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CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY INSTITUTIONS IN LEBANON

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SUMMARY

This paper focuses on the outcomes of a nationwide survey on the Lebanese public's perceptions of their security institutions. These findings were part of a survey conducted by International Alert and the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies about the perceptions of security threats and the institutions providing security. The survey revealed that 92% of Lebanese believe that the state should be responsible for providing security. A total of 75% of respondents stated that they would resort to the state security institutions if they were victims of a crime. However, the survey also revealed that the public feels less safe today than it did three years ago and that there are differences in trust levels towards different security institutions depending on geographical and communal differences. Moreover, the survey revealed that resorting to state security institutions is very much related to the nature of the crime suffered. This paper analyses how citizens perceive the role and performance of state and non-state security institutions. It provides insights into the main perceived causes of citizen dissatisfaction in some security institutions. The paper concludes that the power-sharing sectarian system is one factor behind the rise in non-state security institutions and the weakening of formal state security institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The Lebanese security sector comprises a complex set of state and non-state actors and institutions that aim to protect the national territory, the national population, and specific sectors of that population and territory. Since its foundation, the Lebanese state and its security forces have struggled with cycles of internal violence and foreign intervention, including the 1958 crisis, the civil war of 1975–1990, recurrent conflict with Israel, occupation by Syrian (1976–2005) and Israeli (1978–2000) forces or proxies, conflicts between the state and Palestinian groups, and more recently the regional impact of the Syrian civil war. Nearly sixteen years of violence during Lebanon's civil war resulted in a weakening of Lebanon's state institutions and transformed political parties into warring factions. The end of the civil war in 1990 did not mark an era of reform to security institutions as envisaged in the 1989 Taif Agreement. Demobilisation and disarmament of the various militias was conducted in piecemeal form and largely allowed sectarian political leaders to retain their control of armed forces, even if these were largely held in reserve.[2]
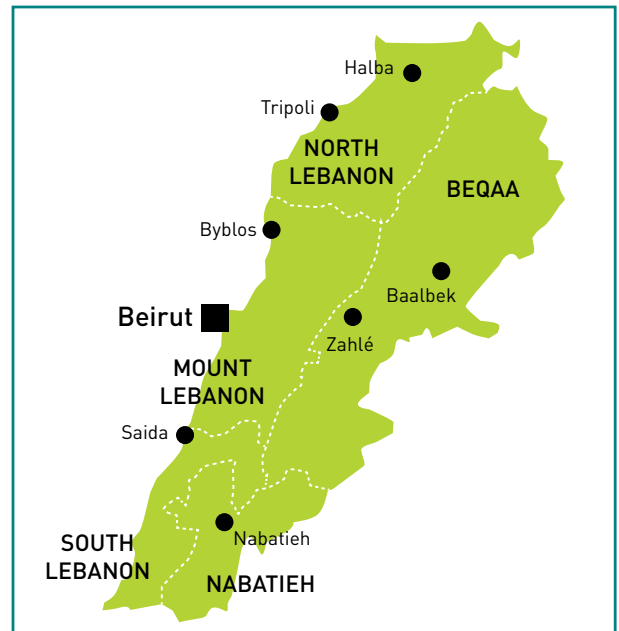
Understanding conflict. Building peace.

Security in Lebanon, like any other public service, is strongly linked to sectarian affiliation, of both individuals and the political parties that share local and national power. As such, there is significant weakness at the institutional level, reflecting a lack of consensus on the role, composition, leadership and interaction of the security forces. It is not possible to speak about security institutions without considering the political context in which they operate as well as the non-state actors that have continued to play a large role in security provision after the civil war.

Three decades of Syrian tutelage have affected the capacity of successive Lebanese governments to implement security sector reform and develop independent national security institutions. Between 1992 and 2005, the hegemony of the Syrian regime over state institutions precluded that recruitment, training and financing of state security institutions required the support of Syria's allies in Lebanon. The Syrian regime also helped forge a 'Troika' comprised of the president, prime minister and house speaker to address strategic security issues, marginalising the role of parliament and ministries in this regard. As such, state security institutions after the war suffered from being underfinanced and understaffed as well as being subject to the political influence of pro-Syrian elites. In addition, the long Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon and the 2006 Israel–Lebanon War have informally given a special status to the activities of anti-Israeli factions in the south, especially Hezbollah. In 2005, the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon signaled a potential opportunity for reforming security institutions. However, while the post-2005 era brought some degree of success in enhancing the capacity of state security institutions, non-state actors have continued to play a large role in security services.[3]

> *Security in Lebanon, like any other public service, is strongly linked to political leadership and sectarian interests.*

This paper discusses Lebanese citizens' perceptions of the role and performance of formal and informal security institutions in Lebanon. It builds on a nationwide survey carried out by International Alert from May to June 2013. The survey was based on a sample of 2,400 citizens in all districts (*qadaas*) of Lebanon, except three (Hasbaya, Hermel and Marjayoun). It was conducted through 'door-to-door' interviews using a directive questionnaire as well as the Probability Proportional Sampling technique. The sample was representative of the demographic composition of Lebanon, being: 50% female and 50% male; 92.5% urban and 7.5% rural; 39.2% Christian, 8.3% Druze, 25.8% Shia and 26.7% Sunni; and distributed proportionately across Lebanese provinces. Using probability sampling, the sampling margin of error was 2.45%. After data collection, the survey findings were cross-tabulated and analysed to ascertain the perceptions of security and security providers among different demographic groups in Lebanon. This cross-tabulated data forms the basis of this paper.

The paper comprises three main sections. The first section introduces the complexities of the Lebanese security sector, including its various formal agencies and the implications of sectarian governance for security provision by both state and non-state institutions. The second section provides an analysis of the 2013 security perceptions survey, drawing five lessons for the relationship between Lebanese citizens and their security institutions. The third section presents four priorities for action in terms of justice and security sector reform (SSR) that would strengthen access and provision for all citizens and residents of Lebanon, also strengthening the crucial relationship between state and people. Finally, the paper offers a conclusion on the opportunities for reform within the Lebanese context.

