

The Lebanese Constitution

Adopted May 23, 1926

PART I: FUNDAMENTAL PROVISIONS

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' [mithaq al-aysh al-mushtaraq]. This Constitutional Law shall be published in the Official Gazette.

CHAPTER 1 THE STATE AND THE TERRITORY

Article 1 [Territory]

(as modified by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943, article 1)

Lebanon is an independent State, unitarian and sovereign. Its frontiers are those which now limit it:

IN THE NORTH: From the mouth of Nahr El Kebir, the line following the course of this river up to its junction with its tributary the Ouade Khaled at the height of Jisr El Kamar.

IN THE EAST: The top line separating the valleys of Ouade Khaled and the Ouade Nahr-El Assi (Orontes) and passing through the villages of Meayssra, Harbaana, Hait, Ebbech, Faissan, at the height of the villages Brifa and Matrebeh. This line follows the northern limit of the caza of Baalbeck, towards the Northeast and Southeast, then the Eastern limits of the cazas of Baalbeck, Bekaa, Hasbaya and Rashaya.

IN THE SOUTH: The present southern limits of the cazas of Tyre and Marjeyoun.

IN THE WEST: the Mediterranean Sea.

Article 2 [Territorial Integrity]

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

Article 3 [Administrative Areas]

The limits of the administrative districts may not be modified except by law.

Article 4 [Republic, Capital]

The Greater Lebanon is a Republic. Beirut is its capital city.

Article 5 [Flag]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 7 December 1943, sole article).

The Lebanese flag is composed of three horizontal stripes two red ones framing a white one. The top of the

white stripe is equal to double of each of the red stripes. In the center of the white stripe figures a green cedar tree the width of which occupies the third of the latter and which, at its top and base, touches each of the red stripes.

CHAPTER 2 THE LEBANESE NATIONALS, THEIR RIGHTS AND THEIR DUTIES

Article 6 [Nationality]

The Lebanese nationality, the way it is acquired, is retained and forfeited, shall be determined by law.

Article 7 [Equality]

All the Lebanese are equal before the law. They enjoy equal civil and political rights and are equally subjected to public charges and duties, without any distinction whatever.

Article 8 [Personal Liberty, nulla poena sine lege]

Individual liberty is guaranteed and protected. No one can be arrested or detained except in accordance with the provisions of the law. No infringements and no sanctions can be established except by law.

Article 9 [Conscience, Belief]

Liberty of conscience is absolute. By rendering homage to the Almighty, the State respects all creeds and guarantees and protects their free exercise, on condition that they do not interfere with public order. It also guarantees to individuals, whatever their religious allegiance, the respect of their personal status and their religious interests.

Article 10 [Education, Confessional Schools]

Education is free so long as it is not contrary to public order and to good manners and does not touch the dignity of creeds. No derogation shall affect the right of communities to have their schools, subject to the general prescriptions on public education edicted by the State.

Article 11 [Official National Language]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943, article 2).

Arabic is the official national language. A law shall determine the cases where the French language is to be used.

Article 12 [Public Office]

All Lebanese citizens are equally admitted to all public functions without any other cause for preference except their merit and competence and according to the conditions set by law. A special statute shall govern Civil Servants according to the administrations to which they belong.

Article 13 [Expression, Press, Assembly, Association]

Freedom of expression by word or pen, freedom of the press, freedom of holding meetings and freedom of association are equally guaranteed within the framework of the law.

Article 14 [Home]

Domicile is unviolable. None can enter it except in cases provided by the law and according to the form it prescribes.

Article 15 [Property]

Property is under the protection of the law. None may be deprived of his property except for public utility, in cases established by the law and in return of prior and fair compensation.

PART II: POWERS

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 16 [Legislative Power, One Chamber]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, Article 1)

Legislature lies with a single assembly: the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 17 [Executive Power, Council of Ministers]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, Article 2, and the constitutional law of August 21, 1990)

Executive power is entrusted to the President of the Republic who exercises it with the assistance of Ministers, according to conditions established by the present constitution.

Article 18 [Bills]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, Article 50)

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]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, Article 50, and the constitutional law of August 21, 1990)

A Constitutional Council shall be 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 will be decided by a special law.

Article 20 [Judicial Power]

Judicial power functioning within the framework of a statute established by law and ensuring essential guarantees to judges and the disputing parties is exercised by courts of different order and degrees. The law fixes the limits and the conditions of the magistrates' tenure of office. Judges are independent in the exercise of their functions. The awards and judgments of all courts are rendered and executed in the name of the Lebanese people.

