

Lebanon Constitution

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- { **Editor's Note:**
- *The ICL edition is based on the raw text of an annotated translation by Paul E. Salem for the Lebanese Center of Political Studies (cf. The Beirut Review No. 1/1991) consolidating all changes up to and including the Amendments of 21 Aug 1990 (signed into force 21 Sep 1990). That text is itself based on 'The Lebanese Constitution: A Reference Edition in English Translation' by the Department of Political Studies and Public Administration at the American University of Beirut (1960), and also seems to draw on the 1973 translation by Gabriel M. Bustros for the Bureau of Lebanese and Arab Documentation in London. We have added minor corrections, changed the British-style 'shall' predominance to more definite wording, worked in the ICL formatting, and included article headings and paragraph numbers. ICL keys are yet to be done. }*

Preamble

a. Lebanon is a sovereign, free, and independent country. It is a final homeland for all its citizens. It is unified in its territory, people, and institutions within the boundaries defined in this constitution and recognized internationally.

b. Lebanon is Arab in its identity and in its association. It is a founding and active member of the League of Arab States and abides by its pacts and covenants. Lebanon is also a founding and active member of the United Nations Organization and abides by its covenants and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Government shall embody these principles in all fields and areas without exception.

c. Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic based on respect for public liberties, especially the freedom of opinion and belief, and respect for social justice and equality of rights and duties among all citizens without discrimination.

d. The people are the source of authority and sovereignty; they shall exercise these powers through the constitutional institutions.

e. The political system is established on the principle of separation, balance, and cooperation amongst the various branches of Government.

f. The economic system is free and ensures private initiative and the right to private property.

g. The even development among regions on the educational, social, and economic levels shall be a basic pillar of the unity of the state and the stability of the system.

h. The abolition of political confessionalism is a basic national goal and shall be achieved according to a gradual plan.

i. Lebanese territory is one for all Lebanese. Every Lebanese has the right to live in any part of it and to enjoy the sovereignty of law wherever he resides. There is no

segregation of the people on the basis of any type of belonging, and no fragmentation, partition, or colonization. j. There is no constitutional legitimacy for any authority which contradicts the 'pact of communal coexistence'. This Constitutional Law shall be published in the Official Gazette.

[Part] A. Fundamental Provisions

[Chapter] I. On the State and its Territories

Article 1 [Territory]

Lebanon is an independent, indivisible, and sovereign state. Its frontiers are those which now bound it: On the North: From the mouth of al-Kabir River, along a line following the course of this river to its point of junction with Khalid Valley opposite al-Qamar Bridge.

On the East: The summit line separating the Khalid Valley and al-Asi River (Orontes) and passing by the villages of Mu'aysarah, Harbanah, Hayt, Ibish, Faysan to the height of the two villages of Brina and

Matraba. This line follows the northern boundary of the Ba`albak District at the northeastern and south eastern directions, thence the eastern boundaries of the districts of Ba`albak, Biqa', Hasbayya, and Rashayya.

On the South: The present southern boundaries of the districts of Sûr (Tyre) and Marji`yun.

On the West: The Mediterranean.

Article 2 [Territorial Integrity]

No part of the Lebanese territory may be alienated or ceded.

Article 3 [Administrative Areas]

The boundaries of the administrative areas may not be modified except by law.

Article 4 [Republic, Capital]

Greater Lebanon is a Republic the capital of which is Beirut.

Article 5 [Flag]

The Lebanese flag is composed of three horizontal stripes, a white stripe between two red ones. The width of the white stripe is equal to that of both red stripes. In the center of and occupying one third of the white stripe is a green Cedar tree with its top touching the upper red stripe and its base touching the lower red stripe.

[Chapter] II. The Rights and Duties of the Citizen

Article 6 [Nationality]

Lebanese nationality and the manner in which it is acquired, retained, and lost is to be determined in accordance with the law.

Article 7 [Equality]

All Lebanese are equal before the law. They equally enjoy civil and political rights and equally are bound by public obligations and duties without any distinction.