POLITICS OF THE LEBANESE SECURITY SECTOR

Formally, the Lebanese state's security apparatus is made up of six agencies:

1. Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) – responsible for external security and reporting to the Ministry of Defence;
2. Internal Security Forces (ISF) – essentially the police service, reporting to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities;
3. General Security Directorate – reporting to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities;
4. State Security Directorate – attached to the offices of the president and the prime minister;
5. Civil Defence – reporting to the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities; and
6. Lebanese Customs Administration – reporting to the Ministry of Finance.

The actual security sector is far more complex, including not just the armed wings of various sectarian-based political parties but also a range of semi-sectarian civil society actors, families, clans and tribes, and the private sector.

3   See M. Cammett and S. Issar (2010). 'Bricks and mortar clientelism: Sectarianism and the logics of welfare allocation in Lebanon', *World Politics*, 62, No. 03, pp.381–421.

A recent report by International Alert also highlighted that even the formal security sector is characterised by multiple authorities and legal ambiguities stemming from the sectarian system, which contribute to weakening its performance.[4] These ambiguities result from enshrining sectarian representation in the Taif Agreement, which makes appointment to and oversight over security institutions difficult to operationalise. At the heart of this institutional challenge lie the interests of political leaders in the sectarian system. These interests are constraining the ability of security forces to act impartially and be responsive to security threats and security demands.[5]

Lebanon's power-sharing formula pre-determines that representation and participation in public policies and public institutions are on the basis of sectarian identity. The power-sharing agreement which emerged from the Ottoman era and became more enshrined in the Taif Agreement requires Christian-Muslim parity in parliament and public institutions. The formula also now applies to all public personnel, including those in security institutions. Historically, this has meant that Lebanese citizens' relations with state institutions are often mediated by influential political authorities, who are supported by and often legitimised through their relations with sectarian leaders.[6] Such leaders – known as *zu'ama* – are often the providers of public

Political influencers are leaders outside of state institutions perceived as being able to control and negatively affect the performance of state security institutions.

services through para-institutional mechanisms. Sectarian representation as a requirement therefore gives power to political influencers, who often take over the role that any supposedly national security institution can play. Citizens' ability to be protected is mediated through their *zu'ama*. All political decisions and policies require a process of consensus building among *zu'ama*, who enjoy large autonomy over their confessional constituency.[7] The Lebanese power-sharing system has in turn emphasised the role of sectarianism and exacerbated clientelism, including through the provision of local security and justice.

In terms of formal or state security institutions, this paper primarily addresses the roles of the ISF and the LAF, as the 2013 survey data mainly assessed citizens' perceptions of these two institutions. That said, it is important for future research to tackle the role of the other four security institutions that also offer security services and are part of the state apparatus.

PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

The following section draws five important lessons from the 2013 survey on security perceptions.

1. Trust in the security institutions depends on the geography and nature of the crime

Despite the sectarian divisions that have characterised Lebanese politics and society since the Taif Agreement, evidence from the survey suggests that the great majority of Lebanese citizens trust the state security institutions sufficiently to enlist their assistance if they are a victim of crime. A total of 74.6% of respondents stated that their first recourse would be state security institutions (see Figure 1), although, as we shall see, that percentage is far lower in response to suffering physical, political, sexual or domestic violence. Eighty-six percent of respondents would be willing to turn to the ISF, 80% would turn to the LAF, 65% would turn to the State Security Directorate and 60% would turn to the General Security Directorate.

These percentages are far higher than any confessional component of the national population or research sample, and they demonstrate that each of the four institutions has some degree of support that transcends sectarian cleavages. Indeed, there were no serious differences in responses according to confessional status other than a slightly higher confidence rating among Christians for the LAF than the ISF, and lower levels of confidence among Shia and especially Sunni in the State Security and General Security directorates. While there was some regional variation, even in the least trusting province (South), almost two-thirds of respondents would turn to state security institutions for assistance.
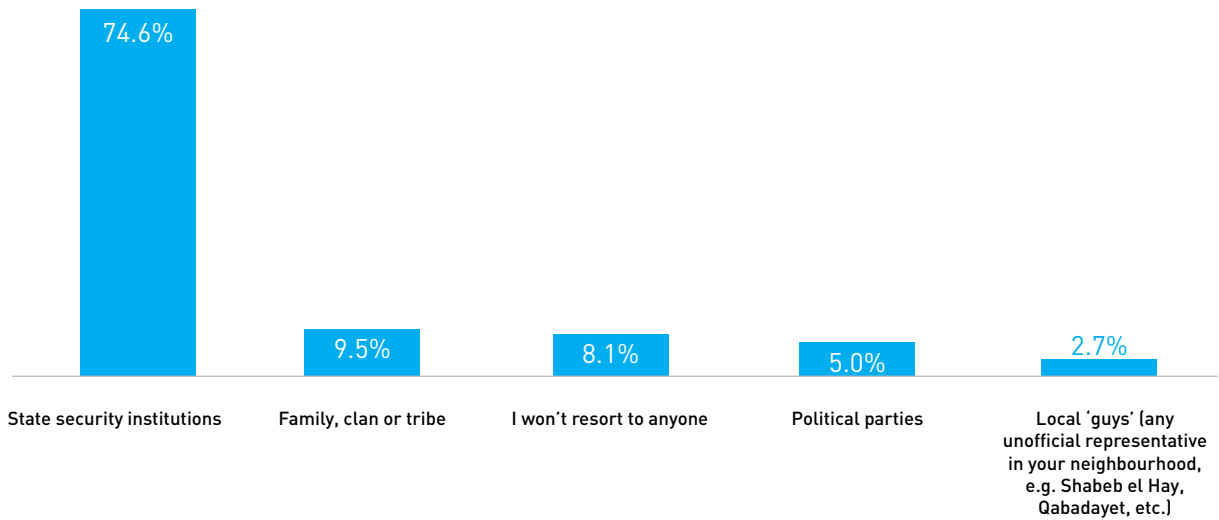
4   Z. Osman and S. Kassis (July 2014). *Security Sector Overview: Final Report providing Overview of Lebanese Security Sector*. Beirut: International Alert.
5   Ibid.
6   S. Haddad (2009). 'Lebanon: From consociation to conciliation', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 3–4, p.411.
7   See T. Fakhoury (2014). 'Debating Lebanon's power-sharing model: An opportunity or an impasse for democratization studies in the Middle East?', *Arab Studies Journal*, Spring 2014, pp.230–255; and R. Crow (1962). 'Religious sectarianism in the Lebanese political system', *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp.489–520.