Article 21 [Electoral Rights]

Any Lebanese citizen aged 21 who meets the conditions of the electoral law is entitled to vote.

CHAPTER 2 THE LEGISLATIVE POWER

Article 22 (The Senate)

(As modified by the constitutional law of August 21, 1990)

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

Article 23

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of October 17, 1927, article 50)

Article 24 [Electoral Laws]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1, and the constitutional law of August 21, 1990)

1- The Chamber of Deputies shall be composed of elected members; their number and the method of their election shall be 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]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1)

In the event of the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies, the deed dissolving it must contain convocation of the voters for new elections which shall be held in conformity with article 24 and within a time-limit not exceeding three months.

CHAPTER 3 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 26 [Location of Government and Parliament]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 3)

The Chamber and the Executive sit in Beirut.

Article 27 [Representation]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1)

The Chamber member represents all the Nation. No imperative mandate may be given him by his electors.

Article 28 [No Incompatibility]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 8 May 1929, article 1)

No incompatibility exists between a deputy's mandate and ministerial office. Ministers may be taken indistinctly either from the Chamber or from outside.

Article 29 [Incompatibility by Law]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 6)

Cases of inaptness to the quality of deputy are determined by law.

Article 30 [Validating Elections]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1, and the constitutional law of August 21, 1990)

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]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, Article 8)

Any sitting of the Chamber outside the legal time of session is illegal and null as a matter of course.

Article 32 [Ordinary Sessions]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 9)

The Chamber convenes every year in two ordinary sessions. The first opens on the first Tuesday following the 15th March and terminates at the end of the month of May. The second opens on the first Tuesday following the 15th October. It is devoted before any other business to budget debate and vote. It lasts until the end of the year.

Article 33 [Extraordinary Sessions]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 10)

The ordinary sessions shall 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]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 11)

The Chamber may not be validly constituted except with the attendance of the majority of the members legally composing it.

Resolutions are adopted by majority vote. In the event of a tie the matter under debate is rejected.

Article 35 [Publicity]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 12)

Debates in the Chamber are public. However, the Chamber convenes in secret committee upon Government request or of five of its members. It then decides if the debate must be resumed in public on the same subject.

Article 36 [Voting Process]

Voting is expressed in a loud voice or by sitting and standing, except in the event of an election, in which case ballot is secret. On laws as a whole and on the matter of confidence voting is always by nominal call and in a loud voice.

Article 37 [Vote of No-Confidence]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 8 May 1929, article 2)

The right of every deputy to question the responsibility of Ministers is absolute during the ordinary and emergency sessions.

No motion of this nature may be debated and voted upon except five days at least after it has been tabled before the Chamber of Deputies and communicated to the Minister of Ministers concerned.

Article 38 [Reintroduction of Bills]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 14)

Any Bill which has not been rejected by the Chamber may not be tabled once more in the course of the same session.

Article 39 [Indemnity]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 15)

No member of the Chamber may be prosecuted for his expression of opinions or votes during the term of his mandate.

Article 40 [Immunity]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 16)

No member of the Chamber may, while the session is in progress, be prosecuted or arrested for breach of the penal

law - barring cases of flagrante delicto - except with the approval of the Chamber.

Article 41 [Re-election]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1)

When a seat in the Chamber has become vacant, the vacancy shall be filled within a time?limit of two months.

The term of office of the new member shall run up to the expiry of the term of office of his predecessor.

No steps shall be taken to fill the vacancy if the Chamber is less than six months away from the expire of its powers.

Article 42 [General Elections]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1)

General elections for the renewal of the Assembly are held within the sixty days which precede the end of its term of office.

Article 43 [Rules of Procedure]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 19)

The Chamber drafts its own internal regulations.

Article 44 [First Session]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1 and in 1990)

Each time a new Chamber is elected the Chamber shall meet under the presidency of the oldest member and the secretariat of the two youngest. It shall 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 shall be sufficient. Should the votes be equal, the oldest candidate shall be considered elected.

Every time a new Chamber of Deputies is elected, as well as in the October session of each year, the Chamber shall elect two Secretaries by secret ballot according to the majority stipulated in the first part of this Article.

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]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 21).

The members of the Chamber do not vote except if they attend the sitting; voting by proxy is not admitted.

Article 46 [Parliamentary Order]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 22).

Only the Chamber is entitled to maintain its own order, through the Speaker.

Article 47 [Petitions]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 23)

Any petition to the Chamber must be made out and communicated in writing. It is forbidden to hand in petitions in person or on the floor.

Article 48 [Remuneration]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 24).

Indemnity to the members of the Chamber is determined by law.

