



Lebanon Expert Survey Report Draft

This summary is compiled for the exclusive use of authors working on the state of the parliament in Lebanon and ACRLI advisors. The findings reported below are extracted from the survey of expert users (Parliamentarians and Employees) carried out by Information International for the benefit of ACRI. The survey included a sample of 25 parliamentarians and 25 employees from Lebanon.

I- Methodology:

The method of sample selection for parliamentarians relied on the stratified sampling procedure, based on the list of parliamentary parties (للكتل النيابية). Out of the 25 randomly selected participants, 6 were from the التيار المستقبلي, 3 came from each of the اللقاء الديمقراطي, التيار الوطني الحر, and حركة أمل, and 7 were from various other smaller or independent parties (الكتل الصغيرة والمستقلون) (see Information International report for details; Appendix C).

As for employees, the method of sample selection relied on systematic random sampling based on the list of employees working at the parliament (see Information International report for details; Appendix C).

Refusal rates (both direct and indirect) reached 15.3%. The ability to generalise to the entire population should be made cautiously.

II- Data Analyses

A- Missing Data Analysis:

An analysis of missing data yielded significant findings that warrant attention. The overall pattern of missing responses did not exceed 6%. This indicates that the questionnaire, on the whole, did not create unexpected complications for participants. However, closer attention to the pattern of missing data points to

- 1- **Item 7**¹ “Generally, to which degree are Election campaigns financed by Corporate donations” had the highest rate of missing data with 22% of participants reporting their inability to assess this item. Either participants felt the item to be too sensitive or they did not feel confident enough to provide an assessment on that question.
- 2- **Item 39** “Internal parliamentary rules are clear” had the second highest rate of missing data, with 20% of participants reporting their inability to assess the item
- 3- **Item 6** “Generally, to which degree are Election campaigns financed by Individual donations” as well as **item 8** “Generally, to which degree are Election campaigns financed by Public funds” met with lower but still significant figures, with 18% of missing data each.

¹ Item 7 had the highest rate of “I don’t know / I can not evaluate” answers.



B- Dimension Analysis: Main findings

When items are combined to measure a dimension of a specific principles (e.g. items 1 & 2 as measures of “free and fair election”, a dimension of the general “representation and participation” principle), only three dimensions proved to be problematic for parliamentarians, while six flagged as significant for employees. The remaining dimensions did not cross the midpoint threshold.

The most important grievance for parliamentarians resided in the “equal opportunities” dimension [representation and participation]. Although still problematic, the least important complaint occurred in “conflict of interest” [integrity].

On the other hand, employees voiced grievances on six subsections. The most important grievance for employees also resided in “equal opportunities” dimension [representation and participation] and the least important one occurred in the “Efficiency of parliamentary groups” dimension [performance].

C- Item Analysis: Main findings

An important finding is that employees and parliamentarians have different evaluation perspectives of the state of the parliament in Lebanon. Overall, employees had a significantly higher number of grievances about the state of the parliament than parliamentarians did. Of the core questions asked, 3 were rated negatively by parliamentarians only (i.e. these items are unique to parliamentarians), while 12 items were rated negatively by employees only. Interestingly though, 4 items were sources of common complaint from both parliamentarians and employees in Lebanon. These 4 items are ranked from highest to lowest complaint in the table below (*Note*: Scores represent the average (mean) for each item on a scale from 1 to 5. Scores below 3 reflect a positive evaluation of the item, while scores above 3 reflect a negative evaluation).

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1. Political finance is regulated by clear rules. (Item 57, $x = 4.13$)
2. Candidates for parliamentary seats have equal access to private and public media enabling them to communicate with their constituents (Item 4, $x = 3.92$)
3. Parliament effectively investigates matters of corruption and mismanagement of public funds (Item 33, $x = 3.36$)
4. Parliamentary staff are selected according to objective professional criteria. (Item 46, $x = 3.21$)

One of the 4 items above is within the “representation and participation” (item 4). Two other items (item 36 & 43) refer to “performance”, and one pertains to the “integrity” principle (item 57).

For an exhaustive list of items to which only parliamentarians and only employees provided negative feedback, please refer to appendix B.