**Figure 1: Whom respondents would turn to if they were a victim of crime (%)**

State security institutions	74.6%
Family, clan or tribe	9.5%
I won't resort to anyone	8.1%
Political parties	5.0%
Local 'guys' (any unofficial representative in your neighbourhood, e.g. Shabeb el Hay, Qabadayet, etc.)	2.7%

However, being willing to turn to state security institutions to address crime is not the same as trusting them. The ISF is the least trusted state security institution, being trusted by just under half of the respondents (see Figure 2). This compares with just over half for State Security, about 60% for General Security and over 80% for the LAF. Once again, confessional differences in trust for the various institutions were not high, the most notable exception being Sunni distrust of State Security and Shia distrust of the ISF.

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents who positively rate aspects of state security institutions' conduct, by sectarian community
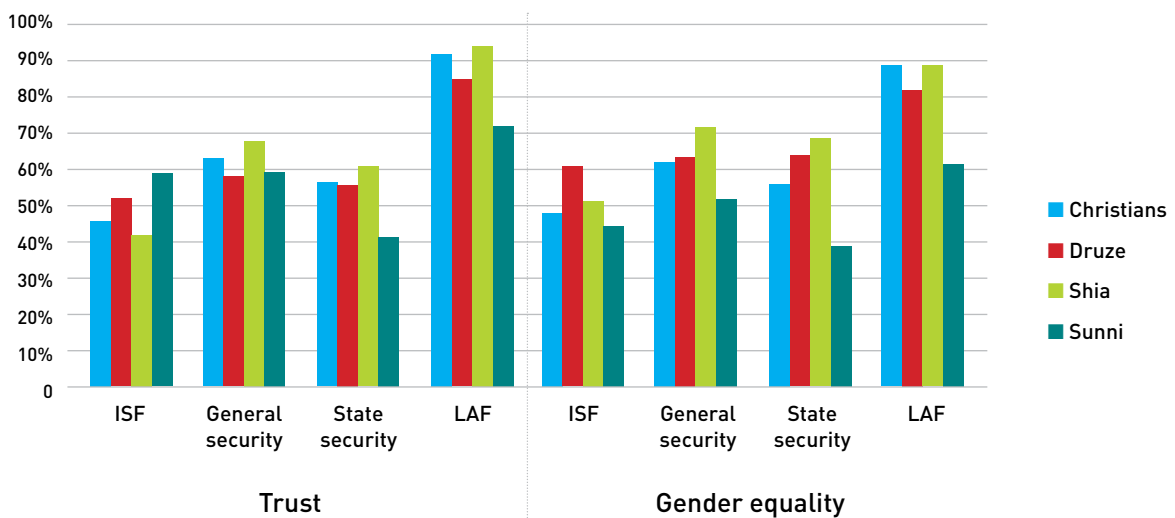
Differences in trust are far more distinguishable by district and province than confessional group. For instance, trust in the ISF varies from over 90% in Rachaya to just 10% in Tyre. The ISF is least trusted in the south and most trusted in the south-central districts. Conversely, while the LAF enjoyed almost universal trust in the south-central districts, it also had the trust of 98% of respondents in Tyre (see Figure 3). Only in the far north (Tripoli, Miniyeh-Danniyeh and Akkar districts) does trust in the LAF fall below 70%. This is a regional rather than sectarian distinction; substantially Sunni Saida and West Beqaa exhibit over 95% trust in the LAF.

Figure 3: Percentage of respondents who trust the LAF, by region[8]
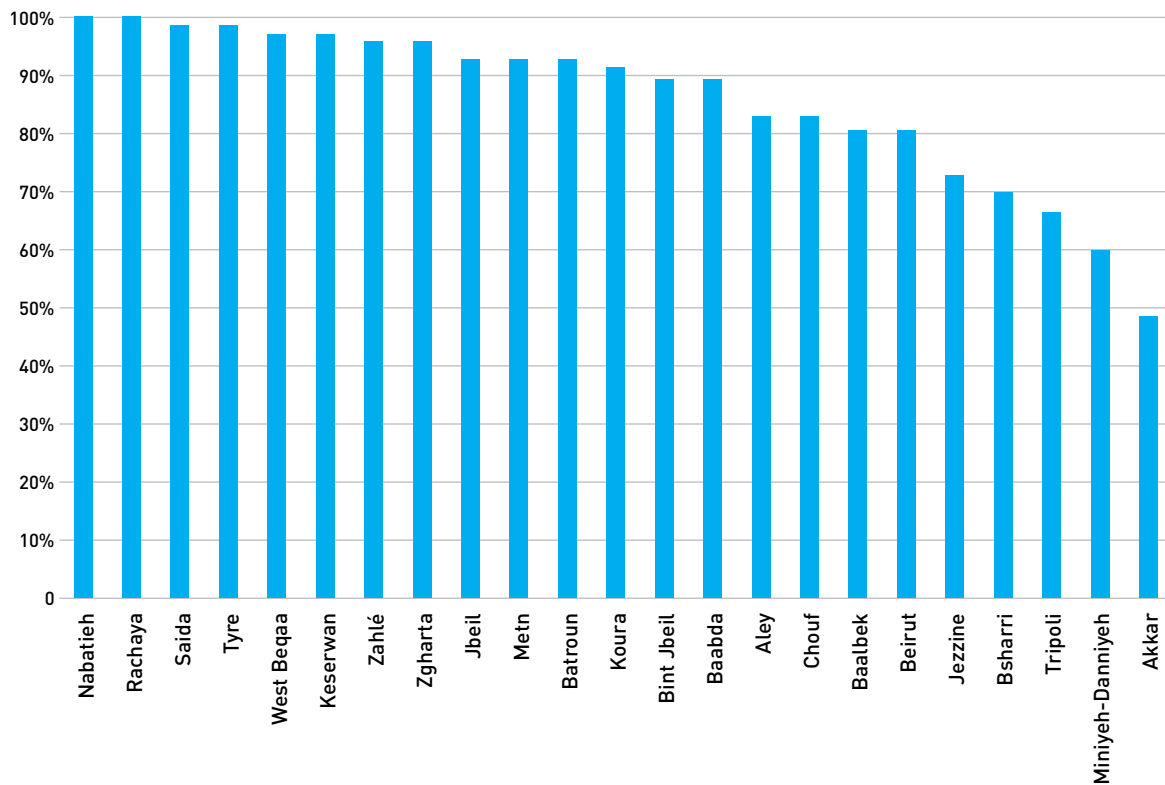
Citizens believe there is no question that state security institutions are needed. However, there seems to be scepticism regarding how much they can depend on the quality of security services provided by the state. There is also a general sentiment that the ISF is physically present, with 70% of respondents stating that there is an ISF station in their locality. The survey portrays that while Lebanese citizens have good faith in security institutions, they are dissatisfied users of state security institutions.

