Draft Parliamentary Elections Law for the Elections of 2013

Proposed by the Minister of Interior & Municipalities H.E Gen. Marwan Charbel

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CHAPTER I

Voting System, Number of Deputies and Consitutencies

Article 1: Voting System and Number of Deputies

The Parliament shall be composed of 128 deputies elected for four years following a system of proportional representation. Elections shall be organized in one round according to universal suffrage and by secret ballot.

Article 2: Parliamentary Seats and Constituencies

a. The number of parliamentary seats and their allocation to confessions by constituency are determined in the table annexed to the present law (Table I). Standing for elections shall also be determined by constituency. The annexed table is therefore an integral part of the present law.

b. All constituents of a given constituency, regardless of their confession, shall vote for candidates of that same constituency.

CHAPTER II

Eligibility of Voters and Candidates

Article 3: Right to Vote

Every resident or non-resident Lebanese citizen, male or female, who has completed the legal age stipulated in the Constitution, who enjoys his/her civil and political rights, and who is not disenfranchised by falling within one of the disqualification cases stipulated in the present law, may exercise his/her right to vote.

Article 4: Disenfranchisement

The following persons shall be disenfranchised:

1. Persons interdicted from exercising their civil rights

2. Persons who suffer the penalty of perpetual disqualification from public office at any grades or positions

3. Persons who suffer the penalty of temporary disqualification from public office, until the end of the disqualification period

4. Persons convicted of a felony

5. Persons convicted of one of the following major offences: burglary, fraud, breach of trust, misappropriation of funds, bribery, perjury, rape, intimidation, falsification, forgery, false testimony, immoral crimes as stated in the seventh chapter of the Penal Code, and crimes related to the cultivation, production of and/or trade in illicit drugs

6. Persons interdicted by court order until the end of the interdiction period

7. Persons declared fraudulently bankrupt or those sentenced to penalties specified in Articles 689 to 698 of the Penal Code

8. Persons convicted and sentenced to penalties stated in Articles 329 to 334 of the Penal Code.

The aforementioned persons may not vote until after their rehabilitation.

Article 5: Voting and Candidacy Requirements for Naturalized Citizens

Naturalized citizens may only vote or run for elections after the lapse of ten years following the issuance of their naturalization decree.

This provision does not apply to foreign women who obtain Lebanese citizenship by marrying Lebanese citizens.

Article 6: Voting or Running for Office of Military Personnel

1. Non-retired Military personnel serving in the various ranks of the army, State Security, Internal Security Forces, Public Security or Customs Police and other similar positions, Shall not be allowed to vote.

2. Non-retired military personnel serving in the various ranks of the army, Internal Security Forces, General Security, State Security, Customs Police, or Parliament Police and other similar positions, may not run for parliamentary elections; however, their candidacy may be accepted if they are retired, or if their resignation has been approved, six months prior to Election Day.

Article 7: Right to Run for Parliamentary Elections

Only Lebanese citizens who have completed the age of twenty-five years, are registered in the voters list, and enjoy their civil and political rights may run for parliamentary elections.

Article 8: Ineligibility to Run for Elections

1. The persons mentioned below may not run for parliamentary elections while still exercising their functions and during the specific periods following their end of service or resignation acceptance date, according to the following:

(a) Judges of all categories and grades, whether in the judicial, administrative, financial, spiritual, confessional or religious courts, unless they submit their resignation and effectively stop exercising their functions in accordance with the provisions of the judicial Law;

(b) Grades one and two civil servants, unless they submit their resignation and effectively stop exercising their functions at least six months prior to the expiry date of the Parliament mandate;

(c) Full-time chairpersons and members of boards of directors in public institutions and bodies, mixed-economy companies, public capital companies, as well as public utility institutions and their general managers, unless they submit their resignation and effectively stop exercising their functions at least six months prior to the expiry of the Parliament mandate;

(d) Presidents and vice-presidents of municipal councils and mayors of unions of municipalities, unless they resign in accordance with the municipal code and effectively stop exercising their functions six months prior to the expiry of the Parliament mandate.

2. Contrary to any other provision, a resignation based on the aforementioned grounds shall be de facto accepted on the date of its submission and the effective termination of work.

3. Full-time and contractual part-time faculty of the Lebanese University shall be exempt from the provisions of the present article.

CHAPTER III

Parliamentary Election Supervision

Article 9: Supervisory Commission on the Parliamentary Elections

A commission called "Supervisory Commission on the Election Campaign" (hereafter referred to as the "Commission") shall be established. The Commission shall perform its functions independently as stated in the present law and in coordination with the Minister of Interior and Municipalities (hereafter referred to as the "Minister"). The Minister shall follow the work of the Commission, determine its premises and attend its meetings when he deems necessary. He shall chair the meetings without however taking part in the voting process.

Article 10: Composition of the Commission

1. The Commission shall be made up of eleven members as follows:

(a) An acting or retired judicial Judge with a minimum experience of twenty years, selected among three names nominated by the Higher Judicial Council.

(b) An acting or retired administrative Judge with a minimum experience of twenty years, selected among three names nominated by the State Council bureau.

(c) An acting or retired financial Judge with a minimum experience of twenty years, selected among three names nominated by the Court of Audit.

(d) A former President of the Bar Association, selected from three former Bar presidents, or a member of the Council of the Bar selected amongst three members, nominated by the the Council of the Bar of Beirut (as member)

(e) A former president of the Bar Association, selected amongst three former Bar presidents, or a membr of the Council of the Bar selected among three members, nominated by the board of the Council of the Bar in Tripoli (as member)

(f) A representative of the Press Association selected amongst three names nominated by the Press Association board (as member).

(g) A representative of the National Media Council selected amongst three names nominated by the National Media Council (as member).

(h) A representative of the Lebanese Association of Certified Public Accountants (LACPA) selected amongst three names nominated by the Association (as member).

(i) Two senior experts in election-related disciplines (including election-related management, finance or advertising).

(j) A representative of civil society organizations that meet the requirements stipulated in Article 20 of the present law, selected amongst three election experts nominated by these organizations.

2. Gender representation shall be taken into consideration in the selection of candidates for membership of the Commission referred to in the above-listed points.

3. The Commission shall be chaired by the eldest among the administrative and judicial Judges; the second Judge shall de facto become first vice president, and the financial Judge shall be the second vice president.

4. The Commission may, when deemed necessary, solicit the assistance of senior experts in elections and other related disciplines.

5. Acting judges as well as full-time and contractual part-time faculty members of the Lebanese University who become members of the Commission shall be considered as delegates and shall resume their initial functions at the end of their mandate in the Commission. The time they spend working with the Commission shall count as an effective period of service, and they shall preserve their right to promotions, pension or discharge compensations.

Article 11: Commission's Appointment and Mandate

The Commission members shall be appointed by virtue of a decree published by the Council of Ministers upon the request of the Minister.

The term of office of the Commission members shall start one year prior to the end of the Parliament mandate and shall end three months after the parliamentary elections date.

Article 12: Vacancy in the Commission

In the event where one of the positions becomes vacant for whatever reason, the Commission shall announce the vacancy, and its chief officer shall inform the Minister within one week for the latter to take the appropriate measures, and appoint a susbstitute.

The substitute shall be appointed within a maximum period of fifteen days as of the date of notification and in the same manner the original member has been appointed and for the remaining period of the original member's term of office.

Article 13: Oath-taking

Within a maximum period of fifteen days after their appointment, the members of the Commission shall take the following oath in the presence of the President of the Republic before assuming their duties:

"I swear in God, the Almighty, to perform my work in the Supervisory Commission on the Election Campaign with utmost loyalty, impartiality, dedication and independance, and to strictly observe the laws and regulations, especially those governing parliamentary elections in order to guarantee their freedom, integrity, and transparency".

Article 14: Commission By-laws

Within one month after its formation, the Commission shall draw up its bylaws stipulating all the rules and procedures that govern its activities pursuant to the provisions of the present law.

The Minister shall issue a decision ratifying the said bylaws within one week of receiving them.

Article 15: Conflict of Interests

a. A chief officer, vice-chief officer, or member of the Commission may not, at the same time, hold the positions of Prime Minister or Minister, Speaker or Member of Parliament, Board Director or Member in any public institution, president or member of any municipal council or hold any other public function with the exception of, full time and contractual Lebanese University faculty members (in addition to the conflict of interests indicated in Paragraphs 'c' and 'd' of Article 8 and Paragraph 2 of Article 108 of the present law).

b. If any of the persons indicated in Paragraph (a) above is appointed as a Commission member, they shall choose, within a period of two weeks, between the said membership and their functions; otherwise they shall be de facto considered as dismissed from membership in the Commission.

Article 16: Prohibited Activities

The chief officer or any member of the Commission may not, during their term of office, carry out any task or activity conflicting with the impartiality of the Commission and its functions.

During their term of office, the chief officer and members of the Commission shall abstain from giving any lectures and from participating personally in any seminar related to elections unless delegated by the Commission.

The Commission shall terminate the term of office of any member who violates the obligations stipulated in the present law. The termination decision shall be made by a two-third majority of the Commission members and without prejudice to the inter partes principle and the right of defense, in accordance with its bylaws, provided that the decision is approved by the Minister.

Article 17: Criminal Prosecution

During their term of office, none of the members of the Commission shall be, without the Commission's authorization, subject to any criminal prosecution or actions related to their work within the Commission. No decision of provisional detention shall be taken against any of the Commission members for acts not related to their work within the Commission, except for flagrant offences (*flagrante delicto*).

The Minister of Justice shall submit a request for prosecution or take appropriate legal measures, pursuant to a warrant by the Attorney General to the Court of Cassation stating the type, date and place of the offence, including a summary of evidence justifying the prosecution and the necessary criminal procedure.

The request to initiate legal proceeding shall be submitted to the Minister. The Commission shall be called to convene within a period of one week to examine the request and render its decision after hearing the concerned member who shall not take part in the vote. The Commission shall render its decision based on an absolute majority vote within a similar period of time and submit it to the Minister for approval.

Article 18: Remuneration of the Commission

The chief officer and members of the Commission shall receive, during their term of office, a monthly flat remuneration. The remuneration of the Commission's chief officer and members shall be determined by virtue of a decree issued by the Council of Ministers upon the suggestion of the Prime Minister.

Article 19: Functions of the Commission

The Commission shall have the following functions and jurisdiction:

1. Receive applications of audio-visual, print and electronic media wishing to participate in the coverage of the voting and counting procedures, provide them with the necessary accreditation forms, and establish a Code of Conduct for media coverage.

2. Receive applications of private, print and audio-visual advertising agencies wishing to participate in the paid electoral advertising in line with the provisions of this law.

3. Supervise the compliance of electoral lists and all types of media with the rules and regulations governing the electoral competition pursuant to the provisions of this law.

4. Determine the terms and conditions to conduct polls, to publish, broadcast, or distribute the results during the electoral campaign, and monitor the compliance with the pre-election silence.

5. Receive and audit statements of accounts of electoral campaigns within one month of Elections Day.

6. Receive applications of financial commissioners for the electoral campaign of every candidate, and give him/her a receipt thereof.

