

ARMENIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE LEBANESE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS DURING THE PRESIDENCY OF MICHEL SULEIMAN (2008-)¹

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INTRODUCTION

A few months after the National Dialogue conferences began, and as it was to tackle the national defense strategy and the issue of the armament of the Resistance, a border incident during which Hezbollah elements captured some Israeli soldiers, on 12 July 2006, became the spark of an Israeli - Hezbollah war. The war lasted till 14 August 2006. Hezbollah declared victory. The March 14 group blamed Hezbollah for causing the war, with over 1200 deaths in Lebanon and a lot of damage to the infrastructure of the country. The group said the decision to make war was solely the right of the state and not any armed resistance group. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1701 imposing a cessation of hostilities, asking the Lebanese government to introduce the army south of the Litani River, asking Israel to withdraw from occupied areas, increasing the UN peacekeeping forces, UNIFIL, asking for the disarmament of all armed groups within Lebanon, etc.

The internal dispute between “March 14” and “March 8” groups, who were in the government of Fouad Siniora, increased. The unresolved assassination of pro-March 14 political figures continued. The war issue, combined with the efforts of Saad Hariri, led March 14 group to instigate the establishment of the International Tribunal to investigate the murder of Rafic Hariri, find out who was responsible and later judge the perpetrators, created a lot of tension. Hezbollah and Amal objected. Gen. Michel Aoun, who had been left out of Siniora’s government and who signed an agreement of understanding with Hezbollah on 6 February 2006 with his parliamentary group and movement as well as allies, supported Hezbollah and Amal. Soon after the assassination of minister Pierre Gemayel on 21 November 2006, the conflict over the tribunal led to the resignation of all the Shiite Ministers who belonged to either Hezbollah or Amal, as well as the resignation of the Christian minister who represented the president of the Republic, Emile Lahoud. “March 8” considered the government illegitimate and “March 14” considered it legitimate. A huge demonstration was held on 1 December 2006 and a permanent sit-in in downtown Beirut, by Hezbollah, Amal, and Aoun’s group and others, started paralyzing life there. However the March 14 group commemorated Hariri’s death on February 14 of 2007 and 2008.

The situation in the country remained very tense. The assassinations and various bloody incidents continued. MP Walid Eido was killed by a car bomb

on 13 June 2007, and on 19 September 2007 MP Antoine Ghanem was killed in a similar manner. Both were “March 14” group members.

In the Nahr el Bared (North Lebanon) Palestinian camp serious clashes between Fateh el Islam and the Lebanese Army started in June 2007 and lasted for some months. The clashes ended with the Army’s success in taking control of the camp, after the defeat of the Fateh el Islam fighters. These clashes further destabilized the country.

Speaker Nabih Berry did not summon the Parliament to any of its regular sessions, as he considered the government illegitimate on the grounds that a large community, the Shiites, were not represented in it.

Within the Armenian community the sequel of the 2005 elections was felt. The Tashnag Party, its affiliates and its organ *Aztag* ignored the activities of the Ramgavar, Huntchag and independent MPs and Minister Oghassapian. However, the three Armenian political parties’ leaders met from time to time and kept their agreement to preside by turn the Armenian community’s delegation in the National Dialogue Committee.

PARTIAL ELECTION OF NORTHERN METN, 2007

After the assassination on 21 November 2006 of Metn MP Minister Pierre Gemayel, son of the former President Amin Gemayel, the government had to organize partial elections within two months, but due to the tense and polarized situation in Lebanon and particularly in Metn, it did not. However, after the car bomb which killed the Beirut MP Walid Eido, seeing that the March 14 majority was eroding in Parliament, it decided to hold partial elections in Northern Metn and Beirut II. The elections were set for Sunday, 5 August 2007, although President Lahoud did not sign the decree calling for the elections.

Gen. Aoun’s Change and Reform parliamentary bloc and his allies, the Tashnag Party and MP Michel Murr, decided to participate, although they considered the government illegitimate. On 23 July 2007 Gen. Aoun, Michel Murr and Hovig Mekhitarian met at the General’s residence in Rabiye. They decided to defend the National Free Current’s candidate, Camille Khoury.² After this meeting they said there was still a glimmer of hope for concord. General Aoun said “the martyrs are our martyrs too, but in Metn the current electoral campaign has a political nature.” He added he had no personal problems with Amin Gemayel, the problems were over the rights of the president of the Republic and the constant marginalization of the Christian community.³

The candidate of the March 14 forces was the former president of the Republic, Amin Gemayel, chief of the Kataeb Party and father of the assassinated MP Pierre Gemayel.

Before their declaration to support Camille Khoury the Tashnag Party had tried to reconcile Amin Gemayel and Gen. Aoun, on condition that Gemayel would withdraw and present the candidacy of his son, Sami Gemayel, but they

had not been able to convince him, so the reconciliation was not materialized. The TPLCC thus remained faithful to its political ally Gen. Aoun and supported the latter's candidate.⁴

On 27 July 2007, receiving a delegation from Jdeyde and Sad Baushrie, Gen. Aoun referred to the unfair electoral law of 2000, which had deprived the Armenians in Parliament and the government of their representation. He was alluding to his ally, the Tashnag Party.⁵

On 29 July 2007 the TPLCC issued a communiqué saying they would not participate in the Beirut II elections based upon their 2005 decision not to participate in the Beirut elections to protest against the unjust electoral law. However, they would participate in the Northern Metn elections, allying with Gen. Aoun and Michel Murr, and supporting candidate Dr. Camille Khoury.⁶

Gen. Aoun declared he was against turning the contested Metn seat into a family inheritance, and that Gemayel should keep his position as former president of the Republic.⁷

The Huntchag and Ramgavar Azadagan parties, and also the LASA (Free Lebanese Armenian Movement), declared their support for their ally in the March 14 forces, Amin Gemayel, in Northern Metn and March 14 candidate, Mohammed Itani, in Beirut II. The Huntchag Party Lebanon Executive Body issued a communiqué in this respect on 1 August 2007.⁸ The Huntchag Party Lebanon Executive Body delegates visited Amin Gemayel at his Bikfaya residence and declared their support for him.⁹

On 31 July 2007 Amin Gemayel visited Catholicos Aram I of the Great See of Cilicia at the Bikfaya summer residence.¹⁰

On 3 August 2007 at Debaye's Emile Lahoud center, an electoral meeting was held organized by the National Free Current, the Tashnag Party and Michel Murr. Among the speakers was MP Hagop Pakradouny. He said there was no difference between the organizers, they were free and they refused the marginalization of the majority of Armenians and humiliation (they had suffered in the elections of 2005). The other speakers were Murr and Gen. Aoun.¹¹

Meanwhile on 3 August 2007 Amin Gemayel met in Bikfaya Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea and National Liberal Party Leader Dory Chamoun, who declared their support for him. Geagea said tens of dozens of buses had come from Damascus transporting hundreds of [naturalized] Syrians who would vote in the partial elections. Dory Chamoun said "Michel Nasrallah must not register a victory" alluding to the Aoun-Hezbollah agreement. Gemayel said he congratulated Aoun on being friends with the Kanso (Ba'asist) family.¹²

The elections were held as planned in a politically tense but calm atmosphere as planned on 5 August 2007. The army, the internal security forces and the Ministry of the Interior controlled the situation.

The official results were as follows –¹³

Beirut II –

Mohammed Itani	22988	votes
Ibrahim Halabi	3556	votes
Zuhair Khatib	75	votes
Rashid Kardouhi	72	votes
Saleh Faroukh	3	votes
Maher Abou Khoudou		received no votes.

Nothern Metn –

Camille Khoury	39534	votes
Amin Gemayel	39166	votes
Joseph Asmar	10	votes

Mohammed Itani and Camille Khoury were declared elected.

It became apparent that in Northern Metn out of 169,340 people who had the right to vote, 79,642 had participated in the election. 978 votes were annulled, due to irregularities. Voter turnout was 46.5 percent.¹⁴

According to various statistics, Aoun's candidate who won with a difference of 418 votes received 80% of the Armenian votes, 97% of the Shiite votes, and 50% of the Sunnite votes, while 57% of the Maronite votes were for Gemayel and 43% to Dr. Camille Khoury.¹⁵ Aoun's candidate received 20,000 less votes than Aoun's list candidates in 2005. While Pierre Gemayel had received about 1600 Armenian votes in 2005, in 2007 his father obtained about 2000 Armenian votes, out of 10,089 Armenian votes.¹⁶ In the region of Bourdj Hammoud Gemayel received from non-Armenian and Armenian voters 3016 votes. Gen. Aoun was pleased; his parliamentary bloc increased from 21 to 22.

The results were headlined as follows in the Armenian party organs –

Aztag – “The Lebanese Armenians once more voted for the decision of the Tashnag Party. National Free Current-Tashnag-MP Michel Murr alliance candidate Dr. Camille Khoury victorious.”¹⁷

Ararad - “The Future Current Candidate won the seat in the Beirut II electoral district. The Metn elections confirmed Gemayel's popularity in the Maronite community.”¹⁸

Amin Gemayel, bitter in his electoral defeat, made attacks in particular on the Tashnag Party and in general on the Lebanese Armenians during a live televised program of LBC's *Kalam el Nass* in which one of the participants was MP Hagop Pakradouny. During the program Gemayel's declarations were televised. In a second declaration Gemayel tried to rectify his first declaration. Gabriel Murr also made similar declarations and said the Armenians should have their electoral district in Bourdj Hammoud disconnected from Metn.¹⁹

Gemayel declared Tashnags must not “steal” the votes of the “real Christians of Metn” and said the will of Metn should not be dictated by the Armenians. Gemayel accused the Tashnag Party of using “unacceptable” election practices, and questioned their alliance with Gen. Aoun. Gemayel said, “Aoun called the group a mafia and undemocratic” citing a statement he said Aoun had made on 29 May 2002 in *AnNahar*. Gemayel said he was preparing a file on the “forgeries” committed by the Tashnag Party in Bourdj Hammoud and that it should be investigated soon. He added “we have close ties with Armenians, but what the Tashnag Party did was unacceptable.”²⁰

The TPLCC issued two statements on 7 August 2009. In the first one it said it was not the first time political or electoral sides tried to blame the Armenians and especially the Tashnag Party for their electoral failures. Furthermore, some had put their bets on a split of Tashnag ranks and leadership and exploited the case of some expelled party members and financed them to create an anti-Tashnag movement spreading false rumors. The Party deplored the fact that for one seat an attempt of settling accounts was made with a party that was not fanatical and racist. In the second statement the Party echoed Gemayel’s announcement that his failure was due to the Armenians and in particular the Tashnag Party. Gemayel in his attack tried to divide the Lebanese Armenians and the Tashnag Party members, sympathizers and opponents, who condemned his declarations.²¹

Indeed the Huntchag Party Lebanon Executive Body, who had campaigned and voted for Gemayel, without naming him, said some political personalities who were displeased with the election results had blamed the Lebanese Armenians for their failure. The Party condemned this and said it was the right of every political current to make electoral alliances as they saw fit.²²

Catholicos Aram I of the Cilician See also asked on 6 August if the sides could not have avoided the tense situation and accusations. Patriarch Sfeir said he had tried to bring forth a mutual agreement between the sides, but the Christians went to the polls with a divided spirit. He also said the accusations against the Armenian community by some were unacceptable and baseless.²³