2. There is dissatisfaction with the performance of state security institutions and some consensus on how to improve them

The survey has provided insight into citizens' priorities for security sector reform, signalling an assumption by citizens that state security services can be improved. When asked how state security institutions could increase levels of public trust, the overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that dealing with terrorism, fighting corruption, respecting citizens, arresting criminals, preserving civil peace and (to a slightly lesser extent) increasing patrols could enhance public trust.

When asked what could enhance the effectiveness of state security institutions, again a large majority (over 70%) of all respondents agreed that all institutions should recruit on merit, address training and equipment requirements, apply sanctions in the case of misconduct, suffer less political interference, be disciplined, be given more authority and have higher salaries (see Figure 4).

8   Osman and Kassis (July 2014). Op. cit. p.58.

Figure 4: What respondents believe can enhance the effectiveness of state security institutions[9]
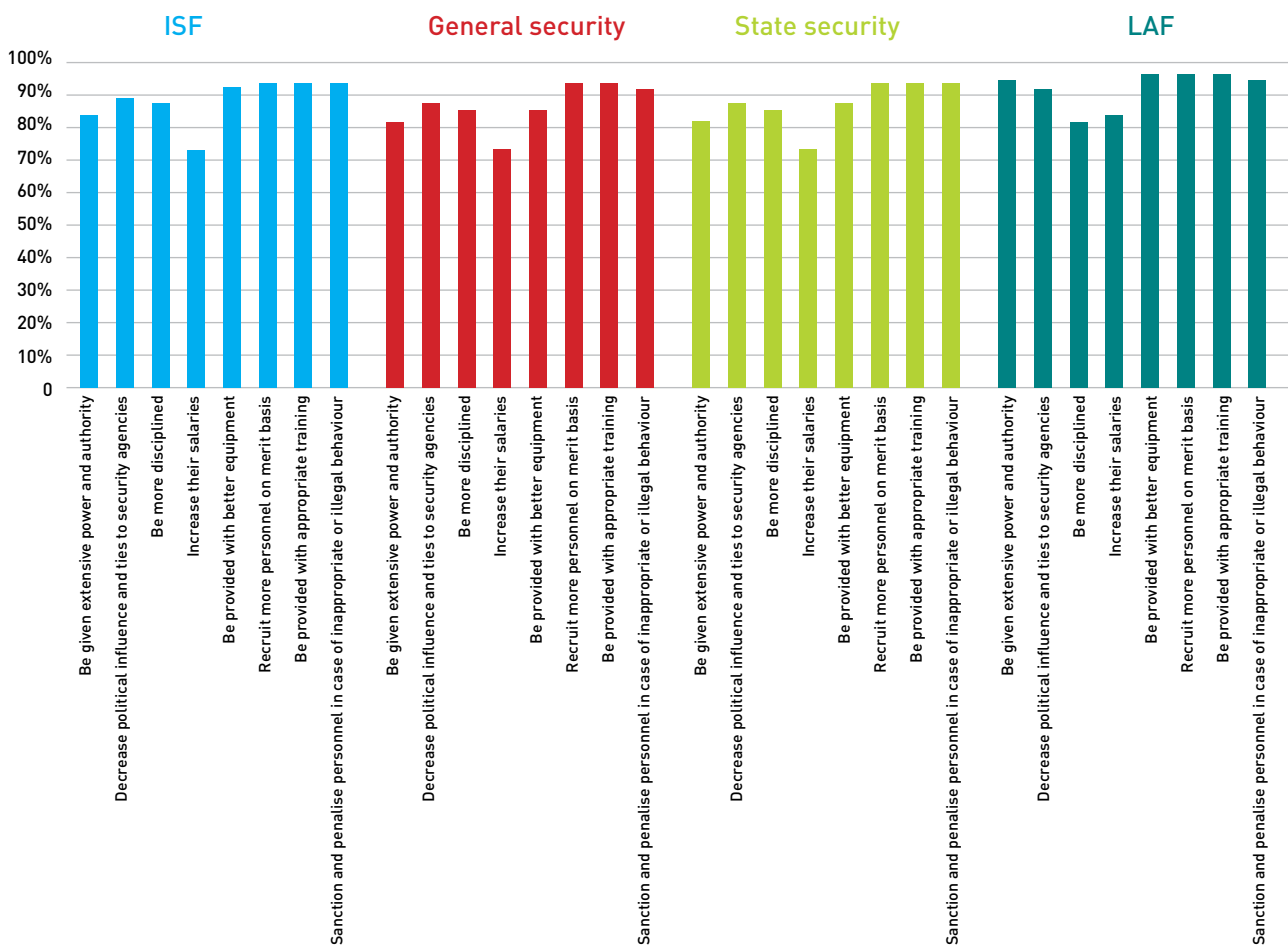
These results point to the fact that the vast majority of Lebanese citizens see room for reform and improvement of state security forces almost independent of their evaluation of those institutions' conduct. For example, although the conduct of the LAF is positively rated by over 80% of Lebanese citizens compared with about 45% for the ISF, respondents essentially exhibited identical support for various remedies to improve their effectiveness. Even for the LAF, over 90% of respondents endorsed decreasing its political influence, greater sanctioning and penalising of abusive personnel, improving its merit-based recruitment, and improving its equipment and training (see Figure 4). Relatively minor differences may be telling. For example, higher support for giving the LAF more extensive power and authority and increased salaries, as well as higher support for improving the discipline of the ISF, are somewhat indicative of greater respect for the LAF.

