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THE LEBANESE CONSTITUTION*

PREFACE

The Lebanese Constitution was promulgated in 1926. Since then, fundamental changes in the country and the region prompted changes in the original text. Accordingly some of the original articles were abrogated, abridged or modified. These changes are included in this translation, for they tell the constitutional history of Lebanon from 1926 until September 1990, when the last constitutional amendments resulting from the Taif Agreement of 1989 were adopted. The changes reflect the manner in which political problems in the country have been constitutionally resolved at different stages of its political development.

The translation into English was done by a committee of professors of law and political science at the Lebanese University and the American University of Beirut at the request of the Minister of Justice. The committee members were Dr Salah Dabbagh, Dr George Deeb, Dr Farid el Khazen and Dr Maroun Kisirwani.

In preparing this translation, the committee made use of the English translation of the text of the Constitution prepared by the department of Political Studies and Public Administration at the American University of Beirut in 1960.

The Lebanese Ministry of Justice is pleased to make available to English readers this translation of the Constitution along with all the amendments introduced since 1926.

Bahige Tabbarah
Minister of Justice

PART ONE FUNDAMENTAL PROVISIONS

Preamble

(Introduced by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

- (1) 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 recognised internationally.
- (2) Lebanon is Arab in its identity and in its affiliation. It is a founding and active member of the League of Arab States and abides by its pacts and

* Promulgated 23 May 1926 with its amendments.

covenants. Lebanon is also a founding and active member of the United Nations Organisation 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.

- (3) 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.
- (4) The people are the source of authority and sovereignty; they shall exercise these powers through the constitutional institutions.
- (5) The political system is established on the principle of separation of powers, their balance and co-operation.
- (6) The economic system is free and ensures private initiative and the right of private property.
- (7) 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.
- (8) The abolition of political confessionalism shall be a basic national goal and shall be achieved according to a staged plan.
- (9) Lebanese territory is one for all Lebanese. Every Lebanese shall have the right to live in any part thereof and to enjoy the rule of law wherever he resides. There shall be no segregation of the people on the basis of any type of belonging, and no fragmentation, partition, or settlement of non-Lebanese in Lebanon.
- (10) There shall be no constitutional legitimacy for any authority which contradicts the pact of mutual existence.

Chapter One

The state and its territory

Article 1

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 9 November 1943)

Lebanon is an independent, indivisible, and sovereign state. Its frontiers are those which now bound it:

On the North: From the mouth of Nahr Al Kabir along a line following the course of this river to its point of junction with Wadi Khalid opposite Jisr Al-Qamar.

On the East: The summit line separating the Wadi Khalid and Nahr Al-Asi, passing by the villages of Mu'aysara, Harb'ana, Hayt-Ibish-Faysan to the height of the two villages of Brifa and Matraba. This line follows the northern boundary of the Ba'albak District at the north-eastern 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 Sur and Marji'yun.

On the West: The Mediterranean.

The original Article 1 was:

Greater Lebanon is an independent and indivisible state. Its frontiers are the present ones which are officially recognised by the Mandatory French Government and by the League of Nations.

Article 2

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

Article 3

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

Article 4

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

Article 5

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 7 December 1943)

The Lebanese flag shall be composed of three horizontal stripes, a white stripe between two red ones. The width of the white stripe shall be equal to that of both red stripes. In the centre 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.

The original Article 5 was:

The Lebanese flag is composed of three equal vertical stripes, blue, white and red, with the cedar in the white stripe.

Chapter Two

The Lebanese: their rights and duties

Article 6

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

Article 7

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

Article 8

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 offence may be established or penalty imposed except by law.

Article 9

There shall be absolute freedom of conscience. The state, in rendering homage to the God Almighty shall respect all religions and creeds, and shall guarantee under

its protection the free exercise of all religious rites provided that the public order is not disturbed. It shall also guarantee that the personal status and religious interests of the population, to whatever religious sect they belong, shall be respected.

Article 10

Education shall be free in so far as it is not contrary to public order and morals, and does not affect the dignity of any of the religions or sects. 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

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 9 November 1943)

Arabic shall be the official national language. A law shall determine the cases in which the French language can be used.

The original Article 11 was:

Arabic shall be the official national language in all the departments of the state. French shall also be an official language and a law shall determine the cases in which it can be used.

Article 12

Every Lebanese shall have the right to hold public office; no preference shall be made except on the basis of merit and competence, according to the conditions established by law.

A special statute shall guarantee the rights of civil servants in the departments to which they belong.

Article 13

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 shall be guaranteed within the limits established by law.

Article 14

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

Article 15

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

PART TWO
POWERS**Chapter One****General provisions****Article 16**

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

The legislative power shall be vested in a single body, the Chamber of Deputies.

The original Article 16 was:

The legislative power shall be vested in two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 17

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

Executive power shall be entrusted to the Council of Ministers, and the Council shall exercise it in accordance with conditions stated in this Constitution.

The original Article 17 was:

Executive power shall be entrusted to the President of the Republic who shall exercise it assisted by the ministers in accordance with conditions stated in this Constitution.

Article 18

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927 and the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

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

The original Article 18 was:

The Chamber of Deputies shall be composed of elected members; their number and method of their election shall be determined by the electoral laws in effect.

Article 18 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The President of the Republic and the Chamber of Deputies have the right to propose laws.

Article 19

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927 and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 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 of the Republic, the Speaker of Parliament, the Prime Minister, along with any ten members of Parliament, have the right to refer to this Council matters that relate to the constitutionality of laws. The officially recognised heads of religious communities have the right to refer to this Council

laws relating to personal status, the freedom of belief and religious practice, and the freedom of religious education.

The rules governing the organisation, operation, composition of the Council and referral thereto shall be decided by a special law.

The original Article 19 was:

In principle, no law may be published until it has been adopted by the two Chambers. But the bills proposed by the Government and ratified by the Chamber, or initiated and voted by the Chamber in agreement with the Government, shall not be presented to the Senate except if it so desires. The above mentioned laws shall be made known to the Senate. If the Senate desires to discuss them, it must notify the Government within eight days. If within this period the Senate does not take any action, the bills shall be considered approved.