CHAPTER 4

THE EXECUTIVE POWER

SECTION 1: THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Article 49 [Presidential Powers]

(As modified by the constitutional laws of 8 May 1929, article 3, and 21 January 1947, article 2 and in 1990 and in 1995)

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 Defence Council and be the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces which fall under the authority of the Council of Ministers.

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.

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 of office or within two years following the date of their resignation or their leaving office for whatever reason.

Constitutional Law 462 dated 19.10.1995 (Addition of a paragraph to article 49)

The members of the parliament have ratified the following:

1) The following text is added to article 49: "Exceptionally, and, for one time, the term of the present President of the Republic is continued for three years ending on the 23rd November 1998"

2) *The Constitutional Law will be effective as from date of publication in the official gazette.*

Constitutional Law 687 dated 13.10.1998 (Addition of a paragraph to article 49)

The members of the parliament have ratified the following:

1) The following text is added to article 49: "Exceptionally and for one time, it is possible to elect the President of the Republic from, judges, first category civil servants or from similar posts in the Public Administration and Establishments and other personalities in the Law":

Article 50 [Oath]

Before entering upon his duties, the President of the Republic takes the oath of allegiance to the Lebanese Nation and the Constitution, before Parliament, in the following terms:

"I swear by Almighty God to observe the Constitution and the laws of the Lebanese people, to safeguard the independence of Lebanon and the integrity of its territory".

Article 51 [Promulgation of Laws]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 26 and in 1990)

The President of the Republic shall promulgate 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]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943, article 3 and in 1990).

The President of the Republic shall negotiate international Treaties in coordination with the Prime Minister. These treaties are not considered ratified except after agreement of the Council of Ministers. They shall 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 shall not be considered ratified until they have been approved by the Chamber.

Article 53 [List of Additional Presidential Powers]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1 and in 1990)

1. The President shall preside over the Council of Ministers when he wishes without participating in voting.
2. The President shall designate the Prime minister in consultation with the President of the Chamber of Deputies based on Parliamentary consultations which shall be binding and the content of which the President shall formally disclose to the Prime Minister.
3. The President alone shall issue the Decree which designates the Prime Minister.
4. He shall issue, in agreement with the Prime Minister, the decree appointing the Cabinet and the decrees accepting the resignation of Ministers.
5. He shall issue, on his own authority, the decrees accepting the resignation of the Cabinet or considering it resigned.
6. He shall forward to the Chamber of Deputies Bills that are delivered to him by the Council of Ministers.
7. He shall accredit [Lebanese] ambassadors [abroad] and accept the credentials of [foreign] ambassadors.
8. He shall preside over official functions and grant official decorations by Decree.
9. He shall grant particular pardons by Decree, but a general amnesty cannot be granted except by a Law.
10. He shall address, 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 sees it necessary.

Article 54 [Countersignature]

(As modified in 1990).

The decisions of the President must be countersigned by the Prime Minister and the concerned Minister or Ministers 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]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 8 May 1929, article 4 and in 1990)

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 shall issue the Decree dissolving it, and in this case, the electoral bodies shall meet as provided for in article

25, and the new Chamber shall be called to convene within fifteen days after the proclamation of the election. The administrative staff of the Chamber of Deputies shall continue to function until the election of a new Chamber.

If elections are not held within the time limit specified in Article 25 of the Constitution, the Decree dissolving the Chamber shall be considered null and void, and the Chamber of Deputies shall continue to exercise its powers according to the stipulations of the Constitution.

Article 56 [Promulgation Time Limits]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 30 and in 1990)

The President of the Republic shall promulgate 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.

The President shall issue decrees and request 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 shall be considered legally operative and must be promulgated.

Article 57 [Presidential Veto]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 31 and in 1990).

The President of the Republic, after consultation with the Council of Ministers, shall have 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 shall not be 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 shall be considered legally operative and must be promulgated.

Article 58 [Urgent Bills]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 32 and in 1990)

Every Bill that 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 and 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]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 33).

The President of the Republic may adjourn the Chamber for a period not exceeding one month. He may not do so twice in the same session.

Article 60 [Responsibility]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1).

The President of the Republic is not responsible for the acts of his functions except in cases of breach to the Constitution or high treason.

His responsibility for offences of common law is submitted to ordinary laws.

For such offences, as for breach of the Constitution and high treason he may not be impeached except by the Chamber of Deputies deciding by a two-thirds majority of the members of the whole Assembly; he is tried by the Higher Court provided in article 80. Public prosecutorship before the Higher Court is exercised by a magistrate appointed by the highest jurisdiction, with all the chambers meeting.