3. Respondents have some trust in political parties as security actors, but this varies widely by community, region and issue

The survey revealed residual levels of trust in political parties as security providers. About 16% of respondents would turn to a political party if they were a victim of crime, although only 5% would prioritise parties over any other institution. This differs significantly by confessional group, with about 30% of Shia willing to resort to a political party for assistance – almost three times the rate of other groups. However, Shia are still far more likely to turn to the ISF (89%) than to political parties and barely less likely than other groups to turn to the LAF, General Security, State Security or courts (all over 50%).

9   Osman and Kassis (July 2014). Op. cit. p.53.

The Shia community's attachment to political parties as security actors is illustrated by the 90% or more levels of trust recorded for Hezbollah and Amal among Shia respondents (see Figure 5). Small majorities of Druze and Sunni respondents would entrust the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and Future Forces, respectively, with their security. Significant minorities (38%–44%) of Christians would entrust various largely Maronite parties with their security. However, the situation is far more complicated than the simplistic sectarian affiliations of the civil war era would suggest. Significant majorities of Shia (63%–69%) would also trust the Christian Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and Marada parties with their security, while almost half of Shia would also trust the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) (Alawite) and Tachnag (Armenian) parties. Meanwhile, Hezbollah is trusted by over 30% of Christians and almost 30% of Druze. Such relationships of trust appear to owe far more to the complex party political alliances of the post-2005 era than to simple sectarian allegiances.

Figure 5: Extent to which people trust political parties with their security, by sectarian community[10]
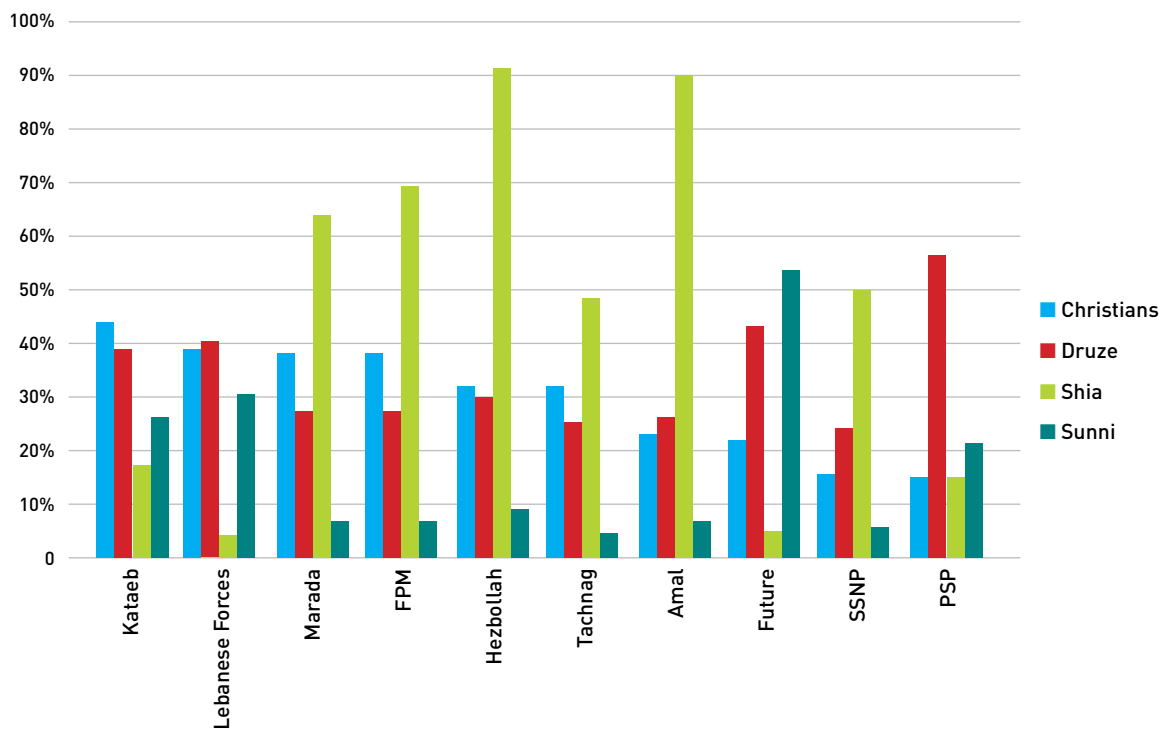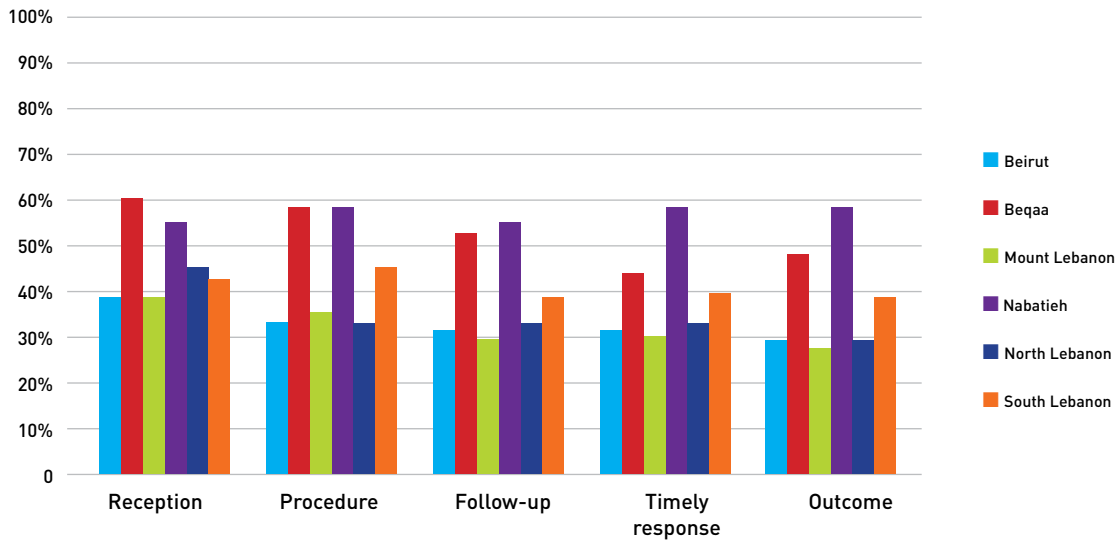

