



# The Republic of Lebanon

MAL FACT SHEET



## SUMMARY

The Republic of Lebanon is located in the Levant, bordering the Mediterranean Sea between Israel and Syria. It is rich in cultural and religious diversity due to its location at the crossroads of three continents. The civil war (1975-1990), which resulted in an estimated 120,000 fatalities, was followed by years of social and political instability, and sectarianism remains a key element of Lebanese political life. The Israeli defense forces, which occupied parts of Lebanon during the civil war, did not completely withdraw until 2000. In 2006, Israel invaded Lebanon after a cross-border skirmish with Hezbollah. Fighting lasted for a little over a month until the UN Security Council brokered a ceasefire agreement. Over 1.5 million Syrian refugees fled to Lebanon after the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011.

Lebanon's prosperity has significantly diminished since the beginning of the country's economic crisis in 2019, which has crippled its economy, shut down its previously lucrative banking sector, reduced the value of its currency, and caused many Lebanese to emigrate in search of better prospects.

**Chief of State:** The position of the president is currently vacant. The head of government is Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Miqati.

**Capital:** Beirut

**Other notable cities:** Tripoli, Jounieh

**Gov Type:** Parliamentary republic

**Population:** 5.8 million (2026 est.)

**History:** Mount Lebanon has historically existed under the Ottoman governate of Syria. After WWI, the French carved out Lebanon from Syria to create a state with a Christian majority. The Christian majority demographics of Lebanon quickly changed after the Naqba when countless Palestinians fled north.

## GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Lebanon is about 10,400 square kilometers in total area and has 170 square kilometers of water but has 225 kilometers of coastline. The climate is Mediterranean; mild to cool, wet winters with hot, dry summers.

The terrain is a narrow coastal plain; El Beqaa (Bekaa Valley) separates Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Mountains.

Natural resources include limestone, iron ore, salt, water-surplus state in a water-deficit region, arable land.

# Economy and Politics

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Noun: Lebanese

Adjective: Lebanese

Ethnic Groups: 93% Arab, 6% Armenian (also some immigrants from Africa and Asia)

Languages: Arabic (Official), French, English, Armenian

Religion: Muslim 67.8% (31.9% Sunni, 31.2% Shia, smaller percentages of Alawites and Ismailis), Christian 32.4% (Maronite Catholics are the largest Christian group), Druze 4.5%, very small numbers of Jews, Baha'is, Buddhists, and Hindus

Literacy: 95.1% (Male 96.9%, 93.3% Female)

Population growth is at 0.61% (2024 est.)

## ECONOMY AND GDP

Lower-middle-income economy; economic activity hurt by conflict, COVID-19, and the port explosion; hyperinflation and sharp increases in poverty; banks have ceased lending; a new financing facility is helping with recovery.

Real GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): \$72.6 billion (2023 est.)

Real GDP Growth Rate: -0.8% (2023 est.)

Real GDP Per Capita: \$12,574 (2023 est.)

GDP (Official Exchange Rate): \$20.08billion (2023 est.)

Inflation Rate (Consumer Prices): 45.2% (2024 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin: agriculture: 3.9% (2017 est.), industry: 13.1% (2017 est.), services: 83% (2017 est.)

Unemployment Rate: 11% (2023 est.)

Youth Unemployment: 22.7% (2023 est.)

Population below poverty line: 44% (2024 est.)

## MAIN POLITICAL CONTENTIONS

Lebanon's political landscape is a tapestry of complexity and diversity, reflecting the country's unique position as a crossroads of cultures, religions, and historical influences. The nation's political history is punctuated by periods of turmoil and instability, juxtaposed with phases of prosperity and growth, particularly in its role as a regional hub for finance and trade. At the heart of Lebanon's political life is a deeply entrenched system of sectarianism. The country's constitution mandates a power-sharing arrangement among its officially recognized religious groups. This arrangement ensures that each group's representation in government is proportionate to its share of the population. This system, while aimed at maintaining a delicate balance of power, has also been a source of political tension and division.

The influence of external actors on Lebanon's politics is another significant factor. Syria, in particular, has had a profound impact on Lebanon's domestic and foreign policies. From 1976 to 2005, Syria maintained a military presence in Lebanon, exerting considerable influence over its politics. The withdrawal of Syrian forces in 2005 marked a significant turning point in Lebanon's political history. Post-Syria's withdrawal, the dynamics between Hizballah, a major Lebanese political party and militia, and Israel have been a defining feature of Lebanon's political landscape.

Many refugees have fled from conflict in Palestine and most recently the civil war in Syria. Since the fall of Assad, most Syrians returned to their country. However, Regional instability continues to affect Lebanon's complex political, social, and economic landscape.

# Lebanon: A Timeline