Article 19 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

No law may be promulgated until it has been adopted by the Chamber.

N.B. Law No. 250 of 14 July 1993 established the Constitutional Council.

Article 20

The judicial power shall be exercised by courts of various degrees and jurisdictions. It shall function within the limits of an order established by the law and offering accordingly the necessary guarantees to the judges and to litigants.

The law shall determine the conditions and limits of the judicial guarantees. The judges shall be independent in the exercise of their functions. The decisions and judgments of all courts shall be rendered and executed in the name of the Lebanese people.

Article 21

Every Lebanese citizen aged 21 or more is an elector provided he fulfils the conditions stated by the electoral law.

Chapter Two

Legislative power

Article 22

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927 and introduced by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

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

The original Article 22 was:

The Senate shall be composed of 16 members, seven of whom shall be appointed by the Prime Minister in consultation with the ministers. The remaining nine shall be elected. The

term of Senators shall be six years, after which they shall be eligible for re-election or re-appointment.

Article 23

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

The original Article 23 was:

It shall be required that a member of the Senate must be a Lebanese citizen of 35 years of age. But it is not required for the validity of his election or appointment as a member of the Senate that he should be residing in Greater Lebanon during the elections. A special law shall be drawn up to deal with the appointment of electoral districts, the requirements, and the methods of election.

Article 24

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and by Order 129 of 18 March 1943,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

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 an electoral law on a non-confessional basis, the distribution of seats shall be according to the following principles:

- (1) Equal representation between Christians and Muslims.
- (2) Proportional representation among the confessional groups within each of the two religious communities.
- (3) Proportional representation among geographic regions.

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

The original Article 24 was:

The Members of the Chamber of Deputies shall be elected in accordance with Order No. 1307 dated 8 March 1922. The Order shall stay in force until the legislative power enact a new electoral law.

Article 24 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

The Chamber of Deputies shall be composed of:

- (1) Elected deputies whose number and method of election is determined by Order No. 1307. This Order shall stay in force until the Chamber enacts a new electoral law.
- (2) Deputies appointed by a Presidential Decree taken in the Council of Ministers according to the regulations prescribed by the current electoral law, in accordance with the representation of confessional groups and electoral districts. The number of appointed deputies shall be equal to half the number of those elected.

Article 24 as amended by the Order No. 129 of 18 March 1943:

The Chamber of Deputies shall consist of elected members whose number and the method of their election by Order No. 2/LR of 3 January 1934 which was amended by Order No. 95/LR of 4 May 1934, and Order No. 279/LR of 3 January 1934, and Order No. 119/LR of 29 July 1937, and Order No. 135/LR of 7 November 1937. These Orders shall stay in force until the Chamber of Deputies enact a new electoral law.

Article 24 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

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.

Article 25

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

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

The original Article 25 was:

Should the Chamber of Deputies be dissolved, the decision of dissolution must call upon the electors to take part in new elections which must take place within a period not exceeding three months.

Chapter Three**General provisions****Article 26**

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 10 October 1927)

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

The original Article 26 was:

The Government and the Parliament shall be located in Beirut.

Article 27

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927, and the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

A member of the Chamber shall represent the whole nation. No restriction or condition may be imposed upon his mandate by his electors.

The original Article 27 was:

A member of the Chamber shall represent the whole nation. No restriction or condition may be imposed upon his mandate by his electors or by the power that appoints him.

Article 27 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

A member of the Chamber shall represent the whole nation. No restriction or condition may be imposed upon his mandate by his electors or by the power that appoints him.

Article 28

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and the Constitutional Law of 8 May 1929)

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

The original Article 28 was:

A deputy or a senator may at the same time occupy a ministerial position. However, the number of ministers taken from the two Chambers must not exceed three.

Article 28 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

A Deputy may also at the same time occupy a ministerial position. However, the number of ministers taken from the Chamber must be neither inferior nor superior to the absolute majority of the members composing the Ministry; by absolute majority is meant the half plus one.

Article 29

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

Cases in which persons are disqualified from becoming deputies shall be determined by law.

The original Article 29 was:

The deputy who is elected or appointed senator and the senator who is elected a deputy must choose between the two offices within eight days of his receiving the decision of his appointment or the declaration of his election. In case of silence or delay, he shall be considered to have chosen the new office.

The other cases of incompatibility and ineligibility for Parliament shall be determined by law.

Article 30

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and by the Order 129 of 18 March 1943,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The deputies alone shall 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.

The original Article 30 was:

Each of the two Chambers shall have exclusive competence to judge the validity of the mandate of its own members. No mandate may be invalidated except by a majority of two-thirds of the votes of the entire Assembly.

Article 30 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

The appointed deputies shall have the same rights, immunities, guarantees, and obligations as the elected deputies. They also must fulfil the same conditions imposed on the elected deputies. The elected deputies alone, however, shall have the competence to judge the validity of their own mandate. No deputy's mandate may be invalidated except by a majority of two-thirds of the votes of the elected members.

Article 30 as amended by the Order No. 129 of 18 March 1943:

The Chamber of Deputies alone shall have competence to judge the validity of its members. No deputy's mandate may be invalidated except by a majority of two-thirds of the votes of the entire Chamber.

Article 30 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947:

The deputies alone shall 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.

N.B. This Article was automatically abrogated by Law No. 250 of 14 July 1993 pertaining to the establishment of the Constitutional Council, and its implementation.

Article 31

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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

The original Article 31 was:

Ordinary and extraordinary sessions shall be the same for both Chambers. All meetings of both or any of them outside the legal sessions shall be unlawful and *ipso facto* null and void.

Article 32

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

The Chamber shall meet each year in two ordinary sessions. The first session shall open on the first Tuesday following 15 March and shall continue its meetings until the end of May. The second session shall begin on the first Tuesday following 15 October; its meetings shall be reserved to the discussion of, and voting on the budget before any other work. This session shall last until the end of the year.