Trust for political parties as security actors is also hugely influenced by region. Whereas support for Hezbollah was almost universal in Baalbek, Nabatieh and Tyre (over 95%), it reached barely 20% in Beirut and was almost non-existent (under 10%) in the far north. However, such support for Hezbollah is positively correlated with trust in the LAF. Thus, over 97% of respondents in Nabatieh and Tyre, and over 80% in Baalbek, also trusted the LAF, while support for the LAF was at its lowest in the far north (Akkar, Miniyeh-Danniyeh, Tripoli) (see Figure 3). Support for the ISF among districts is far more mixed. While Nabatieh residents strongly trust the ISF, the people of Tyre have by far the lowest trust (10%) in the ISF of any district. Thus, there may be towns and districts in Lebanon where a political party is more trusted than an individual security institution, but such locales are atypical. Moreover, there is no significant locale where one party is trusted to the exclusion of all Lebanese state security institutions, although trust in the ISF and especially the LAF is notably weak in Akkar and Tripoli.

To put it another way, although each confessional community in Lebanon has a relatively high level of confidence in at least some of its own political parties to provide security, in no significant region of the country does this trust exceed the trust placed in state security institutions. Moreover, nationally no party exceeds the trust placed in any of the four main security institutions. While Hezbollah comes closest nationally to rivalling state institutions as far as the Lebanese Shia are concerned, it should be noted that the two Shia-majority provinces (Beqaa and Nabatieh), often seen as its heartland, also recorded the highest approval ratings for the ISF (see Figure 6), which some see as a Sunni-dominated institution.

10   Osman and Kassis (July 2014). Op. cit. p.58.

Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who positively rate aspects of the ISF's work, by *mohafaza*

Legend:
- Beirut
- Beqaa
- Mount Lebanon
- Nabatieh
- North Lebanon
- South Lebanon

(Categories: Reception, Procedure, Follow-up, Timely response, Outcome)

Note: *Mohafaza* refers to the administrative divisions of Lebanon.

Political parties are also far more likely than state institutions to polarise opinion. Despite its approval rating among some communities – for example, 42.3% of men and 37.1% of women considered that it was easy to get help from Hezbollah – a higher percentage (47%) of respondents said they felt threatened by Hezbollah (see Figure 7). Similar perceptions of threat were perceived by similar percentages of Lebanese in relation to other Alawite, Christian, Druze, Shia and Sunni parties.

Figure 7: Percentage of respondents who feel threatened by political parties

(Parties: PSP, Hezbollah, SSNP, Lebanese Forces, Future, Amal, Kataeb, Marada, FPM, Tachnag)
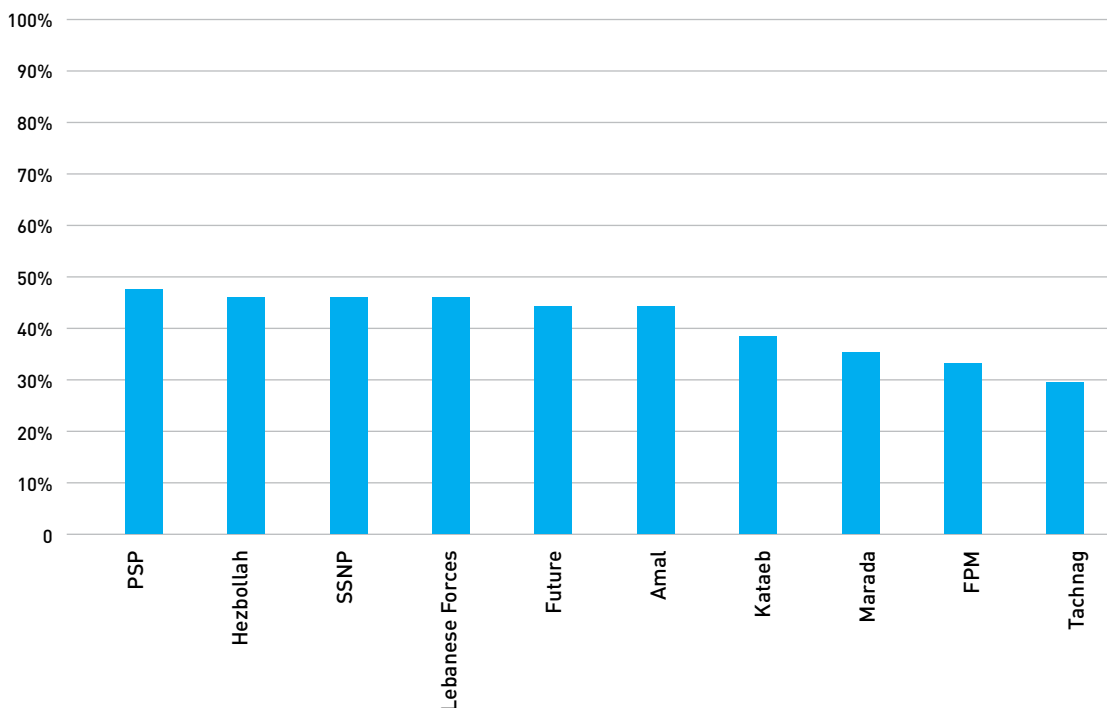
Another interesting finding concerns the types of security issues that Lebanese victims of crime have referred to political parties. In terms of property crimes such as theft (accounting for 70% of all incidents), only 2.3% referred the incident to political parties. However, in terms of physical attacks such as assault or kidnapping, 15.6% of victims referred the incident to political actors. Where respondents had been victims of political violence such as bombings, assassination (attempts) or street clashes, they were as likely (10.5%) to refer the incident to political actors as to state security institutions, although over 70% did not seek any recourse. As victims of crime, party members were four times more likely to resort to political parties than non-members. Interestingly, victims of crime state they are more likely (in the future) to resort to political parties than non-victims. Respondents who have relatives employed in state security institutions were far more likely (81%) not to report political violence to state institutions and displayed a slightly higher level of trust in the effectiveness and conduct of political parties as security actors.