D- Negative Evaluation: Item analysis

As depicted above, many aspects of the state of the parliament were negatively evaluated. The five items least favourably evaluated by parliamentarians and employees are presented below:

	P	E
4 Candidates for parliamentary seats have equal access to private and public media enabling them to communicate with their constituents.	X	X
57 Political finance is regulated by clear rules.	X	X
14 Parliamentarians are subject to threats of physical harm.	X	
15 Parliamentarians receive the adequate financial compensation that guarantees their independence	X	
16 Parliamentarians occasionally legislate laws under undue pressures (internal or external)		X
43 Parliamentary groups work according to their own internal organizational rules		X
46 Parliamentary staff are selected according to objective professional criteria.	X	
58 Parliamentarians declare their financial assets in an accurate and honest manner		X

Parliamentarians ranked items 57, 4, 14, 15 & 46 consecutively as the least favourable in the state of the parliament in Lebanon. Two of these items refer to independence (items 14 & 15), and one item pertains to each of the following dimensions, integrity (item 57), representation and participation (item 4) and performance (item 46).

Employees ranked items 57, 4, 16, 58, & 43 consecutively as the least favourable in the state of the parliament in Lebanon. One item (item 16) refers to independence, two pertain to the integrity principle (items 57 & 58), and one item belongs to each of the “Representation and Participation” (item 4) and “performance” (item 43) dimensions.

E- Positive Evaluation: Item analysis

On the more positive end of the analysis, the five items most favourably evaluated by parliamentarians and employees are presented below:

	P	E
35 Parliamentary committees effectively study and debate draft laws before submission to the plenary assembly	X	X
11 Parliamentarians communicate periodically with their constituents on issues pertaining to public life.	X	
21 Parliament frequently delegates its legislative power to the executive	X	
24 Parliamentarians study and debate draft laws seriously and in details before approving them	X	
28 Parliamentarians refer to the previous year’s budget numbers to correct and estimate the projected year’s budget	X	
39 Internal parliamentary rules are clear		X
40 Internal parliamentary rules are implemented in a way that guarantees the ability		X



of the Parliament to fulfill its mandate (legislation and monitoring)		
41 Parliamentary sessions are managed in full conformity with internal rules		X
48 To what extent are the parliament's documented resources adequate (library or research centre or data bank)		X

Parliamentarians ranked items 11, 35, 24, 21 and 28 consecutively as the most favourable in the state of the parliament in Lebanon. One of these items (items 11) refers to the “representation and participation” principle, three (items 24, 28, and 35) pertain to the performance dimension, and one (item 21) refers to independence.

Employees ranked items 39, 48, 35, 41 and 40 consecutively as the most favourable in the state of the parliament in Lebanon. All of these items pertain to the performance dimension.

E- Frequencies of Specific Items

The table below presents the percentage of participants who believe that the election campaigns are financed by several sources and that the parliament is influenced by several sources as well.

	Parliaments			Employees		
	Good/ fine/ significant	Neutral	poor/ weak/ insignificant	Good/ fine/ significant	Neutral	poor/ weak/ insignificant
5 Generally, to which degree are Election campaigns financed by Personal funds of the candidate	91.7%	8.3%		81%		19%
6 Generally, to which degree are Election campaigns financed by Individual donations	26.3%	15.8%	57.9%	44.4%	5.6%	50%
7 Generally, to which degree are Election campaigns financed by Corporate donations	25%	8.3%	66.7%	13.3%	20%	66.7%
8 Generally, to which degree are Election campaigns financed by Public funds	25%	25%	50%	36.8%	42.1%	21.1%
9 Generally, to which degree are Election campaigns financed by Other sources				100%		
18 To which degree is the Parliament influenced/pressured by The government	36.4%	22.7%	40.9%	39.1%	17.4%	43.5%
19 To which degree is the Parliament influenced/pressured by Non-governmental entities	26.3%	36.8%	36.8%	33.3%	19%	47.6%
20 To which degree is the Parliament influenced/pressured	28.6%	33.3%	38.1%	82.6%	17.4%	



by International entities

F- Reform Questions:

The questionnaire administered to the sample of employees and parliamentarians included a series of “reform” questions. Participants were asked to rate the importance of reform in each of the subsections of the state of the parliament questionnaire.

