewhat support the idea of Lebanon pursuing bilateral or regional engagements.



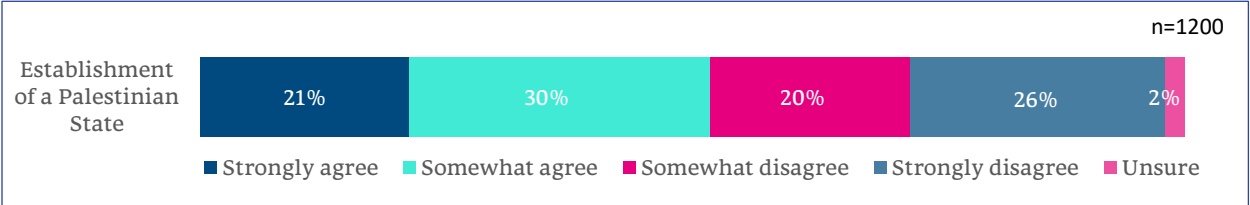
At the same time, 25% oppose such engagement (15% somewhat oppose and 10% strongly oppose), indicating a significant minority that remains skeptical of external political or diplomatic alignments.

Christians are the strongest supporters of diplomatic engagement. An overwhelming **90% of Christians** support Lebanon engaging in future bilateral or regional agreements (**59% strongly, 31% somewhat**), significantly higher than among **Druze (85%) and Sunnis (77%)**.

Shia respondents are the most internally divided group. While more than half of the respondents (**54%**) oppose such engagement, a **substantial 43% express support** (**10% strongly and 33% somewhat**), highlighting that attitudes are **far from uniform** and that there is a **significant constituency open to engagement** within this community.

Support for diplomatic engagement is strongest in North Lebanon and Bekaa. In **North Lebanon**, nearly **two thirds (65%) strongly support** Lebanon engaging in future bilateral or regional agreements, followed by **Bekaa (46%) and Mount Lebanon (41%)**, reflecting a strong pro-engagement stance in these regions. **Akkar and Baalbek-Hermel show more cautious support**, with majorities favoring engagement but with lower intensity and higher shares expressing opposition, indicating **greater hesitation toward regional political deals**.

Beirut and the South are the most divided, with relatively low strong support (**10% each**) and sizable shares expressing **opposition or ambivalence**, while **Nabatiyeh stands out as the most resistant**, with **over 70% opposing** future diplomatic or political agreements (**39% somewhat oppose and 32% strongly oppose**).



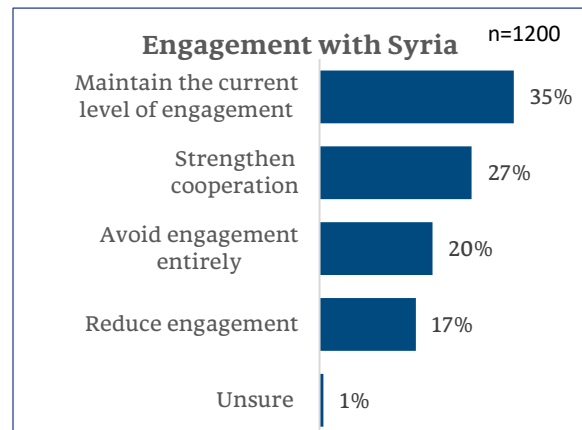
Public opinion is divided on linking regional agreements to the Palestinian issue. A slim majority of respondents (**51%**) agree that the **establishment of a Palestinian state should be a prerequisite** for Lebanon’s participation in any new bilateral or regional agreements (**21% strongly agree and 30% somewhat agree**).

At the same time, a substantial **46% disagree** (**20% somewhat and 26% strongly**), indicating **strong resistance to making Lebanon’s foreign engagement conditional on this issue**.

3. Lebanon's Relationship with Syria

Public opinion favors cautious engagement with Syria rather than escalation or isolation. A plurality of respondents (35%) prefer to **maintain the current level of engagement** with the new Syrian government, while 27% support **strengthening cooperation**, bringing the share favoring **continued or increased engagement to 62%**.

At the same time, 37% favor a more distant approach, with 17% calling to **reduce engagement** and 20% to **avoid engagement entirely**, reflecting **deep ambivalence and lingering mistrust** toward Syria.



Views on Syria are sharply divided along religious lines. Sunnis are the most supportive of closer engagement, with 42% favoring stronger cooperation and another 39% preferring to maintain current relations, meaning **81% back continued or increased engagement**. **Christians also lean toward engagement (65% in total)**, though with more caution.