7. Monitor the electoral expenditure according to the provisions of the present law.

8. Accept and process the applications of local and international election observers, provide them with the necessary authorization, and draft a special code of conduct for their work.

9. Disseminate electoral education, guide voters and promote democratic practices with all available means.

10. Receive and settle complaints related to its mandate; take action as well as the necessary measures in this respect against any proven violation.

11. Formulate proposals, draft resolutions, and draft circulars that fall within its scope of functions.

The Commission shall submit, by the end of its mandate, a report of its work to the Minister who shall, in his turn, submit the report to the presidencies of the Republic, Parliament, and Prime Ministry. The report shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Article 20: Election Monitoring

a. Competent civil society organizations may, under the supervision of the Commission, monitor the different stages of the elections provided that they fulfill all of the following conditions combined:

- The organization should be a non-political Lebanese organization, having duly lodged its articles of incorporation at least one year before the date of filing the application with the Commission.

- It should not be affiliated to any political side or party and its administrative board should not include any candidate running for elections.

- Its statutes should include, at least for the last year, objectives on the promotion of democracy, human rights, elections, transparency, or training related to these issues.

- The number of its members in the lists duly filed with the competent official authority should not be less than 100 members at the date of filing the application.

- Its administrative board should comply with a Code of Ethics established by the Commission.

The Commission shall study the applications for accreditation received and verify, in coordination with the Ministry, their fulfillment of the aforementioned conditions. It is up to the Commsion to approve or reject an application. In case of approval, the Commission shall determine the procedures and mechanisms of following and monitoring the electoral process by virtue of decisions that it issues at least one month prior to Elections Day.

b. The Commission shall study the applications of election-related international organizations wishing to follow the electoral process in accordance with a set of conditions laid down by the Commission in due course.

Article 21: Commission Decisions

Decisions of the Commission shall be made by absolute majority of its legal members. These decisions may be challenged before the State Council within three days of their announcement or publication. The State Council shall render its decision within three days as of the submission of the challenge.

Article 22: Delegation of Jurisdiction

The Commission may decide to delegate part of its jurisdiction to one or more of its members. It may also form committees to carry out specific functions related to its work.

The Commission chief officer may delegate part of his powers to one or more of the Commission members.

Article 23: The Commission's Administrative Body and Budget

The Commission shall be supported by an Administrative Office. It may enter into contracts with experts who it deems qualified to assist it in performing its functions. The Commission may also request to have a number of grade-four, or equivalent, civil servants from public administrations and institutions to be attached to it on a provisional basis in return for a remuneration determined by the Minister.

This procedure shall be carried out by virtue of a decision by the competent minister, at the request of the Minister of Interior and Municipalities, and upon the commission's suggestion. The said decision shall also specify the period of attachement.

Based on a suggestion made by the Minister, a special amount shall be allocated from the budget of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities to the Commission.

The administrative body shall operate until the end of the Commission's mandate.

CHAPTER IV

Preliminary Work & Voter Rolls

Article 24: Enrollment on Voter Rolls

Enrollement on voter rolls shall be mandatory for resident and non-resident voters. A voter may not be registered on more than one roll subject to the application of the provisions of Article 461 of the Penal Code.

Article 25: Duration and Auditing of Voter Rolls

Voter rolls shall be permanent; however, they shall be audited periodically in accordance with the provisions of the present law.

Article 26: Voters & Voter Rolls

The Directorate General of Personal Status shall establish automated voter rolls for every constituency, including the names of voters based on the personal status records. The rolls shall include the names of all voters who, on the date of the voter rolls re-audit, i.e. November 20th of every year, would have been registered in a given constituency for at least one year.

Article 27: Voter Rolls Entries

Voter rolls must include: the voter's full name, mother's name, registry number as it appears in the personal status records, sex, date of birth, and confession. A box shall be reserved on each roll for any modifications occurring to the records in terms of rectification or replacement, along with the legal evidence thereof.

Voters who are 100 years old or more shall automatically be crossed off the voter rolls.

Voters whose year of birth is not mentioned shall as well be automatically crossed off the voter rolls.

However, this crossing-off shall not preclude the concerned person from filing a request of "re-enrollment" with the Ministry one month after the publication of the voter rolls.

Article 28: Obligations of Civil Registry Offices

Heads of local civil registry departments and offices shall submit annually to the Directorate-General of Personal Status, between November 20th and December 20th, primary voter rolls including: the names of registered persons who are legally eligible for enrollment on the voters rolls, the names of those who are expected to become eligible by the date voter rolls will be freezed; in addition to omitted names, or names of those deceased or crossed off the personal status records for any reason whatsoever.

Article 29: Obligations of the Police Record Department

The Police Record department in each *Muhafazat* shall annually submit to the Directorate-General of Personal Status, between November 20th and December 20th, the names of persons who are convicted of crimes that disenfranchise them according to the provisions of Article 4 of the present law.

Article 30: Obligations of Judicial Courts

Judicial Courts shall annually submit to the Directorate-General of Personal Status, between November 20th and December 20th, a list of its final verdicts on crimes set forth in Article 4 of the present Law.

Article 31: Auditing of Voter Rolls

The Directorate-General of Personal Status shall rectify, after auditing them, the voter rolls according to the documents it receives from aforementioned authorities.

Each roll shall include a special field to indicate the reasons both of rectification and of transfer of a person's record from one roll to another. In the event of a transfer, it is mandatory to mention the place and number of the register and the date of the transfer.

In application of the present law, voluntary transfer of the place of registration occurring within the year that precedes the re-auditing of the voter rolls, shall not be taken into consideration. However, transfer due to marriage shall not be considered voluntary. The wife shall have the right to vote if the place of her record is transferred within the aforementioned year.

Article 32: Publication and Circulation of Voter Rolls

Before February 1st of every year, the Directorate-General of Personal Status shall send copies of the primary voter rolls to municipalities, *Mukhtars*, *Muhafazats* and *Qadas* centers to have them published and circulated in order to facilitate their final rectification. Recipients of these rolls should receive them before February 1st at the latest, in order for them to call the voters to verify their records, and to proceed then with their rectification based on the available documented information.

Article 33: Announcing Voter Rolls in the Media

Between February 1st and March 10th, the Ministry shall announce in the print and audio-visual media the availability of voter rolls, and shall call upon voters to verify them. For the same purpose, the Ministry shall, within the same deadline, publish the primary voter rolls on its Website and issue CDs containing these rolls. Any person may buy a copy of voter rolls CDs for an amount that shall be determined by the Ministry.

Article 34: Rectification of Voter Rolls

1. Any concerned person may, as of February 1st of every year, submit to the competent registration committee mentioned in the present law, a request for the rectification of any inaccuracy related to his/her record on the voter rolls such as omissions or name misspelling due to negligence, material error, or any other reason.

The rectification request shall be submitted along with supporting documents to the registration committee by March 1st of the same year. The said request shall be free of charge.

Requests that call for adding names which have been omitted due to negligence should enclose a police record that is less than one month old.

2. Every voter enrolled on a given voter roll shall have the right to request of the competent registration committee to cross off or add the name of any person who has been illegally registered on or omitted from the same roll.

The competent *Muhafez*, *Qaimaqam* and *Mukhtar* may also exercise this right within the one-month period that ends on March 10th of every year.

3. Non-resident voters may also make the same requests mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the present article to the concerned Lebanese embassies and consulates abroad who shall immediately send such requests to the Directorate General of Personal Status via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants.

The Directorate General of Personal Status shall, in its turn, forward the requests to the competent registration committes.

Article 35: Freezing of Voter Rolls

In the preparation of the final voter rolls, the Directorate General of Personal Status shall observe record rectification and transfer procedures provided for in the present law.

Voter rolls shall be freezed on March 30th of each year and remain effective until March 30th of the following year.

Upon receiving the final voter rolls from the Directorate General of Personal Status, the Minister of Interior and Municipalities shall send a copy thereof to the Directorate General of Political Affairs and Refugees to be adopted in any elections scheduled between March 30th of the current year and March 30th of the subsequent year.

Article 36: Primary Registration Committees

In each constituency, one or more primary registration committees shall be established.

Each Registration Committee shall be made up of an acting judicial or administrative Judge (as president), one of the mayors or members of the municipal councils in the constituency (as member) and one civil servant from the Directorate General of Personal Status (as member).

One or more civil servants from the Directorate General of Personal Status shall be attached to each Registration Committee by virtue of a decision of the Minister of Interior and Municipalities.

Article 37: Functions of the Primary Registration Committee

The Primary Registration Committees shall:

1. Study and decide on the requests for voter rolls rectification in accordance with the provisions of the present law, within three working days as of the request submission date, and notify the concerned persons and the Directorate General of Personal Status of its decision. The Primary Registration Committee decisions may be appealed to the competent Higher Registration Committee mentioned later in this law within a period of three days after notification thereof by means of a free of charge petition. The appellant shall as well be exempt from hiring an attorney.

2. Receive ballot boxes upon the closing of polling stations, verify the records and other documents, and take the appropriate decisions in this regard.

3. Count votes, collate and tabulate results of each list and candidate and dispatch them to the competent Higher Registration Committee.

Article 38: Higher Registration Committees

Each electoral district shall have one or more Higher Registration Committee who shall serve for the duration of one electoral round.

A Higher Registration Committee shall be composed of an adviser to the Court of Cassation, a presiding Judge in a chamber of appeals or a chamber's president in the State Council (as president), an acting judicial or administrative Judge (as member) and an Inspector from the Central Inspection Board (as member), in addition to the Registrar of the Personal Status Department, the chairperson of a given department or an employee from the Directorate General of Personal Status (as rapporteur).

Article 39: Functions of the Higher Registration Committee

The Higher Registration Committee shall be entrusted with the following tasks:

1. Study and decide on the appeals lodged against the decisions of the registration committees before March 6 of every year inclusive.

2. Receive and verify the record of results and attached tables as submitted by all Primary Registration Committees working within its scope of authority, count the votes, tabulate the results of every list and every candidate within these lists, and immediately submit them to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities via the governor or his delegate.

Article 40: Terms of Office of Registration Committees

Presidents, members, and rapporteurs of each Primary and Higher Registration committee shall be appointed for one electoral round before February 1st of the year in which general parliamentary elections are scheduled, by virtue of decrees issued upon the suggestions of the Ministers of Justice and of Interior and Municipalities.

Article 41: Date of Elections

Parliamentary elections shall be held on one day for all constituencies during the sixty-day period preceding the expiry of the Parliament mandate. However, in the event of the dissolution of Parliament, elections shall be held within three months following the publication of the dissolution decree.

Article 42: Calling the Electorate

Electorate shall be called by virtue of a decree published in the Official Gazette at least ninety days before Election Day.

Article 43: By-Elections

1. In the event of vacancy of a parliament seat, for such reasons as death, resignation, deputyship annulment, or any other reason, elections shall be held to fill the vacant seat within two months of the vacancy date or the date of publication in the Official Gazette of the Constitutional Council decision annulling the deputyship of a Member of Parliament.