The five domains that require the highest need for reform according to parliamentarians and employees are presented:

	P	E
31 It is essential to have specialized financial experts assisting parliamentarians in reviewing and overseeing the budget	X	X
3 Reforms are needed to reinforce the freedom and fairness of elections		X
10 Reforms are needed to ensure equal media and campaign funding opportunities for all candidates	X	
13 Parliamentarians should consult more frequently with constituents and civil society organizations to make the parliament more representative		X
34 Parliament should be more active in overseeing the executive		X
38 It is essential to assign parliamentarians to committees based on their expertise in order to increase the committees’ efficiency	X	
50 Improved staffing and equipment would strengthen the ability of parliament to function effectively	X	
56 Effective enforcement of conflict of interest rules is needed to ensure the integrity of the Parliament	X	
59 Reforms of political financing rules are needed to strengthen the integrity of the Parliament		X

Parliamentarians ranked items 56, 38, 10, 50 and 31 consecutively as the most needed reforms in the state of the parliament in Lebanon. One of the domains highlighted above refers to “representation and participation” (item 10), one to the integrity principle (item 56), and three pertain to the performance dimension.

Employees identified items 13, 3, 34, 59, and 31 consecutively as those requiring reform in the state of the parliament in Lebanon. Two of the items relate to performance issues (items 31 & 34), two belong to the “representation and participation” (items 3 & 13) dimension and one (item 59) pertains to integrity.

II. DETAILED FINDINGS FROM SURVEY**Representation and Participation**

Respondents indicate that the parliamentarians regularly participate with constituents and civil society organizations, thereby making the parliament more representative. Many respondents lack confidence in the equal opportunities of candidates, but waver over whether elections are free and fair.

Free And Fair Elections



- Sixty-two percent of respondents agree that the candidates have the means to contest the election results.
- There are mixed views on whether the elections are administered in a free and fair manner without pressures (disagree 45%, agree 43%, neutral 10%).

Equal Opportunities Of Candidates

- Seventy-four percent think that candidates for parliamentary seats do not have equal access to private and public media enabling them to communicate with their constituents.
- Respondents agree that election campaigns are funded by the personal funds of candidates (86%), but not by individual (54%) and corporate (66%) donations. There are mixed opinions on the use of public funds to finance election campaigns (32% agree and disagree). Respondents also agree that election campaigns are funded by other sources, such as international support (33%) and political parties (66%).

Participation

- According to respondents, parliamentarians communicate periodically with their constituents on issues pertaining to public life (58%), and 61% agree that parliamentarians also consult with civil society organizations on issues submitted to parliament.

Reforms

- Ninety-eight percent of respondents want parliamentarians to consult more frequently with constituents and civil society organizations to make the parliament more representative.
- Reforms are needed to ensure equal media and campaign funding opportunities for all candidates (93%), and to reinforce the freedom and fairness of elections (85%).

Independence

Respondents lack confidence in the independence of the Parliament. There is a concern over the protection of the parliamentarians, as many are perceived to be legislating laws under pressure. The external pressures that influence the Parliament and its loss of power compromise the independence of this branch of the government.

Protection of Parliamentarians

- Fifty-three percent agree that parliamentarians occasionally legislate laws under undue pressures, both internal and external.
- Respondents are mixed as to whether parliamentarians are subject to threats of physical harm (44% disagree, 41% agree, 14% neutral).
- A plurality of 44% thinks that parliamentarians do receive adequate financial compensation that guarantees their independence (38% disagree).

Independence of Parliament in Fulfilling its Mandate

- A majority agree that the Parliament is pressured by international entities (56%), and 42% think that the Parliament is not influenced by non-governmental entities. A slight plurality does not perceive the government to influence or pressure the Parliament (42%, 37% disagree).
- Seventy-nine percent do not think that the Parliament frequently delegates its legislative power to the executive (79%).



Reforms

- Seventy-five percent agree that additional measures are needed to increase the protection of parliamentarians and reinforce their independence.
- Respondents agree that reforms of the Parliament's administrative agencies are necessary to reduce the influence of the executive (88%) and also reforms to guarantee that parliamentarians fulfil their duties independently (87%).

Performance

Respondents depict the overall performance of the Parliament as effective. The legislative process, oversight of public finance, parliamentary committees, internal parliamentary rules and the overall competence of the parliamentarians serve to strengthen the effectiveness of the Parliament. Respondents are concerned over the oversight of the executive due to the inadequate investigation into corruption. The efficiency of parliamentary groups is also a concern as a result of the groups' failure to work according to their own internal organized rules. The administrative and technical bodies are an issue as the respondents are concerned over the selection process for staff.