Shia and Druze respondents are far more resistant. Among Shia, only 42% favor maintaining or strengthening ties, while a clear majority (58%) want to **reduce or avoid engagement entirely**, including 37% who want to **avoid engagement altogether**. **Druze views are even more skeptical**, with 51% favoring **reduced or no engagement** and only 50% supporting continued or increased engagement.

Key Takeaways

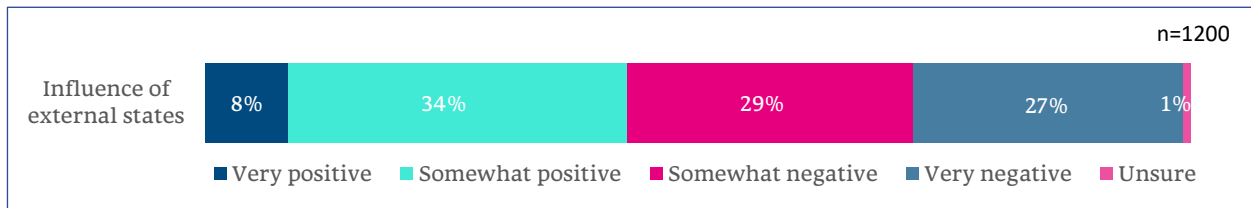
- **Regional war anxiety is extremely high:** 84% of Lebanese are concerned about regional security and 69% believe the risk of escalation with Israel is high or very high, with women (43% very high) and Shia (48% very high) showing the greatest alarm.
- **Lebanese judge regional agreements through a security-and-economy lens:** 68% prioritize security guarantees and 52% economic benefits when evaluating any future regional or bilateral deal, while religious or ideological factors matter to only 14%, showing strong pragmatism.
- **There is broad but uneven support for diplomatic engagement:** 72% support Lebanon pursuing bilateral or regional agreements, but Shia are deeply divided (43% support vs 54% oppose) and Nabatiyeh stands out as the most resistant, with over 70% opposed.
- **Syria remains a fault line:** 62% support maintaining or increasing engagement with Damascus, but 58% of Shia and 51% of Druze want to reduce or avoid engagement, highlighting lingering mistrust and sectarian divergence.

IX. External Actors & Influence

1. Overall Perceptions of External Influence

Public opinion on the influence of external states is deeply divided. While 42% of respondents view the role of external actors positively (8% very positive and 34% somewhat positive), a slightly larger share (56%) see their influence as negative (29% somewhat negative and 27% very negative).

Perceptions of foreign influence vary sharply across religious groups. Sunnis and Christians are the most positive, with 54% of Sunnis (11% very positive and 43% somewhat positive) and 53% of Christians (13% very positive and 40% somewhat positive) viewing external states' influence favorably.



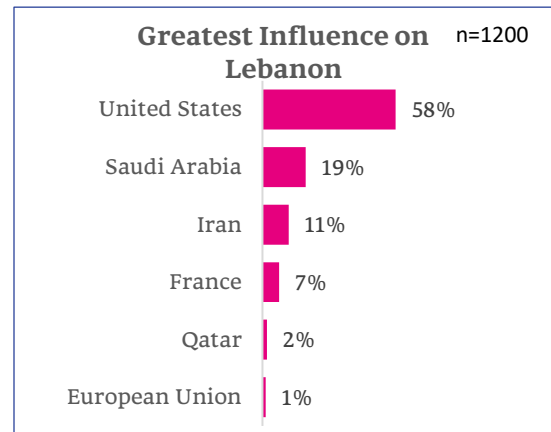
Shia respondents are overwhelmingly negative, with 81% rating external influence negatively (37% somewhat negative and 44% very negative), reflecting deep distrust of foreign involvement. Druze views are more mixed, though they lean negative, with 55% seeing external influence as negative and 46% as positive.

2. Most Influential External Actors

The United States is seen as the dominant external power shaping Lebanon today. A clear majority of respondents (58%) identify the United States as the most influential external actor, far surpassing any other country.

Saudi Arabia comes a distant second (19%), followed by Iran (11%) and France (7%), indicating that while several actors are perceived as relevant, none approach the level of influence attributed to Washington.

Qatar (2%) and the European Union (1%) are seen as marginal players in comparison.