If the vacancy occurs within the last six months of the Parliament's mandate, the vacant seat shall not be filled.

2. Voters shall be called to vote by virtue of a decree published in the Official Gazette thirty days at least before the by-elections day.

3. Application of candidates for parliamentary by-elections shall be closed at least fifteen days prior to the by-elections date. Candidates may withdraw 10 days at least before polling day.

4. In by-elections held to fill a vacancy at the level of the constituency to which the vacant seat belongs, the one round majority system shall be adopted. Polling centers within the constituency in question shall be designated by virtue of a decision issued by the Minister of Interior and Municipalites.

5. Resident and non-resident voters may vote in the by-elections provided that they exercise their right to vote on the Lebanese territory.

6. The term of office of a candidate who won by-elections may not exceed that of the replaced deputy.

7. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 2 of article 6 and the provisions of article 8 of the present law, the persons mentioned in the said articles shall be entitled to run for elections if they

resign and effectively discontinue the practice of their functions within a period of 15 days of the date of issue of the decree calling on the voters to participate in the by-elections.

8. Exceptionally, the provisions of Parliamentary Elections law number 25 dated October 8, 2008 shall apply to the provisions of the present article.

Article 44: Standing for Elections in a constituency

Any person who fulfills the requirements of parliament deputyship may stand for elections in any *Qada* and constituency. However, a candidate may not run in more than one constituency at the same time.

Article 45: Candidacy Applications

Each candidate standing for parliamentary elections shall submit the following:

1. A notarized application signed by the candidate him/herself, to be submitted to the Directorate General of Political Affairs and Refugees at the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities. The application is a form prepared by the Ministry of Interior that includes the following data:

- The full name of the candidate

- The seat, Qada, and constituency for which the candidate wishes to run.

2. The following documents shall be attached to the application:

- An individual civil status record less than one month old

- A police record less than one month old

- Two passport photos certified by the Mukhtar

- A financial receipt from the Ministry of Finance proving that the candidate has paid the candidacy fees of eight million Lebanese pounds.

- A bank certificate confirming that he/she has opened an electoral campaign account as stipulated in the present law, and stating the name of the financial commissioner authorized to perform transactions with the account.

- A copy of the final voter rolls proving the voter enrollment. The copy shall be signed by the Personal Status employee acting as rapporteur with the Primary Registration Committee of the relevant constituency.

- A notarized statement by the candidate including the names of the financial commissioner and the account auditor; a certified copy of the statement should be deposited at the Commission.

- A notarized statement by the candidate authorizing the Commission to access and check the candidate's bank accounts.

Article 46: Candidacy Filing Closure and Application Processing

1. Candidacy filing shall be closed sixty days before Elections Day.

2. Candidates should submit their candidacy applications along with all required documents to the Ministry no later than the deadline of candidacy filing.

3. The Ministry shall give the applicant a provisional receipt acknowledging receipt of his application and required documents.

4. The Ministry shall decide on the candidacy applications within five days after receiving them. If the application is approved, the Ministry shall give the applicant a final receipt proving his/her registration as candidate. If the application is rejected, the Ministry shall inform the applicant about the reasons thereof.

5. If more than five days elapse from the deposit of the application without the Ministry notifying the candidate about its decision (approval or rejection), the application shall be deemed approved and the Ministry shall give the applicant the final receipt proving his/her registration.

6. If the Ministry rejects a candidate application, the applicant may, within the three days following his notification of the explicit rejection, file a free of charge petition to the State Council who shall then deliberate and decide on the petition within three days as of receipt. The decision of the State Council rendered in this regard shall be final and irrevocable.

Article 47: Extension of Candidacy Application Period

1. If the deadline for candidacy application expires and no applicant has registered to stand for a particular seat, the period shall be automatically extended for seven days. Applications received during the extension period shall be processed and approved or rejected by the Ministry within 24 hours as of receipt. If the application is approved, the Ministry shall give the applicant a final receipt proving his/her candidacy registration. In case the application is rejected, the Ministry shall inform the applicant about the reasons thereof.

2. If the above mentioned 24-hours deadline elapses after the deposit of an application without the Ministry notifying the candidate about its decision on his/her application, the latter shall be deemed approved, and the Ministry shall issue to the candidate the final receipt proving his/her registration.

3. If the Ministry rejects a candidate's application, the applicant may, within the 48-hour period following his due notification of the explicit rejection, file a free of charge petition to the State Council who shall then deliberate and decide on the petition within 48 hours as of receipt. The decision of the State Council rendered in this regard shall be final and irrevocable.

Article 48: Winning by Acclamation

1. If the deadline for candidacy application expires and only one applicant has registered to stand for a given seat, this candidate shall win by acclamation. In this case, the lists shall be considered

complete with the number of seats left in the given constituency.

2. Lists shall be registered forty days at least prior to Election Date. If the deadline for list registration expires and only one complete list has registered to stand for the seats of a given constituency, this list shall win by acclamation.

3. In both cases, the Ministry shall immediately send a letter to the Speaker of Parliament and the President of the Constitutional Council informing them thereof.

Article 49: Null Applications

Candidacy applications that do not comply with the provisions of the previous articles shall be considered null. The same applies to several applications filed at the same date by the same applicant in more than one constituency. However, if these applications have been submitted at different dates, only the most recent one shall be taken into consideration and all previous applications shall be deemed null.

Article 50: Candidate Withdrawal

A candidate may not withdraw unless by virtue of a notarized legal authorization submitted to the Ministry forty five days at least before Election Day. If the candidate declares his/her withdrawal after the expiry of the aforementioned deadline, it shall not be taken into consideration in the electoral process.

If the candidate withdrawal prevents the election of the number of deputies required in a given constituency, new candidates may be accepted in that constituency provided that they submit their applications within a period of seven days as of the date of that withdrawal. Candidate applications and their administrative and judicial processing shall be subject to the deadlines established in Article 47 herein.

Article 51: Announcing the Names of Accepted Candidates

After closing candidacy filing, the Ministry announces the names of accepted candidates, immediately informs the *Muhafezs* or *Qaimaqams* thereof, and publishes them where appropriate.

Article 52: Electoral Lists

Candidates shall form complete lists no farthest than forty days to elections day. The lists shall comply with the seat allocation to *Qadas* or constituencies, as well as with the confessional and religious distribution of these seats.

The Ministry shall keep the order of candidate names on the lists as established by the candidates themselves. The withdrawal of a candidate after the registration of his/her list shall not be taken into consideration.

The Ministry shall follow the order of lists on the ballot paper based on their date of registration.

Article 53: Gender Quotas

Every list shall include among its members a percentage of no less than 30% for either gender. Fractions equal to or larger than one half shall be rounded up. Zebra lists- or lists that equally alternate between the names of male and female candidates shall be adopted.

Article 54: Registration of Lists

Candidates shall group themselves in lists and delegate one candidate on their list by means of a notarized power of attorney signed by them all, to register the list at the Ministry within a period not exceeding 40 days prior to Election Day. No list registration or amendment thereon shall be accepted after this deadline. When registering the list, the delegate shall submit the following:

The full names of all candidates on that list

The final receipts corroborating the approval of candidates' applications

The order of candidates names on the list

The constituency in which the list is standing for elections

A copy of the list logo, if any

The color of the list

If the application meets all legal requirements, the Ministry shall issue, within 24 hours, a receipt proving the registration of the list. However, if the application does not fulfil all or part of the requirements, the Ministry shall grant the members of that list 24 hours to rectify their application under penalty of rejection. The notice shall start as of the date of notifying the delegate of the above-mentioned list.

The Ministry's decision rejecting the application of a list may be challenged before the State Council within 24 hours as of notification of the above mentioned list delegate. The State Council shall then decide on the challenge within a similar period. The decision of the State Council rendered in this regard shall be final and irrevocable.

Article 55: Announcing Accepted Lists

Upon expiry of the deadline for list registration mentioned in Article 54 above, the Ministry shall announce the names of the accepted lists and the names their members, notify *Muhafezs* and *Qaimaqams* thereof, and publish them where required.

CHAPTER V

Electoral Funding and Expenditure

Article 56: Electoral Contribution

Any grant, donation, cash or in-kind gift, loan, advance, or financial payment or anything of material value offered to the list or candidate, shall, under the present law, be considered as contribution.

Article 57: Electoral Expenditure

Shall be considered electoral expenditure under the present law the total expenses paid by the list or the candidate and payments made in their favor or interest, or with their explicit or implied consent, by natural persons, parties, associations or supporting organizations, provided that these expenses are directly related to the electoral campaign and voting process and to the establishement of legitimate communication between the list or candidate and the voter. Electoral expenditure includes among others:

The rent of electoral offices and all related expenses, the organization of rallies, festivals, public meetings and election-related banquets, expenses related to the equipment used during the campaign, the preparation, publication and distribution of media and promotional material such as books, booklets, bulletins, pamphlets, letters sent as print-outs or by regular or electronic mail, the production, distribution and posting of pictures, posters, banners, and billboards, the remunerations and allowances paid in cash or in kind to delegates and other persons involved in the electoral campaign, the transportation fees of the campaign team and voters, travel fees of voters abroad, costs of electioneering, opinion polls and other costs paid to any radio or TV station, newspaper, magazine or any other means of publication.

Article 58: Duration of the Electoral Campaign

The electoral campaign period starts on the day of opening candidacy filing and ends with the beginning of the pre-election silence, i.e. 24 hours before ballot boxes open.

Article 59: Electoral Campaign Account and Appointment of Financial Commissioner and Account Auditor

1. At the beginning of the electoral campaign period or upon submitting the application at the latest, each candidate shall open an “Electoral Campaign Account” with an operating bank in Lebanon. They shall appoint a financial representative who would be exclusively in charge with managing the said account, as well as an auditor registered with the Lebanese Association of Certified Public Accountants who would audit the campaign accounts in accordance with the prevailing rules. The auditor may be in charge of auditing the accounts of more than one candidate.

2. The Electoral Campaign Account shall not be covered by banking secrecy. The candidate shall be automatically considered as waiving such right as soon as he/she opens such account. The same shall also apply to all personal accounts of the candidate.

The candidate shall accept the publication of the electoral campaign's statement of account according to a detailed sample provided by the Commission on its website or through any other means that it deems appropriate.

3. All electoral contributions and expenditure shall be made exclusively through this account throughout the electoral campaign period.

4. The financial commissioner may not stand for elections, and shall not be entitled to handle more than one electoral campaign account.

5. The financial commissioner shall be exclusively entitled to receive funds and contributions to finance the electoral campaign and to pay electoral expenses. Moreover, he/she shall keep a record, bearing the seal of the Commission, where he/she shall record all financial transactions pertaining to the electoral campaign as well as all contracts and settled payments and expenses of all types.

6. The financial commissioner shall reimburse the candidate for expenses incurred by him prior to the appointment of the commissioner. He shall record this amount under the electoral expenses in the record kept by him

7. No amount exceeding five hundred thousand Lebanese pounds shall be received or paid unless by check or any other non-cash payment means.

8. The functions of the financial commissioner expire automatically two months after submitting the campaign account to the Commission.