The Political Council of the Armenian Parliamentary Bloc condemned Gemayel’s and Gabriel Murr’s “racist declarations”.²⁴

MP Hagop Pakradouny said Gemayel had to apologize to the Armenians and that if he decided to visit the TPLCC, he would be accepted by them. He said it is not true that the Tashnag Party had communicated with the American Embassy on the issue of the partial elections. He added no one was more Christian, than the Armenians, who were the first to accept Christianity as their state religion in 301 AD.²⁵

MP Nabil Nicola of Aoun’s bloc said the Armenians were one of the first Christian peoples, and Armenians were in Metn from the days of Greater Lebanon and were not newcomers, as some political sides had declared.²⁶

President Lahoud also said to his visitors on 8 August, if one wanted to be in disagreement let this be on a political basis and not a sectarian basis. It was not possible to address accusations to a Lebanese community and say it was not Lebanese anymore, as happened in the case of the Armenians. He said that Armenia was the first state to accept Christianity as its state religion and it is wrong to say the Armenians are not Christians.²⁷

Many political personalities visited the TPLCC and showed their support. Some of them were former Minister Talal Arslan,²⁸ a Hezbollah delegation, Fouad Makhzoumi, Tadamon Party Chief Emile Rahme,²⁹ Aoun's bloc MPs, Michel Murr, Sleiman Franjie, an Akkar Muslim delegation led by Sheikh Abdel Salam Haraji, and others.³⁰ There were declarations of solidarity by speaker Berry³¹ and the Zahle Bloc of Elias Skaff.³²

The TPLCC in its turn visited Catholicos Aram I, Armenian Catholic Patriarch Nerses-Bedros XIX and Rev. Meguerditch Karageuzian, President of the Near East Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches. The party discussed the latest developments resultant from the partial elections.³³

On the same day, 8 August 2007, former president Amine Gemayel visited Catholicos Aram I at his Bikfaya residence. The Catholicos conveyed to him his and his community's outrage "at the allegations and irresponsible declarations" made after the partial elections. Gemayel in his turn clarified that personally he had made not one injurious statement concerning the Armenian community and that his expressions dealt with the electoral process only. He said he reconfirmed his great respect for the Armenian community.³⁴

Gemayel on 12 August declared in Bikfaya "let us close this page of the elections and look to the future", to which MP Pakradouny replied "we are waiting for practical steps and our doors are open to all". Murr in his turn, in the Tashnag headquarters, said, "It is a virtue to accept a mistake and rectify it". The TPLCC expressed thanks for the solidarity statements and visits, as well as saying Gemayel's recent declarations were the first step to rectifying the disrespect to the Lebanese Armenians and the Tashnag Party.³⁵ However, Gemayel did not visit the TPLCC headquarters.

The Huntchag Party Dkhrouni Student Youth Union's delegation met Amin Gemayel on 9 October 2007 in his Bikfaya residence. Gemayel reiterated that his declarations were not directed against the Armenian community "but an Armenian party, whose leadership's particular steps do not correspond to the Armenian reality". Also during the meeting appreciation was shown for the increase of Armenian votes in favor of the March 14 candidate.³⁶

The Free Lebanese Armenian Movement's (LASA) leader, Gen. Nareg Aprahamian, said Gemayel's nervous outburst was against the Tashnag Party leadership and not the Lebanese Armenians; they were not expelled members but had all resigned from the party of their own free will. He added the marginalization of the community was due to the party leadership who, at the beginning of Lahoud's presidency, saw the imprisonment of a minister,

resignation of first category officials and the refusal to appoint a second Armenian minister.³⁷

The Speaker of the Parliament, Nabih Berry, when he summoned the Parliament solely to elect the parliamentary committees, had the Ministry of Interior's decree on the election results read. Thus he recognized the result of the partial elections, decided upon by a government he considered illegitimate, particularly as the call of the election was not endorsed by the President of the Republic.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION PRIOR TO THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS OF 2009

According to the constitution the Speaker called the parliament to elect the successor of the outgoing president Lahoud on 25 September 2007. But the opposition boycotted the successive sessions and did not agree to the candidates of the majority March 14 group. Lahoud left the presidential palace at midnight on the last day of his term, 23 November 2007, before a successor was elected.

Eventually the majority agreed upon a candidate accepted by all, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Michel Sleiman. However, the opposition, without objecting to the candidate, did not attend the set presidential election sessions, as they had their terms for the formation of the government to be formed after the presidential elections.

The situation was very tense in Lebanon; the sit-in continued; the country and the parliament were paralyzed. When Siniora's government, upon the insistence of Walid Jumblat, decided to take measures against the cellular telephone network of Hezbollah, just prior to the Labour Union's strike and demonstrations against the high cost of living, the situation worsened. Clashes took place in certain neighborhoods and roads were blocked by Hezbollah and Amal, including the airport road. On 7 May 2008 Hezbollah and its allies intensified their penetration into West Beirut Sunnite quarters and attacked Hariri's Future TV and radio stations as well as Radio Sevan, which belonged to Ara Sisserian. Armed elements took control of West Beirut and cut road links with East Beirut, except for the harbour road. The army did not intervene in Beirut or elsewhere in Lebanon. The airport was closed. Almost all schools in West Beirut closed. A good number of people could not reach their places of work. For days armed elements were seen in key areas of West Beirut.

The May 7 incidents led to a compromise. Qatar sponsored a conference at Doha, in which the National Dialogue groups participated including the Armenians. After days of negotiations on 21 May 2008 an agreement was reached on the formation of the government and changes in the electoral law. The question of the arms of Hezbollah would be dealt with in the National Dialogue conference.³⁸ This agreement would pave the way for the presidential elections in Parliament.

In Doha, the agreement reached concerned the formula on which would be based the formation of the cabinet and the electoral law. Out of 30 ministerial seats 16 would be given to the majority March 14 group, who would not have an absolute majority. The opposition March 8 group would have 11 ministerial seats, thus enabling them to veto any major decisions not approved by them. The President of the Republic would have 3 ministers appointed by himself.³⁹

As far as the electoral law was concerned, it was agreed to hold elections based on the smaller administrative area, the *caza*, to follow more or less the electoral law of 1960, and to divide Beirut into three electoral districts.⁴⁰

Beirut I would have one seat each for Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox and Armenian Catholics. Beirut II would have 2 Armenian Orthodox, 1 Shiite and 1 Sunnite seats and Beirut III would have 6 Sunnite, 1 Shiite, 1 Greek Orthodox, 1 Protestant and 1 Minorities seats.⁴¹

After heated discussions on the Armenian representation, it was agreed that in Beirut II one seat would go to the March 8 ally Tashnag Party and one seat to the March 14 Armenian allies. Furthermore it was agreed that the Sunnite seat would go to Hariri's Future Movement and the Shiite seat to the Hezbollah-Amal alliance, to prevent a fierce campaign and to achieve a fair representation of the political forces on the ground. The other seats in Beirut I and III would be open to contestation.⁴²

On 22 May 2008, *Nahar* gave the geographical divisions of each Beirut electoral districts and the number of voters therein, according to each community.⁴³

Beirut I – Ashrafieh, Rmeil and Saifi

Greek Orthodox	25,211
Armenian Orthodox	16,489
Armenian Catholic	4,813
Protestants	2,171
Greek Catholics	12,698
Maronites	16,447
Other Christians	10,403
Druzes	268
Sunnites	6,275
Shiites	1,831
Total	96,669

Beirut II – Mudawar, Marfa and Bashoura

Greek Orthodox	2,403
Armenian Orthodox	29,643
Armenian Catholic	3,729
Protestants	2,436
Greek Catholics	2,314
Maronites	3,866

Other Christians	3,505
Druzes	133
Sunnites	30,597
Shiites	27,689
Total	106,637

Beirut III – Mazraa, Zokak el Blat, Minet el Hosn, Museitbeh, Ain el Mreysse and Ras Beirut.

Greek Orthodox	17,003
Armenian Orthodox	5,425
Armenian Catholic	1,153
Protestants	3,054
Maronites	5,786
Other Christians	8,882
Druzes	4,735
Sunnites	172,756
Shiites	38,052
Total	267,893

Once the agreement was signed, the door was opened for the presidential elections. On 25 May 2008 Gen. Michel Sleiman, was unanimously elected President of the Republic, after a vacancy of six months since Lahoud's departure.

On 11 July 2008 a new government of 30 members led by Fouad Siniora was formed, on the basis of the Doha agreement, with the primary task of organizing the legislative elections.⁴⁴

THE PRE-ELECTORAL SITUATION WITHIN THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

The world Tashnag and Ramgavar Azadagan leaderships met in the capital of Armenia, Yerevan, in November 2007, and signed an agreement of cooperation in national affairs. The Huntchag party did not participate in the meeting.⁴⁵

In Lebanon as well the leadership of the three local parties met on 6 December 2007 to discuss local issues.⁴⁶

The divisions within the Ramgavar Azadagan Party were exacerbated. The party organ, *Zartonk* daily, ceased publication from 11 January 2007 to the end of April 2008; it reappeared on 1 May 2008 first as a weekly, then semi-weekly and later thrice weekly. The editor-in-chief, Barouyr Aghbashian, who had resigned in protest from party membership, was replaced. The internal opposition, just prior to the legislative elections of 2009, started the publication of a monthly newsletter.

The Communist *Gantch* weekly had also ceased publication in November 2006 after its editor Barouyr Yeretsian passed away on 9 September 2006. On

the other hand, the Huntchag Party seemed to unite its ranks and gather some strength, and its organ *Ararad* was published as a daily, as of March 2008, after being a weekly then thrice weekly for some time.

The movement created by the former Lebanese army general Nareg Aprahamian, former Ambassador Dr. Vatche Nurpetlian, and others, as LASA opened a club right in the heart of Bourdj Hammoud, and also on Mar Mikhael street in the Nahr area. Essentially they were a splinter group from the Tashnag Party. The general, who had resigned from the Tashnag Party, was declared expelled by the party. The new group publicly celebrated Armenian Martyrs' Day on 25 April 2008. For sometime they also published a magazine.

Due to the assassination of several MPs and the fear that the majority forces in parliament would thus be reduced, almost all March 14 MPs and ministers, including the Armenian MPs, took up residence at Hotel Phoenicia and later at other sea-front hotels rather than at their homes and did not circulate, except to attend parliament and bloc meetings under strict security measures. The Huntchag and Ramgavar Party Lebanon leadership visited their MPs at their hotel residences.⁴⁷

Representatives of the pro-March 14 Armenian parties, the Huntchags, Ramgavars, LASA, and Ararad Union, met Minister Oghassapian and MPs Djeredjian and Toursarkissian and decided to participate massively in the 14 February 2008 meeting at the Martyrs Square in downtown Beirut in commemoration of Hariri's assassination.⁴⁸

Michel Murr, some time before the May 7 incidents had left Aoun's parliamentary group, disagreeing on Aoun's stand over the presidential elections. Murr declared that he regretted joining forces with Aoun during the partial elections of Northern Metn in August 2007, which resulted in former president Gemayel's defeat. The Tashnag Party had visited Aoun and reaffirmed their solidarity with him and also had maintained their alliance with Murr.⁴⁹ However the Tashnag Party did not participate in the Municipal councilors meetings that Murr had organized.⁵⁰

After the 7 May 2008 incidents in West Beirut, the three Armenian political parties' leaders met and issued a joint declaration on 10 May 2008, saying that they had met and discussed matters concerning Lebanon and the Armenian community.⁵¹ The same day the Huntchag Executive Body condemned the burning of Radio Sevan.⁵²

Later, after the election of president Sleiman, each Armenian party leadership, accompanied by their MPs visited the president at the presidential palace in Ba'abda.⁵³

In the new government of Fuad Siniora the Tashnags were represented by Minister of Energy Alain Tabourian and the March 14 parties, the Ramgavars and the Huntchags by Minister of State Jean Oghassapian.⁵⁴

Soon after the Doha agreement and particularly after the formation of the new Siniora government, pre-electoral activities started.