3. Images of Key International Actors

Public attitudes toward international actors show sharp contrasts, with Gulf and Western countries generally viewed more positively, and Iran viewed overwhelmingly negatively.

Iran is the most negatively perceived actor. Nearly three quarters of respondents (73%) hold a negative view of Iran, including 56% who express a very negative opinion, while only 26% view it positively.

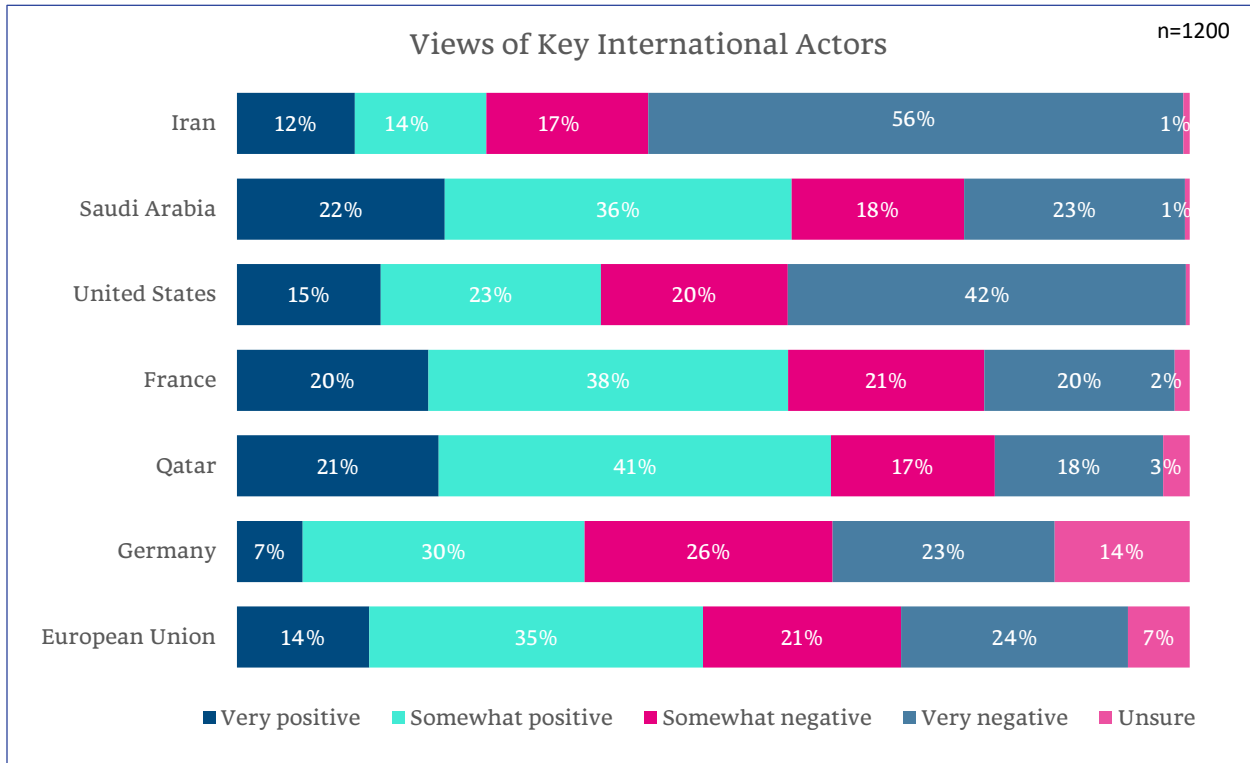
In contrast, **Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and France** enjoy the **strongest positive images**.

1. **Qatar** is the **most positively viewed**, with **62% positive** and only **35% negative**.
2. **Saudi Arabia** and **France** both receive **58% positive** ratings, with fewer than half holding negative views.

The **European Union** and the **United States** occupy a more **middle ground**.

- The **EU** is viewed positively by **49%**, but **45%** still view it negatively, indicating a **mixed but slightly favorable image**.
- The **United States** is more divisive, with **38% positive** and **61% negative**, reflecting **significant skepticism toward US influence**.

Germany is viewed relatively less favorably than other Western actors, with **37% positive** and **49% negative**, suggesting a **more subdued or less visible role** in Lebanese perceptions.