The original Article 32 was:

The two Chambers shall meet each year in two ordinary sessions. The first ordinary session shall open on the first Tuesday following 15 March and shall continue its meetings until the end of May. The second ordinary session shall begin on the first Tuesday following 15 October; its meetings shall be reserved to the discussion of, and voting on the budget before any other work. This session shall last for sixty days.

Article 33

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927 and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The ordinary sessions shall begin and end automatically on the dates fixed in Article 32. The President of the Republic in agreement with the Prime Minister may summon the Chamber to extraordinary sessions by a decree that specifies the dates of the opening and closing of the extraordinary sessions as well as the agenda. The President of the Republic shall be required to convene the Chamber if an absolute majority of the total membership so requests.

The original Article 33 was:

The ordinary sessions shall begin and end automatically on the dates fixed in Article 32. The President of the Republic may summon the Chamber to extraordinary sessions. The dates of the opening and closing of the extraordinary sessions shall be determined by decree. The agenda of the extraordinary session shall be fixed by the decree of convocation. The President of the Republic shall be required to convene the Chambers if the majority of the two Chambers or two-thirds of the deputies so request.

Article 33 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The ordinary sessions shall begin and end automatically on the dates fixed in Article 32. The President of the Republic may summon the Chamber to extraordinary sessions. The dates of the opening and closing of the extraordinary sessions as well as the agenda shall be specified by a decree. The President of the Republic shall be required to convene the Chamber if an absolute majority of the total membership so requests.

Article 34

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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

The original Article 34 was:

Neither of the Chambers shall be validly constituted unless more than half the total membership is present. Decisions shall be taken by a majority vote. Should the votes be equal, the question under consideration shall be rejected.

Article 35

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

The meetings of the Chamber shall be public. However, at the request of the Government or of five deputies, the Chamber may meet in secret sessions. It may then decide whether to resume the discussion of the same question in public.

The original Article 35 was:

The meetings of the Chambers shall be public. However, at the request of the Government or five of its members, each Chamber shall meet in secret session. It may then decide whether to resume the discussion of the same question in public.

Article 36

Votes shall be cast verbally or by the members rising and sitting, except in case of elections when the ballot shall be secret. With respect to laws in general and on questions of confidence, the vote shall always be taken by roll-call and in an audible voice.

Article 37

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927, and the Constitutional Law of 8 May 1929)

Every deputy shall have 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 Bureau of the Chamber and its communication to the ministers concerned.

The original Article 37 was:

Every deputy shall have the absolute right to raise the question of no-confidence during the two ordinary sessions. Discussion of, and voting on such a proposal may not take place until at least five days after its deposit with the Bureau of the Chamber and its communication to the minister concerned. The same procedure shall be followed in the Senate.

Unless one of the ministers requests a vote of confidence, neither Chamber may do so except during ordinary sessions.

Article 37 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

Every deputy shall have the absolute right to raise the question of no-confidence during the two ordinary sessions. Discussion of, and voting on such a proposal may not take place until at least five days after its deposit with the Bureau of the Chamber and its communication to the minister concerned.

Unless one of the ministers requests a vote of confidence the Chamber may not do so except during ordinary sessions.

Article 38

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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

The original Article 38 was:

No bill which has been rejected by the Parliament may be re-introduced during the same session.

Article 39

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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

The original Article 39 was:

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

Article 40

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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

The original Article 40 was:

No member of either Chamber may, during the sessions, be prosecuted or arrested for a criminal offence without the permission of the Chamber to which he belongs, except when caught in the act.

Article 41

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and the Order of 18 March 1943,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

Should a seat in the Chamber become vacant, the election of a successor shall begin within two months. The mandate of the new member shall 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.

The original Article 41 was:

Should a seat in either Chamber become vacant, the election of a successor or his appointment, depending on the case, shall begin within two months. The mandate of the new member shall not exceed that of the old member whose place he is taking. However, should a vacancy occur in a seat in either Chamber during the last six months of its mandate, no successor may be elected.

Article 41 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

Should a seat in the Chamber become vacant, the election of a successor or his appointment, depending on the case, shall begin within two months. The mandate of the new member shall not exceed that of the old member whose place he is taking. However, should a vacancy occur in a seat in the Chamber during the last six months of its mandate, no successor may be elected.

Article 41 as amended by the Order 129 of 18 March 1943:

Should a seat in the Chamber become vacant, the election of a successor shall begin within two months. The mandate of the new member shall not exceed that of the old member whose place he is taking. No vacant seats shall be filled during the last six months of the mandate of the Chamber.

Article 42

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and the Order of 18 March 1943,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

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

The original Article 42 was:

General elections for the renewal of the Chambers and the nominations of the appointed senators shall take place within a sixty-day period preceding the expiration of their mandate.

Article 42 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

General elections for the renewal of the Chamber and the nominations of the appointed deputies shall take place within a sixty-day period preceding the expiration of their mandate.

Article 42 as amended by the Order 129 of 18 March 1943:

General elections for the renewal of the Chamber within a sixty-day period preceding the expiration of their mandate.

Article 43

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

The Chamber shall draw up its own internal rules of procedures.

The original Article 43 was:

Each Chamber shall draw up its own internal rules of procedures.

Article 44

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

Each time a new Chamber is elected, the Chamber shall meet under the presidency of the oldest member, and the two youngest members shall serve as secretaries. 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 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 the President and the Vice President, and the first session it holds, withdraw its confidence from the President or the Vice President 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.

The original Article 44 was:

At the opening of the October session, each of the two Chambers shall meet under the presidency of its oldest member and the secretariat of the two youngest. It shall separately elect by a secret ballot and by an absolute majority of the votes cast its President, Vice President, and two secretaries. Upon a third ballot, a relative majority is sufficient. Should the votes be equal, the oldest candidate shall be considered elected.

Article 44 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

At the opening of the October session, the Chamber shall meet under the presidency of its oldest member and the secretariat of the two youngest. It shall separately elect, by a secret ballot and by an absolute majority of the votes cast, its President, Vice President, and two secretaries. Upon a third ballot a relative majority is sufficient. Should the votes be equal, the oldest candidate shall be considered elected.