Article 8 [Personal Liberty, *nulla poena sine lege*]

Individual liberty is guaranteed and protected by law. No one may be arrested, imprisoned, or kept in custody except according to the provisions of the law. No offense may be established or penalty imposed except by law.

Article 9 [Conscience, Belief]

There shall be absolute freedom of conscience. The state in rendering homage to the Most High shall respect all religions and creeds and guarantees, under its protection, the free exercise of all religious rites provided that public order is not disturbed. It also guarantees that the personal status and religious interests of the population, to whatever religious sect they belong, is respected.

Article 10 [Education, Confessional Schools]

Education is free insofar as it is not contrary to public order and morals and does not interfere with the dignity of any of the religions or creeds. There shall be no violation of the right of religious communities to have their own schools provided they follow the general rules issued by the state regulating public instruction.

Article 11 [Official National Language]

Arabic is the official national language. A law determines the cases in which the French language may be used.

Article 12 [Public Office]

Every Lebanese has the right to hold public office, no preference being made except on the basis of merit and competence, according to the conditions established by law. A special statute guarantees the rights of state officials in the departments to which they belong.

Article 13 [Expression, Press, Assembly, Association]

The freedom to express one's opinion orally or in writing, the freedom of the press, the freedom of assembly, and the freedom of association are guaranteed within the limits established by law.

Article 14 [Home]

The citizen's place of residence is inviolable. No one may enter it except in the circumstances and manners prescribed by law.

Article 15 [Property]

Rights of ownership are protected by law. No one's property may be expropriated except for reasons of public utility in cases established by law and after fair compensation has been paid beforehand.

[Part] B. Powers**[Chapter] I. General Provisions****Article 16 [Legislative Power, One Chamber]**

Legislative power is vested in a single body, the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 17 [Executive Power, Council of Ministers]

Executive power is entrusted to the Council of Ministers to be exercised in accordance with the conditions laid down in this constitution.

Article 18 [Bills]

The Parliament and the Council of Ministers have the right to propose laws. No law shall be promulgated until it has been adopted by the Chamber.

Article 19 [Constitutional Council]

A Constitutional Council is established to supervise the constitutionality of laws and to arbitrate conflicts that arise from parliamentary and presidential elections. The President, the President of the Parliament, the Prime Minister, along with any ten Members of Parliament, have the right to consult this Council on matters that relate to the constitutionality of laws. The officially recognized heads of religious communities have the right to consult this Council only on laws relating to personal status, the freedom of belief and religious practice, and the freedom of religious education. The rules governing the organization, operation, composition, and modes of appeal of the Council are decided by a special law.

Article 20 [Judicial Power]

Judicial power is to be exercised by the tribunals of various levels and jurisdictions. It functions within the limits of an order established by the law and offering the necessary guarantees to judges and litigants. The limits and conditions for the protection of the judges are determined by law. The judges are independent in the exercise of their duties. The decisions and judgments of all courts are rendered and executed in the name of the Lebanese People.

Article 21 [Electoral Rights]

Every Lebanese citizen who has completed his twenty-first year is an elector provided he fulfills the conditions laid down in the electoral law.

[Chapter] II. The Legislative Power**Article 22 [Senate]**

With the election of the first Parliament on a national, non-confessional basis, a Senate is established in which all the religious communities are represented. Its authority is limited to major national issues.

Article 23 [Eligibility to the Senate]

{abolished 1927}

Article 24 [Electoral Laws]

(1) The Chamber of Deputies is composed of elected members; their number and the method of their

election is determined by the electoral laws in effect. Until such time as the Chamber enacts new electoral laws on a non-confessional basis, the distribution of seats is according to the following principles:

- a. Equal representation between Christians and Muslims.
- b. Proportional representation among the confessional groups within each religious community.
- c. Proportional representation among geographic regions.

(2) Exceptionally, and for one time only, the seats that are currently vacant, as well as the new seats that have been established by law, are to be filled by appointment, all at once, and by a majority of two thirds of the Government of National Unity. This is to establish equality between Christians and Muslims as stipulated in the Document of National Accord [The Taif Agreement]. The electoral laws will specify the details regarding the implementation of this clause.