Key Takeaways

- **Foreign influence is widely viewed as harmful:** 56% of Lebanese say external actors have a negative impact, including 27% very negative, while only 42% see foreign involvement positively, showing deep public skepticism.
- **Perceptions are sharply sectarian:** 81% of Shia view foreign influence negatively, compared to majorities of Sunnis (54%) and Christians (53%) who see it positively, making external involvement one of Lebanon's most polarizing issues.
- **The United States is seen as the dominant power in Lebanon:** 58% identify the US as the most influential external actor, far ahead of Saudi Arabia (19%), Iran (11%), and France (7%).
- **Iran's image is overwhelmingly negative, while Gulf states lead in popularity:** 73% hold a negative view of Iran (56% very negative), while Qatar (62% positive), Saudi Arabia (58%), and France (58%) enjoy the strongest positive perceptions, highlighting a clear contrast between regional and international actors.

X. Key Insights & Strategic Implications

1. Cross-cutting Themes

Public opinion in Lebanon today reflects not a rejection of the state, but a profound rejection of how it has been governed. While public evaluations of the current government show an overall negative balance (55% negative versus 44% positive), approval levels are comparatively substantial in the Lebanese historical context, where governments have often recorded lower levels of public support. The data also reveal a pronounced confessional divide: majorities among Christian and Sunni respondents evaluate the government positively, whereas the negative overall balance is largely driven by overwhelmingly negative views among Shiite respondents, a pattern likely linked to the government's firmer stance toward certain political groups. This discontent, however, does not extend to the political system as a whole. Strong approval of the presidency, widespread support for elections, and overwhelming demand for institutional reforms in banking, justice, and public services all indicate that citizens still believe in the possibility of a functioning state. What they reject is elite mismanagement, corruption, and policy failure.

Economic survival has become the central lens through which Lebanese evaluate politics. The economic crisis and security concerns dominate public priorities, far outweighing ideological or identity-based issues. Even highly sensitive topics such as weapons, foreign relations, or Syria are increasingly assessed in pragmatic terms, based on whether they contribute to stability and

economic recovery. This reflects a society that has shifted from political polarization to survival-driven pragmatism.

At the same time, public trust in political actors has collapsed. Confidence in parties, reformist MPs, and traditional elites is weak, and a large share of voters remain undecided or skeptical. Yet this disillusionment has not translated into disengagement. Voter turnout intentions remain high, and a majority still believe elections can bring meaningful change. This combination of anger, distrust, and continued participation defines Lebanon's current political mood: citizens are deeply dissatisfied, but not resigned.

These attitudes also reveal a country divided not only by sect but by geography and geopolitical outlook. Central and northern regions are more open to reform, state authority, and international engagement, while southern and eastern regions show much stronger resistance to these ideas. This spatial polarization cuts across multiple issues and shapes how reform, sovereignty, and stability are understood in different parts of the country.

Geopolitical considerations further reinforce these divides. Attitudes toward placing all weapons under state authority, Lebanon's participation in regional or bilateral agreements, and relations with Syria vary sharply across sectarian groups and governorates, reflecting distinct security perceptions and geopolitical alignments. In particular, the data reveal clear-cut sectarian differences on sovereignty-linked issues, including the role of non-state weapons, engagement in regional peace or diplomatic agreements, and the perceived influence of foreign powers. Perceptions of foreign influence are similarly polarized, with communities differing not only in how they evaluate external actors but also in how they assess the costs and benefits of international engagement. Across the population, security guarantees, economic benefits, and domestic political consensus emerge as the main criteria through which regional agreements and external partnerships are judged, indicating that debates over sovereignty and foreign relations are increasingly shaped by pragmatic calculations about stability and recovery rather than ideology alone. Together, these patterns highlight that Lebanon's political landscape is shaped simultaneously by a broad consensus on economic and governance reform and a deep geopolitical polarization that continues to influence voter behavior and reform dynamics ahead of the 2026 elections

2. Risks and Opportunities

The political environment ahead of the 2026 elections is highly fluid and volatile. With a fragmented party system and a large share of undecided voters, electoral outcomes are difficult to predict and vulnerable to last-minute shifts driven by fear, security incidents, or political alliances. Deep distrust of political actors also raises the risk that unmet expectations after the elections could lead to further disillusionment or instability.