Gabriel Murr, on 3 July 2008, visited the Tashnag headquarters and declared he had come “to rectify a careless attitude which belonged to the past”, referring to his impertinent declarations after the Northern Metn partial elections. The Tashnag MP Pakradouny afterwards declared that the page of the declaration of Gabriel Murr was closed.⁵⁵ A week later on 10 July the TPLCC delegation visited Michel Murr and said their visit was to confirm the party’s alliance and friendship with Murr, which would continue in the elections of 2009. Murr also confirmed that he would participate with the Tashnag Party in the forthcoming election.⁵⁶ Also, one week after their visit, a TPLCC delegation visited Gen. Aoun and declared their alliance with him should stand firm and the party would cooperate both with Aoun and Murr in the elections.⁵⁷ Murr later on said it was early to present the lists of candidates.⁵⁸ On 18 July 2008 the Tashnag Party received the visit of a Baas party delegation.⁵⁹

There was talk of a list in the March 14 forces Northern Metn which would include Amin Gemayel, Nassib Lahoud and an Armenian, but it was speculation.⁶⁰

On 4 August 2008 MP Pakradouny declared the Tashnag Party was open electorally to all sides in Metn. He added that relations with the Kataeb Party needed a positive step on the part of Amin Gemayel. He further said the alliances of the Tashnag in Beirut, Bekaa and the Metn remained unchanged.⁶¹

In the Huntchag daily *Ararad*, on 22 July 2008, the party indicated the party electoral central committee office days and hours and invited party members and supporters to present themselves to check on their electoral status.⁶² Vice-PM Abou Jamra of Aoun’s bloc declared their allies in the opposition were to be their candidates in the elections of 2009.⁶³

THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS OF 2009

The electoral law was approved by the parliament on 29 September 2008. The proposal of printed electoral ballots with the names and pictures of all the candidates of a given district did not pass. The electoral registration voting card was abolished; instead, according to article 88 of the electoral law, voters would present their I.D. cards to vote and a finger would be marked by ink. Lebanese émigrés could not vote in 2009 in their places of residence abroad. This was left to 2013. However, if they presented themselves in Lebanon and their names were on the electoral registration lists, they could vote. The lowest age for voters was maintained at 21 years old.⁶⁴

Articles 1 and 2 and article 67 mentioned the right of each candidate to full access to the public media. Article 70 gave each local authority the right to set the zones where electoral material would be posted. Article 71 forbade any electoral publicity at the doors of polling stations. Article 57 set 150,000,000LL as the maximum a candidate could spend for electoral expenses, which would later be controlled by the Committee of control of the elections. Article 73 also forbade the diffusion of any forms of publicity on the

day before the election till the voting was over. Article 78 gave the Committee of control of the elections, the right to take sanctions against the media if they failed to observe the dispositions of the electoral law.⁶⁵

In its meeting of 14 December 2008 the government formed the Committee of control of the elections, chaired by Ghassan Abou Alouan and composed of ten individuals. The committee included an Armenian Evangelical, Dr. Arda Ekmekji, Dean of Arts and Sciences at Haigazian University of Beirut, who previously was in the Committee formed to present a new electoral law which was presided by Fuad Boutros.⁶⁶

The Minister of the Interior, Ziad Baroud, who also had been previously in the Boutros Committee, firmly took charge of the electoral process. He announced that the legislative elections would be held in one day on 7 June 2009, in all Lebanon, contrary to the previous system of holding the elections over several Sundays. The minister also said all I.D. demands should be presented by 28 February 2009. Later on this deadline was extended to facilitate the task of voters.⁶⁷

Once the electoral law was approved by parliament, electoral activities accelerated. At this juncture patriarch Sfeir warned against the victory of March 8 forces in an interview in *Al-Massira*, making clear his position.⁶⁸

There was persistent talk that Minister Jean Oghassapian would present his candidacy in Northern Metn.⁶⁹

MP Michel Pharaon organized a meeting in Biel, in which Future Bloc leader Saad Hariri was represented by MP Serge Toursarkissian. Pharaon said Ashrafieh refused to fall to inter-Christian conflicts and that there would be no national reconciliation without reconciliation in Beirut.⁷⁰

Michel Murr declared he would carry out his electoral campaign as an independent, but that his alliance with the Tashnag was firm, and that he would examine the possibility of cooperating with other forces that had a popular presence in Metn.⁷¹

On 2 November Minister Oghassapian, MPs Dr. Djerejian, Kassarjian and Toursarkissian met Saad Hariri and examined the forthcoming elections.⁷²

On 16 November MP Pakradounny declared the Tashnag Party's aim was to reinstall the six-member Bloc of Armenian MPs. He further declared their alliance in Northern Metn would be extended to all Lebanon, as it was impossible to side with a group in one area and campaign against it in another.⁷³

On 27 November the Huntchag Executive Body delegation accompanied by Dr. Djeredjian visited Prime Minister Siniora and re-confirmed their support to his government⁷⁴ as the Ramgavar Azadagan District Council accompanied by Kassarjian had already done.⁷⁵

There were noteworthy visits by the TPLCC, to Maronite Patriarch Sfeir (7 November), Speaker Berry (11 November), Metropolitan Elias Aoude (11 November), Sheikh Abdel Amir Kabalan, vice-chairman of the Shiite Supreme Council (12 November), Minister of Defense Elias Murr (13 November),

Prime Minister Siniora (24 November), Minister of Culture Tammam Salam (27 November), Minister of Information Tarek Mitri (28 November) and the commander-in-chief of the Lebanese Army, Gen. Jean Kahwaji.⁷⁶

On 1 December 2008, a TPLCC delegation composed of Hovig Mekhitarian, Dr. Sebouh Hovnanian and MP Pakradouny, visited Damascus. They were received by the Syrian president, Bashar Assad. The Party praised president Assad's firm attitude of support for Lebanon's unity, security, stability and the strengthening of Beirut-Damascus relations.⁷⁷

In an interview Party representative Mekhitarian declared the Tashnag Party was in the opposition, but did not form part of the March 8 forces; it had its own special policy and differed from those taking part in the March 8 forces.⁷⁸

The TPLCC received the visit of the adviser of the USA Foreign Relations Committee President, Terry Kanak, along with the American Ambassador, Michele Sasson, on 16 February in its headquarters and conveyed its stance concerning the forthcoming elections.⁷⁹

On 22 January a TPLCC delegation led by MP Pakradouny met Gen. Aoun to discuss electoral issues.⁸⁰ On 11 February 2009 MP Pakradouny declared in an interview on NBN TV station that the Tashnag Party remained Gen. Aoun's ally and would also maintain its alliance with Murr.⁸¹

On 21 February MP Pakradouny met President Sleiman at Ba'abda.⁸²

The Ramgavar Azadagan Party internal dissensions were aggravated. On 27 November 2008, Dany Haddad echoed the party's problems in an article in the local *Al-Alkhabar* newspaper, which said 128 party members were opposed to MP Hagop Kassarjian's candidacy in the legislative elections as Ramgavar Azadagan candidate and called for new Party internal elections by the Party's Lebanon District Council. Furthermore the Ramgavar opposition said their conflict with Kassarjian was not because of his political stand, (i.e. with the 14 March group) but because of his conduct within the Party. In the end the opponents of Kassardjian requested Saad Hariri to reconsider Kassarjian's candidacy as they claimed "he did not represent the Ramgavar Party".⁸³

Just three days later, on 30 November 2008, in the Emile Lahoud Center at Dbaye, on the occasion of the foundation of the Lebanese Armenian Universitarians' Union (LAUSA), the founding president Sebouh Mkhjian, who worked for MP Michel Pharaon, spoke to the 1000 or so present at the meeting.⁸⁴ Speculation ran high that Mkhjian, supported by Pharaon, would run for the Armenian Orthodox seat in Beirut I, against Kassarjian. It was reported many Ramgavars attended the gathering.⁸⁵

On 5 December 2008, Minister Oghassapian, MPs Djeredjian, Kassarjian and Toursarkissian met president Sleiman and declared their support for his balanced policy.⁸⁶ Newspaper reports revealed that the delegation spoke to the president about "the rotation principle" of the Armenian MP's delegation to the National Dialogue conferences, as after Doha, only MP Pakradouny had

represented the Armenians, in the resumed National Dialogue meeting summoned by the president.⁸⁷

The Ramgavar Azadagan opponents of Kassarjian issued a newsletter, in which the appeal of the party's Central Council to the Lebanese Armenians was published. In the appeal, dated 24 December 2008, which the Party's Lebanon organ *Zartok* did not publish, the Central Committee said it was essential that the Lebanese Armenian Community came forth in a reconciliatory mood and ready for mutual concessions considering the situation in Lebanon and the community. The whole Lebanese Armenian community had to present one single front of unity and concord in the Lebanese legislative elections.⁸⁸

In late December 2008, the Lebanon District Council of the Ramgavar Azadagan Party, held a large meeting of members at which the opening words were by the Council's Chairman, Dr. Avedis Dakessian. The second speaker, MP Kassarjian, said the Party had decided to participate in the electoral campaigns in Beirut, Metn and Middle Beka'a, and would support Saad Hariri and his policies. He also said it was not a secret that there was internal opposition within the party, that Ramgavar meant democratic, so in this respect, the opposition must be respected by the leadership and vice-versa. He appealed for mutual understanding and concord. He said elections would come to prove that within the Lebanese Armenian community there was a large mass that showed cooperation on ideological grounds for a free, unrestrained democratic and independent Lebanon.⁸⁹

Despite the appeal of the Central Council of the Ramgavar Azadagan Party, the Lebanon District Council organized a meeting at the Tekeyan Center on 24 January 2009. Among those present were Minister Oghassapian, MP Kassarjian, Hagop Vartivarian (a party leader from the East Coast of USA), Mustaqbal (Future) Current's official responsible for Armenian Affairs Ara Sisserian, former Central Council member Haig Naccashian (from Canada) and party members. Hrair Hovivian, announced in the name of the Lebanon District Council of the Party that their 2009 legislative election candidate was the incumbent MP, Hagop Kassarjian.⁹⁰

In a speech at the same meeting, the Tekeyan Cultural Association Founders' Council chairman Garabed Babahekian expressed the hope that Vartivarian would do the necessary work to settle the "chaos" prevalent in their organization.⁹¹ In another meeting of support organized by the Tekeyan School on 20 February 2009, MP Kassarjian said they supported the restoration of the Armenian Pparliamentary Bloc, but the Bloc's activities should be with the cooperation of all sides, not with one side imposing its views on all.⁹²

On 27 February 2009 the Ramgavar opposition issued a declaration in its newsletter number 1, and said they were in favor of the Lebanese Armenians participating in the election with one unity front under the name of Armenian Parliamentary Bloc, where all sides would be represented without any

discrimination. They said this was the right track, as the party Central Council's appeal of 24 December 2008 had announced.⁹³

The Lebanon District Council disregarded the Party opposition's stand in the general meeting of party members held at the Tekeyan Center on 13 March 2009. MP Kassarian said *Al-Akhbar* newspaper had announced that there was opposition within the party who were against his candidacy and that they had proposed the name of Sebouh Mkhdjian as candidate. He said how Mkhdjian, who worked in Michel Pharaon's office, could be related to people in the ranks of Ramgavar. He said the party ranks should take a united stand in the elections.⁹⁴

The Huntchag Party also had successive meetings. On 7 January 2009 the Lebanon Executive Body delegation, including Dr. Djeredjian, met Armenian Catholic Patriarch Nerses-Bedros XIX,⁹⁵ on 19 January 2009 Dr. Djeredjian met Mustaqbal Bloc leader Saad Hariri alone⁹⁶ and together with the Lebanese Executive Body delegation on 21 January 2009.⁹⁷ On 20 February 2009 the Party delegation along with MP Djeredjian met the Minister of Interior Ziad Baroud⁹⁸; on 26 February 2009 the Executive Body accompanied by MP Djeredjian met Catholicos Aram I.⁹⁹ The main theme of discussion with most of these personalities was the forthcoming elections, as well as other community concerns.