Article 25 [Dissolution]

Should the Chamber of Deputies be dissolved, the Decision of dissolution must provide for the holding of new elections in accordance with Article 24 and within a period not exceeding three months.

Article 26 [Location of Government and Parliament]

The Government and the Chamber of Deputies shall be located in Beirut.

Article 27 [Representation]

A member of the Chamber represents the whole nation. No restriction or stipulation may be imposed upon his mandate by his electors.

Article 28 [No Incompatibility]

A Deputy may also occupy a ministerial position. Ministers, all or in part, may be selected from among the members of the Chamber or from persons outside the Chamber.

Article 29 [Incompatibility by Law]

Cases in which persons are disqualified from becoming Deputies are determined by law.

Article 30 [Validating Elections]

The Deputies alone have competence to judge the validity of their mandate. No Deputy's mandate may be invalidated except by a majority of two thirds of the votes of the entire membership. This clause is automatically cancelled as soon as the Constitutional Council is established and as soon as the laws relating to it are implemented.

Article 31 [Illegal Sessions]

Meetings of the Chamber outside those set for legal sessions are unlawful and *ipso facto* null and void.

Article 32 [Ordinary Sessions]

The Chamber meets each year in two ordinary sessions. The first session opens on the first Tuesday following 15 March and continues until the end of May. The second session begins on the first Tuesday following 15 Oct; its meetings is reserved for the discussion of and voting on the budget before any other work. This session lasts until the end of the year.

Article 33 [Extraordinary Sessions]

The ordinary sessions begin and end automatically on the dates fixed in Article 32. The President of the Republic in consultation with the Prime Minister may summon the Chamber to extraordinary sessions by a Decree specifying the dates of the opening and closing of the extraordinary sessions as well as the agenda. The President of the Republic is required to convoke the Chamber if an absolute majority of the total membership so requests.

Article 34 [Quorum]

The Chamber is not validly constituted unless the majority of the total membership is present. Decisions are to be taken by a majority vote. Should the votes be equal, the question under consideration is deemed rejected.

Article 35 [Publicity]

The meetings of the Chamber are public. However, at the request of the Government or of five Deputies, the Chamber may sit in secret sessions. It may then decide whether to resume the discussion of the same question in public.

Article 36 [Voting Process]

Votes are to be cast verbally or by the members standing, except for elections when the ballot is secret. With respect to laws in general and on questions of confidence, the vote is always taken by roll call and the responses are made in an audible voice.

Article 37 [Vote of No-Confidence]

Every Deputy has the absolute right to raise the question of no-confidence in the government during ordinary or extraordinary sessions. Discussion of and voting on such a proposal may not take place until at least five days after submission to the secretariat of the Chamber and its communication to the ministers concerned.

Article 38 [Reintroduction of Bills]

No Bill that has been rejected by the Chamber may be re-introduced during the same session.

Article 39 [Indemnity]

No member of the Chamber may be prosecuted because of ideas and opinions expressed during the period of his mandate.

Article 40 [Immunity]

No member of the Chamber may, during the sessions, be prosecuted or arrested for a criminal offense without the permission of the Chamber, except when he is caught in the act.

Article 41 [Re-election]

Should a seat in the Chamber become vacant, the election of a successor begins within two months. The mandate of the new member does not exceed that of the old member whose place he is taking; however, should the seat in the Chamber become vacant during the last six months of its mandate, no successor may be elected.

Article 42 [General Elections]

General elections for the renewal of the Chamber shall take place within a sixty day period preceding the expiration of its mandate.

Article 43 [Rules of Procedure]

The Chamber draws up its own internal rules and procedures.

Article 44 [First Session]

(1) Each time a new Chamber is elected, the Chamber meets under the presidency of the oldest member and the secretariat or the two youngest. It will then elect separately, by a secret ballot and by an absolute majority of the votes cast, the President and the Vice President of the Chamber to hold office for the length of the Chamber's term. At the third ballot, a relative majority is sufficient. Should the votes be equal, the oldest candidate is considered elected.

(2) Every time a new Chamber or Deputies is elected, as well as in the October session or each year, the Chamber elects two Secretaries by secret ballot according to the majority stipulated in the first part of this article.