One of the most significant risks lies in Lebanon's internal geopolitical divide. Public opinion on sovereignty-linked issues such as the role of weapons outside state authority, Lebanon's participation in regional or bilateral agreements, relations with Syria, and the perceived influence of foreign powers is sharply polarized across sectarian groups and geographic regions. In parts of the country where resistance to state authority, international engagement, and reform is strongest, these geopolitical perceptions are closely tied to security concerns and identity-based political alignments, making consensus on reform far more difficult to achieve. This

polarization creates a structural obstacle to national agreement around IMF-linked reforms, financial restructuring, and governance change, and increases the likelihood that economic and institutional reforms will be framed by some actors as externally imposed agendas rather than nationally driven recovery strategies. As regional geopolitical tensions fluctuate, these divisions may also become more politically mobilized during the electoral campaign, further increasing the risk of polarization and reform paralysis.

Yet the same data also point to a rare and powerful opportunity. On key economic and governance reforms, Lebanese society shows an extraordinary level of consensus. Support for banking reform, anti-corruption measures, electricity reform, and judicial independence cuts across most social and religious groups. This creates a historic window for reform, in which the public is not only ready for change but actively demanding it.

There is also a clear opportunity to rebuild institutional legitimacy. Strong backing for elections, high voter engagement, and broad approval of the presidency suggest that citizens still see national institutions as potential vehicles for recovery. If reform-minded actors can demonstrate tangible progress, the social contract between citizens and the state can begin to be restored.

3. Policy Relevance for Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation

The survey findings closely align with the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation's core mission of promoting the rule of law, accountable governance, and economic freedom. Lebanese public opinion is not asking for ideological transformation but for practical, institutional change: transparent banking, independent courts, reliable electricity, and a state that delivers. This creates a strong foundation for FNF's work to resonate locally, rather than being perceived as externally driven.

FNF's greatest added value lies in helping convert public demand for reform into informed, sustainable political support. While majorities back IMF-linked financial reforms, anti-corruption measures, and institutional restructuring, understanding of what these reforms mean in practice remains limited. Strategic communication, policy dialogue, and civic education can help ensure that support for reform is resilient and not easily undermined by fear-based narratives.

The approaching 2026 elections further elevate the importance of FNF's engagement. With elections seen by the public as the primary pathway to change, efforts to support electoral integrity, voter education, megacenters, and diaspora participation can have a stabilizing and democratizing effect. Strengthening these processes will help protect the legitimacy of whatever political outcome emerges.

Finally, FNF is uniquely positioned to work with the constituencies that are most open to reform and international engagement, including youth, professionals, civil society, and diaspora-linked communities. These groups form the backbone of Lebanon's potential reform coalition. Supporting their capacity, coherence, and credibility will be essential to translating public frustration into constructive political change rather than deeper polarization.

XI. Conclusions

Public attitudes toward governance in Lebanon reveal a sharp distinction between institutions and those who currently manage them. Evaluations of the current government show an overall negative balance, yet they are also markedly divided across confessional groups, with more positive assessments among Christian and Sunni respondents and strongly negative views concentrated among Shiite respondents. While the government and political parties face deep dissatisfaction, confidence in the presidency, elections, and the state itself remains relatively strong. This indicates that Lebanon is experiencing a crisis of political leadership rather than a collapse of institutional legitimacy. Citizens still believe in the idea of a functioning state, but they are demanding one that delivers accountability, transparency, and effective economic management. The erosion of confidence in reformist MPs further underscores the urgency of moving beyond symbolic change toward tangible institutional reform.

Economic collapse has become the central organizing force of Lebanese public opinion. The overwhelming support for banking reform, anti-corruption measures, electricity reform, and IMF-linked restructuring reflects a rare national consensus around the need for systemic economic change. These priorities cut across religious, regional, and political divides, demonstrating that economic survival has replaced ideology as the dominant political driver. This creates a unique reform window, but also raises the stakes: failure to deliver meaningful economic recovery risks turning public frustration into political instability.

Despite widespread distrust of political parties and elites, Lebanese citizens remain strongly committed to electoral participation. High turnout intentions, strong support for elections taking place on time, and broad backing for megacenters and diaspora voting reflect a population that still sees elections as the primary pathway to change. However, the fragmented party landscape and large share of undecided voters make the electoral environment highly volatile. The 2026 elections therefore represent both an opportunity for renewal and a risk of further disillusionment if expectations are not met.

Lebanese public opinion reflects deep anxiety about regional instability and strong awareness of external influence over domestic affairs. While most citizens support diplomatic engagement and international cooperation, this support is uneven and highly polarized across regions and religious communities. Economic and security considerations dominate how international relationships are judged, with citizens prioritizing stability, recovery, and domestic consensus over ideology. This suggests that external engagement will be publicly accepted only if it is clearly linked to tangible national benefits and respect for sovereignty.