Article 61 [Suspension after Impeachment]

When indicted, the President of the Republic is suspended of his functions and the Presidency is vacant until the Higher Court adjudicates.

Article 62 [Vacancy]

(As modified in 1990)

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

Article 63 [Remuneration]

The civil list of the President of the Republic is determined by law. During the President's tenure of office it may be neither increased nor reduced.

SECTION 2: THE PRIME MINISTER

Article 64 [Responsibility and Powers]

(As modified in 1990)

The Prime Minister is the head of the Government and its representative. He speaks in its name and shall be considered responsible for executing the general policy that is set by the Council of Ministers. He shall exercise the following powers:

1. He shall head the Council of Ministers and shall be, ex officio, Deputy Head of the Supreme Defense Council.
2. He shall conduct the Parliamentary consultations involved in forming a Cabinet. He shall sign, with the President, the Decree forming the Cabinet. The Cabinet must present its general statement of 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 shall 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 shall present the Government's general policy statements before the Chamber of Deputies.
4. He shall sign, along with the president, all decrees, except the Decree which designates him the head of the Government [i.e. Prime Minister], and the Decree accepting the Cabinet's resignation or considering it resigned.
5. He shall sign the Decree calling for an extraordinary parliamentary session, decrees issuing Laws, and requests for reviewing Laws.
6. He shall call the Council of Ministers into session and set its agenda, and he shall inform the President and the Ministers beforehand of the subjects included on the agenda and of the urgent subjects that will be discussed.
7. He shall supervise the activities of the public administrations and institutions and shall coordinate among the Ministers and provide general guidance to ensure the proper progress of affairs.
8. He shall hold 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]

(As modified in 1990)

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

1. It shall set the general policy of the Government in all fields, prepare Bills and organizational Decrees and make the decisions necessary for implementing them.
2. It shall watch over the execution of Laws and regulations and supervise the activities of all the Government's branches including the civil, military, and security administrations and institutions without exception.
3. It shall appoint Government employees and dismiss them and accept their resignations according to the Law.
4. It shall dissolve 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 shall meet in a locale specifically set aside for it, and the President shall chair its meetings when he attends. The legal quorum for a Council meeting shall be a two-thirds majority of its members. It shall make its decisions by consensus. If that is not possible, it shall make its decisions by vote of the majority of attending members. Basic national issues shall 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 long-term 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]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 34 and in 1990)

Only Lebanese who satisfy the conditions for deputization may assume Ministerial posts. The Ministers shall administer the Government's services and shall 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 shall be collectively responsible before the Chamber for the general policy of the Government and individually responsible for their personal actions.

Article 67 [Ministers in Parliament]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 35).

Ministers may come to the Chamber without let or hindrance and make themselves heard whenever they please. They may seek the assistance of one or several Civil Servants of their department.

Article 68 [Vote of No-Confidence]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 36).

When, in conformity with article 37, the Chamber declares it has no confidence in a Minister, this Minister is required to resign.

Article 69 [Government Resignation]

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 8 May 1929, article 5 and modified in 1990).

1. The Government shall be 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 shall 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 shall automatically be considered in extraordinary session until a new Council has been formed and has gained the Chamber's confidence.

Article 70 [Impeachment]

(As modified in 1990)

The Chamber of Deputies shall have 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 two-thirds majority of the total membership of the Chamber. A special Law shall be issued to determine the conditions of the civil responsibility of the Prime Minister and individual Ministers.

Article 71 [Judicial Impeachment Proceedings]

(As modified in 1990)

The impeached Prime Minister or Minister shall be tried by the Supreme Council.

Article 72 [Consequences of Impeachment]

(As modified in 1990)

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

PART III

CHAPTER 1 ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Article 73 [Election of the President]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 38)

At least one month and at the latest two months before the expiry of the powers of the President of the Republic, the Chamber convenes on the invitation of its Speaker, for the election of a new President. In default of convocation, the meeting shall be held as a matter of right the tenth day before the end of the President's term of office.

Article 74 [Vacancy of Presidency]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927 article 39)

Should the presidency become vacant through death, resignation or any other cause, the Assembly meets immediately and as a matter of right to elect a new President. If at the time the vacancy occurs, the Chamber happens to be dissolved, the electoral bodies are summoned without delay and, soon after the elections are held, the Chamber meets as a matter of right.

Article 75

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 40)

The Chamber meeting to elect the President of the Republic constitutes an electing body and not a deliberating assembly.

It must proceed solely, without delay or debate, with the election of the Head of the State.

CHAPTER 2 AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

Article 76 [Proposal]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 41)

The Constitution may be revised on the initiative of the President of the Republic. In this event, the government shall table before the Assembly a draft constitutional law.