(3) The Chamber may, once only, two years after the election of its President and his Deputy, and in the first session it holds, withdraw its confidence from the President of the Chamber or his Deputy by a Decision of two thirds of the Chamber, based on a petition signed by at least ten Deputies. The Chamber, at such point, must hold an immediate session to fill the vacant post.

Article 45 [Presence]

Members of the Chamber may only vote when they are present at the meeting. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.

Article 46 [Parliamentary Order]

The Chamber has the exclusive right to maintain order in its meetings through its President.

Article 47 [Petitions]

Petitions to the Chamber may not be presented except in writing. They may not be presented verbally or at the bar of the Chamber.

Article 48 [Remuneration]

The remuneration of members of the Chamber is determined by law.

[Chapter] III. The Executive Power**[Section] 1. The President of the Republic****Article 49 [Presidential Powers]**

(1) The President of the Republic is the head of the state and the symbol of the nation's unity. He shall safeguard the constitution and Lebanon's independence, unity, and territorial integrity. The President shall preside over the Supreme Defense Council and be the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces which fall under the authority of the Council of Ministers.

(2) The President of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot and by a two-thirds majority of the Chamber of Deputies. After a first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient. The President's term is for six years. He may not be re-elected until six years after the expiration of his last mandate. No one may be elected to the Presidency of the Republic unless he fulfills the conditions of eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies.

(3) It is also not possible to elect judges, Grade One civil servants, or their equivalents in all public institutions to the Presidency during their term or office or within two years following the date of their resignation or their leaving office for whatever reason.

Article 50 [Oath]

Upon assuming office, the President of the Republic shall take an oath of fidelity before the Parliament to the Lebanese Nation and the constitution in the following terms:

"I swear by Almighty God to observe the Constitution and the laws of the Lebanese Nation and to maintain the independence of Lebanon and its territorial integrity."

Article 51 [Promulgation of Laws]

The President of the Republic promulgates the laws after they have been approved by the Chamber in accordance with the time limits specified by the constitution. He asks for the publication of these laws, and he may not modify these laws or exempt anyone from complying with their provisions.

Article 52 [Negotiation of International Treaties]

The President of the Republic negotiates international treaties in coordination with the Prime Minister. These treaties are not considered ratified except after agreement of the Council of Ministers. They are to be made known to the Chamber whenever the national interest and security of the state permit. However, treaties involving the finances of the state, commercial treaties, and in general treaties that cannot be renounced every year are not considered ratified until they have been approved by the Chamber.

Article 53 [List of Additional Presidential Powers]

1. The President presides over the Council of Ministers when he wishes without participating in voting.
2. The President designates the Prime Minister in consultation with the President of the Chamber of Deputies based on parliamentary consultations which are binding and the content of which the President formally discloses to the Prime Minister.
3. The President alone issues the Decree which designates the Prime Minister.
4. He issues, in agreement with the Prime Minister, the decree appointing the Cabinet and the decrees accepting the resignation of Ministers.
5. He issues, on his own authority, the decrees accepting the resignation of the Cabinet or considering

it resigned.

6. He forwards to the Chamber of Deputies Bills that are delivered to him by the Council of Ministers.
7. He accredits ambassadors and accept the credentials of ambassadors.
8. He presides over official functions and grants official decorations by Decree.
9. He grants particular pardons by Decree, but a general amnesty cannot be granted except by a law.
10. He addresses, when necessary, letters to the Chamber of Deputies.
11. He may introduce, from outside the agenda, any urgent matter to the council of Ministers.
12. He may, in agreement with the Prime Minister, call the Council of Ministers to an extraordinary session, whenever he deems this necessary.

Article 54 [Countersignature]

The decisions of the President must be countersigned by the Prime Minister and the Minister or Ministers concerned except the Decree designating a new Prime Minister and the Decree accepting the resignation of the Cabinet or considering it resigned. Decrees issuing laws must be countersigned by the Prime Minister.