9. Every candidate shall, upon submitting his/her application, declare the names of the financial commissioner and the auditor mentioned above by virtue of a notarized letter submitted to the Commission.

The following shall be annexed to the letter:

- The explicit approval of both the financial commissioner and the auditor of their respective appointment.

- A bank certificate confirming the opening of an electoral campaign account including the name of the bank, and when needed, of the branch, the name of the account owner, the account number, as well as the name of the financial commissioner in charge of managing the account.

Every candidate shall duly inform the Commission of any change that may occur with regard to the identity of the financial commissioner and the auditor within a period of two days after such change occurs.

10. The candidate may terminate the services of a financial commissioner and appoint another one provided that he/she informs the Commission thereof within two days after the appointment of the substitute. In this case, the bank account of the electoral campaign shall be frozen upon notification of the bank by the account holder and until the substitute is appointed.

The financial Commissioner, whose services were terminated, shall submit a management of statement of account to the party that appointed him/her.

Article 60: Electoral Expenditure and Funding

1. The candidate may use his/her personal money to fund his/her electoral campaign. The money of the candidate's spouse, ascendants, or descendents shall also be regarded as personal funds.

2. All personal funds allocated to finance the candidate's electoral campaign, as defined in paragraph 1 above, shall be transferred to the bank account mentioned in article 59 herein. The financial commissioner of each candidate shall be notified thereof.

3. All expenses contracted or paid by the candidate from his/her own funds to finance his/her electoral campaign shall be recorded in the special record kept to this end by the financial commissioner and shall be subject to a binding expenditure ceiling in accordance with article 61 herein.

4. It is strictly forbidden for any candidate to accept or receive direct or indirect contributions coming from a foreign state, or any foreign legal or natural person.

5. The contribution granted by a single legal or natural Lebanese person for the purpose of financing the electoral campaign of a given candidate shall not exceed 50% of the electoral expenditure ceiling as determined in Article 61 herein; it shall always be made via a bank transaction (transfer, check, credit card etc.) subject to Article 59 of the present law.

6. The total amount of all contributions received by any candidate shall not exceed the ceiling of electoral expenditure as defined in Article 61 of the present law. No contributions shall be made through a mediator.

7. Political parties and groups may fund the electoral campaigns of their candidates provided that the sources of funding and expenditure are subject to the rules and limitations established in the present law, and provided that they explicitly mention the beneficiary in order to deduct such funds from the electoral account of the concerned candidate or list.

8. Candidates, their financial commissioners, or any civil servant working in public administrations, institutions and municipalities shall be prohibited from using public resources- whether in cash or in kind- for electoral purposes.

Article 61: Expenditure Ceiling

1. The maximum limit of funds that each candidate may spend on his/her electoral campaign shall be determined as follows:

A fixed flat amount equivalent to one hundred million Lebanese pounds and a variable amount depending on the number of voters within the constituency of the concerned candidate, and equivalent to three thousand Lebanese pounds per enrolled voter.

This ceiling may be reconsidered at the beginning of the campaign period in light of the economic conditions and by virtue of a decree issued by the Council of Ministers at the suggestion of the Minister and upon consultation with the Commission.

Article 62: Prohibitions

1. Obligations and expenditure including provision of services and payment of amounts of money to voters, inter alia: in kind and cash donations to individuals and to charitable, social, cultural, family, religious or any other organization, sports clubs and all public and non-public institutions operating within the candidate's constituency, shall be prohibited during the electoral campaing.

2. The above-mentioned donations shall not be prohibited if they are granted by candidates or institutions owned or run by candidates who have been doing so on a regular basis for no less than three years prior to the commencement of the electoral campaign. In such cases, donations and support granted during the electoral campaign shall be subject to the electoral spending ceiling set forth in article 61 above.

Article 63: Obligations of the Financial Commissioner

1. The financial commissioner of every candidate shall submit periodically to the Commission, within one week after the end of every month of the electoral campaign period, a monthly financial statement detailing the financial receipts, payments and obligations for the previous month, along with a statement of the electoral campaign account issued by the accredited bank. He/she shall also submit, at the end of their term of office, a financial statement and a management report to the candidate.

2. In case the financial commissioner discovers that the candidate spending is exceeding the ceiling, or in case he/she becomes aware of, or has any doubts about any financial leaks or electoral expenses that are not contracted or incurred through him/her, he/she shall immediately submit a report in this respect to the Commission.

3. If the Commission notices clear breaches to the provisions of the present chapter, it shall immediately take the necessary measures to stop them and refer the case, if need be, to the competent judicial authority.

Article 64: Comprehensive Statement of Account

1. After the elections, each candidate shall draw up a comprehensive financial statement certified by the accredited auditor and detailing the total received amounts and in-kind contributions, stating their sources and dates, in addition to the total expenses paid or pending, stating their nature and dates, since the beginning of the electoral campaign.

2. This statement should be submitted to the Commission within thirty days of the official announcement of the elections results, along with the supporting documents related to all account items, such as receipts and payment vouchers, in addition to an exhaustive bank statement of the electoral account showing all transactions made in this account since its opening until the submission of the said statement.

3. Shall be attached to the statement of account a notarized declaration signed by the candidate, whereby he declares, under his/her full responsibility, that the attached statement of account

is correct, exhaustive and includes all received contributions and paid or to pending expenses pertaining to the electoral campaign. He/she shall also explicitly declare that there are no other amounts or in-kind expenses paid in cash or through other bank accounts or third parties.

4. If the statement of account does not contain any electoral receipts or expenses, the financial commissioner shall present a testimony certified by the auditor confirming the absence of such revenues or expenses.

5. The Commission shall study and audit the statement of account, and investigate its accuracy or the accuracy of some of its elements. It may, to this end, resort to experts and other members of the judiciary police after the approval of the competent public prosecution.

6. The Commission shall evaluate the reliability of the aforementioned statement of account within a period of thirty days from its submission. It shall decide either to approve it, or reject it, in which case the principle of inter partes proceedings and the right of defense should be respected. The Commission may also request its amendment or rectification, fully or partially. The Commission shall submit its justified decision to the Constitutional Council along with the statement of account.

If within one month of submitting the statement of account the Commission does not issue a decision thereon, the statement shall be automatically deemed approved.

7. The Commission shall reject the statement of account if it concludes that it is wrongful or that, even after its rectification or amendment, it exceeds the expenditure ceiling. In that case, the Commission shall inform the presidencies of both the Parliament and the Constitutional Council thereof.

8. If the Commission concludes that the value of any of the electoral expenses declared in the statement of account and annexes thereto, is inferior to the value usually incurred for such expenses, it shall estimate, without prejudice to the principle of inter partes proceedings and the right of defense, the difference by comparing the amount with different sources, and automatically add it to the expenses. The difference shall be subject to the expenditure ceiling set forth in the present law.

9. The provisions of Paragraph 8 above shall apply to all direct and indirect benefits as well as to all in kind donations and services offered to the candidate.

10. The decisions of the Commission regarding the exhaustive statement of account may not be challenged before the State Council.

Article 65: Legal Prosecution and Complaints

1. The Commission shall refer any violation to the provisions of this chapter to the competent public prosecution if the said violation falls under the category of criminal offenses.

2. Whoever intentionally violates any of the provisions of Paragraph 1 shall be sentenced to up to 6 months imprisonment and to a fine ranging between 50 million LBP and 100 million LBP, or shall be subject to either one of the sentences, without prejudice to penalties of criminal offenses set forth in the Penal Code and other relevant criminal laws.

3. The disbursement of the prohibited electoral expenditure indicated in Article 62 of the present law shall be considered as bribery crime set forth in the Penal Code.

4. The sanctions indicated in paragraph two above shall apply to the moral person as per article 210 of the Penal Code.

5. The statute of limitations shall apply to both public and civil proceedings related to the crimes provided for in Paragraph 2 above one month after the elections results are announced.

Article 66: Sanctions and Penalties relevant to the Statement of Account

1. The Constitutional Council shall annul the election of candidates who do not submit the statement of account within the conditions and deadline indicated in Article 64 herein or who exceed the spending ceiling set forth in Article 61 of the present law.

The Constitutional Council shall, upon receiving the file from the Commission, declare that the election of the candidate in question is de facto nullified if he/she had won the elections.

2. If the candidate refrains from submitting the exhaustive statement of account indicated in Article 64 of the present law, both his/her financial commissioner and account auditor shall prepare and submit, within a period of ten days, the said statement on his behalf and at his/her responsibility under penalty of a one-million Lebanese pounds fine for every day of delay.

The said fine shall be imposed by the Ministry at the request of the Commission.

Article 67: Fines

In addition to the aforementioned sanctions, the Ministry shall, in light of the Commission report, impose on every candidate who did not win the elections and failed to submit the statement of account, or if it has been proven that he/she has exceeded the spending ceiling- a fine of no less than three times the value of the excess amount to be paid to the Treasury.

CHAPTER VI

Electoral Media and Advertising

Article 68: Terminology

For the purpose of implementation of the present law, the following terms, whether used in their singular or plural form, shall have the meanings described below:

Electoral media:
Any media material such as news, analyses, statements, interviews, debates, discussions, reports, press conferences and meetings, directly or indirectly related to elections and broadcast for free, in the usual or special programs of a media company.

Electioneering:
Any material related to the programs, campaigns and electoral and political positions of candidates that are recorded/filmed inside or outside a media company studios, and through which, candidates wish to address the voters. Broadcast of such material is made at the Candidates' own expense, through programs that the media company dedicates for such purpose, against a given price.

Election Advertising:
Any material aimed at promoting the election of a certain candidate, broadcast against specific prices, during commercial breaks of a media outlet.

Electoral material:
It encompasses the electoral media, promotion and advertisement.

Media Outlets:
Every public or private, audiovisual, printed or electronic media outlet, irrespective of its technical nature.

Article 69: Explaining the Electoral Program

Each list or candidate may organize various legitimate activities to explain their electoral program using appropriate ways and means that do not contradict laws and regulations.

Article 70: Electoral Campaign Period

Electoral material broadcast on various media outlets and advertisement companies throughout the electoral period that starts, pursuant to the present law, on the date the candidacy was filed and ends with the closing of ballot boxes, shall be subject to the provisions of the present chapter.

Article 71: Paid Election Advertising

A. Paid electoral promotion and advertisement through different media outlets and advertisement companies shall be authorized in accordance with the following provisions:

(1) Media outlets and advertisement companies wishing to take part in the electoral promotion and advertisement shall submit to the Commission, at least ten days before the beginning of the electoral campaign period, a statement expressing such wish, along with a price list and information regarding the space it intends to allocate to electoral media outlets and advertisement companies.

(2) Media outlets and advertisement companies shall comply with their submitted price lists and allocated space. They may not reject any electoral advertisement request from any candidate or list adhering to the set prices and space allocation.

(3) Media outlets and advertisement companies that fail to submit their statements within the set deadline shall be prevented from organizing any election advertising or promotional activity during the whole electoral campaign period.

(4) Media outlets and advertisement companies shall explicitly indicate, when broadcasting or publishing electoral ads, that these are paid ads, and indicate the advertiser's identity.