Article 77 [Request]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 42 and in 1990)

The Constitution may also be revised upon the request of the Chamber of Deputies. In this case the following procedures shall 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 two-thirds majority 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 shall then transmit 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 two thirds majority, it must prepare the draft amendment and submit it to the Chamber within four month; 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 three-fourths majority 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.

CHAPTER 3 OPERATION OF THE ASSEMBLY

Article 78 [Priority]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 43).

When the draft constitutional law has been tabled before it, the Chamber must engage itself in no other business but that of revision, until the final vote.

It may not deliberate and vote except those articles and issues which have been set down for the sake of

limitation and clarified in the project duly communicated.

Article 79 [Majority, Promulgation]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 44 and in 1990).

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 shall likewise be by the same majority.

The President of the Republic shall be required to promulgate the law of the Constitutional amendment under the same conditions and in the same form as ordinary laws. He shall have 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 shall be by a two-thirds majority.

PART IV: VARIOUS PROVISIONS

CHAPTER 1 THE SUPREME COURT

Article 80 [Function, Composition, Organizational Law]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 45 and in 1990).

The Supreme Council, whose function is to try Presidents and Ministers, shall consist 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 shall meet under the presidency of the judge of the highest rank. The Decisions of condemnation by the Supreme Council shall be rendered by a majority of ten votes. A special Law shall be issued to determine the procedure to be followed by this Council.

CHAPTER 2 FINANCES

Article 81 [Integral Tax Law]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1).

Taxes are established for public utility, No taxes may be levied in the Lebanese Republic except in conformity with a uniform law applicable on the whole territory without exception.

Article 82 [Rule of Law]

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

Article 83 [Yearly Budget]

Every year, early in the October session, the Government submits to the Chamber of Deputies, for examination and approval, the general budget of State revenue and expenditure for the following year. The budget is voted article by article.

Article 84 [Budget Discussion]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 46).

In the course of the budget debate and the discussion of the Bills providing for the opening of supplementary and emergency credits, the Chamber may not increase the credits proposed in the draft budget or in the abovementioned projects, either through amendment or through independent proposals. But once this debate is over, the Assembly may pass laws providing for new expenditures.

Article 85 [Extraordinary Credit]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 1 and in 1990).

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 of 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 shall be submitted to the Chamber for approval at the first ensuing session.

Article 86 [Provisional Budget]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 48 and in 1990).

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, shall immediately convene the chamber for an extraordinary session which shall last till 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 then make 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 (dara'ib, charges (takalif), duties [rusum), imposts [mucus), and other kinds of revenues (a'idat) shall continue to be collected as before. The budget of the previous year shall be adopted as a basis. To this must be added the permanent credits which have been dropped, and the Government shall fix the expenditures for the month of January on the basis of the "provisional twelvth".

Article 87 [Final Financial Accounts, Auditing Bureau]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 17 October 1927, article 49).

The final account of the finance administration for the closed financial year must be submitted to the Chamber and approved before the promulgation of the budget of the second financial year following that to which the account refers. An Audit Department shall be created by special law.

Article 88 [Public Loan]

No public loan and no commitment likely to burden the Treasury may be transacted except by virtue of a law.

Article 89 [Contracts, Concessions, Resources, Monopolies]

No concession aiming at the exploitation of a natural resource of the country or a public utility service, nor any monopoly may be granted except by virtue of a law for a limited period.

PART V: PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE MANDATORY POWER AND LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Article 90

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943, article 4).

Article 91

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943, article 4).

Article 92

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943, article 4).

Article 93

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 2).

Article 94

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943, article 4).

PART VI: TEMPORARY FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 95 [National Committee]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943, article 5 and in 1990).

The first Chamber of Deputies which is elected on the basis of equality between Muslims and Christians shall take the appropriate measures to realize the abolition of political confessionalism according to a transitional plan. A National Committee shall 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.

The tasks of this Committee shall be 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.

During the transitional phase:

- a. The confessional groups shall 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 shall 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 shall be excepted from this rule, and the posts shall 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.

Article 96

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 2).

Article 97

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 2).

Article 98

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 2).

Article 99

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 2).

Article 100

(Abrogated by the constitutional law of 21 January 1947, article 2).

Article 101 [Greater Lebanon, The Lebanese Republic]

As from 1 September 1926, the State of "Greater Lebanon" shall bear the name of "Lebanese Republic", without change or modification of any other kind.

Article 102 [Abrogation of Old Laws]

(As modified by the constitutional law of 9 November 1943, article 6).

All legislative provisions contrary to the present constitution are abrogated