Article 55 [Dissolution of Parliament by Decree]

(1) The President of the Republic may, in accordance with the conditions stipulated in Articles 65 and 77 of this constitution, ask the Council of Ministers to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies before the expiration of its mandate. If the Council, based on this request, decides to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies, the President issues the Decree dissolving it, and in this case, the electoral bodies meets as provided for in Article 25, and the new Chamber is to be called to convene within fifteen days after the proclamation of the election.

(2) The administrative staff of the Chamber of Deputies continues to function until the election or a new Chamber.

(3) If elections are not held within the time limit specified in Article 25 of the constitution, the Decree dissolving the Chamber is considered null and void, and the Chamber of Deputies continues to exercise its powers according to the stipulations of the constitution.

Article 56 [Promulgation Time Limits]

(1) The President of the Republic promulgates the laws which have been adopted within one month of their transmission to the Government. He must promulgate laws that were declared urgent by a special Decision of the Chamber within five days.

(2) The President issues decrees and requests their promulgation; he has the right to ask the Council of Ministers to review any Decision that the Chamber has taken within fifteen days of the decision's transmission to the Presidency. If the Council of Ministers insists on the Decision or if the time limit passes without the Decree being issued or returned, the Decision or Decree is considered legally operative and must be promulgated.

Article 57 [Presidential Veto]

The President of the Republic, after consultation with the Council of Ministers, has the right to request the reconsideration of a law once during the period prescribed for its promulgation. This request may not be refused. When the President exercises this right, he is not required to promulgate this law until it has been reconsidered and approved by an absolute majority of all the members legally composing the Chamber. If the time limits pass without the law being issued or returned, the law is considered legally operative and must be promulgated.

Article 58 [Urgent Bills]

Every Bill the Council of Ministers deems urgent and in which this urgency is indicated in the decree of transmission to the Chamber of Deputies may be issued by the President within forty days following its communication to the Chamber, after including it on the agenda of a general meeting, reading it aloud before the Chamber, and after the expiration of the time limit without the Chamber acting on it.

Article 59 [Adjourning the Chamber]

The President of the Republic may adjourn the Chamber for a period not exceeding one month, but he may not do so twice during the same session.

Article 60 [Responsibility]

(1) While performing his functions, the President of the Republic may not be held responsible except when he violates the constitution or in the case of high treason.

(2) However, his responsibility in respect of ordinary crimes is subject to the ordinary laws. For such crimes, as well as for violation of the constitution and for high treason, he may not be impeached except by a majority of two thirds of the total membership of the Chamber of Deputies. He is to be tried by the Supreme Council provided for in Article 80. The functions of Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Council are performed by a judge appointed by the Supreme Council in plenary session.

Article 61 [Suspension after Impeachment]

Should the President of the Republic be impeached, he is suspended from his functions. The presidency remains vacant until the Supreme Council has settled the matter.

Article 62 [Vacancy]

Should the Presidency become vacant for any reason whatsoever, the Council of Ministers exercises the powers of the President by delegation.

Article 63 [Remuneration]

The remuneration of the President of the Republic is determined by a law. It may not be increased or reduced during his term of office.

[Section] 2. The Prime Minister

Article 64 [Responsibility and Powers]

The Prime Minister is the Head of Government and its representative. He speaks in its name and is responsible for executing the general policy that is set by the Council of Ministers. He exercises the following powers: 1. He heads the Council of Ministers and is *ex officio* Deputy Head of the Supreme Defense Council. 2. He conducts the parliamentary consultations involved in forming a Cabinet. He signs, with the President, the Decree forming the Cabinet. The Cabinet must present its general statement or policy to the Chamber and gain its confidence within thirty days of the date of issuance of the Decree in which the Cabinet was formed. The Cabinet does not exercise its powers before it gains the Chamber's confidence nor after it has resigned or is considered resigned, except in the narrow sense of managing affairs.

3. He presents the Government's general policy statements before the Chamber of Deputies.
4. He signs, along with the President, all decrees, except the Decree which designates him the head of the Government, and the Decree accepting the Cabinet's resignation or considering it resigned.
5. He signs the Decree calling for an extraordinary parliamentary session, decrees issuing laws, and requests for reviewing laws.
6. He calls the Council of Ministers into session and sets its agenda, and he informs the President and the Ministers beforehand of the subjects included on the agenda and of the urgent subjects that will be discussed.
7. He supervises the activities of the public administrations and institutions, coordinates among the Ministers and provides general guidance to ensure the proper progress of affairs.
8. He holds working meetings with the competent authorities in the Government in the presence of the concerned Minister.