4. Political parties are not the only non-state security and justice actors that Lebanese citizens resort to, or necessarily the most trusted or accessed

Lebanon is not wholly exceptional in the role that political actors play in providing access to security and justice. However, political parties are not the only non-state actors to which citizens refer security issues. Other non-state institutions include community mediators, human rights organisations, women's rights groups, religious organisations and community groups. Less formal security actors would include the family or tribe, friends, neighbours and local youth groups ('local guys').

Figure 8: Which security provider respondents would turn to if they were a victim of crime, by sectarian community
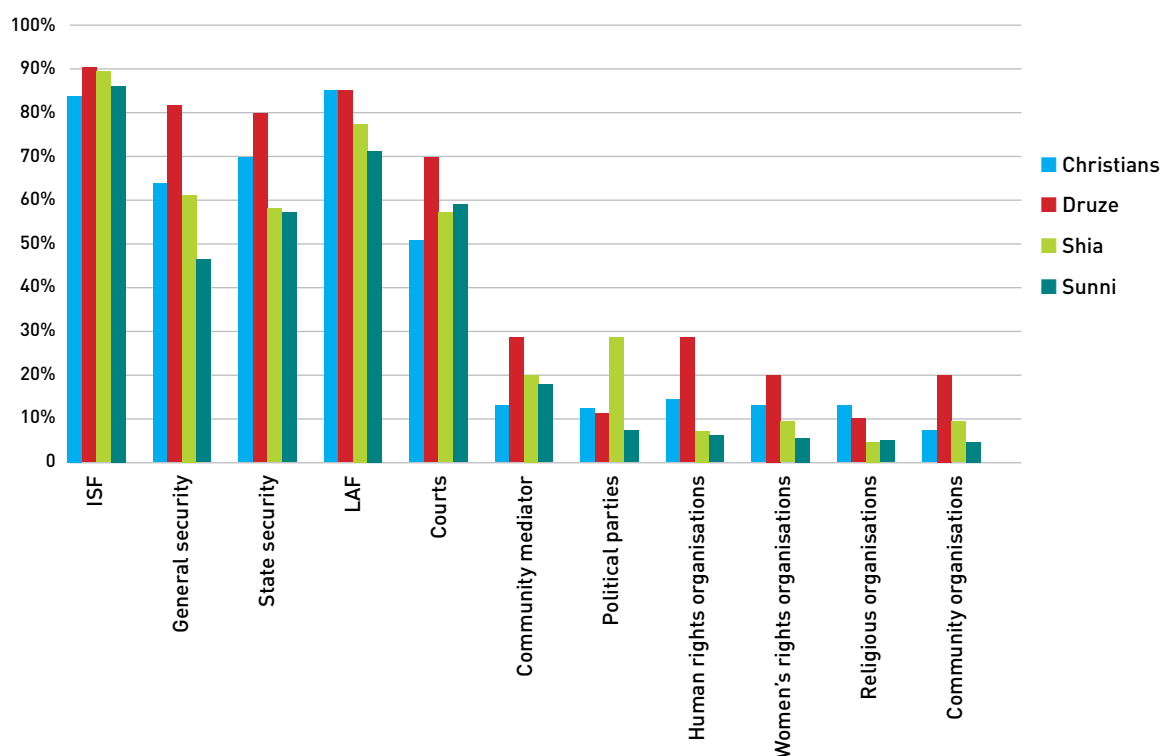
More respondents stated that they would turn to a community mediator rather than political parties if they were a victim of crime (see Figure 8). Only Shia were more likely to seek political party support. Overall, it seems that Lebanese citizens are at least as likely to seek restitution or protection through civil society organisations (CSOs) as they are through political parties, although the distinction of civil society service providers from parties or other sectarian interests is not always obvious or complete in Lebanon. Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) belong to established religious groups or families of sectarian leaders and play a crucial role in delivering key services such as education and healthcare.[11]

Overall, 9.5% of respondents said they would turn to family, clan or tribe (see Figure 1). In terms of sexual and domestic violence cases, this percentage rises to 50% across Lebanon, significantly higher than the 35% who would contact state security institutions. This suggests that there is a lack of confidence in state security institutions and the courts to take such cases seriously, even though female respondents (especially those who had been victims of crime) were more likely overall than men to place their trust in the ISF. About 18% of residents of Beqaa said they would turn to their family or tribe for security from crime, a far higher rate than the rest of the country. This may correlate with a sparser presence of state security institutions in this more rural province as well as greater concern about sexual violence in Beqaa.

Armed actors in Lebanon are not just divided between the state and political parties. Of the Lebanese who had seen non-state actors carrying arms in their locality (about two-thirds never or rarely had), just over half of these armed persons were recorded as party cadres. Others included bodyguards, hunters, security guards and criminals. These individuals complete the full spectrum of potential security actors.

5. There is less confidence in the Lebanese court system than in security institutions

The survey revealed that Lebanese citizens negatively perceive the role and performance of the court system. While citizens reported that they would resort to state security agencies, more than half of the respondents considered the courts to be inaccessible, unfair, ineffective and not timely. Over 60% of respondents did not rate the courts as independent. The negative perception of the court system may explain why citizens believe that reporting crimes might not be taken seriously by the ISF, among other state agencies. Interestingly, party members are more likely to see the courts as independent. Victims of crime are significantly more negative in their appraisal of the judicial system than those without exposure to the courts.

Lebanese courts are perceived as lacking autonomy and the ISF is perceived as not taking crimes seriously.