Minister Oghassapian,¹⁰⁰ the Huntchag Party Lebanon Executive Body¹⁰¹ and the Ramgavar Azadagan Lebanon District Council¹⁰² condemned the attack on 27 January in the Dora-Amanos region by two Armenian men on Hrag Okian, a founding member of the LASA. Okian's car was shot, and he was paralyzed as a result.¹⁰³

Both the Ramgavar and Huntchag parties as well as the LASA participated in the mass rally of March 14, in Martyr's Square on 14 February 2009.¹⁰⁴

As the new electoral law permitted the overseas Lebanese to vote, in Beirut, a special effort was made by all to benefit from this opportunity.

In January 2009 MP Pakradouny said he expected that former Lebanese Armenians would participate in the elections, not in their current residences, but by coming to Lebanon to vote, so that together they would restore a six-member Armenian parliamentary bloc.¹⁰⁵ In February the Tashnag Electoral Central Committee published announcements in *Aztag*, where it said all who were ready to come to Lebanon and participate in the elections should contact them to receive necessary information.¹⁰⁶ Full-page ads appeared in the Tashnag or independent Los Angeles press, indicating contact telephone numbers in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Fresno, also e-mail and website addresses. The ads said "let us make our voice audible by massively participating in the Lebanese elections." The electoral office undertook passport and flight arrangements and said it would secure flights to and from Lebanon.¹⁰⁷

Minister Oghassapian visited Los Angeles, to be the guest speaker of the Mustaqbal Front on the fourth anniversary of the death of Rafik Hariri at

Anaheim's Embassy Suite Hotel. The Huntchag and Ramgavar parties participated in the event along with the Mustaqbal Front, Socialist, and Kataeb parties and the Lebanese Forces. The AGBU had sent representatives. In his speech the Minister said the Lebanese Armenians were united in recognition of the Genocide but had opposite views concerning Lebanon's domestic politics. Oghassapian visited the Diocese Center, the Huntchag, Ramgavar and AGBU headquarters. During his visit to the Huntchag headquarters, he said it would be desirable if all Lebanese Armenians living abroad did their electoral duty to preserve democracy in Lebanon. Oghassapian publicly appealed during a dinner for Lebanese Armenians residing in Los Angeles to participate in the elections.¹⁰⁸

In March 2009, Hovig Mekhitarian announced wherever the Tashnag Party was present abroad, electoral offices were to be set up with committees and personnel to register and prepare documents, which were later sent to the Los Angeles Central Committee. The second office was in Beirut, and there was coordination between it and the offices of Greece, Germany, France, Sweden, Canada, USA, Argentina, Australia, and the Gulf countries, Egypt, Syria, Armenia and Iran. The aim of all these efforts was to restore the Armenian Bloc. He stated, "through our participants we will create an unprecedented number and astonish the communities".¹⁰⁹

On 27 May *Diar* headlined "The Tashnag are bringing 5000 voters from abroad¹¹⁰ to Beirut, Metn and Zahle".¹¹¹

Just a few days before the elections the Tashnag Central Electoral Committee, in an appeal in *Aztag*, wrote "our compatriots who have come from abroad and have not yet contacted the electoral offices should do so immediately, to give details of their passport and other information."¹¹²

On 1 June 2009, Pharaon declared, "do the Armenians coming from abroad know for which plan and against whom they will vote?"¹¹³

THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IN ZAHLE

The Zahle electoral campaign took an early start. As early as 23 February 2009 incumbent MP George Kassardji accused the American Embassy on LBC TV news of interference in the Zahle electoral campaign and asked for its cessation.¹¹⁴ *Aztag* did not echo his accusation nor give the news. However, MP Pakradouny, in an interview on Hezbollah Manar TV station, announced that the Tashnag Party would maintain their alliance with Elias Skaff in Zahle.¹¹⁵

An unofficial estimate of the Zahle electorate was published in *Al Balad* newspaper on 27 February 2009. The estimate is given below:

Sunnite	38,470
Shiite	21,895
Greek Catholic	29,561
Maronite	24,713
Greek Orthodox	14,758

Armenian Orthodox	8,368
Minorities	7,958
Armenian Catholic	1,864
Druze	746
Total	148,333

Balad newspaper in its issue of 27 February mentioned that there was the possibility of replacing Kassardji on the Elie Skaff, Aoun and Tashnag list in Zahle with Sahag Andekian, principal of the Anjar Armenian Secondary School. For the March 14 forces, possible candidates were Antoine Neshanagian, Gen. Nareg Aprahamian and, as independent, Shant Chinchinian, and Jean (Varoujan) Arakelian, who had long served in the Serail of Zahle in the civil service.¹¹⁶

Shant Chinchinian, born in 1974 in Zahle, had received his primary education in Armenian and non-Armenian schools of Zahle, was the son of Mardiros Chinchinian, a Ramgavar Azadagan party member. He graduated from Bradford University of the UK in international relations. He has been a member of AGBU, and the principal of its Levon Nazarian School in Sin el Fil. He also has been the president of the Rotary Club in Zahle and the whole of the Bekaa.

Gen. Nareg Aprahamian, born in 1953 in Anjar, graduated from the Sophia Hagopian College in Bourdj Hammoud and did his Bacc. II in the Armenian Evangelical College of Beirut. Later he attended the Military School and eventually became the leader of a Lebanese Army commando unit. In 1989 he supported Gen. Aoun in his fight against the Lebanese Forces. Later he resigned from the army. He travelled to Armenia and Mountainous Karabakh. He joined the ranks of the Tashnag Party but was expelled. He formed the LASA and became its leader.

On 21 March it became known that George Kassardji and Boghos Kurdian (Chairman of the Goldsmith's Syndicate) had officially registered themselves as candidates for Zahle¹¹⁷ and on 31 March Dr. Antoine Neshanagian did likewise.¹¹⁸

There was a delay in the formation of lists. Elias Skaff had a problem with incumbent Sunnite candidate Assem Arayji, elected on his list in 2005, and wanted to replace him.¹¹⁹ His list was delayed until he found a Sunnite candidate to replace Arayji. Arayji, some time later, found a place on the March 14 list led by MP Nicolas Fattouche. Shiite candidate Hariri-in-law Mohsen Dalloul tried to get on the March 14 list without success.

Despite rumors that the March 14 list would have no Armenian candidate on it,¹²⁰ *Zartouk* reported on 9 May that Zahle's Merjanian Ramgavar Club had organized a luncheon in Zahle on 1 May. Among those present were MPs Fattouche, Hagop Kassartjian, as well as the leader of the LASA, Gen. Aprahamian. MP Kassartjian announced that the Ramgavar Party supported candidate in Zahle was Gen. Aprahamian.¹²¹ On 12 May, *Zartouk*, in another

report, mentioned that at the AGBU Levon Nazarian School's dinner at the Kaslik Century Park Hotel, the school's principal Shant Chinchinian, who was presenting his candidacy in Zahle, on the March 14 list, was present.¹²²

Finally on 17 May 2009 MP Fattouche announced his list in Zahle. It was headed by himself as Greek Catholic, and included Tony Abou Khater (Greek Catholic), Assem Arayji (Sunnite), Elie Marouni (Maronite), Okab Sakr (Shiite), Joseph Saab Ma'alouf (Greek Orthodox) and Shant Chinchinian (Armenian Orthodox).¹²³

Zartonk indirectly mentioned why Chinchinian had been selected. It mentioned that according to *Al-Hayat* newspaper, published in London, this was due to the efforts of the March 14 leadership in favor of securing Serge Toursarkissian's candidacy in Beirut I.¹²⁴ The Lebanese Forces would withdraw their Armenian Catholic candidate in Beirut I in favor of Toursarkissian, on condition that in Zahle, Chinchinian were selected instead of Gen. Aprahamian, provided the former gave a written engagement that he would abide by the decisions of the Lebanese Forces.

Once selected, Chinchinian visited the Huntchag Executive Committee in their headquarters on 26 May, where he met by MPs Dr. Djeredjian and Sebouh Kalpakian.¹²⁵ On 27 May Chinchinian visited the Tekeyan Center and had a meeting with the Lebanon District Council of the Ramgavar Azadagan Party in the presence of MP Kassarjian. The Zahle electoral situation was discussed, and the District Council expressed its solidarity with Chinchinian.¹²⁶ *Zartonk* also wrote an article on Chinchinian, published his picture and presented him as a "March 14" candidate. So did *Ararad*.¹²⁷

On 27 May Elias Skaff (Greek Catholic) also declared his list headed by himself including Fuad Turk (Greek Catholic), Rida elMays (Sunnite), Selim Aoun (Maronite), Hasan Yaacoub (Shiite), Camille Maalouf (Greek Orthodox) and George Kassardji (Armenian Orthodox).¹²⁸

As of mid-May, and especially after the lists were proclaimed, electoral activities intensified and withdrawals of candidacies were registered.

On 17 May there was a public meeting at the Zahle Tashnag Club in the presence of Skaff, Maalouf, Kassardji and Dr. Hovnanian.¹²⁹

The Tashnag Party held a public meeting on 31 May in Anjar for the Skaff list. All the candidates, including Kassardji, spoke as well as MP Pakradouny and Yessayi Havatian.¹³⁰

Dr. Neshanagian, accompanied by Skaff, visited the Tashnag Headquarters in Beirut, where Neshanagian expressed solidarity with the Tashnag political stand and announced his withdrawal in favor of Kassardji.¹³¹ Similarly *Aztag* announced that Kurdian had withdrawn his candidacy "in favor of the unity of the Lebanese Armenian community."¹³² On the other hand, Gen. Aprahamian withdrew his candidacy in favor of the March 14 list, on which Chinchinian was.¹³³

THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IN NORTHERN METN

Minister Jean Oghassapian placed an announcement in *Zartonk* in September 2008, saying that all those who voted in Metn and had social or electoral issues could apply to his social services office.¹³⁴ This confirmed the persistent rumors that he was to be a candidate in Northern Metn.