The data reveal a Lebanon that is divided along both sectarian and geographic geopolitical lines. On key sovereignty-linked issues, including the monopoly of weapons, regional or peace agreements, and relations with external actors, attitudes vary sharply across confessional groups, indicating that sectarian identity remains a central structuring factor of political opinion. At the same time, important geographic patterns are also visible, with central and northern regions showing relatively stronger support for reform, state authority, and international engagement, while southern and eastern regions express greater resistance to these positions. These overlapping sectarian and regional divides are deeply embedded across issues ranging from weapons to refugees and foreign policy. Managing these fault lines will be

critical for any successful reform agenda, as failure to bridge them risks entrenching polarization and undermining national recovery.

XII. Recommendations

1. For Lebanese Policymakers

Rebuild trust through visible, economic-first reforms

Public opinion shows overwhelming support for economic and governance reform, but deep distrust toward political elites. Policymakers should prioritize a small number of highly visible, citizen-relevant reforms that signal a genuine break from past practices. These include banking sector restructuring, electricity sector reform, and anti-corruption enforcement.

Protect the credibility of the 2026 elections

With strong public demand for elections to be held on time and high voter turnout intentions, political leaders must ensure that the electoral calendar, legal framework, and administrative preparations are safeguarded from political interference. Implementing megacenters, facilitating diaspora voting, and guaranteeing transparency will be critical to maintaining institutional legitimacy and preventing post-election instability.

Address regional and sectarian polarization through national framing

Our findings show that views on weapons, refugees, and foreign involvement differ sharply by sect and region, and when these issues are framed in sectarian or confrontational terms, people interpret them through group identities rather than as national challenges. As a result, reforms linked to shared goals such as economic recovery, security, and stability are more likely to gain cross-community support, especially when they are presented as improving livelihoods and strengthening state institutions.

2. For the Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation (FNF)

Translate reform support into informed public demand

While Lebanese citizens strongly support economic and institutional reform, understanding of what these reforms entail remains shallow. FNF should invest in civic education and policy communication that explains reforms, including IMF programs and banking restructuring, in clear and relatable terms for the public. This will help protect reform momentum from misinformation and fear-based narratives.

Strengthen reform constituencies ahead of the 2026 elections

Certain segments of the population show greater openness to reform, institutional accountability, and international engagement. FNF should prioritize capacity building, awareness-raising, networking, and leadership development among these groups, enabling them to become more informed, organized, and credible voices in the electoral and policy debate.

Promote rule of law and accountability as national not foreign values

In polarized regions where reform is often framed as foreign interference, FNF can play a crucial role in reframing rule-of-law, anti-corruption, and state institutions as expressions of Lebanese sovereignty and dignity. Supporting locally rooted messengers and community-level dialogue will be essential to avoid further polarization.

3. For Civil Society & Reform Movements

Move from protest to program

Public frustration with both traditional parties and “change” MPs shows that symbolic opposition is no longer enough. Civil society actors and reformist movements need to articulate clear, realistic reform platforms focused on economic recovery, service delivery, and institutional accountability. Voters are no longer looking for slogans, but for credible governing alternatives.

Develop clear, voter focused policy proposals

With many voters undecided and skeptical of all political actors, reform movements should prioritize developing and communicating a small set of concrete, achievable policy proposals on issues that matter most to citizens, such as banking reform, electricity, and anti-corruption. Clear policy commitments will help voters distinguish reformist actors from traditional parties and reduce uncertainty in the electoral choice.

4. For International Partners & Donors

Anchor support in Lebanese public priorities

The data show that IMF reforms, anti-corruption measures, and service delivery are not donor-driven agendas; they are public demands. International partners should explicitly frame assistance in terms of what Lebanese citizens want economic stabilization, fair banking, electricity, and justice. This will reduce resistance and increase local legitimacy.

Avoid reinforcing polarization

External engagement should be carefully calibrated in regions where foreign influence is deeply distrusted. Working through Lebanese institutions, municipalities, and civil society rather than high-profile political channels can help prevent backlash and politicization.

5. For Media & Opinion Leaders

Shift the narrative from fear to solutions

With public anxiety high over security, the economy, and regional conflict, media actors play a critical role in shaping political behavior. Responsible reporting that focuses on reform options, policy trade-offs, and accountability can help prevent the manipulation of fear and polarization in the lead-up to elections.