Major regional variation is also evident in perceptions of the judicial system. In general, residents of Nabatieh and South provinces were very positive in their appraisals of the courts, while residents of North province were very negative: less than a quarter viewed the courts as effective or independent. While Nabatieh residents had generally very positive views of other elements of the state security and justice system, the northern evidence is interesting as North province has generally high levels of trust in the ISF. This suggests that there is a breakdown in the chain of security and justice provision between the police and courts that is undermining confidence in the state overall.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR SECURITY SYSTEM REFORM

The vast majority (92%) of survey respondents believe that the state should be responsible for security and a significant number (74.6%) would turn to state security institutions in the event of a crime. However, respondents also believe that the performance and conduct of state institutions, particularly the ISF, could be enhanced in a number of ways.

A total of 92% of survey respondents believe that the state should be responsible for security service provision.

In so doing, security and stability could be improved and levels of insecurity, which persist to quite a high degree in many areas of Lebanon, could be reduced.[12] Based on the evidence amassed from the 2013 survey of citizens' perceptions of security across Lebanon, four priority areas for improving state security and justice institutions may be highlighted, as follows:

11   J. Chaaban and K. Seyfert (2012). *Faith-based NGOs in a Multi-Confessional Society: Evidence from Lebanon*. Beirut: Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies. pp.1–21.

12   E. Gordon (January 2014). *Perceptions of Security and Insecurity in Lebanon*. Beirut: International Alert and Lebanese Center for Policy Studies. p.13.

1. **Accessing security institutions:** One of the main ways that respondents rated security services was in terms of whether or not there was a security agency present near their household. The perception that the mere presence of an ISF station could deter crime was a repeated observation in the survey report. This indicates that the first way in which security services can be improved is through ensuring formal presence of the ISF in all localities. In this respect, 74.6% of respondents said that they would go to state security institutions if they were a victim of crime (see Figure 1). This supports the argument that the presence of state security agencies could potentially increase the rate of citizens using these security institutions. There is some evidence from Beqaa, where the ISF presence is lowest, that lack of state presence determines a higher recourse to non-state actors, although more obviously family than political parties.

The mere presence of ISF stations can increase the perception of safety among citizens.

2. **Providing security and justice:** Another way to assess security services is in terms of whether or not citizens can receive security protection as victims of crime or in response to social, economic or political grievances. The perception of victims of crime was less favourable of the ISF and the courts, with respondents reporting that it takes too long to receive protection or to address criminal issues. This indicates that there is a margin of freedom for non-state security actors to intervene and offer direct protection from security threats, thus undermining confidence in state security providers. Here, a high proportion of survey respondents said that they had been a victim of crime but did not report the crime to any security service provider. This is particularly the case for crimes of a political nature or sexual violence, for which the great majority of victims do not seek redress from the state. This supports the argument that citizen perception of state security institutions can be enhanced by improving the reputation of security agencies, including not just their *ability* to act but also their political independence or *willingness* to act.

Citizens feel that although they might access the ISF, it is likely that they may not receive the protection they need.

3. **Addressing the Syrian security and refugee crisis:** Based on the 2013 survey data, the ongoing war in Syria and the accompanying influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon was of concern to almost all respondents, representing a major, dynamic security issue for Lebanon. Along with Palestinians and foreign workers, respondents exhibited high levels of distrust towards refugee communities. The challenge of accommodating over one million Syrian refugees is seen as a critical security issue that state security agencies are failing to address. To some extent, individuals and non-state groups have taken matters into their own hands.[13] Although it is not a security service per se, addressing the challenges (social, economic and security) associated with the Syrian crisis can greatly improve the perception of state security services, and prove that these agencies are capable of dealing with humanitarian and political challenges.

State security institutions have yet to take formal and concrete measures to deal with the influx of Syrian refugees.

4. **Protecting women:** While gender does not significantly influence perceived challenges to Lebanese security, the ability of state security services to win the trust of women in particular is under question. Women feel less safe travelling long distances than men and more women than men said they had been the victim of sexual and gender-based violence and related crimes (9.2% compared with 3.8%, respectively). Women are also less likely to have visited an official security post than men. This indicates that security institutions are seen as less 'friendly' to women than they are to men, even though women experience equal if not greater insecurity than men. This supports the argument that relations between women and security state institutions could be improved in order to enhance the levels of satisfaction of both women and men in security services.

Women are more likely than men to feel that they lack full protection by state security institutions.

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13   At the time of writing, a rise in tensions, discrimination and violence among Lebanese and Syrians in local communities was proving to be a major national challenge to security. See, for instance: Human Rights Watch (2014). 'Lebanon: Rising violence targets Syrian refugees', 30 September, available at http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/09/30/lebanon-rising-violence-targets-syrian-refugees

Acting on these four priorities could potentially improve citizens' view of how security institutions are managed and the way in which they assess services obtained from the state. The continued perception that state security institutions fall short in addressing these four areas will provide citizens with a justification to resort to non-state actors, whether political parties, family or private actors.

CONCLUSION: PRIORITIES FOR REFORM

As discussed in detail above, the turbulent short history of the Lebanese state has shaped the development of the country's security institutions. The sectarian system underpinning the work of the Lebanese state institutions has influenced the function of the security sector. This factor, together with many other elements such as the structural and economic challenges and the enormity and permanency of the security problems facing Lebanon, has resulted in considerable challenges for Lebanese security providers and contributed to the shaping of a particular perception of security threats and security providers.

The survey showed, as this paper has sought to demonstrate, that despite all these real and perceived obstacles hindering the work and progress of the security sector, trust levels in the state security institutions still far outweigh the trust in non-state actors. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of state security institutions and believed in the necessity to reform them.

The perception that state security institutions are far from being fully effective in providing security services has opened the way for non-state actors to play different security roles. This trend, while contributing to offering increased security to the population, also serves to undermine the authority and role of official security institutions. These findings underline the need for security sector reform aimed at empowering and improving the performance of state security institutions, which 92% of Lebanese citizens believe should be serving them. Citizens' perception that state security services are inaccessible, unresponsive or unreliable is contributing to distrust in the state as a capable security provider. The perception that state security services are needed and can contribute to stability helps to build trust. Addressing these drivers of trust and distrust will help state security agencies to play a greater role in providing safety, stability and justice.