Article 44 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

Each time a new Chamber is elected and at the opening of the October session, the Chamber shall meet under the presidency of its oldest member and the youngest members shall serve as secretaries. It shall then elect separately by a secret ballot and by an absolute majority of the votes cast, the President, the Vice President, and the two secretaries of the Chamber. At the third ballot, a relative majority shall be sufficient. Should the votes be equal, the oldest candidate shall be elected.

Article 45

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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

The original Article 45 was:

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

Article 46

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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

The original Article 46 was:

Each of the two Chambers shall have the exclusive right to maintain order at its meetings through its President.

Article 47

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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

The original Article 47 was:

All petitions to either Chamber must be presented in writing only. They may not be presented verbally or at the bar of the Chamber.

Article 48

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

The remuneration of members of the Chamber shall be determined by law.

The original Article 48 was:

The remuneration of members of the two Chambers shall be determined by law.

**Chapter Four
Executive power***The President of the Republic***Article 49**

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and by the Constitutional Law of 8 May 1929,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

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 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 fulfils the conditions of eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies and the conditions which are not incompatible with candidacy to the said Chamber.

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 and their effective cessation of service, or following retirement.

The original Article 49 was:

The President of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot and a two-thirds majority of the total votes of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies joined in a Parliamentary Assembly. After the first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient. He shall be elected for a term of three years. He may not be re-elected for a third term until three years have elapsed since the date of expiration of his last mandate. No one may be elected to the Presidency of the Republic unless he fulfils the conditions of eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 49 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

The President of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot and a two-thirds majority of the total votes of the Chamber of Deputies. After the first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient. He shall be elected for a term of three years. He may not be re-elected for a third term until three years have elapsed since the date of expiration of his last mandate. No one may be elected to the presidency of the Republic unless he fulfils the conditions of eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 49 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 8 May 1929:

The President of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot and a two-thirds majority of the total votes of the Chamber of Deputies. After the first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient. He shall be elected for a term of six years. He may not be re-elected for a term of six years. He may not be re-elected until six years have elapsed since the date of expiration of his last mandate. No one may be elected to the Presidency of the Republic unless he fulfils the conditions of eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies.

Provisional paragraph: The present President of the Republic shall not benefit from the provisions of this Article which made the term of the Presidency six years instead of three years. Accordingly, his term shall end on 26 May 1932.

(This paragraph was abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947.)

Article 49 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 22 May 1947

stipulating the re-election of the President of the Republic (Sheikh Bechara al-Khoury) for a second term:

Contrary to the provisions of Article 49 of the Constitution, and only exceptionally, the present President of the Republic may be re-elected for a second term, and he may not be re-elected for a third term until six years have elapsed since the date of expiration of his second mandate.

Article 50

Upon assuming office, the President of the Republic shall take an oath of fidelity, before the Parliament, to the 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

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927, and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 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.

The original Article 51 was:

The President of the Republic shall promulgate the laws after they have been approved by the two Chambers or by the Chamber of Deputies within the conditions stated in Article 9. He shall assure their execution on the basis of the organisational power granted to him. He may not modify these laws or exempt anyone from complying with their provisions. He shall have the right to pardon. However, amnesties may not be granted except by law.

Article 51 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The President of the Republic shall promulgate the laws after they have been approved by the Chamber. He shall assure their execution on the basis of the organisational power granted to him. He may not modify these laws or exempt anyone from complying with their

provisions. He shall have the right to pardon. However, amnesties may not be granted except by law.

Article 52

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and by the Constitutional Law of 9 November 1943,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The President of the Republic shall negotiate and ratify international treaties in agreement with the Prime Minister. These treaties are not considered ratified except after approval by the Council of Ministers. They shall be made known to the Chamber and Deputies 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 of Deputies.

The original Article 52 was:

In accordance with Article 3 of the Mandate Pact, the President of the Republic shall negotiate and ratify international treaties. He shall make them known to the two Chambers whenever the interest and safety of the state permit. However, treaties involving the finances of the state, commercial treaties, and in general treaties which cannot be denounced every year shall not be considered ratified until they have been approved by the two Chambers.

Article 52 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

In accordance with Article 3 of the Mandate Pact, the President of the Republic shall negotiate and ratify international treaties. He shall make them known to the Chamber whenever the interest and safety of the state permit. However, treaties involving the finances of the state, commercial treaties, and in general treaties which cannot be denounced every year shall not be considered ratified until they have been approved by the Chamber.

Article 52 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The President of the Republic shall negotiate and ratify international treaties. He shall make them known to the Chamber whenever the interest and safety of the state permit. However, treaties involving the finances of the state, commercial treaties, and in general treaties which cannot be denounced every year shall not be considered ratified until after they have been approved by the Chamber.

Article 53

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

- (1) The President of the Republic shall preside over the Council of Ministers when he wishes without participating in voting.
- (2) The President of the Republic shall designate the Prime Minister in consultation with the President of the Chamber of Deputies based on

binding parliamentary consultations, the content of which he shall formally disclose to the latter.

- (3) He 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 or their dismissal.
- (5) He alone shall issue 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 ambassadors and accept the credentials of 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, messages 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 it necessary.

The original Article 53 was:

The President of the Republic shall appoint and dismiss ministers from among whom he shall designate a Prime Minister. He shall appoint a number of deputies as provided in Article 22. He shall appoint officials to state posts except where the law specifies other methods of appointment. He shall preside over official ceremonies.

Article 53 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

The President of the Republic shall appoint and dismiss ministers from among whom he shall designate a Prime Minister. He shall appoint a number of deputies as provided in Article 24. He shall appoint officials to state posts except where the law specifies other methods of appointment. He shall preside over official ceremonies.

Article 53 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The President of the Republic shall appoint and dismiss ministers from among whom he shall designate a Prime Minister. He shall appoint officials to state posts except where the law specifies other methods of appointment. He shall preside over official ceremonies.

