

7.2. Political opposition members

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As noted by Freedom House, Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing framework ensures that no political party functions consistently as an opposition group, while intra-party competition was also constrained due to power consolidation among political elites. Political parties that had dominated the political landscape before the 2017 electoral reform continued to benefit from legal provisions they had shaped, and often relied on coercion, disinformation campaigns, and communal pressure to sideline new political actors. Nonetheless, in the 2022 parliamentary elections, independent representatives linked to the 2019 protest movement succeeded in obtaining 13 seats.564

Debates over electoral reform continued into 2025. According to reporting from that year, Hezbollah, the Amal Movement, and the Free Patriotic Movement opposed proposals to amend the expatriate voting law, seeking to preserve Article 122, which reserves six parliamentary seats for the diaspora. Their opposition was linked to concerns about losing parliamentary representation, since expatriate ballots—comprising nearly one-third of the electorate—had predominantly supported opposition candidates during the 2022 elections.565

Beyond electoral matters, political elites were described as employing broader strategies to contain dissent. A 2025 report by the Dutch think tank Clingendael Institute highlighted the use of co-optation and fragmentation to contain and neutralise popular dissent, referencing demonstrations in the 1970s, 2015, and 2019 as examples. The report further noted that elite-driven rivalries sometimes resulted in shifts in the balance of power.566 For more information, see section 2.1 Recent political developments.

According to Freedom House, Lebanese authorities conducted surveillance of social media platforms and electronic communications, targeting *inter alia* political figures and dissidents. Security bodies were further alleged to have penetrated online networks employed by activists. 567 In parallel, criminal defamation and insult laws were frequently employed to silence critics, 568 particularly for exposing corruption or highlighting misconduct.569 For more information on the use of defamation laws, see section 7.4.1 Threats and harassment against journalists and media workers. Human Rights Watch documented that the advocacy group Kulluna Irada, which identifies itself as committed to promoting socio-economic and political reform in Lebanon,570 faced a legal complaint filed by a group of lawyers in March 2025 accusing it amongst others of disseminating false or exaggerated information that undermined public confidence in the state's financial stability.571

Concurrently, the government pursued direct measures targeting Hezbollah's military capacity.[572] In July 2025, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam ordered the arrest of armed men, reportedly Hezbollah supporters, who carried weapons during a religious gathering in Beirut, stating that armed demonstrations were unacceptable.[573] The following month, the government instructed the army to enforce the state's monopoly on arms by year's end, tasking it with disarming Hezbollah and restricting weapons to state-sanctioned forces.[574] Lebanon's Agriculture Minister Nizar Hani confirmed that the army had already seized hundreds of Hezbollah sites and arms depots.[575] For more information on Hezbollah's disarmament process, see section 6.2 Overview of security dynamics related to recent developments with Israel.

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