Efficiency in the legislative process

- A strong majority report that parliamentarians study and debate draft laws seriously and in detail before approving them (80%).
- Sixty-three percent agree that the Parliament refers to experts when studying draft laws.

Effective Oversight Of Public Finance

- According to respondents, parliamentarians resort to economists and financial experts to study and approve the budget (66%).
- Seventy-seven percent agree that the parliamentarians refer to the previous year's budget number to correct and estimate the projected year's budget, but only 47% think that the parliament effectively monitors the disbursement and collection of funds in the budget.
- Respondent think that 48% of Parliamentarians use the reports of the Court of Audit to correct the expenditure of public funds.

Effective Oversight Of The Executive

- Sixty-one percent of respondents indicate that the Parliament effectively oversees the government in all of its activities.
- Respondents are concerned with corruption as 53% think that the parliament does not effectively investigate matters of corruption and mismanagement of public funds.

Efficiency Of Parliamentary Committees

- One-hundred percent of the respondents agree that the parliamentary committees effectively study and debate draft laws before submission to the plenary assembly.
- Seventy-two percent agree that committee meetings run in an efficient manner with 58% who think that the committees effectively oversee government activity.

Performance Of Parliamentarians According To Internal Parliamentary Rules



- According to respondents, the internal parliamentary rules are clear (80%) and these rules are implemented in a way that guarantees the ability of the parliament to fulfil its mandate (72%).
- Seventy-eight percent agree that parliamentary sessions are managed in full conformity with internal rules.

Efficiency Of Parliamentary Groups

- Seventy-eight percent agree that parliamentarians regularly attend the block meetings and follow a set agenda, but 42% disagree that the parliamentary groups work according to their own internal organizational rules.

Efficiency Of Administrative And Technical Bodies

- Forty-five percent of respondents think that the parliamentary staff are not selected according to objective professional criteria, but 75% agree that the parliamentary staff regularly attend compulsory training sessions.
- A strong majority think that the Parliament's document resources are adequate (87%), and 52% report that the parliamentarians regularly use these resources.

Competence Of Parliamentarians

- Respondents agree that the parliamentarians have effective access to government documents (75%). A majority think that the parliamentarians participate in workshops for professional development (54%).

Reforms

- One-hundred percent of respondents confirm that it is essential to have specialized financial experts assisting parliamentarians in reviewing and overseeing the budget.
- According to respondents, it is essential to assign parliamentarians to committees based on their expertise in order to increase the committees' efficiency (98%).
- Ninety-eight percent report that improved staffing and equipment would strengthen the ability of the Parliament to function effectively.
- Ninety-six percent agree that that Parliament should be more active in overseeing the executive.
- Reforms of the internal parliamentary rules (79%) and the creation of parliamentary blocks will increase the efficiency of the parliament (93%).
- Respondents think that the use of independent research centers (84%) and more on-going training for parliamentarians will make the Parliament more competent and more efficiency.

Integrity

Respondents cast doubt over the integrity of the Parliament. The lack of transparency regarding parliamentary activity undermines its integrity. Respondents waver back and forth on conflict of interests, but cite political financing rules as a major concern.

Conflict of Interest

- Forty-two percent of respondents think that the Parliament has clear rules prohibiting conflict of interest, but are mixed on whether the parliamentarians effectively adhere to conflict of interest rules (35% agree and disagree).

Political Financing Rules for Parties and Election Campaigns



- Seventy-nine percent do not think that political finance is regulated by clear rules, but 57% agree that parliamentarians declare their financial assets in an accurate and honest manner.

Transparency Of Parliamentary Activity

- Forty-seven percent disagree that anyone can access the minutes of parliamentary sessions without restrictions (42% agree).

Reforms

- Respondents indicate that political financing rules are in need of reform to strengthen the integrity of the Parliament (95%). Ninety-percent indicate that reforms to the conflict of interest rules are needed for effective enforcement. More transparency in the parliamentary activity is also identified as a needed reform to improve the integrity of the Parliament (89%).

III- Limitations:

It is important to note that the study does not allow sweeping generalisations about the state of the parliament; the survey used a random sample of parliamentarians and employees, but the sample size is too small to allow for confident generalisations. Furthermore, difficulties accessing these population (see refusal rates) limit the ability to generalise to the population since those that accepted to participate in this survey and those that refused may have different characteristics and perspectives.