[Section] 3. The Council of Ministers

Article 65 [Powers]

Executive authority is vested in the Council of Ministers. It is the authority to which the armed forces are subject. Among the powers that it exercises are the following:

1. It sets the general policy of the Government in all fields, prepares Bills and organizational Decrees and makes the decisions necessary for implementing them.
2. It watches over the execution of laws and regulations and supervises the activities of all the Government's branches including the civil, military, and security administrations and institutions without exception.

3. It appoints Government employees and dismisses them and accepts their resignations according to the law.

4. It dissolves the Chamber of Deputies upon the request of the President of the Republic if the Chamber of Deputies, for no compelling reasons, fails to meet during one of its regular periods and fails to meet throughout two successive extraordinary periods, each longer than one month, or if the Chamber returns an annual budget plan with the aim of paralyzing the Government. This right cannot be exercised a second time if it is for the same reasons which led to the dissolution of the Chamber the first time.

5. The Council of Ministers meets in a locale specifically set aside for it, and the President chairs its meetings when he attends. The legal quorum for a Council meeting is a majority of two thirds of its members. It makes its decisions by consensus. If that is not possible, it makes its decisions by vote of the majority of attending members. Basic national issues require the approval of two thirds of the members of the Council named in the Decree forming the Cabinet. Basic national issues are considered the following:

The amendment of the constitution, the declaration of a state of emergency and its termination, war and peace, general mobilization, international agreements and treaties, the annual government budget, comprehensive and longterm development projects, the appointment of Grade One government employees and their equivalents, the review of the administrative map, the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies, electoral laws, nationality laws, personal status laws, and the dismissal of Ministers.

Article 66 [Ministries, Responsibility]

Only Lebanese who satisfy the conditions for deputization may assume ministerial posts. The Ministers administer the

Government's services and assume the responsibility of applying the laws and regulations, each one according to the affairs of his administration and what is specific to them. Ministers are collectively responsible before the Chamber for the general policy of the Government and individually responsible for their personal actions.

Article 67 [Ministers in Parliament]

Ministers may attend the Chamber if they so desire, and they have the right to be heard whenever they request to speak. They may be assisted by whomever they select from among the officials of their Departments.

Article 68 [Vote of No-Confidence]

When the Chamber, in accordance with Article 37, passes a vote of noconfidence in a Minister, that Minister is required to resign.

Article 69 [Government Resignation]

(1) The Government is considered resigned in the following circumstances:

- a. if the Prime Minister resigns;
- b. if it loses more than a third of the members specified in the Decree forming it;
- c. if the Prime Minister dies;
- d. at the beginning of the term of the President of the Republic;
- e. at the beginning of the term of the Chamber of Deputies;
- f. when it loses the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies based on the Chamber's initiative or based on the Council's initiative to gain the Chamber's confidence.

(2) Ministers are to be dismissed by a Decree signed by the President and the Prime Minister in accordance with Article 65 of the constitution.

(3) When the Council resigns or is considered resigned, the Chamber of Deputies is automatically considered in extraordinary session until a new Council has been formed and has gained the Chamber's confidence.

Article 70 [Impeachment]

(1) The Chamber of Deputies has the right to impeach the Prime Minister and Ministers for high treason or for serious neglect of their duties. The Decision to impeach may not be taken except by a majority of two thirds of the total membership of the Chamber.

(2) A special law is to be issued to determine the conditions of the civil responsibility of the Prime

Minister and individual Ministers.

Article 71 [Judicial Impeachment Proceedings]

The impeached Prime Minister or Minister are tried by the Supreme Council.

Article 72 [Consequences of Impeachment]

A Prime Minister or Minister leaves office as soon as the Decision of impeachment concerning him is issued. If he resigns, his resignation does not prevent judicial proceedings from being instituted or continued against him.