On 17 November 2008 MP Pakradouny declared that their alliance in Northern Metn with Gen. Aoun would encompass all of Lebanon.¹³⁵

However the electoral activities intensified after MP Michel Murr declared he would participate in the Metn elections on an independent list. He said he was a victim of his alliance with Gen. Aoun in 2005, as he had sacrificed his allies for that alliance. In return they had erased his name from their list in 2005. He also stressed on his alliance with the Tashnag Party would be maintained.¹³⁶ Later he added that he would present a list of four names and that he had begun consultations with the Kataeb Party to form an alliance, but if he failed, he would present his candidacy with the Tashnag candidate.¹³⁷

Meanwhile the Tashnag Party hoped to reconcile Gen. Aoun and Murr “as their dissensions could not be considered a final divorce”. MP Pakradouny said the Tashnag Party would remain Gen. Aoun’s ally and maintain the alliance with Murr.¹³⁸ This stand was repeated over and over again as the electoral campaign proceeded.

On 13 February it was announced that Amin Gemayel and Michel Murr would meet.¹³⁹ On 18 February newspapers wrote a Kataeb-Murr electoral alliance was ripening. The Kataeb would present the candidacy of Sami Gemayel, the second, surviving son of Amin Gemayel. The latter said he would not select the remaining candidates of the list.¹⁴⁰ The next day the leader of the Lebanese Forces received Antoine Haddad, the vice-president of the Democratic Renewal Party. Both put forward the question of electoral alliances in which the Democratic Renewal Party, the Lebanese Forces and the Kataeb were the backbone of the electoral campaign and said they were heading towards an alliance with Murr. Eddy Abillamah was mentioned as the Lebanese Forces candidate.¹⁴¹ MP Pakradouny declared the reconciliation with the Kataeb had not been realized. However, their alliance with Murr stood. Before any reconciliation with the Kataeb, there would be no electoral cooperation. He said the insult to the Tashnag Party by president Gemayel had not been erased. They were trying to find a common space between Murr and Aoun. This statement was made to contradict Murr’s earlier declaration that the Tashnag would join his alliance with the Kataeb Party.¹⁴² Instead MP Pakradouny thought that Murr would not form a list with the Kataeb. He also added, in case Gemayel proposed an Armenian candidate on the Metn list, it would be more reason for the Tashnags to close ranks and have a fierce electoral campaign. He said if Murr, Gemayel, the Lebanese Forces, Nassib Lahoud and a Lebanese Armenian formed a list, they could not be part of such a list. He added they would also not vote for Sami Gemayel as they had dissensions with the Kataeb.¹⁴³

Samir Geagea denied information that a difference of opinion existed between Gemayel and Murr for the Metn list, and that it was not known whether the list would be complete or not, and the contacts with the Tashnag Party were continuing.¹⁴⁴

On 8 March the TPLCC representative announced on Future TV that they had allied in Metn with Gen. Aoun and Murr. However, if the parliamentary majority (i.e. the March 14 forces) closed its list by adopting an Armenian candidate, then they would not vote for Murr but for the complete Gen. Aoun list.¹⁴⁵ On 13 March the TPLCC representative declared their candidate in Northern Metn would be Hagop Pakradouny (Pakradounian).

On 8 March Nassib Lahoud said he would be a candidate on the list supported by the March 14 forces and Murr; this list would be completed if the Tashnags, with whom they were in contact, participated.¹⁴⁶

As the above was the electoral situation, Minister Oghassapian announced on 8 March he would not present his candidacy for the 7 June election.¹⁴⁷ Apparently the Metn electoral forces opposed to Gen. Aoun had not given him a place on their list.

A week later, on 15 March, Nassib Lahoud said he refused to participate on a list in the formation of which he had no say. He later denied Gemayel's and Murr's assertion that he had withdrawn for personal reasons.¹⁴⁸ A month later, *L'Orient-Le Jour* wrote Lahoud did not appreciate Murr's agreement with the Tashnags, to be the only member on the list to receive their votes.¹⁴⁹

On 19 March former president Gemayel declared on LBC TV the Tashnags might be on both lists in Metn, but if no agreement was reached then two lists would be formed.¹⁵⁰

Political observers said "if the Armenians side with March 14, then [the Metn] is guaranteed for March 14, if not, then there will be a battle."¹⁵¹

Diar reaffirmed the Tashnag Party stood firm on its alliance with Gen. Aoun and Murr.¹⁵²

Sami Gemayel visited the Tashnag headquarters on 20 March, but there was no agreement.¹⁵³ This was apparent on 23 March when Gen. Aoun presided a meeting of the opposition parliamentary blocs, his own, those of Hezbollah, Amal, and Skaff as well as Tashnag represented by MP Pakradouny.¹⁵⁴ Later, the TPLCC representative, Mekhitarian, declared what was sought was the election of their candidate without any contestant (i.e. *tazkieh*). If this was not done, and another Armenian was proposed, and Murr had a share in such a situation, the party would not vote for him.¹⁵⁵

On 27 March 2009, Sami Gemayel said negotiations with the Tashnag Party had not ceased.¹⁵⁶ *An Nahar* wrote on 29 March that MP Pakradouny had asked Gen. Aoun to leave one Greek Orthodox seat on his Metn list in order to accommodate Murr. As for the meetings with Gemayel, Pakradouny said, they were positive, but till 28 March no agreement had been reached, as Tashnags could not vote for Sami Gemayel in Metn, when March 14 were proposing an Armenian candidate against them in Zahle. As for the Beirut I electoral

situation, Pakradouny said, they were comfortable, as the difference in the election of their list with the March 14 forces would be 14,000 votes more in their favor.¹⁵⁷ On 2 April, former president Gemayel said negotiations with the Tashnags were not running smoothly.¹⁵⁸

On 6 April, *L'Orient-Le Jour* confirmed, Amin Gemayel wanted to form a complete list with an Armenian candidate on it, while Murr wanted to leave the Armenian seat vacant on their joint list.¹⁵⁹

Gen. Aoun declared on 6 April that he would not agree with the Kataebs as the gap was great between them, as they were against him and had insulted the Tashnags [in the by-elections of 2007].¹⁶⁰

At midnight on 7 April 2009, MP Pakradouny was considered elected without an opponent,¹⁶¹ as before the deadline Tashnag sympathizer Nazareth Saboundjian, the treasurer of the Union of Owners of the Industrial sector, had withdrawn his candidacy in favor of Pakradouny.¹⁶² His candidacy was presented as a reservist, in case of any mishap.

The TPLCC representative said although their candidate had succeeded, they would continue their support for the other seven. In Metn, he added, “there were electoral interests and due to our policy there, people did not dare to present an Armenian candidate against us. The Tashnag Party will respect its promises”.¹⁶³

MP Pakradouny telephoned Minister of Interior Ziad Baroud and said as they had been marginalized [in the elections of 2005], they had allied with the opposition forces and that neither the loyalists nor the opposition could impose political stands on them, as the Party took its own decisions.¹⁶⁴

Meanwhile Amin Gemayel criticized Aoun’s alliance with the Baas Party and the Syrian National Socialist Party.¹⁶⁵ At this stage Emile Lahoud, son of the former president Emile Lahoud, withdrew in favor of Gen. Aoun’s list.¹⁶⁶ MP Pakradouny visited former president Lahoud.¹⁶⁷ The former president’s brother, retired Judge Nasri Lahoud, declared he supported the list of Gen. Aoun and the Tashnag alliance.¹⁶⁸ Murr, who supported Pierre Ashkar’s candidacy on the March 14 list, eventually agreed to the candidacy of Emile Kana’an.¹⁶⁹

Finally the lists of Metn were officially announced. Gen. Aoun declared the list in his Rabiye residence. The list was composed of Edgar Ma’alouf (Greek Catholic), Ibrahim Kana’an, Nabil Nicolas, Selim Salhab (Maronites), Ghassan Moukheiber and Ghassan Rahbani (Greek Orthodox), as well as the already elected Hagop Pakradouny (Armenian Orthodox).¹⁷⁰

Once more the TPLCC representative clarified the Party’s position. They would vote for seven candidates, one of whom would be Murr, and they would consult Gen. Aoun two days before the elections to cancel one Greek Orthodox name from his list.¹⁷¹ However, on 24 May the TPLCC representative said there was uneasiness among Tashnag sympathizers about voting for Murr. The antagonism towards Murr was due to the OTV broadcast of the secret registration of unfavorable comments about Armenians by some of his

municipal council allies done in his absence.¹⁷² The TPLCC would not impose anything on the people, but the Lebanese Armenians had always voted for the Party decision.¹⁷³ Later, on 27 May, MP Pakradouny reaffirmed this view.¹⁷⁴ On 1 June Pakradouny declared the Party remained committed to voting for Murr, but this did not mean all the Lebanese Armenians were committed to following the Party's decision.¹⁷⁵

On 27 May the March 14 forces announced their list. Maronites: Sami Gemayel (Kataeb) and Elie Karame (Kataeb), Eddy Abillamah (Lebanese Forces), Sarkis Sarkis (independent), Emile Kanaan (independent), Greek Orthodox: Michel Murr and Elias Moukheiber (independent).¹⁷⁶ The list had no Armenian candidate as there had been no other than Pakradouny.

Sami Gemayel declared "the fate of the country is at stake in Metn".¹⁷⁷ On 2 June Sami Gemayel¹⁷⁸ and on 4 June Eddy Abillamah¹⁷⁹ visited the Huntchag Lebanon Executive Body in the presence of Dr. Djeredjian, Kalpakian and Toursarkissian. The Kataeb MP was returning the visit by a Huntchag delegation to Amin Gemayel on 19 May 2009. Both sides confirmed their commitment to vote for the March 14 list in Metn.

Just before the elections MP Pakradouny announced the Tashnag Party would vote for Murr and would give equal votes to the two other Greek Orthodox candidates on the Change and Reform Metn list of Gen. Aoun, rather than erasing one name.¹⁸⁰ Murr in his turn said he was confident that the list of the alliance with the March 14 forces in Metn would be elected in its totality. According to his estimates, the Tashnag Party had 10,000 votes, the Syrian National Socialist Party 8000, Aoun's current 12,000 while the Kataeb and the Lebanese Forces had by themselves 27,000, other than his own voters.¹⁸¹

THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IN BEIRUT

The TPLCC representative Mekhitarian visited Saad Hariri at his Koraytem residence, on 8 March 2009, meeting him in the presence of MP Michel Murr, to discuss electoral issues. The Tashnag representative considered the meeting "as delayed", in the sense that they should have met long before, to settle dissensions and that the meeting was positive.¹⁸² According to Murr, as he declared on 12 March on LBC TV, Hariri offered 4 Armenian seats out of 6 to the Tashnags, provided they would support the March 14 current in all electoral districts.¹⁸³

On 10 March, a meeting of the Huntchag, Ramgavar, LASA and Beirut Armenian MPs took place to discuss the electoral situation. The gathering stressed its attachment to the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon, the construction of the state, the removal of illegal arms, and the cessation of terrorism and the revelation of the truth through the International Court on Lebanon. They decided to coordinate their potential and unite forces to support candidates and sides who supported their above-mentioned principles.¹⁸⁴

The International Court on Lebanon had begun its work on March 1, 2009. While the TPLCC representative was visiting Hariri, Tashnag MP Pakradouny

was in Muscat, where he declared that they would support Gen. Aoun. This was not well received on the Mustaqbal TV news. On 13 March, the Tashnag Party representative clarified that, although Murr had been right about Hariri's offer, he had left out the political content of the meeting, which was much more important. Furthermore, he said, except for their candidate in Metn, Hagop Pakradouny, the other candidates were not yet decided.¹⁸⁵

On 17 March the TPLCC representative declared that their reply to Hariri had two parts: electoral, having to do with the Beirut, Zahle and Metn Armenian seats, and political. In the end they could not be in a position which was far from their political orientation. He added there had been an agreement in Doha for the Beirut II Armenian seats, one for each side, and the others were open to contest. He said any potential alliance with Hariri would not mean that they would become part of the March 14 forces. He added they would not agree on the presence of another Armenian in Metn and that their alliance with Gen. Aoun was firm. He said the time had come to have true representation and an Armenian parliamentary Bloc.¹⁸⁶

On March 14, the March 14 forces held a rally at Biel; all the party chiefs, Hariri, Gemayel, Geagea and Jumblat, were on the platform, with other leaders including Kassardjian and Djeredjian.¹⁸⁷

The pro-March 14 Armenian forces (Huntchag, Ramgavar Azadagan, LASA leaders) and their March 14 Armenian MPs met on 24 March and in a declaration said the Armenian candidates on the majority forces (i.e. March 14) lists should be proposed by them. They further added that if this demand was not respected it would cause their withdrawal from the elections (organizational activities and voting).¹⁸⁸ Soon after, on 27 March Nadim Gemayel visited the Huntchag Party headquarter.