Article 54

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The decisions of the President of the Republic must be countersigned by the Prime Minister and the minister or ministers concerned with the exception of 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 54 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The decisions of the President of the Republic must be countersigned by the minister or ministers concerned except when ministers are designated or dismissed.

Article 55

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927

and by the Constitutional Law of 8 May 1929

and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 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 bureau 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.

The original Article 55 was:

The President of the Republic may, with the approval of the Council of Ministers and with that of the Senate taken by a three-quarters majority of its total membership, issue a Decision with the reasons specified, dissolving the Chamber of Deputies, before the legal expiration of its mandate. The reasons enabling the President of the Republic to dissolve the Chamber are:

- 1) The refusal of the Chamber to meet in an ordinary or extraordinary session, although it has been called to convene by the President of the Republic for two consecutive times.
- 2) In case of the rejection by the Chamber of the whole budget in an attempt to paralyse the machinery of the Government.
- 3) In case the Chamber adopts decisions liable to raise the country against the constitution or the mandate.

In that case the electoral bodies shall meet as provided for in Article 25. The new Chamber shall be called to convene within ten days after the proclamation of the results of the election.

The Chamber of Deputies may not be dissolved a second time for the same reasons for which it has been dissolved in the first time.

Article 55 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

The President of the Republic may, with the approval of the Council of Ministers, issue a Decision with the reasons specified, dissolving the Chamber of Deputies before the legal expiration of its mandate. The reasons enabling the President of the Republic to dissolve the Chamber are:

- 1) The refusal of the Chamber to meet in an ordinary or extraordinary sessions, although

it has been called to convene by the President of the Republic for two consecutive times.

- 2) In case of the rejection by the Chamber of the whole budget in an attempt to paralyse the machinery of the government.
- 3) In case the Chamber adopts decisions liable to raise the country against the mandate.

In that case the electoral bodies shall meet as provided for in Article 25. The new Chamber of Deputies may not be dissolved a second time for the same reasons for which it has been dissolved in the first time.

Article 55 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The President of the Republic may, with the approval of the Council of Ministers, issue a Decision with the reasons specified, dissolving the Chamber of Deputies before the legal expiration of its mandate.

In that case the electoral bodies shall meet as provided for in Article 25. The new Chamber shall be called to convene within fifteen days after the proclamation of the results of the election.

Article 56

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927 and the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The President of the Republic shall issue the laws which have been definitely adopted and demand their publication. He must issue laws which were declared urgent by a decision of the Chamber within five days and demand their publication.

He shall issue decrees and demand their publication, he has the right to ask the Council of Ministers to reconsider any decision taken by the Chamber within fifteen days as of its registration with the Presidency. If the Council of Ministers insists on the adopted decision or if the time limit expires without the decree being issued or returned, the decision or decree shall be considered automatically operative and must be published.

The original Article 56 was:

The President of the Republic shall promulgate the laws, which have been definitely adopted, within one month of their transmission to the Government. As for the laws that were declared urgent by a special decision of either Chamber, he must promulgate them within five days.

Article 56 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The President of the Republic shall promulgate the laws, which have been definitely adopted, within one month of their transmission to the Government. As for the laws that were declared urgent by a special decision of the Chamber, he must promulgate them within five days.

Article 57

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927 and the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The President of the Republic, after informing the Council of the Ministers, shall have the right to request the reconsideration of a law once during the period prescribed for its issue. This request may not be refused. When the President exercises this right, he shall not be required to issue the law until it has been re-discussed and approved by an absolute majority of all the members legally composing the Chamber.

If the time limit expires without the law being issued or returned, the law shall be considered automatically operative and must be promulgated.

The original Article 57 was:

The President of the Republic 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 of the Republic exercises this right, he shall not be required to promulgate the law until it has been reconsidered and approved by an absolute majority of the members composing each Chamber.

Article 57 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The President of the Republic 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 the law until it has been reconsidered and approved by an absolute majority of all members legally composing the Chamber.

Article 58

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927 and the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

By means of a decree issued after the approval of the Council of Ministers, the President of the Republic may put into effect any bill which has been previously declared to be urgent by the Government with the approval of the Council of Ministers in the decree of its transmission to the Chamber, and on which the Chamber has not given a decision within forty days following its communication to the Chamber, and including it in the agenda of a general meeting and reading it therein.

The original Article 58 was:

Should the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate disagree upon a bill, the President of the Republic may call them to a General Assembly to discuss the bill. If the bill is approved by an absolute majority of the total membership of the joined bodies, it shall be considered adopted and the President of the Republic shall promulgate it.

Article 58 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

By means of a decree issued with the approval of the Council of Ministers, the President of the Republic may put into effect any bill which has previously been declared to be urgent by the Government in the decree of transmission issued with the approval of the Council of Ministers, and on which the Chamber has not given a decision within forty days following its communication to the Chamber.

Article 59

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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

The original Article 59 was:

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

Article 60

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

While performing his functions, the President of the Republic shall not be held responsible except when he violates the Constitution or in the case of high treason.

However, responsibility with respect to ordinary crimes shall be 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 two-thirds majority decision of the total members of the Chamber of Deputies. He shall be tried by the Supreme Council provided for in Article 80. The function of public prosecutor at the Supreme Council shall be performed by a judge appointed by the Supreme Court formed from all its chambers.

The original Article 60 was:

While performing his functions, the President of the Republic shall not be held responsible except when he violates the Constitution and in the case of high treason.

However, responsibility with respect to ordinary crimes shall be 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 two-thirds majority decision of the total members of the Chamber of Deputies. He may not be tried except by the Supreme Council provided for in Article 80. The functions of public prosecutor at the Supreme Council shall be performed by two judges appointed every year by the Court of Cassation during its General Assembly.

Article 61

Should the President of the Republic be impeached, he shall be suspended from his functions. The Presidency shall remain vacant until the Supreme Council has settled the matter.

Article 62

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

Should there be a vacancy in the Presidency for any reason whatsoever, the

Council of Ministers shall exercise the authorities of the President of the Republic by delegation.

The original Article 62 was:

Should there be a vacancy in the Presidency for any reason whatsoever, the Council of Ministers shall exercise the executive power by delegation.