[Part] C. Procedural Provisions

[Chapter] I. Election of the President of the Republic

Article 73 [Election of the President]

One month at least and two months at most before the expiration of the term of office of the President of the Republic, the Chamber is summoned by its President to elect the new President of the Republic. However, should it not be summoned for this purpose, the Chamber meets of its own accord on the tenth day preceding the expiration of the President's term of office.

Article 74 [Vacancy of Presidency]

Should the Presidency become vacant through the death or resignation of the President or for any other cause, the Chamber meets immediately and by virtue of the law to elect a successor. If the Chamber happens to be dissolved at the time the vacancy occurs, the electoral bodies are convened without delay and, as soon as the elections have taken place, the Chamber meets by virtue of the law.

Article 75

The Chamber meeting to elect the President of the Republic is considered an electoral body and not a legislative assembly. It must proceed immediately, without discussion or any other act, to elect the Head of the State.

[Chapter] II. Amending the Constitution

Article 76 [Proposal]

The constitution may be revised upon the proposal of the President of the Republic. In such a case the Government submits a draft law to the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 77 [Request]

The constitution may also be revised upon the request of the Chamber of Deputies. In this case the following procedures are to be observed:

During an ordinary session and at the request of at least ten of its members, the Chamber of Deputies may recommend, by a majority of two thirds of the total members lawfully composing the Chamber, the revision of the constitution.

However, the articles and the questions referred to in the recommendation must be clearly defined and specified. The President of the Chamber then transmits the recommendation to the Government requesting it to prepare a draft law relating thereto. If the Government approves the recommendation of the Chamber by a majority of two thirds, it must prepare the draft amendment and submit it to the Chamber within four months; if it does not agree, it shall return the Decision to the Chamber for reconsideration. If the Chamber insists upon the necessity of the amendment by a majority of three fourths of the total members lawfully composing the Chamber, the President of the Republic has then either to accede to the Chamber's recommendation or to ask the Council of Ministers to dissolve the Chamber and to hold new elections within three months. If the new Chamber insists on the necessity of amending the constitution, the Government must yield and submit the draft amendment within four months.

Article 78 [Priority]

When a draft law dealing with a constitutional amendment is submitted to the Chamber, it must confine itself to its discussion before any other work until a final vote is taken. It may discuss and vote only on

articles and questions clearly enumerated and defined in the draft submitted to it.

Article 79 [Majority, Promulgation]

(1) When a draft law dealing with a constitutional amendment is submitted to the Chamber, it cannot discuss it or vote upon it except when a majority of two thirds of the members lawfully composing the Chamber are present. Voting is by the same majority.

(2) The President of the Republic is required to promulgate the law of the constitutional amendment under the same conditions and in the same form as ordinary laws. He has the right, within the period established for the promulgation, to ask the Chamber to reconsider the draft, after consultation with the council of Ministers, in which case the vote is by a majority of two thirds.

[Part] D. Miscellaneous Provisions

[Chapter] I. The Supreme Council

Article 80 [Function, Composition, Organizational Law]

The Supreme Council, whose function is to try Presidents and Ministers, consists of seven deputies elected by the Chamber of Deputies and of eight of the highest Lebanese judges, according to their rank in the judicial hierarchy, or, in case of equal ranks, in the order of seniority. They meet under the presidency of the judge of the highest rank. The Decisions of condemnation by the Supreme Council is rendered by a majority of ten votes. A special law is to be issued to determine the procedure to be followed by this Council.

[Chapter] II. Finances

Article 81 [Integral Tax Law]

No public taxes may be imposed and no new taxes established or collected in the Lebanese Republic except by a comprehensive law which applies to the entire Lebanese territory without exception.

Article 82 [Rule of Law]

No tax may be modified or abolished except by virtue of law.

Article 83 [Yearly Budget]

Each year at the beginning of the October session, the Government has to submit to the Chamber of Deputies the general budget estimates of state expenditures and revenues for the following year. The budget is voted upon article by article.