The Minister of the Interior, Baroud, declared the deadline for presenting candidacies was 7 April and that of withdrawal was 22 April. He further declared the Lebanese state and the Ministry of Interior kept the same distance from all sides.¹⁸⁹

On 29 March at a rally held in the Der Melkonian Theatre of Bourdj Hammoud, the TPLCC declared its candidates in the presence of Prelate Bishop Kegham Khacherian, the Armenian Catholic Patriarch's representative Bishop Vartan Ashkarian, the Armenian Evangelical community's representative Rev. Soghomon Kilaghbian, the Bourdj Hammoud and Anjar mayors, and the AGBU Lebanon District Committee vice-chairman Garo Djeghelian (who was present on a personal basis). The candidates were: MP Hagop Pakradouny, former minister Arthur Nazarian, MP Georges Kassardji, and industrialist Vrej Sabounjian as Armenian Orthodox candidates, and Gregoire Kaloust, the principal of the Armenian Catholic Mesrobian School, in Bourdj Hammoud for the Armenian Catholic seat.¹⁹⁰

As the deadline to register candidates was nearing its end, the TPLCC rejected the package deal offered by Hariri. The TPLCC explained its position through an announcement after giving the historical background of Hariri's

stand in the 2005 elections. The TPLCC said after the Doha Accord the Tashnag party had proposed to Huntchag and Ramgavar parties that each party would have one representative and the remaining three candidates would be jointly selected and form one parliamentary bloc, which would be master of its decisions. At first the three parties had positively responded to the offer but later had retracted, as they had “engagements that they had to honor with the Future Current.” That was why the TPLCC had decided to form a bloc of 5 Armenian deputies. They had so informed Hariri on 31 March, adding that their deputies would have freedom of political choice and not have to follow a line; they would vote according to their convictions in Beirut, Northern Metn and Zahle. Furthermore they affirmed their political and electoral alliance with Gen. Aoun’s current and Elie Skaff in Zahle.¹⁹¹

Hariri’s press bureau replied to the Tashnag statement saying that the Tashnags had promised neutrality between March 8 and March 14 forces, but in the end they had chosen the alliance with Aoun’s current and Skaff.¹⁹²

In the *New York Times* Robert F. Worth wrote “the main Armenian political block decided to support Hezbollah’s alliance in the coming parliamentary elections in Lebanon against the pro-American parliamentary majority. Because of their role as a crucial swing vote, the Armenians could end up deciding who wins and who loses in what is often described as a proxy battle between Iran, Hezbollah’s patron, and the West.” However, the Armenians said they were voting with the opposition for reasons that were entirely local and pragmatic. It offered them full control over the parliamentary seats in Armenian dominated districts. The other side did not, said Hovig Mekhitarian, the chairman of the local branch of Tashnag. “We want candidates who represent a community...We are not with the opposition, and not with the majority.” Mekhitarian said Hariri had not offered enough. “He was really only offering one seat, and he wanted our support in 15 other seats.”¹⁹³

Hezbollah sources also let it be known that they had known for weeks that the Tashnags would consolidate their alliance with Aoun, and estimated March 14 forces had been weakened.¹⁹⁴

The TPLCC representative later declared their alliance with Aoun’s current did not mean an alliance with March 8 forces.¹⁹⁵ He also added the new development would not affect their alliance with Michel Murr, who had no ties with Aoun.¹⁹⁶

In official statements, the Huntchag and Ramgavar parties said the TPLCC statement on joint Armenian representation had not been rejected upon the recommendation of other sides, that during the talks for the formation of an Armenian parliamentary bloc, no clear political line had been set, so the issue had remained clouded and thus was unacceptable.¹⁹⁷

MP Kassarian in his turn said they had proposed that the Armenian Bloc should work jointly for Armenian matters and interests and the rights of Lebanese Armenians. Other than that, in Lebanese political matters each

would have the right to decide its position and the Tashnag Party had refused this. Furthermore he said, they had proposed both sides leave their alliances with March 8 and March 14 and form a neutral bloc, but this proposal was also turned down.¹⁹⁸

On 1 April Gen. Aoun announced the list he supported in Beirut I. It was composed of Issam Abou Jamra, Nicolas Sehnaoui (Greek Orthodox), Massoud Ashkar (Maronite), Vrej Sabounjian (Armenian Orthodox) and Gregoire Kaloust (Armenian Catholic).¹⁹⁹

Soon after the Tashnag Party declared its candidates, visits to dignitaries began. The TPLCC, accompanied by their candidates (Pakradouny, Nazarian, Kassardji, Sabounjian and Kaloust), successively visited Armenian Catholic Patriarch, Nerses Bedros XIX (2 April), the president of the Near East Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches, Rev. Meguerditch Karageuzian (2 April), Catholicos Aram I of the Cilician See (3 April), Greek Orthodox metropolitan, Elias Aoude (3 April), and Armenian Orthodox Prelate, Bishop Kegham Khacherian (6 April). With other members of the list sponsored by Gen. Aoun in Beirut I, Sabounjian and Kaloust visited Evangelical Community head Rev. Selim Sahyouni (14 April) and Assyrian Catholic, Assyrian and Chaldean community leaders (16 April). The Armenian candidates of the Tashnag Party visited Mufti Rashid Kabbani (15 April) and later with the exception of Georges Kassardji, visited Greek Catholic Patriarch, Gregoire III Laham (17 April).²⁰⁰

On 6 April Saad Hariri visited Catholicos Aram I. MP Pakradouny declared this was a positive step, but they would not change their alliance.²⁰¹

Hariri said the March 14 forces were continuing their consultation within the majority forces, had settled numerous points, and would lead the electoral campaign with united ranks.²⁰²

The March 14 Armenian forces faced some obstacles within the March 14 alliance. The Lebanese Forces Pparty presented the candidacy of Richard Kouyoumjian, the grandson of the last governor (*Mutasarif*) of the autonomous region of Mt. Lebanon, in 1912-1915, Hovhanness Pasha Kouyoumjian, for the Armenian Catholic seat in Beirut I in a much publicized public gathering at Biel on 4 April 2009 where all the Lebanese Forces candidates were announced.²⁰³

It was rumoured he had been brought from abroad to present his candidacy. MP Michel Pharaon, whose personal relations with MP Kassarjian were tense, as speculated, presented the candidacy of Sebouh Mkhjian for one of the Armenian Orthodox seats in Beirut I.²⁰⁴ The Ramgavar leadership resented the candidacy of Mkhjian. This and various other factors led to the withdrawal of Kassarjian as candidate of the Ramgavars.²⁰⁵ On 6 April 2009 the Lebanese District Council of the Ramgavar Azadagan Party, in the presence of Kassarjian, decided that Minister Jean Oghassapian, although not a Party member, would be the Party candidate for the Beirut I Armenian Orthodox seat.²⁰⁶

The Lebanese Forces, stand created some tension within the Ramgavar and Huntchag Party leaderships, who supported the incumbent Armenian Catholic MP Serge Toursarkissian.²⁰⁷ The latter maintained that a person unknown to the community and imported from abroad could not represent the Armenian Catholic community.²⁰⁸

On 7 April, the Huntchag Party Lebanon Executive Body and candidate Sebouh Kalkapian visited Armenian Catholic Patriarch Nerses XIX. They informed him that they had proposed Toursarkissian as Armenian Catholic candidate and condemned the proposal of non-Armenians for an Armenian seat.²⁰⁹

On 8 April, the Huntchag Party delegation led by its Central Council President Setrag Adjemian, accompanied by MP Djeredjian, Lebanese Executive Body Chairman Dr. Mardig Jamgotchian and Beirut II party candidate Kalpakian, visited Catholicos Aram I and exchanged their points of view concerning the elections and other matters.²¹⁰

After the deadline for submission of candidates it became clear that the following had presented their candidacies for the Armenian seats in parliament.²¹¹

Beirut I, Armenian Orthodox seat: Jean Oghassapian, Vrej Sabounjian, Garabed Haroutounian, Sebouh Mkhadjian, Diran Sarkissian.

Beirut II, Armenian Catholic seat: Serge Toursarkissian, Gregoire Kaloust, Fuad Karkour, Michel Khorozian, Richard Kouyoumjian.

Beirut II, Armenian Orthodox seat: Sebouh Kalpakian, Arthur Nazarian, Alain Balian, Raffi Madeyan, Mardiros Jamgotchian, Hagop Guergeurian.

Beirut III Evangelical seat: (Evangelicals, Arabs or Armenians) Bassem Shab, George Ishkhanian and Donald Babikian.

Metn, Armenian Orthodox seat: Hagop Pakradouny and Nazareth Sabounjian

Zahle, Armenian Orthodox seat: Georges Kassardji, Antoine Neshanagian, Nareg Aprahamian, Varoujan Arakelian, Boghos Kurdian, Eddy Demirjian, Shant Chinchinian, Setrag Havatian.

The Tashnag, Huntchag and Ramgavar parties had presented substitute reserve candidates just in case of any mishaps or last-minute problems.

Among the new candidates Sebouh Kalpakian was born in Beirut in 1960 and had been educated in the Jesuit St. Gregoire l'Illuminateur School in Beirut and Armenia's Fine Arts and Theatre Institute in Yerevan. For 20 years he had been the principal of the Sahag Mesrobian-Roupinian School in Beirut. For 13 years he had been the chairman of the Lebanese Executive Body of the Huntchag Party. He had then emigrated to Australia. He had returned to be a candidate. His candidacy was proposed for the seat in Beirut II.²¹²

The Tashnag Party Central Committee on 10 April adopted the candidacy of George Ishkhanian, for the Beirut III Evangelical seat, after his visit to the TPLCC headquarters. Ishkhanian, born in Beirut in 1963, was on the First

Armenian Evangelical Church Board of Managers. He had been the chairman of the Armenian Evangelical Youth Union and was a trader.²¹³

Donald Babikian worked at the American University Hospital as dietary quality coordinator. He was born in 1966, and after graduating from the Armenian Evangelical College, earned a B.S. from AUB. He entered the elections as an independent candidate.