(5) Media outlets and advertisement companies shall not be allowed to make any advertisement for free or for any price not included in the approved price list.

(6) The candidate or his/her legal agent shall submit a copy of the electoral advertisement tape, along with a written booking request, to the Commission, as well as to the media outlets and advertisement companies to broadcast or publish it. The request shall be submitted three days at least before the first broadcast or publication date.

(7) Every media outlet and advertisement company shall present to the Commission a weekly report including an account of all electoral ads and promotions broadcast during the past week with the broadcasting time and the price received for each.

(8) No candidate shall be allowed to disburse more than 50% of his/her total media and advertising expenditure to one media outlet or advertisement company; this applies to all categories of media outlets and advertisement companies.

B. The Commission shall decide the maximum space that may be allocated to every media outlet or advertisement company to broadcast or publish media or advertising programs related to lists or candidates. It shall also determine the relevant time for broadcasting or publishing.

C. In the specification and allocation of maximum media space, the Commission shall abide by the principle of equality; it shall also observe the right of candidates to have equal media appearance

within the limits established by the law, and the principles of legitimate electoral competition, as per the criteria set forth above.

Article 72: Media Monitoring by the Commission

1. The Commission shall monitor the compliance of the media in Lebanon with the provisions stipulated in the present law on election advertising, as well as the decisions made for the implementation of these provisions.

2. The Commission shall guarantee the observance of the freedom of expression of various opinions and trends of thought in media programs broadcast during the electoral campaign period, by issuing binding recommendations so as to ensure a fair, balanced, and impartial treatment of all candidates and lists.

3. Clause 1 above shall apply to all public and political news programs including news bulletins, political talk shows, interviews, reports, meetings, discussions, round tables and live broadcast and coverage of rallies that shall be free of charge.

4. The Commission shall ensure a balanced media appearance among competing lists and candidates by binding media outlets when hosting a list representative or a candidate to also host their competitor under the same conditions in terms of timing, duration, and type of program.

5. The Commission may, at its own discretion, decide whether or not, and to what extent, the appearance of candidates on satellite TV stations should be part of the advertising and media space allocated by the Commission to each list or candidate.

6. The Commission shall immediately investigate any complaint filed by a prejudiced list or candidate and make its decision in terms of referring such complaint to the competent Court of Publications within twenty four hours of filing the complaint.

Media companies shall be required to keep a registered archive of all programs they broadcast during the electoral campaign for a period of six months from Election Day.

7. The Commission shall, prior to the commencement of the electoral process, determine the criteria for the discrimination between electoral information and electoral advertising. It may verify, at any time, if any program attempts to make any illegal electoral advertising under the guise of electoral information, and shall consequently take the necessary legal measures to end such practice.

Article 73: Obligations of Public Media

1. A list or candidate may use public media outlets, free of charge, to broadcast electoral programs as per the provisions of the present law and other regulations established by the Commission.

2. Every list or candidate wishing to use this right shall submit a written request to the Commission. The Commission shall keep a record of lists and candidates who are authorized to use public media.

3. The Commission establishes a special program including the schedule and conditions of air time

distribution among the different lists and candidates that observe balance in this respect, in such a way as to guarantee equality and equal opportunities for the different candidates and lists.`

4. Public media shall remain impartial during the different stages of the electoral process; they, branches and staff, may not carry out any activity that may be considered in favour of one candidate or list at the expense of another candidate or list.

Article 74: Obligations of Private Media

1. No private media outlet shall be allowed to declare its support to any candidate or list.

Taking into account the principle of independence, media outlets shall clearly discriminate, throughout the electoral campaign period, between reality and facts on the one hand and opinions and comments on the other, in all their news bulletins or political programs.

2. During the electoral campaign period, private media, as well as electoral lists and candidates shall abide by the following obligations:

- Refrain from any act of libel, slander and defamation towards any list or candidate.

- Refrain from broadcasting anything that might trigger religious, confessional or ethnic sensitivities or acts of violence or riots, or support for terrorism, crimes, or sabotage.

- Refrain from broadcasting anything that might be a means of pressure, intimidation, mistrust, allusion to or promise of material or moral benefits.

- Refrain from distorting, screening, falsifying, omitting, or misrepresenting information.

- Refrain from transmitting or re-broadcasting anything that might produce the above mentioned violations under penalty of holding the media outlet in question responsible for violating this law.

Article 75: Electoral Educational Programs

During the electoral campaign period, audio-visual media outlets shall allocate at least three hours weekly for broadcasting election-related educational programs produced by the Ministries of Information and of Interior and Municipalities in coordination with the relevant media.

Article 76: Appropriate Billposting Places for Electoral Ads

1. The competent local authority in each city or village shall, under the supervision of the administrative authority, designate appropriate billposting places for election advertising and posters during the whole electoral campaign period.

2. No advertisements or pictures for candidates or electoral lists shall be posted outside the indicated places. Furthermore, no candidate or list may be allowed to post an advertisement or a picture in places reserved for others. It is incumbent upon the concerned list or candidate to remove them.

3. The local authority shall distribute the specific places as per Clause 1 of this article among lists and candidates, and according to the order in which candidate applications were filed.

Local authorities and companies exploiting billposting places shall cooperate with the Commission to guarantee the proper implementation of these provisions.

4. No candidate or list shall be allowed to waive their posting places in favour of another candidate or list.

Article 77- Prohibitions

1. Public utilities, state departments, public institutions, private or public universities, faculties, institutes, public and private schools, and places of worship may not be used for electoral events, rallies or meetings or for any election advertising purposes.

2. Civil servants and employees of public institutions, municipalities, and municipal unions, and those who have similar statuses, shall not be allowed to make any electoral propaganda for any candidate or list and shall refrain, along with the Mukhtars, from distributing flyers in favor of, or against, any candidate or list.

3. The distribution, on Election Day, of flyers, or any other document in favor of, or against, a candidate shall be prohibited at polling center entrances or at any other place within the polling center, under penalty of confiscation without prejudice to other sanctions provided for in this law.

Article 78: Electoral Silence

All media outlets shall be prohibited, Twenty-four hours before polling day and until ballot boxes close, from broadcasting any live electoral advertisement or promotion, or any live electoral message, except for voices/images that cannot be avoided during the live coverage of the electoral process.

On Election Day, coverage shall be limited to the electoral proceedings.

Article 79: Opinion Polls

1. The Commission shall specify the conditions for conducting opinion polls during the electoral campaign, and the procedures to follow in order to ensure credible, fair, and impartial polls.

2. The Commission shall specify the terms and conditions for publishing, broadcasting, and distributing opinion poll results during the electoral campaign. It shall have full powers to verify the compliance of opinion polls with the laws and regulations and with the decision of the Commission. It shall also be entitled to take all necessary measures against media outlets, pollsters, or any other person, to stop or address violations.

3. The announcement, publishing, broadcast, or distribution of the opinion poll results, must be accompanied, at least, by the following information, at the responsibility of the polling organization:

- The name of the polling organization

- The name of the party that requested and paid for the opinion poll

- The dates when the opinion poll was conducted in the field

- The size, mode of selection and distribution of respondent samples

- The polling method

- The verbatim questions

- The limits of result interpretation and the margin of error when need be.

4. Publishing, broadcasting or distribution of poll results and comments thereon shall be prohibited ten days before Election Day and until ballots close.

Article 80: Media Coverage of the Voting and Counting Procedures

Any media outlet wishing to cover the voting and counting procedures shall be required to obtain a written authorization from the Commission, pursuant to the provisions of Paragraph 1, Article 19 of the present law. It shall also abide by the Code of Conduct established by the Commission.

Article 81: Sanctions and Fines

1. Without prejudice to the Penal Code, The Publications Law, and the Audio-Visual Media Law, the Commission may take any of the two following procedures against any media outlet or advertising company that violates the provisions of the present chapter on electoral media and advertisement:

a- Address a warning to the media outlet in question or compel it to broadcast an apology or give the wronged candidate an opportunity to exercise his/her right for reply.

b- Bring the media outlet in question before the competent Court of Publications which shall take any of the measures below that it deems appropriate:

Impose a fine ranging between 50 and 100 million Lebanese pounds on the media outlet in question.

Partially suspend the work of the media outlet in question for a maximum of three days. This shall include the suspension of all political and news programs, bulletins, interviews and seminars.

Totally suspend, in the case of repeated violations, the work of the media outlet in question and all its programs for a maximum period of three days.

The Public Prosecution shall bring the media outlet in question before the Court of Publications directly or upon a request filed by the wronged party. The media outlet in question shall submit a pleading

to the court within 24 hours as of notification.

The Court of Publications shall render its judgment within a maximum period of 24 hours. The Public Prosecution and the prosecuted party may challenge the decision before the Court of Cassation within 24 hours starting from the time of the court's ruling for the Public Prosecution, and from the time of notification for the concerned media outlet.

The appeal shall not stop the implementation of the decision unless otherwise decided by the Court of Cassation within 24 hours of filing the challenge.

2. Without prejudice to the Penal Code, the Commission may take any of the measures below against any polling organization or any other person violating the provisions of Article 79 of the present law:

(a) Address a warning

(b) Compel the violating party to broadcast/publish an apology or correction through the media

(c) Impose a fine ranging between 10 and 25 million Lebanese pounds by virtue of a writ of collection issued by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities upon request of the Commission.

The said fine shall be doubled if the violation takes place during the period of electoral silence.

Article 82: Print Media

The aforementioned provisions on election advertising shall not apply to the print media that remain subject to the laws and regulations that govern it.

Article 83: Correction and Right of Reply

Media outlets shall broadcast and publish the corrections and replies that they receive from the concerned lists and candidates within 24 hours of the broadcast/publication of the denounced news. Concerned Media outlets may reject the broadcast of any reply in case it was disorderly.

CHAPTER VII

Polling

Article 84: Polling Centers and Stations

The constituency shall be divided, by virtue of a decision of the Minister, into a number of polling centers (*markaz*) which in its turn includes a number of polling stations (*qalam*). Each village having 100 to 400 enrolled voters shall be entitled to one polling station. The number may be increased to more than 400 voters per station if deemed necessary for the integrity of the electoral process; however, this number shall not exceed 600 voters per station. The number of polling stations per center may not exceed 20 stations.

The decision of the Minister regarding the distribution of polling stations shall be published in the official gazette and on the Ministry website at least 20 days before Election Day. The distribution may not be modified during the week preceding Election Day unless for serious reasons and under a justified decision.

Article 85: Composition and Tasks of the Polling Station Staff

1. The Muhafez or Qaimaqam, each according to their terms of office, shall appoint one chief officer for each polling station, in addition to one or more clerks, selected from a list of names of civil servants submitted by the Ministry's Directorate General of Political Affairs and Refugees within a maximum of one week before Election Day. However, the appointed civil servants shall not be informed of their assignment location at the Muhafaza or Qada until five days before Election Day.

2. The polling station's chief officer shall have two assistants: one that he/she selects from among the voters present at the opening of the polling station, and one chosen by the voters from among themselves. The two assistants must be literate. The head of the polling station shall record the names of his two assistants in the station's record as set forth in the present law, and shall have their signature affixed to the record. The Muhafez or Qaimaqam may, if necessary, appoint substitute assistants if need be.