Article 84 [Budget Discussion]

During the discussion of the budget and draft laws involving the opening of supplementary or extraordinary credits, the Chamber may not increase the credits proposed in the budget or in the draft laws mentioned above either by way of amendment Or by means of a proposal. The Chamber may, however, adopt, by way of proposal, laws involving further expenditures after the close of this discussion.

Article 85 [Extraordinary Credit]

No extraordinary credit may be opened except by a special law. Nevertheless, should unforeseen circumstances render urgent expenditures necessary, the President of the Republic may issue a Decree, based on a Decision of the Council or Ministers, to open extraordinary or supplementary credits or transfer appropriations in the budget as long as these credits do not exceed a maximum limit specified in the budget law. These measures are to be submitted to the Chamber for approval at the first ensuing session.

Article 86 [Provisional Budget]

If the Chamber of Deputies has not given a final decision on the budget estimates before the expiration of the session devoted to the examination of the budget, the President of the Republic, in coordination with the Prime Minister, immediately convenes the Chamber for an extraordinary session which lasts until the end of January in order to continue the discussion of the budget; if, at the end of this extraordinary session, the budget estimates have not been finally settled, the Council

of Ministers may take a decision on the basis of which a decree is issued by the President giving effect to the above estimates in the form in which they were submitted to the Chamber. However, the Council of Ministers may not exercise this right unless the budget estimates were submitted to the Chamber at least fifteen days before the commencement of its session. Nevertheless, during the said extraordinary session, taxes, charges, duties, imposts, and other kinds of revenues continue to be collected as before. The budget of the previous year is adopted as a basis. To this must be added the permanent credits which have been dropped, and the Government fixes the expenditures for the month of January on the basis of the 'provisional twelfth.'

Article 87 [Final Financial Accounts, Auditing Bureau]

The final financial accounts of the administration for each year must be submitted to the Chamber for approval before the promulgation of the budget of the year following. A special law is to be issued for the setting up of an Auditing Bureau.

Article 88 [Public Loan]

No public loan or undertaking involving an expenditure from the treasury funds may be contracted except by virtue of a law.

Article 89 [Contracts, Concessions, Resources, Monopolies]

No contract or concession for the exploitation of the natural resources of the country, or a public utility service, or a monopoly may be granted except by virtue of a law and for a limited period.

[Part] E. Provisions Relating to the Mandatory Power and the League of Nations

Article 90 [...]

{Abolished in 1943}

Article 91 [...]

{Abolished in 1943}

Article 92 [...]

{Abolished in 1943}

Article 93 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

Article 94 [...]

{Abolished in 1943}

[Part] F. On the Abolition of Political Confessionalism

Article 95 [National Committee]

(1) The first Chamber or Deputies which is elected on the basis of equality between Muslims and Christians takes the appropriate measures to realize the abolition of political confessionalism according to a transitional plan. A National Committee is to be formed, headed by the President of the Republic, including, in addition to the President of the Chamber of Deputies and the Prime Minister, leading political, intellectual, and social figures.

(2) The tasks of this Committee are to study and propose the means to ensure the abolition of confessionalism, propose them to the Chamber of Deputies and the Ministers, and supervise the execution of the transitional plan.

(3) During the transitional phase:

a. The confessional groups are to be represented in a just and equitable fashion in the formation of the Cabinet.

b. The principle of confessional representation in public service jobs, in the judiciary, in the military and security institutions, and in public and mixed agencies are to be cancelled in accordance with the requirements of national reconciliation; they shall be replaced by the principle of expertise and competence. However, Grade One posts and their equivalents are exempt from this rule, and the posts must be distributed equally between Christians and Muslims without

reserving any particular job for any confessional group but rather applying the principles of expertise and competence.

[Part] G. Provisions Relating to the Election and Functions of the Senate

Article 96 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

Article 97 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

Article 98 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

Article 99 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

Article 100 [...]

{Abolished in 1947}

[Part] H. Additional Provisions

Article 101 [Greater Lebanon, The Lebanese Republic]

Beginning 1 Sep 1929, the state of 'Greater Lebanon' is to be known as 'The Lebanese Republic' without any other change or modification.

Article 102 [Abrogation of Old Laws]

All legislative provisions contrary to the present constitution are abrogated.