On 11 April Kassarian visited Hariri and informed him that for personal reasons²¹⁴ he had resigned his candidacy and announced the adoption of his recommendation of Oghassapian's candidacy by the Ramgavar District Council.²¹⁵

In his Easter sermon on 12 April Catholicos Aram I said there was a culture of inner dissensions in Lebanon and that sharp, political divisions had deepened. He advised the Armenian political parties to stay away from such a culture. He further advised Armenian candidates who would be deputies or ministers that their persons were means and not ends and that in order to represent the community they should enjoy the solidarity and confidence of the community. He concluded that the Armenians, as one of the 7 main communities, had always stood for their rights and duties, and for the unity, independence, integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon and would continue to stand by Lebanon.²¹⁶

On 15 April the Ramgavar Azadagan District Council, accompanied by MP Kassarian, visited Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea and discussed electoral issues. The delegation transmitted to the Lebanese Forces leader their unyielding attitude in relation to the Ashrafieh (Beirut I) and Zahle Armenian candidates and their refusal to accept the nomination of Armenian candidates other than those nominated by the Armenian forces in the March 14 group. Geagea reiterated his position and the matter was not resolved.²¹⁷

On 14 April, the Huntchag Executive Body Delegation in its turn, accompanied by MPs Dr. Djeredjian and Kalpakian, visited Geagea and discussed the same issues and transmitted its view that the Party could not accept that non-Armenian parties and currents propose candidates for Armenian seats. The same day the delegation met with Hariri.²¹⁸

Oghassapian and Toursarkissian met Pharaon on 17 April.²¹⁹ Toursarkissian, who had visited Patriarch Nerses Bedroas XIX the previous day,²²⁰ visited Patriarch Sfeir and declared he would maintain his candidacy till the end.²²¹

On the same day the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate declared it was at an equal distance from all candidates.²²²

The Lebanese Forces stood firm in maintaining Richard Kouyoumjian's candidacy and on various occasions declared it had no intention of withdrawing him.²²³ Efforts were made to settle the Armenian Catholic candidate issue on the March 14 list in Beirut I.

On 21 April the Huntchag Party Lebanon Executive Body announced it had proposed Serge Toursarkissian as its candidate in Beirut I.²²⁴ On the same

day a party delegation including Dr. Djeredjian, Kalpakian and Toursarkissian visited Pharaon, presented the Party candidate, and declared their total support for the Ramgavar Party candidate Oghassapian.²²⁵

March 14 supported Nayla Tueni, daughter of the assassinated MP Gebran Tueni, and granddaughter of MPs Ghassan Tueni and Murr, announced her electoral program on 21 April in Ashrafieh. Among those present during her meeting were Oghassapian and Toursarkissian.²²⁶ Kouyoumjian declared his candidacy was firm and final and that he represented the Lebanese Armenian community as others did.²²⁷

On 21 April Pharaon met Tueni and Nadim Gemayel.²²⁸ On 22 April Oghassapian declared that negotiations were underway within the March 14 forces to finalize the electoral lot of Beirut I and that the March 14 Armenian forces held firmly to Toursarkissian's candidacy in Beirut I.²²⁹ However, the next day Kouyoumjian declared he was maintaining his candidacy.²³⁰

To respect the Doha Agreement, Hezbollah candidate Amin Sherri (Shiite) withdrew his candidacy in Beirut II in favor of Amal's candidate.²³¹ Furthermore, for the same purpose, Hezbollah persuaded Raffi Madeyan to withdraw his candidacy in Beirut II,²³² hardly a week after the latter had declared his electoral program on 17 April at the Coral Beach Hotel.²³³

The agreement reached on Beirut II at Doha was respected. There were no other candidates but those agreed upon by rival groups.

On 23 April 2009 *Aztag* headlined "Arthur Nazarian, Armenian parliamentary bloc's second elected member", while *Ararad* headlined "Huntchag party candidate, comrade Sebouh Kalpakian, deputy of the Lebanese parliament."²³⁴

After his election as an MP in Beirut II, Nazarian met President Sleiman on 8 May.²³⁵ However, both the Sunnite and Shiite candidates in Beirut II faced challenges by other candidates.

The campaign was carried out on the television networks as well as directly and indirectly. On 8 April MTV had started its programs, and on 24 April OTV of Gen. Aoun's Current started to give Armenian news at 4:30, the same time as the Future TV's Armenian news.²³⁶ Also Radio Voice of Van of the Tashnag Party and Radio Sevan, were important tools in the electoral campaign.

L'Orient-Le Jour on 25 April 2009 headlined the "Armenian knot fetters the March 14 list in Beirut I."²³⁷

The French language newspaper spoke of difficulties in the formation of the Zahlé and Beirut I March 14 lists. In the case of Zahlé LASA leader Gen. Aprahamian was mentioned, but his choice was not finalized. As to Beirut I the list formed by Tueni, Gemayel and Pharaon initially was to be completed in accord with all the Armenian parties; however as the dialogue between the Tashnag Party and March 14 forces was interrupted and Gen. Aoun's list proclaimed in Beirut I, the two candidates had to be from the Huntchag and Ramgavar parties, Toursarkissian and Oghassapian respectively. On the other

hand, as the Lebanese Forces had presented the candidacy of Kouyoumjian for the Armenian Catholic seat and then Pharaon had presented Mkhjian. The Huntchag and Ramgavar parties had then told the March 14 forces they would not withdraw their candidates in Beirut I and, if they were not placed on the majority's list, the two parties would boycott the elections in other electoral districts.²³⁸ Due to intensified political contacts, Pharaon had withdrawn Mkhjian. However, the Lebanese Forces persisted in maintaining Kouyoumjian. Contacts were continuing to find a solution to the problem as the persistence of Kouyoumjian would bring forth the victory of the Tashnag candidate and move some voters to vote against the candidate seen as nearest to the Lebanese Forces.²³⁹

The next day Toursarkissian said the pro-March 14 Armenian voters would boycott the elections in Metn and Zahlé if their candidates were not placed on March 14 lists.²⁴⁰

In April *Ararad* reported that according to a last minute agreement the Lebanese Forces would withdraw Kouyoumjian but would present for the Zahlé Armenian seat a candidate who enjoyed their approval.²⁴¹ Oghassapian also stressed they supported and stood firm by Toursarkissian.²⁴² *Ararad* reported on 3 May that Kouyoumjian had declared he would support Toursarkissian if he withdrew his candidacy.²⁴³ On 4 May 2009, *Al-Moustaqbal* in its page-one headlines indicated the Armenian parties allied with March 14 forces stood firm on Toursarkissian's candidacy.²⁴⁴

On 5 May a communique published in *Ararad* indicated that the Armenian currents cooperating with March 14 forces confirmed their support for Toursarkissian in Beirut I and Aprahamian in Zahle. The Huntchag, Ramgavar and LASA representatives confirmed that candidates enjoying their support should be taken on March 14 lists.²⁴⁵

A public meeting took place on 4 May in Ashrafieh with Tueni, Gemayel, Pharaon and Oghassapian on the platform without an Armenian Catholic candidate.²⁴⁶

Newspapers stated on 6 May that Hariri and Geagea had reached an agreement to withdraw Kouyoumjian in favor of Toursarkissian.²⁴⁷ However, soon afterwards Kouyoumjian denied the existence of such an agreement,²⁴⁸ and Toursarkissian, after a visit to Metropolitan Aoudé, said he maintained his candidacy.²⁴⁹

Efforts intensified to find a solution to this problem. Nadim Gemayel visited Samir Geagea at Me'areb and said the matter of the Armenian Catholic seat would be settled soon.²⁵⁰ Both candidates, Toursarkissian and Kouyoumjian, separately declared that the interests of the March 14 political forces were above all other things.²⁵¹ On 15 May the problem was not settled yet and Pharaon said the friction over the Armenian Catholic seat should cease.²⁵² Pharaon, Oghassapian, Gemayel and Tueni met with a great number of Beirut I families at the residence of the Minister of Information, Mitri, in Ashrafieh.²⁵³

Earlier MP Antoine Zahra of the Lebanese Forces had said the issue would be settled soon.²⁵⁴

On 16 May the Huntchag Party, in a show of force, organized a public gathering at the former Sahagian playing field in the presence of deputies Djeredjian, Kalpakian, Kassarian, Oghassapian, and Toursarkissian, as well as Huntchag and Ramgavar leaders, Ara Sisserian and the candidate of Beirut II, Nouhad Mashnouk.²⁵⁵

On 17 May MP Pakradouny and Oghassapian were guests of Marcel Ghanem on LBC's *Kalam el Nas* program. *Nahar* wrote on 19 May that by adapting the candidacy in Zahlé of Chinchinian, who was close to the Lebanese Forces, it would be possible that the Lebanese Forces would withdraw the candidacy of Kouyoumjian.²⁵⁶

Toursarkissian declared he was the Huntchag candidate and that this Party was one of the forces within the March 14 alliance.²⁵⁷ Kalpakian and Toursarkissian visited Bishop Boulos Matar and discussed electoral issues.²⁵⁸

On 20 May Geagea declared he had sent a balanced and good proposal to the March 14 Armenian parties concerning the Beirut I Armenian Catholic seat.²⁵⁹ The next day Geagea officially announced the withdrawal of Kouyoumjian in favor of the March 14 forces in a press conference in Mea'rab.²⁶⁰ The Huntchag Party Lebanon Executive Body welcomed and praised the decision of Geagea in a special communiqué.²⁶¹ Oghassapian also appreciated Kouyoumjian's withdrawal.²⁶²

On 23 May Pharaon, Tueni and Gemayel visited Geagea. Pharaon expressed regret that some Armenians who had entered into the ranks of the March 8 forces and distanced themselves from their tradition of supporting the presidency and symbols of the state were taking steps against the lawful authorities. He also added with the inclusion of Toursarkissian in their list, the Beirut I list was completed.²⁶³

The Beirut I list, after its completion, held a public meeting on 22 May in the Beydoun Quarter of Ashrafieh. There the candidates emphasized on coexistence in Lebanon, away from the threat of arms. Tueni and Oghassapian criticized the reference of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nassrallah to 7 May 2008 as being a glorious day for the resistance. Pharaon deplored the campaign against the President of the Republic²⁶⁴ and emphasized that 7 June was as important as 14 March 2005 in its impact on the future of Lebanon.²⁶⁵

On 27 May the Beirut I list of March 14 forces was officially announced by Pharaon. During the gathering Tueni said the only arms in Lebanon should be those of the army and illegal arms should be handed over to the authorities. Gemayel welcomed Gen. Aoun's visit to Ashrafieh, but he hoped he would not bring Iran's and Hezbollah's plans there.²⁶⁶ The list had a joint public meeting in Karm el Zeitoun on 28 May.²⁶⁷