Article 63

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

The Prime Minister

Article 64

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 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 Defence Council.
- (2) He shall conduct the parliamentary consultations for forming the Government and shall sign with the President of the Republic the decree of its formation. The Government must present its general statement of policy to the Chamber to gain its confidence within thirty days of the date of issuance of the decree in which the Government was formed. The Government shall not exercise its powers before it gains confidence nor after it has resigned or is considered resigned, except in the narrow sense of a caretaker government.
- (3) He shall present the Government's general policy before the Chamber of Deputies.
- (4) He shall sign with the President of the Republic all decrees, except the decree which designates him the Prime Minister and the decree accepting the Government's resignation or considering it as having resigned.
- (5) He shall sign the decree calling for an extraordinary parliamentary session, and decrees issuing laws, and decrees requesting the reconsideration of laws.
- (6) He shall call the Council of Ministers into session and set its agenda. He shall inform the President beforehand of the subjects included on the agenda and of the urgent subjects that will be discussed.
- (7) He shall follow up the activities of administrations and public institutions and shall co-ordinate among the ministers and give general guidance to ensure the proper progress of affairs.
- (8) He shall hold working meetings with the concerned authorities in the Government in the presence of the concerned minister.

The original Article 64 was:

Ministers shall administer the services of the State and shall be entrusted with the application of laws and regulations, each within his department and in so far as he is concerned.

*The Council of Ministers***Article 65**

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The executive power shall be vested in the Council of Ministers. It shall be the authority to which the armed forces are subject. Among the authorities that it shall exercise are the following:

- (1) It shall set the general policy of the Government in all fields, draw up bills and organisational decrees, and take 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 civil, military, and security administration and institutions.
- (3) It shall appoint state employees, dismiss them and accept their resignation 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 sessions and fails to meet throughout two successive extraordinary sessions, each longer than one month, or if the Chamber returns the entire budget plan with the aim of paralysing 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 periodically in a special seat and the President of the Republic shall chair its meeting 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 issues shall require the approval of two-thirds of the members of the Government named in the decree of its formation. The following issues are considered basic:

The amendment of the Constitution, the declaration of a state of emergency and its termination, war and peace, general mobilisation, international agreements, long-term comprehensive development plans, the appointment of employees of grade one and its equivalent, the reconsideration of the administrative divisions, the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies, electoral law, nationality law, personal status laws, and the dismissal of ministers.

The original Article 65 was:

Only Lebanese may be appointed to the Ministry.

Article 66

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927

and the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

Only Lebanese who satisfy the conditions for becoming deputies may assume ministerial posts.

The Ministers shall administer the Government's services and shall be entrusted with applying the laws and regulations, each one pertaining to matters relating to his department.

Ministers shall be collectively responsible before the Chamber for the general policy of the Government and individually responsible for their personal actions.

The original Article 66 was:

Ministers shall be individually responsible to the Chambers for their personal actions. The Government's statement of policy shall be drawn up and presented to the Chamber by the Prime Minister or by a minister acting on his behalf.

Article 66 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Chamber for the general policy of the Government, and individually responsible for their personal actions. The Government's statement of policy shall be drawn up and presented to the Chamber by the Prime Minister or by a minister acting on his behalf.

Article 67

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

Ministers may attend the Chamber if they so desire and they shall 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.

The original Article 67 was:

Ministers may attend the two Chambers if they so desire and they shall 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

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

When the Chamber, in accordance with Article 37, passes a vote of no confidence in a minister, that minister shall be required to resign.

The original Article 68 was:

When either of the Chambers, in accordance with Article 37 passes a vote of no confidence in a minister, that minister shall be required to resign.

Article 69

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
Abrogated by the Constitutional law of 8 May 1929
and issued by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 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 its members specified in the decree of its formation.
 - (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 seek confidence.
- (2) A minister shall be dismissed by a decree signed by the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister after the approval of two-thirds of the Council members.
- (3) When the Council resigns or is considered resigned, the Chamber of Deputies shall automatically be considered convened in extraordinary session until a new Council has been formed and has gained the Chamber's confidence.

The original Article 69 was:

No decision of no confidence in a minister may be adopted unless at least three-quarters of the members of the Chamber are present. But if the minister himself raises the question of confidence, the ordinary quorum shall be sufficient.

Article 69 before its abrogation by the Constitutional Law of 8 May 1929:

No decision of no-confidence in the Ministry or in a minister may be adopted unless at least two-thirds of the total membership of the Chamber are present, but if the Ministry or any of the ministers raises the question of confidence, the regular quorum shall be sufficient.

Article 70

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The Chamber of Deputies shall have the right to impeach the Prime Minister and ministers for high treason or for breach of their duties. The decision to impeach may not be taken except by a two-thirds majority of the total members of the Chamber. A special law shall determine the conditions of the civil liability of the Prime Minister and individual ministers.

The original Article 70 was:

The Chamber of Deputies shall have the right to impeach the ministers for high treason or for breach of their duties. The decision of impeachment may not be taken except by a two-thirds majority of the total members of the Chamber. A special law shall be issued to determine the conditions of the civil liability of ministers.

Article 71

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

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

Article 71 before its amendment by the Constitutional law of 21 September 1990:

The impeached minister shall be tried by the Supreme Council.

Article 72

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The 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.

Article 72 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The 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 THREE

Election of the President of the Republic**Article 73**

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and the Constitutional Law of 22 May 1948,
and the Constitutional Law of 24 April 1976)

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 shall be convened by its President to elect the new President of the Republic. However, should it not be convened for this purpose, the Chamber shall meet automatically on the tenth day preceding the expiration of the President's term of office.

The original Article 73 was:

One month at least and two months at most before the expiration of the term of office of the President of the Republic, the President of the Senate shall convene the two Chambers in a joint Parliamentary Assembly to elect the new President of the Republic. However, should they not be convened for this purpose, the two Chambers shall automatically meet on the tenth day preceding the expiration of the President's term of office.