3. The chief officer and clerk of each polling station shall be present throughout the electoral process.

4. Only the chief officer of the polling station shall have the authority to maintain order inside the polling station. No security forces are allowed to stay inside the station without his/her request, and they may only intervene temporarily and exclusively to guarantee the sound running of the electoral process.

5. The chief officer of the polling station shall not, in any case, prevent the candidates or their agents and accredited observers from exercising their right of supervising the electoral process. He/she may not evict any candidate or list agent unless they continue to cause disorder despite being given a warning and that this warning has been recorded in the station's record.

6. In case such a measure is taken by the chief officer of the polling station, he/she shall make out a

record in this regard stating the facts, the time of their occurrence and the reasons thereof. He/she shall then sign it along with all the present agents and immediately submit it to the competent registration committee.

7. Any election staff member, who, without any legitimate grounds, fails to appear in the polling station where he/she is appointed as chief officer or clerk, shall be sentenced either to one month emprisonment or to pay a one-million LBP fine. In such cases, only medical reports issued by the State Medical Committee shall be taken into consideration.

8. The chief officer or the clerk of a polling station, who fails to observe their obligations and follow the regulations that govern their work as stipulated in the present law, shall be sentenced to imprisonment from three months to three years, or to pay a fine ranging between one to three million LBP. In this case, and notwithstanding the provisions of article 61 of the Civil Servants Law, issued by virtue of decree 112/59 of June 12, 1959, a public-right proceeding shall be filed by the candidate, the Public Prosecution, or upon the request of the President of the concerned registration committee. The proceeding does not require the approval of the administration in which the civil servant serves.

Article 86: Voting Schedule

Voting, throughout Lebanon, shall always take place on one day, which shall always be a Sunday, from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Article 87: Voting of Polling Stations' Staff

The Ministry shall organize exclusive elections for polling stations' staff in all constituencies on the Thursday that preceeds Election Day.

All ballot boxes related to the polling stations' staff shall be dispatched closed, with an escort of security forces, immediately after counting the ballot papers in each box, to the Central Bank of Lebanon or to one of its branches. At the end of the voting process on Sunday, these boxes shall be sent to the competent registration committee to count them and collate their results with those of the other ballot boxes. The regulations set forth in Chapter 11 of the present law shall apply in this process.

Article 88: Voter Checklists

1. The Ministry's Directorate General of Political Affairs and Refugees shall issue voter checklists, based on the voter rolls, to be used in all polling stations in Lebanon and abroad. In addition to the data taken from the voter rolls, each checklist shall include the voter's ID card number or passport number, if available on the date when the lists were prepared, as well as three empty boxes: one for the voter's signature, one for the polling station staff member appointed to verify the voting, and one for any notes related to the voting process.

2. Each polling station's checklist shall have all its pages bound together, numbered, and bearing the seal of the Ministry.

3. No one shall be allowed to vote unless his/her name is registered on the checklist of the relevant polling station, or unless the competent registration committee issues a decision, at the request of the person wishing to enroll, to have his/her name registered before March 25th upon consultation with the Ministry.

Article 89: Agents

1. Each list may delegate voters from the relevant constituency to access the polling station, on a basis of maximum two permanent agents per polling station. It may also choose, amongst the constituency voters, itinerant agents to enter all the constituency's polling stations, at a basis of one agent for every three polling stations in villages, and one agent for every 5 polling stations in cities.

2. The Muhafez or Qaimaqam shall issue special authorization to the aforementioned agents according to regulations specified by the Ministry.

Article 90: Maintaining Security

Security forces shall maintain order at the entrance of and around polling centers. Any electoral or promotional activity, especially loudspeakers, loud music, party flags and car convoys, shall be prohibited in the vicinity of the polling center.

Article 91: Polling Station Equipment

1. The Ministry shall provide the polling stations with the equipment and stationery necessary for the electoral process. It shall provide each polling station with one ballot box made of transparent solid material and having one opening.

2. The Ministry shall print and supply chief officers of polling stations with the official ballot papers, along with their stamped envelopes, which number shall be equal to that of enrolled voters. The Ministry shall also provide to the chief officers of polling stations extra ballot papers with their non-stamped envelopes, which shall be equivalent to 20% of the number of enrolled voters.

3. Each polling station shall have one or more voting booths.

4. No voting shall be carried out in a polling station not equipped with a polling booth; otherwise, the voting process shall be annulled in the polling station in question.

Article 92: Ballot Papers

1. Voting shall be carried out using, as indicated in article 91 of this law, ballot papers prepared in advance by the Ministry for every constituency, and distributed to the polling stations staff along with the elections material.

2. The official ballot papers shall include the names of all lists and their members, as well as the speci-

fications indicated in the specimen prepared by the Ministry, namely: the color and logo of the list, an empty checkbox for each list, the full name and confession of each candidate and the cada in which he/she is standing for elections. A passport photo of each candidate shall be displayed next to his/her name, in addition to an empty box where voters may exercise their right to cast their preferential vote on the same list, as per the provisions of Article 97 of the present law.

3. Voters shall exclusively use these ballot papers to vote. They shall not use any other paper to exercise their right to vote.

Article 93: Preparatory Procedures

1. Before the commencement of the voting process, the polling station chief officer shall open the box and verify with the polling station staff and candidate agents that it is empty before locking it properly according to the Ministry's instructions.

2. During the election process, official copies of the voter roll and of the Minister's decision establishing and designating the polling stations shall be posted at the entrance of every polling station. A copy of the electoral law, a list of the candidate agents as well as posters and illustrative material explaining the electoral process shall be placed on a table inside the polling station so that voters, candidates and agents may refer to them.

3. Before the beginning and until the end of the electoral process, the polling station chief officer shall make sure that all posters, symbols, writings, or slogans of any nature whatsoever, except for the illustrative material provided by the Ministry, are removed from the polling station.

4. Before the commencement of the voting process, the polling station chief officer shall verify that the number of ballot papers and sealed envelopes is exactly equal to the number of the enrollded voters.

In the event of shortage in the ballot papers and stamped envelopes due to force majeure that aims at affecting the validity of the ballot, or for any other reason, the polling station chief officer shall replace the missing ballot papers and envelopes with the additional ballot papers and unsealed envelopes that he/she had received, seal the additional envelopes with the Polling Station seal, and indicate the date and the reason for this replacement in the record. The remaining additional ballot papers and unsealed envelopes that were not used shall be annexed to the record.

Article 94: Voting Process

1. As soon as the voter enters the polling station, the station chief officer shall verify his/her identity based on his/her ID card or Lebanese valid passport. In the event where the ID card or passport data conflict with the data on the voters' checklists, the ID card number or passport number shall be adopted instead.

2. Upon verification by the staff of a given polling station that the voter's name is listed on the voters' checklist of the polling station in question, the polling station chief officer shall give the voter a ballot paper, after signing its back side with the clerk, in addition to a sealed envelope, after signing it.

He shall then ask the voter to mandatorily go into the voting booth to freely exercise his/her right to vote under penalty of prohibiting him/her from voting.

3. The voter shall put the ballot paper in the envelope while still inside the booth, after choosing the list and the names of candidates as per Article 97 of the present law.

The voter may not put more than one ballot paper in the envelope. The voter shall then approach the polling station staff and show its chief officer that he/she holds only one stamped envelope; the head of the station shall verify this without touching the envelope, and then authorize the voter to drop himself/herself the envelope, in the ballot box.

4. The polling station chief officer shall make sure that the voter has indeed used the voting booth under penalty of prohibiting him/her from voting. The voter may not display his/her ballot paper upon exiting the voting booth.

5. The voting shall be confirmed by the voter's signature on the voters' checklist and by thumb-inking using indelible ink that lasts for at least 24 hours, and which shall be provided by the Ministry for all polling stations. Any voter with their thumb inked shall be prevented from voting a second time.

6. The polling station chief officer shall, under penalty of liability, prohibit any voter from voting unless he/she abides by the provisions of Paragraph 4 of the present Article.

7. No voter may delegate the exercise of his/her right to vote to anyone else.

Article 95: Voting of Persons with Special Needs (Disability Rights Law)

1. A Voter with special needs and whose disability prevents him/her from writing down their choice, put the ballot paper in the envelope and drop it in the box may, in accordance with the Disability Rights Law, be assisted by another voter that he/she chooses, under the supervision of the polling station staff. Such incident shall be mentioned in the empty box on the voters' checklist reserved for notes.

2. The Ministry shall take into consideration the needs of persons with disabilities during the organization of the electoral process and shall, hence, take all necessary measures allowing those to exercise their right to vote without obstacles.

The Ministry shall set forth a relevant detailed implementation code after consultation with the concerned organizations of disabled persons set forth in the Disability Rights Law no. 220 of 29/5/2000.

Article 96: Conclusion of the Voting Process

The head of the polling station shall declare the ballot closed at 7:00 pm. However, if there are still voters present in the entrance area of the polling center, who have not yet cast their votes, the polling time shall be extended until they cast their vote. Such a procedure shall be mentioned in the record.

CHAPTER VIII

The Electoral System

Article 97: Voting for a List and Preferential Vote

1. Each voter shall vote for one of the competing lists and shall be entitled to cast two preferential votes for two candidates of the same list he/she had chosen.

2. In case the voter does not cast two preferential votes, the voting shall remain valid and only the list shall count. In case the voter casts only one preferential vote, this vote shall be counted. However, if the voter casts more than two preferential votes within the same list, none of them shall be counted, and only the list shall count.

3. If the voter casts a vote for a list in addition to two preferential votes: one on the same list he/she has chosen and one or more preferential votes on another list, none of the preferential votes shall count and only the list shall count.

4. If the voter does not vote for any list but casts two preferential votes on the same list, the list as well as the preferential votes shall count.

Article 98: The Proportional System (The rule of double quota or the largest remainder)

1. The number of seats won by each lists shall be determined based on the electoral quotient.

2. In order to determine the electoral quotient, the number of voters in a given constituency shall be divided by the number of seats allocated for that constituency.

3. Lists that have not obtained the electoral quotient shall be eliminated from the seat allocation procedure; the electoral quotient shall be re-determined after deducting the votes received by the eliminated lists.

4. The remaining vacant seats shall be allocated to qualified lists that obtained the largest remainder of the votes left after the first division. This procedure shall be repeated until all of the remaining seats are distributed (cf. a practical example).

5. Once the number of seats obtained by every qualified list is determined, the names of candidates of the same list shall be ranked in a descending order, following the preferential votes obtained by each.

6. Announcing the names of winners in each constituency shall be based on the following mechanism:

(a) The names of candidates of all qualified lists shall be ranked in one comprehensive list in a descending order based on the number of preferential votes obtained by each.

(b) The seats shall be distributed among winning candidates starting from top of the comprehensive list that contains the names of all list candidates. The first seat shall be given to the candidate who

received the highest number of preferential votes. The second seat shall be given to the candidate ranked second on the comprehensive list, irrespective of his/her original list. The same applies for the third seat and until all seats of the constituency are distributed among the candidates of other qualified lists.