Article 73 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 22 May 1948 aiming at the re-election of the President of the Republic (Sheikh Bechara al-Khoury) for a second time:

Contrary to the provisions of Article 73 of the Constitution and in an exceptional manner,

the Chamber shall be convened by its President to elect the President of the Republic within one month of the promulgation of this Constitutional Law. His new term of office shall begin as of the expiration of his present term.

Article 73 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 24 April 1976 aiming at advancing the date of the election of the President of the Republic (Elias Sarkis):

One month at least and six months at most before the expiration of the term of office of the President of the Republic, the Chamber shall be convened by its President to elect the new President of the Republic. However, should it not be convened for this purpose, the Chamber shall meet automatically on the tenth day preceding the expiration of the President's term of office.

The application of this amendment shall terminate on 23 September 1976.

Article 74

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

Should the Presidency become vacant through the death or resignation of the President or for any other cause, the Chamber shall meet 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 shall be convened without delay and, as soon as the elections have taken place, the Chamber shall meet by virtue of the law.

The original Article 74 was:

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

Article 75

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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

The original Article 75 was:

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

Amendment of the Constitution

Article 76

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

The Constitution may be revised upon the suggestion of the President of the Republic. In such a case the Government shall submit a bill to the Chamber of Deputies.

The original Article 76 was:

The two Chambers may, directly or upon the suggestion of the President of the Republic, decide upon the revision of the Constitution. A decision to this effect must be separately adopted by each Chamber by a two-thirds absolute majority of the members of that Chamber. This decision shall specify the subjects to be revised and indicate them clearly.

Article 77

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927
and the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The Constitution may also be revised upon the request of the Chamber of Deputies. In such a case the following procedures shall be observed:

During an ordinary session and upon the proposal of at least ten of its members, the Chamber of Deputies may propose by a two-thirds majority of the total members lawfully composing the Chamber, the revision of the Constitution. However, the articles and the issues referred to in the proposal must be clearly defined and stated. The President of the Chamber shall then transmit the recommendation to the Government requesting it to prepare a bill relating thereto. If the Government approves the proposal of the Chamber by a two-thirds majority, it must prepare the draft amendment and submit it to the Chamber within four months. If it does not approve it shall return the decision to the Chamber for reconsideration. If the Chamber insists upon the proposal by a three-fourths majority of the total members lawfully composing the Chamber, the President of the Republic has then either to comply with the Chamber's wish 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 the amendment, the Government must acquiesce and submit the draft amendment within four months.

The original Article 77 was:

When the two Chambers agree on the articles to be revised, they shall meet in a Parliamentary Assembly to discuss these revisions. No decision may be adopted unless it secures thirty-one votes.

Article 77 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The Constitution may also be revised upon the request of the Chamber of Deputies. In such a case the following procedures shall be observed:

During an ordinary session and on the proposal 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 issues referred to in the proposal must be clearly defined and specified. The President of the Chamber shall then notify the proposal to the Government requesting it to prepare a bill relating thereto. If the Government approves the proposal of the Chamber, it must prepare the draft amendment and submit it to the Chamber within four months. If it does not approve, it shall return the decision to the Chamber for reconsideration. If the Chamber insists upon the necessity of the amendment, the Government must acquiesce and submit the draft amendment within a period of four months.

Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies

Article 78

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

When a bill 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 the vote only on the articles and the questions clearly enumerated and defined in the bill submitted to it.

The original Article 78 was:

The President of the Senate shall preside over the Parliamentary Assembly. The bureau of the Senate shall be the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Article 79

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927

and as amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

When a bill 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, after consultation with the Council of Ministers, and within the period fixed for the promulgation, to ask the Chamber to reconsider the bill, in which case the vote shall be by a two-thirds majority.

The original Article 79 was:

The Parliamentary Assembly shall not be validly constituted unless an absolute majority of the membership of each Chamber are present. The resolutions shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of those present except where it has been stated otherwise in Articles 49 and 77.

Article 79 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

When a bill 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 bill, in which case the vote shall be by a two-thirds majority.

PART FOUR
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

The Supreme Council

Article 80

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927
and as amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 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 rank, 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.

The original Article 80 was:

The Supreme Council shall consist of seven Senators elected by the Senate and of eight of the highest Lebanese judges, according to their rank in the judicial hierarchy, or in case of equal rank, 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.

Article 80 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

The Supreme Council 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 rank, 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.

N.B. Law No. 13 of 18 August 1990 established the procedure to be followed by the Supreme Council.

Finances

Article 81

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

Public taxes shall be imposed and no taxes shall be established or collected in the Lebanese Republic except by a comprehensive law which shall apply to the entire Lebanese territory without exception.

The original Article 81 was:

Public taxes shall be imposed for public utility. No taxes shall be levied in Greater Lebanon

except by a comprehensive law which shall apply to the entire Lebanese territory without exception. A special law shall be promulgated unifying financial taxes amongst all the inhabitants of the territory of Greater Lebanon.

Article 82

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

Article 83

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

Article 84

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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.

The original Article 84 was:

All propositions of laws involving a new expenditure, and every expenditure established or added to the budget or taken from the reserves, and any suppression or reduction of credit already earmarked in the budget may not be approved except by an absolute majority of the total membership in each of the two Chambers.

Article 85

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947,
and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

No extraordinary credit may be opened except by a special law. However, 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.

The original Article 85 was:

No extraordinary or supplementary credit may be opened except by a special law. Should the government find it necessary to have extraordinary or supplementary credits during the recess of the two Chambers it must convoke them immediately.

Article 85 as amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927:

No extraordinary credit may be opened except by a special law. However, should circumstances unaccounted for render urgent expenditures necessary, the President of the Republic may, by decree issued with the approval of the Council of Ministers, open extraordinary or supplementary credits or transfer appropriations in the budget. These

credits may not exceed 1500 L.L. per item. These measures shall be submitted to the Chamber for approval at the first ensuing session.

Article 85 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

No extraordinary credit may be opened except by a special law. However, should unforeseen circumstances render urgent expenditures necessary, the President of the Republic may, by decree issued with the approval of the Council of Ministers, open extraordinary or supplementary credits or transfer appropriations in the budget. These credits may not exceed 1500 L.L. per item. These measures shall be submitted to the Chamber for approval at the first ensuing session.

Article 86

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927

and as amended by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 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 co-ordination with the Prime Minister, shall immediately convene the Chamber for an extraordinary session which shall last 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 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. During the said extraordinary session, taxes, charges, duties, imposts, and other kinds of revenues 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 supplementary credits, and from it must be deducted 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 twelfth" of the preceding year.

The original Article 86 was:

If the two Chambers have not approved the budget by the opening of the final year, taxes, charges, duties, imposts, and other kinds of revenues 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 supplementary credits, and from it must be deducted the permanent credits which have been dropped. The government shall draw its expenditures month by month using the "provisional twelfth" as a basis.

Article 86 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 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 shall immediately convene the Chamber for an extraordinary session which shall

last 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 President of the Republic may, with the approval of the Council of Ministers issue a decree giving effect to the above estimates in the form in which they were submitted to the Chamber. However, the President may not exercise this right unless the budget estimates were submitted to the Chamber at least fifteen days before the commencement of its session. During the said extraordinary session, taxes, charges, duties, imposts, and other kinds of revenues 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 supplementary credits, and from it must be deducted 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 twelfth".

Article 87

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 17 October 1927)

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 second year which follows that year. A special law shall be issued for the setting up of an Audit office.

The original Article 87 was:

The final financial accounts of the Administration for each year must be submitted to the two Chambers for approval before the promulgation of the budget of the second year which follows that year. A special law shall be issued for the setting up of an Audit office.

Article 88

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

Article 89

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

PART FIVE PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE MANDATORY POWER AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Article 90

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 9 November 1943)

The original Article 90 was:

The provisions adopted in this Constitution shall be in force in addition to the preservation of the rights and duties of the Mandatory Power in accordance with Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Act of Mandate.

Article 91

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 9 November 1943)

The original Article 91 was:

When circumstances permit, and with the help of the Mandatory Power, the government of Greater Lebanon shall apply for a seat in the League of Nations.

Article 92

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 9 November 1943)

The original Article 92 was:

In this Constitution, the Lebanese Republic affirms its good intentions for the preservation of peace and concord with all states, especially those neighbouring states which are under the French Mandate. With these states Lebanon wishes to strengthen its bonds of friendship in an atmosphere of reciprocal cordiality.

Article 93

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

The original Article 93 was:

According to this Constitution, the Lebanese Republic shall be under obligation to submit for the arbitration of the Mandatory Power in all conflicts that may disturb peace and security. Therefore, the Lebanese Republic shall be willing to conclude agreements with its neighbouring and other states who desire to do so, provided these agreements include a clear statement binding all parties to the obligatory arbitration in all conflicts.

Article 94

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 9 November 1943)

The original Article 94 was:

The Lebanese Government shall, later on, agree with the representative of the Mandatory Power upon the establishment of a Lebanese delegation in Paris and of posts of Lebanese attachés with the French diplomatic delegations and consulates in foreign cities where the number of Lebanese residents make it necessary.

The French government shall do its utmost to strengthen the ties between the Lebanese emigrants and their native country.

PART SIX

FINAL AND TEMPORARY PROVISIONS

Article 95

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 9 November 1943 and by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990)

The Chamber of Deputies that is elected on the basis of equality between Muslims and Christians shall take the appropriate measures to bring about the abolition of political confessionalism according to a transitional plan. A National Committee shall be formed and shall be headed by the President of the Republic; it includes, in addition to the President of the Chamber of Deputies and the Prime Minister, leading political, intellectual, and social figures.

The task 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 to the Council of Ministers, and to follow up the execution of the transitional plan.

During the transitional phase:

- (1) The sectarian groups shall be represented in a just and equitable manner in the formation of the Cabinet.
- (2) 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 sectarian group but rather applying the principles of expertise and competence.

The original Article 95 was:

As a provisional measure and according to Article one of the Charter of the Mandate and for the sake of justice and amity, the sects shall be equitably represented in public employment and in the composition of the Ministry, provided such measures will not harm the general welfare of the state.

Article 95 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990:

As a provisional measure and for the sake of justice and amity, the sects shall be equitably represented in public employment and in the composition of the Ministry, provided such measures will not harm the general welfare of the state.

Article 96

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

The original Article 96 was:

According to Articles 22 and 95, the seats of the Senate shall be distributed among the sects as follows:

5 Maronites; 3 Sunnis; 3 Shi'ia, 3 Orthodox; 1 Catholic; 1 Druze; 1 minorities.

Article 97

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

The original Article 97 was:

The present Representative Assembly, after ratifying this Constitution, shall continue its functions until the expiration of its term. It will be called the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 98

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

The original Article 98 was:

In order to facilitate the immediate implementation and guarantee the full execution of this

Constitution, the French High Commissioner shall be given the right to appoint the first Senate to be composed in accordance with Articles 22 and 96, for a period extending only to the end of the year 1928.

Article 99

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

The original Article 99 was:

When the High Commissioner convokes the newly established Senate for the first time, it must proceed to elect a President, a Vice President and two Secretaries, in accordance with Article 44 of this Constitution. This procedure is to be followed every time the election of the Senate is renewed. The Chamber of Deputies shall also elect, in accordance with Article 44, its body of officials each time it is convoked after the renewal of its election.

The term of the bodies thus elected in both Chambers must extend only to the session of the following October.

Article 100

(Abrogated by the Constitutional Law of 21 January 1947)

The original Article 100 was:

Within one month of the establishment of the Senate, the President of the Senate shall convoke the Parliamentary Assembly to elect the President of the Republic.

Article 101

Beginning 1 September 1926 the State of Greater Lebanon shall be known as The Lebanese Republic without any other change or modification.

Article 102

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of 9 November 1943)

All legislative provisions contrary to the present Constitution shall be abrogated.

The original Article 102 was:

This Constitution shall be entrusted to the French Republic in its capacity of being mandated by the League of Nations. All legislative provisions contrary to the present Constitution shall be abrogated.