7. Seat allocation shall also consider the following conditions:

- The vacancy of the seat, which is subject to the confessional distribution of seats. That is, once a specific confession has exhausted its share of seats in a single constituency, the remaining candidates of that confession shall be de facto eliminated from the seat allocation competition.

- The list must not have exhausted its share of seats. During seat allocation, a candidate belonging to a list that has already exhausted its share of seat shall be skipped, and the seat shall be given to the next candidate.

8. If two candidates obtain equal numbers of preferential votes, the eldest candidate shall be ranked higher. If both candidates are of the same age, the Higher Registration Committee shall resort to the drawing of lots.

Chapter IX

Counting Votes and Declaring Results

Article 99: Counting Process in Polling Stations

At the end of the voting process, polling shall be closed; only the station staff members, permanent and/or itinerant list agents, accredited observers and media representatives authorized by the Commission to cover and film the counting process inside the polling stations, shall be allowed to stay inside the polling station.

The polling station chief officer shall open the ballot box and count the envelopes. If the ballots outnumber or undernumber the number on the checklist of cast votes, it shall be mentioned in the record.

The polling station chief officer shall open the envelopes one by one and read loudly the name of the list elected by the voter, followed by the name or names of the candidate(s) having received preferential votes on each list, under the effective supervision of candidates or their agents and other accredited observers if any.

Article 100: Polling Station Equipment

The Ministry shall provide the polling stations with special cameras and TV Screens allowing the projection of the ballot paper content on the TV screen, and therefore, allowing the station staff, candidate agents, and accredited observers to easily read, during the vote count, the names of lists and candidates on the ballot paper.

Article 101: Invalid Ballots

Any ballot paper containing any mark other than those mentioned in Article 97 shall be deemed invalid. Envelopes that contain ballots other than the common official ballot papers, as well as empty envelopes shall be also deemed invalid.

The polling station chief officer shall enclose the invalid ballots with their envelopes signed by the staff with the record and shall mention the reasons thereof.

Article 102: Blank Ballots

Ballots that do not include any vote for a list or any preferential vote shall be considered as blank ballots and shall be counted with the valid ballots.

Article 103: Declaring Results of a Polling Station

1. After counting the official ballot papers, the polling station chief officer shall declare the provisional result, sign it and immediately post it on the polling station entrance; he shall also issue duplicates to any candidate or agent upon their request.

2. The number of votes obtained by every list as well as the number of preferential votes obtained by every candidate shall be specified when the results are declared.

Article 104: Polling Station Record

Upon declaring the provisional results of the polling station, the station chief officer shall draw up a report in two original copies, which shall have all is pages signed by the station staff members.

The station chief officer shall enclose in a special envelope: the voters checklists signed by the voters, all ballot papers, the aforementioned report and the voting tally sheet of lists and candidates.

After being sealed with wax, the envelope shall be carried by the both the chief officer and the clerck of the station, with an escort of security forces, to be submitted to the registration committee center, where it shall be delivered together with all enclosed documents to the head of the registration committee, or his delegate, who shall later open the envelope in the presence of candidate agents.

The polling station's chief officer and clerck shall both be held responsible if, once received by the registration committee, the envelope is found open or not corresponding to the declared provisional results.

Article 105: Counting Process at the Primary Registration Committees

1. The competent Primary Registration Committee shall receive the records of all polling stations located within its scope of work. Records shall be delivered by the polling stations' chief officers and shall be documented in a report established to this end. The Ministry shall provide the necessary material to the Primary Registration Committee, most importantly, a big transparent container for the ballot papers, a programmed computer as well as a large screen to display the results, and any other equipment necessary for the sound automation of the electoral process.

2. The Primary Registration Committee shall study the polling station record and documents and take the relevant decisions thereon. It shall recount the votes according to the following:

Ballots of each polling station shall be consecutively emptied in the big transparent container after being counted under the supervision of the Primary Registration Committee, candidate agents and observers.

Then, the vote count for every polling station shall begin using a programmed computer that shall process the count automatically.

In case there was any difference between the results contained in the polling station record and those of the programmed computer, the count shall be repeated manually.

After verifying the number of votes obtained by every list and candidate, the Primary Registration Committee shall record the total result in tables and records, and submit them, after signing them by all the committee members, in duplicates to the higher registration committee of the constituency.

The Ministry's Directorate General of Political Affairs and Refugees shall appoint an employee in each primary registration committee to consecutively receive the envelopes of polling stations and

documents attached thereto from these Committees as soon as they finish their work with every envelope. The said employee shall sign an acknowledgement of receipt of each envelope and its relevant documents.

Article 106: Declaring the Final Results

The Higher Registration Committee of each constituency shall receive the results submitted by the Primary Registration Committees of that constituency.

It shall audit the tables and records and only rectify material and counting irregulatities, if any, and then rectify the final result accordingly.

It shall then count the votes submitted by the Primary Registration Committees using a computer programmed to this end. The final results of each constituency shall be recorded, in the final table of results, in numbers and letters, writing the word "only" after the total result. The record and final comprehensive table shall be signed by all Committee members.

Subsequently, it shall announce, to candidates or their agents, the final results pertaining to the number of seats obtained by each list as well as the names of winning candidates.

The Higher Registration Committee shall submit to the *Muhafez* or *Qaimaqam* the final records and the comprehensive results table, and shall draw up an acknowledgement of delivery and receipt to be signed by the *Muhafez* or *Qaimaqam*, and one member of the Higher Registration Committee named by the head of the said committee.

The results, along with the final records and the comprehensive table enclosed thereto shall be immediately sent to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, who declares the final official results and the names of winning candidates. The Minister shall immediately notify the Speaker of Parliament and the President of the Constitutional Council of the results.

Article 107: Saving Ballot Papers

After the announcement of the elections' results, ballot papers shall be confidentially saved at the Central Bank of Lebanon, in special separate folders each indicating the name of its corresponding polling station, for a period of three month after which the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities shall destroy them by virtue of a duly prepared record, unless they are subject to any review or challenge before the Constitutional Council.

CHAPTER X

Conflict of Interests between Parliamentary Membership and Other functions

Article 108: Special Cases of Conflict of Interests

1. A Member of Parliament may not simultaneously be a chair or member of the board of any public institution or public utility institution, nor occupy a post in any public administration or institution, municipality, union of municipalities, chartered company, mixed-economy company, or public-capital company.

No Member of Parliament may simultaneously occupy any religious post remunerated from the Treasury.

Each of those, once elected MPs, shall be automatically considered discharged from their functions if they do not relinquish Parliament membership within one month of declaring the elections results.

2. A Member of Parliament may not hold at the same time the position of attorney of the State or any of its departments or public institutions, or of municipalities, unions of municipalities or any of the institutions or companies mentioned in paragraph 1 above.

Once elected members of Parliament, the attorneyship of each of the above mentioned persons shall become automatically invalid.

Article 109: Prohibited Professional Activities

A Member of Parliament may not be granted any monopoly, privileges or entitlement by the State, public institutions or municipalities. Their spouse and children shall be considered as a single person.

CHAPTER XI

Voting of Non-Resident Citizens

Article 110: The Right to Vote for Non-Resident Lebanese Citizens

All Lebanese natives living outside the Lebanese territory shall be entitled to vote in the polling centers established in Lebanese embassies and consulates or in other locations specified by the Ministry, pursuant to the provisions of the present law and in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, provided that their names are registered on the personal status registers and that there is no legal impediment to their right to vote persuant to the provisions of Article 4 of the present law.

Article 111: Non-Resident Voters Enrollment

Upon enactment of this law, the Ministry shall invite, via Lebanese embassies and consulates, and in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, all the Lebanese emigrants who fulfill the aforementioned conditions, to express their wish to participate in the voting from their country of residence, by registering their names either personally or by virtue of a duly signed and authenticated proxy.

The Ministry, along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, shall establish the procedures for the enrollment of non-resident Lebanese citizens in the embassies or consulates of their choice, including all the information needed concerning their identity, register number, confession and regular Lebanese passport number, if available.

The deadline for registration shall not exceed November 20th of the year preceding the parliamentary Elections. After this date, the right to out-of-country voting shall be called off. The embassies shall send the new registration data successively to the Directorate General of Personal Status via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants before December 20th.

Article 112: Separate Voter Rolls

The competent departments at the Directorate General of Personal Status shall verify the registration of those names on the personal status register and shall establish, after the expiry of the enrollment period, a special voter register for each embassy or consulate, including the names of eligible voters, distributed according to constituencies. The number of enrolled voters in one electoral center shall not be less than 200 voters. A mark shall be put next to their names to prevent them from voting again in their original place of residence. Their place of registration abroad shall also be indicated.

Article 113: Announcing and Auditing Separate Voter Rolls

1. Before February 1st of every year, the Ministry shall send on CDs, via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

and Emigrants, to the Lebanese embassies and consulates, the primary voter rolls with the names of persons who have expressed their wish to vote abroad pursuant to the provisions of Article 111 of the present law.

2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants shall circulate and publish the aforementioned rolls by all means possible. It shall invite the voters to verify their registration data and request their rectification when need be. Every embassy and consulate shall produce copies of these registers and make them available at their premises and publish them on their websites, if any.

3. Any concerned person may lodge a claim relating to the voter rolls before the concerned embassy or consulate and provide the necessary documents. The concerned embassy or consulate shall study the claim and send it to the Ministry through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants before February 20th of every year. The revision, rectification, and crossing-off records shall be subject to the rules and procedures set forth in Chapter IV of the present law.

Article 114: Out-of-Country Polling Stations

The Ministry shall send via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, to every embassy or consulate, the number of eligible voters reporting to it. Each embassy or consulate shall then designate one polling station for each center. In case enrolled voters in a polling center exceed 400, more than one polling station shall be designated.

Article 115: Out-of-Country Polling Stations' Staff

The ambassador or consul shall coordinate with the Ministry via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to appoint the staff of each polling station. The staff shall include at least one chief officer and one clerk selected among the embassy or consulate staff or; otherwise, the ambassador or consul shall contract two employees provided that they are Lebanese nationals, and are thus subject to the pertinent Lebanese laws, and shal specify their terms of reference.

Candidate agents who have obtained authorizations issued by the relevant embassy or consulate may be present in the polling station during the voting process.

Article 116: Out of Country Voting Process

Out of Country voting shall take place, according to the constituencies concerned, fifteen days, at the farthtest, prior to Election Day in Lebanon. Unified opaque sealable envelopes adopted by the Ministry and bearing its seal shall be used.

The ballot boxes shall be open from 7 am to 10 pm.

As soon as the voter enters the polling station, the station chief officer shall verify his/her identity based on his/her ID card or Lebanese valid passport, and shall also verify that his/her name is listed on the voters checklist. In case the data on the ID card or passport conflict with that on the voters' checklists, the ID card number or passport number shall be adopted instead.

After verification by the station staff that the voter's name is listed on the polling station's checklist, the Chief officer shall give the voter a ballot paper and an officially sealed envelope, after signing it. He/she shall write down the name of the constituency to which the voter belongs along with the cadas covered by that constituency.

Voting of non-resident Lebanese citizens shall be regualted by the general provisions that govern the voting of resident Lebanese citizens and which do not conflict with the provisions of the present law.

Article 117: Counting and Distribution of Ballot Papers

At the end of the voting process, the polling station staff shall open the ballot box (es) in the presence of the ambassador or consul or their delegate if both were unable to attend. The polling station staff shall count envelopes and sort them based on the constituency to which they belong in the presence of candidate agents, observers and accredited media, if any. The envelopes of each constituency shall be placed in separate large envelopes bearing the name of the corresponding constituency and sealed with red wax.

Article 118: Submitting Envelopes and Relevant Electoral Documents

A report on the electoral process shall be established in duplicate including the numbers of eligible voters, of ballots cast, and of envelopes per constituency. The record shall be signed by the polling station staff members and candidate agents, if any are present. One copy shall be kept at the embassy or consulate with the ambassador or consul, and the second shall be sent immediately along with the polling station large folders containing the envelopes, ballot papers and other electoral documents to the Central Bank of Lebanon via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants.

At the end of the voting process taking place on Election Day in Lebanon, the said folders shall be sent along with other elelctoral documents to the competent Primary Registration Committee which shall count the votes and add the results to those of the remaining ballot boxes. The rules established in the present law shall be observed in this process.

Article 119: Implemention of the Provisions of this Chapter

A joint committee between the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants shall be established upon the decision of both concerned Ministers and shall be entrusted with the implementation details of the provisions of the present Chapter.

CHAPTER XII

Miscellaneous Provisions

Article 120: Training Sessions

The Ministry shall organize training sessions for those involved in the polling and counting procedures in order to ensure the sound conduct of the election process.

Article 121: Implementation of the Law

In the cases where the present law does not detail its implementation provisions, the said details shall be determined by virtue of decrees issued by the Council of Ministers upon the suggestion of the Minister of Interior and Municipalities.

Article 122: Conflicting Provisions

All provisions conflicting with those of the present law shall be deemed null; particularly, law no.25 of October 8, 2008 with the exception of the provisions pertaining to by-elections.

Article 123: Effective Date

This law shall become effective immediately upon its publication in the official gazette.

This Draft law is translated by IFES and printed by the support of UNDP with the contribution of the Norwegian Government

Constituencies (14) (First Option)

Constituencies , Seat Distribution & Number of Voters		
Tripoli – Menyeh Deneyyeh (11) 298.184 Geographic Area: 390 Km^2	Zgharta – Bsharri – Koura Batroun (10) 234.916 Geographic Area: 800 Km^2	Akkar (7) 230.646 Geographic Area: 788 Km^2
Baalbeck – Hermel (10) 264.486 Geographic Area: 2825 Km^2	Rashaya – West Bekaa (6) 125.076 Geographic Area: 922 Km^2	Zahleh (7) 159.341 Geographic Area: 425 Km^2
Baabda – Metn (14) 324.104 Geographic Area: 457 Km^2	Jbeil – Kesserwan (8) 165.858 Geographic Area: 766 Km^2	Chouf – Aley (13) 301.008 Geographic Area: 746 Km^2
Tyr – Bint Jbeil (7) 284.974 Geographic Area: 678 Km^2	Nabatieh – Marje'youn – Has-bayah (8) 266.468 Geographic Area: 834 Km^2	Saida – Jezzin – Zahrani (8) 204.910 Geographic Area: 515 Km^2
Beirut 1: Ashrafieh – Rmeil – El Mdawwar – Marfaa – El Saifi – Bashoura (9) 195.428 Geographic Area: 7.59 Km^2	Beirut 2: Ras Beirut – Ein el-Mre-isseh – Mina' el Hosn – Zkak el Blat – Mazra'a – Mosaitbeh (10) 255.407 Geographic Area: 12.04 Km^2	

Constituencies (14) (Second Option)

Constituencies , Seat Distribution & Number of Voters			
Tripoli – Menyeh Deneyyeh (11) 298.184 Geographic Area: 390 Km^2	Zgharta – Bsharri – Koura – Batroun (10) 234.916 Geographic Area: 800 Km^2		Akkar (7) 230.646 Geographic Area: 788 Km^2
Baalbeck – Hermel (10) 264.486 Geographic Area: 2825 Km^2	Zahleh - Rashaya – West Bekaa (13) 284.417 Geographic Area: 922 Km^2		
Baabda – Aley (11) 270.164 Geographic Area: 458 Km^2	Shouf (8) 183.086 Geographic Area: 482 Km^2	Jbeil – Kesser-wan (8) 165.858 Geographic Area: 766 Km^2	Metn (8) 171.262 Geographic Area: 263 Km^2
Tyr – Bint Jbeil (7) 284.974 Geographic Area: 678 Km^2	Nabatieh – Marje'youn – Hasbayah (8) 266.468 Geographic Area: 834 Km^2		Saida – Jezzin – Zah-rani (8) 204.910 Geographic Area: 515 Km^2
Beirut 1: Ashrafieh – Rmeil – El Mdawwar – Marfaa – El Saifi – Bashoura (9) 195.428 Geographic Area: 7.59 Km^2	Beirut 2: Ras Beirut – Ein el-Mreisseh – Mina' el Hosn – Zkak el Blat – Mazra'a – Mosaitbeh (10) 255.407 Geographic Area: 12.04 Km^2		

Constituencies (14) (Third Option)

Constituencies , Seat Distribution & Number of Voters		
Tripoli (8) 198.540 Geographic Area: 24 Km^2	Zgharta – Bsharri – Koura – Batroun (10) 234.916 Geographic Area: 800 Km^2	Akkar – Menyeh Deneyyeh (10) 330.290 Geographic Area: 1154 Km^2
Baalbeck – Hermel (10) 264.486 Geographic Area: 2825 Km^2	Rashaya – West Bekaa (6) 125.076 Geographic Area: 922 Km^2	Zahleh (7) 159.341 Geographic Area: 425 Km^2
Baabda – Metn (14) 324.104 Geographic Area: 457 Km^2	Jbeil – Kesserwan (8) 165.858 Geographic Area: 766 Km^2	Chouf – Aley (13) 301.008 Geographic Area: 746 Km^2
Tyr – Bint Jbeil (7) 284.974 Geographic Area: 678 Km^2	Nabatieh – Marje'youn – Hasbayah (8) 266.468 Geographic Area: 834 Km^2	Saida – Jezzin – Zahrani (8) 204.910 Geographic Area: 515 Km^2
Beirut 1: Ashrafieh – Rmeil – El Mdawwar – Marfaa – El Saifi – Bashoura (9) 195.428 Geographic Area: 7.59 Km^2	Beirut 2: Ras Beirut – Ein el-Mreisseh – Mina' el Hosn – Zkak el Blat – Mazra'a – Mosaitbeh (10) 255.407 Geographic Area: 12.04 Km^2	

Constituencies (13)

Constituencies , Seat Distribution & Number of Voters			
Tripoli – Menyeh Deneyyeh (11) 298.184 Geographic Area: 390 Km^2	Zgharta – Bsharri – Koura – Batroun (10) 234.916 Geographic Area: 800 Km^2		Akkar (7) 230.646 Geographic Area: 788 Km^2
Baalbeck – Hermel (10) 264.486 Geographic Area: 2825 Km^2	Zahleh – Rashaya – West Bekaa (13) 284.417 Geographic Area: 1347 Km^2		
Baabda – Aley (11) 270.164 Geographic Area: 458 Km^2	Chouf (8) 183.086 Geographic Area: 482 Km^2	Jbeil – Kesserwan (8) 165.858 Geographic Area: 766 Km^2	Metn (8) 171.262 Geographic Area: 263 Km^2
Saida – Saida Villages – Jezzine – Tyr (12) 364.182 Geographic Area: 929 Km^2	Nabatieh – Marje'youn – Hasbayah – Bint Jbeil (11) 392.170 Geographic Area: 1098 Km^2		
Beirut 1: Ashrafieh – Rmeil – El Mdawwar – Marfaa – El Saifi – Bashoura (9) 195.428 Geographic Area: 7.59 Km^2	Beirut 2: Ras Beirut – Ein el-Mreisseh – Mina' el Hosn – Zkak el Blat – Mazra'a – Mosaitbeh (10) 255.407 Geographic Area: 12.04 Km^2		

Constituencies (12)

Constituencies , Seat Distribution & Number of Voters		
Tripoli – Menyeh Deneyyeh (11) 298.184 Geographic Area: 390 Km^2	Zgharta – Bsharri – Koura – Batroun (10) 234.916 Geographic Area: 800 Km^2	Akkar (7) 230.646 Geographic Area: 788 Km^2
Baalbeck – Hermel (10) 264.486 Geographic Area: 2825 Km^2	Zahleh – Rashaya – West Bekaa (13) 284.417 Geographic Area: 1347 Km^2	
Baabda – Metn (14) 324.104 Geographic Area: 457 Km^2	Jbeil – Kesserwan (8) 165.858 Geographic Area: 766 Km^2	Chouf – Aley (13) 301.008 Geographic Area: 746 Km^2
Saida – Saida Villages – Jezzine – Tyr (12) 364.182 Geographic Area: 929 Km^2	Nabatieh – Marje'youn – Hasbayah – Bint Jbeil (11) 392.170 Geographic Area: 1098 Km^2	
Beirut 1: Ashrafieh – Rmeil – El Mdawwar – Marfaa – El Saifi – Bashoura (9) 195.428 Geographic Area: 7.59 Km^2	Beirut 2: Ras Beirut – Ein el-Mreisseh – Mina' el Hosn – Zkak el Blat – Mazra'a – Mosaitbeh (10) 255.407 Geographic Area: 12.04 Km^2	

Constituencies (10)

Constituencies , Seat Distribution & Number of Voters	
Tripoli – Menyeh Deneyyeh – Akkar (18) 528.830 Geographic Area: 1178 Km^2	Zgharta – Bsharri – Koura – Batroun (10) 234.916 Geographic Area: 800 Km^2
Baalbeck – Hermel (10) 264.486 Geographic Area: 2825 Km^2	Zahleh – Rashaya – West Bekaa (13) 284.417 Geographic Area: 1347 Km^2
Baabda – Aley – Chouf (19) 453.850 Geographic Area: 940 Km^2	Jbeil – Kesrwan – Metn (16) 337.120 Geographic Area: 1029 Km^2
Saida – Saida Villages – Jezzine – Tyr (12) 364.182 Geographic Area: 929 Km^2	Nabatieh – Marje'youn – Hasbayah – Bint Jbeil (11) 392.170 Geographic Area: 1098 Km^2
Beirut 1: Ashrafieh – Rmeil – El Mdawwar – Marfaa – El Saifi – Bashoura (9) 195.428 Geographic Area: 7.59 Km^2	Beirut 2: Ras Beirut – Ein el Mreisseh – Mina' el Hosn – Zkak el Blat – Mazra'a – Mosaitbeh (10) 255.407 Geographic Area: 12.04 Km^2

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