While the March 14 forces were in the above-mentioned difficulties in choosing the Armenian Catholic candidate on their list, the Tashnag Party went full steam ahead in organizing small- and large-scale public gatherings in

the presence of their candidates. There were gatherings for Armenian unions, associations and denominations (15 April), with Armenian physicians, dentists, lawyers, artists, and academics (16 April), with school principals and teachers (28 April),²⁶⁸ for the youth and students (30 April)²⁶⁹ both at Hotel Promenade, Zalka. A public meeting was held on 8 May at Bourdj Hammoud's Arin Center²⁷⁰ and on 13 May a meeting at the Municipality Football Court of Bourdj Hammoud.²⁷¹ On 15 May a meeting was held opposite the Karekin Njteh Club²⁷² and on 17 May opposite the Karm el Zeitoun Tashnag club.²⁷³ The Beirut I Tashnag Party candidates, Vrej Sabounjian and Gregoire Kaloust, participated in the public meetings organized by Gen. Aoun's Current in Dekwaneh on 11 May²⁷⁴ and in Rmeil on 9 May²⁷⁵ and 17 May.²⁷⁶ In the May 9 meeting candidate Sabounjian, alluding to the question of the Armenian Catholic candidate in the March 14 list, said, "in the past Koraytem appointed the rival list's Armenian candidates and now it's Mea'rab".²⁷⁷ In a meeting, at the Le Gabriel Hotel of Ashrafieh, Kaloust declared, "if we are successful, we shall also try to obtain the rights of the Protestants and Minorities".²⁷⁸ MP Nabil Nicola, in his turn, said "Gen. Aoun will not ask the Tashnag Party not to vote for Murr as he respects his allies."²⁷⁹ On 19 May a meeting was held on the campus of the Souren Khanamirian school in Fanar, in the presence of 1000 people.²⁸⁰ On 22 May two meetings were held at the Mansourieh club of the National Free Current and at Rawda.²⁸¹ On 26 May a meeting was held at the Azadamard Club in Ashrafieh. The presence of former MP Michel Sassin, who earlier had indicated he would present his candidacy but had not, was noted at some of the meetings.²⁸² On 28 May Gen. Aoun was presented to a large gathering in Ashrafieh, along with the Beirut I candidates he supported.²⁸³

Visits also continued; on 7 May 2009 a Ramgavar Azadagan Lebanese District Council delegation led by Chairman Dr. Dakessian, incumbent MP Kassarian and candidate Oghassapian met Catholicos Aram I. Among the items discussed were the party's plans and role in the election.²⁸⁴ On the same day visits by the same Party were also made to the Mufti of the Republic, Sheikh Mohammad Rashid Kabbani, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Elias Aoude,²⁸⁵ and on 22 May they visited Patriarch Sfeir and Bishop Boulos Matar. Meanwhile MPs Pakradouny and Nazarian visited speaker Berry on 26 May, discussing electoral issues.²⁸⁶ On 29 May Beirut I candidates visited former Minister Jacques Joukhadarian, who declared his full solidarity with them.²⁸⁷

Before the Beirut I March 14 forces list was officially announced, at the Nejme Sports Court Saad Hariri proclaimed the Beirut III March 14 forces list, composed of himself, Tammam Salam, Mohammad Kabbani, Ammar Houry, Imad Hout (Sunnite), Ghazi Aridi (Druze), Atef Majdalani (Greek Orthodox), Ghazi Youssef (Shiite), Bassem Shab (Protestant) and Nabil de Freige (minorities). Hariri said in Beirut II the candidate Sebouh Kalpakian

was already elected as he had no competitors and the Sunnite candidate was Nouhad Mashnouk.²⁸⁸

The opposition's Beirut III list was declared at the Safir Heliopolitan Hotel. It was composed of Behaeddine Itani, Khaled Daouk, Omar Ghandour, Abdel Nasser Jabri, Ibrahim Halabi (Sunnites), Rafik Nasrallah (Shiite), Ghazi Mounzer (Druze), Najah Wakim (Greek Orthodox), Georges Ishkhanian (Protestant) and Raymond Asmar (minorities).²⁸⁹

During the declaration of this list two prominent Armenian communists, Me Kasbar Derderian and Megerditch Tahoulakian were present.²⁹⁰ George Ishkhanian was present at all the public meetings organized by the Tashnag Party in Beirut I and Metn.²⁹¹

On 26 May the March 14 forces issued a joint declaration restating their tenets, signed by 100 prominent leaders, party leaders or MPs. Among the signatories were: Amin Gemayel, Farid Mekari, Walid Joumblat, Saad Hariri, Samir Geagea, Elias Attalah, Dory Chamoun, Carlos Edde, Boutros Harb, Mohammad Safadi, Michel Pharaon and Bassem Sabeh. The Armenian signatories on the list were, in their order of appearance, Jean Oghassapian, Dr. Yeghig Djeredjian, Sebouh Kalpakian, Serge Toursarkissian, Shant Chinchinian and Hagop Kassarian.²⁹²

On 28 May in a meeting at the Syriac Quarter, Pharaon said that the day Gen. Aoun had come to his meeting in Ashrafieh, Hezbollah had paraded in Sassine square. He said the majority MPs were accused of corruption, but it was the allies of Gen. Aoun who were corrupt. It was for this reason that Gen. Abou Jamra was withdrawn from Merjayoun, where he had tried to enter the opposition list, and as a consolation he was given a place in Ashrafieh.²⁹³

Once the March 14 list was officially announced, the Ramgavar Azadagan Party organized a meeting on 29 May at the Tekeyan Club in the presence of Pharaon, Tueni, Gemayel, Oghassapian, Toursarkissian, Kassarian, Kalpakian, Dr. Djeredjian, and Gen. Aprahamian as well as Kouyoumjian. The latter was applauded for withdrawing in favor of Toursarkissian.²⁹⁴

A meeting of the Beirut I list took place on 3 June near the Al Saydé church in Ashrafieh, with all the candidates present. Oghassapian said their opponents, not satisfied with the "cancellation" and "liberation" battles, were leading a third battle.²⁹⁵

The Tashnag Party also held a public meeting at the Homentmen Aghpalian Center on 29 May 2009. The presence of Lebanese Armenians from abroad was noted. A speaker reiterated they had proposed to the Huntchags and Ramgavars that each appoint a candidate and select the other three jointly, but they had refused saying they were not free to accept the proposal, and suddenly they decided to withdraw their candidate (i.e. Kassarian) and select another candidate (Oghassapian), sticking the party's name on him.²⁹⁶ Earlier at the 26 May meeting in Ashrafieh Avo Gidanian, of the TPLCC said their opponents thought that by taking away the representation of Lebanese Armenians they would weaken the Tashnag Party, but they had failed. Others

thought to secure seats the Tashnag Party would change allies, but the Party would not betray those who had shown confidence and cooperation towards them, to the degree of refusing to participate in the government without them.²⁹⁷

Recriminations came also from the editor of *Ararad*, who wrote that the Huntchag Party had fought for the independence of Arab countries and had been persecuted. They had been termed opposition members and leftists. He added that they had refused parliamentary seats and had opposed the authorities, often gaining their enmity and persecution. They had refused to join and cooperate with colonial powers and parties, but had been with the national forces of the country. He added this cannot be said about the Tashnag Party. They had cooperated with the authorities, who were surviving with the aid of foreign states, and thus were classified among the anti-national forces of Lebanon. The Tashnags, with political opportunities, had stood with imported policies and the authorities who had implemented these policies. So it was not surprising that the Huntchag Party enjoyed respect and their current position.²⁹⁸

As the Election Day approached, the Beirut I Free Decision List (March 14 forces) visited Catholicos Aram I and Armenian Catholic Patriarch Nerses-Bedros XIX on 1 June 2009.²⁹⁹

The Tashnag Party organized a huge public rally in the presence of thousands on 4 June 2009 at the Zavarian Sports Field. The Armenian candidates of the party in Metn, Beirut I and Zahlé were present. During the rally the TPLCC representative said in his speech “on June 7 the Lebanese Armenians by their votes shall get their rights and shall reinstate the Armenian Parliamentary Bloc”.³⁰⁰

Strict measures were taken by the government to organize proper elections. No electoral publicity was allowed the day preceding the elections. The army commander-in-chief, Gen. Kahwaji, asked the troops to act firmly if a conflict developed on election day.³⁰¹

Foreign observers were on the ground; former USA president Jimmy Carter, the European observer head Jose Ignacio Sala Franca, Robin Carnahan representing the National Democratic Institute, and Yves Aubin de la Messuziere, leading the Francophone observers’ delegation.³⁰² The President of the Republic said the recently formed Constitutional Council should act with complete impartiality, as he took their oath at the presidential palace. He reiterated the state and its institutions and administration were impartial in the elections.³⁰³

However, the international news media spoke of money pouring into Lebanon to buy votes. It was reported Iran financed Hezbollah and Saudi Arabia financed candidates running against Hezbollah.³⁰⁴ *Newsweek* mentioned \$750,000,000 being spent in Lebanon.³⁰⁵

The elections were held in all Lebanon in one day, on Sunday 7 June 2009, 7a.m. to 7p.m., in a generally calm atmosphere.

The official results in the electoral districts in which the Armenians participated with candidates were as follows:³⁰⁶

Beirut I – Number of registered voters 92,764, those who actually voted 37,284, i.e. 40%.

Nayla Tueni	19,985
Michel Pharaon	19,742
Nadim Gemayel	19,340
Jean Oghassapian	19,317
Serge Toursarkissian	19,281
Massoud Ashkar	17,209
Gregoire Kaloust	16,817
Vrej Sabounjian	16,778
Nicolas Sahnaoui	16,730
Issam Abou Jamra	16,421

The Armenian Catholic candidates whose names had not been erased from the candidates' list received a few votes: Karkour 7, Kouyoumjian 5, Khorozian 2. As for the Armenian Orthodox, Diran Sarkissian got 13 votes and Garo Haroutiounian 2.³⁰⁷

Beirut II – Number of registered voters 101,787, those who actually voted 27,787, i.e. 27%.³⁰⁸

Nouhad Mashnouk	16,583
Hani Qubaysi	15,126
Adnan Arakji	8,071
Abbas Yaghi	195

Beirut III – Number of registered voters 252,165, those who actually voted 103,243, i.e. 40%.³⁰⁹

Saad Hariri	78,382
Tammam Salam	76,925
Ghazi Aridi	76,792
Basem Shab	76,510
Mohammad Kabbani	76,448
Nabil de Freige	76,431
Ghazi Youssef	76,410
Ammar Houri	76,201
Atef Majdalani	76,133
Imad Hout	75,954
Rafik Nasrallah	22,177
Najah Wakim	21,921
Omar Ghandour	21,703
Behaeddine Itani	21,507
Raymond Asmar	21,362
Abdel Nasser Jibri	21,103
Mohammad Daouk	21,100

Ibrahim Halabi	21,050
George Ishkhanian	21,041
Ghazi Mounzer	20,860
Donald Babikian received 71 votes.	³¹⁰

Northern Metn - Number of registered voters 170,744, those who actually voted 96,748, i.e. 56%.³¹¹

Ibrahim Kanaan	49,147
Michel Murr	48,953
Selim Salhab	48,673
Edgard Ma'alouf	48,577
Sami Gemayel	47,688
Ghassan Moukheiber	46,874
Ghassan Rahbani	46,204
Ghassan Ashkar	45,759
Sarkis Sarkis	45,252
Emile Kana'an	44,602
Elie Karamé	44,543
Eddy Abillama	44,425
Fuad AbouNader	1997

In Zahlé, the number of registered voters was 158,005 of whom 56% voted.³¹²

Elie Marouni	49,328
Oukab Sakr	49,283
Shant Chinchinian	48,527
Issam Arayji	48,464
Joseph Maalouf	48,288
Tony Abou Khater	48,019
Nicolas Fattouche	47,709
Elias Skaff	42,975
Camille Maalouf	41,643
Georges Kassardji	41,512
Selim Aoun	41,064
Fuad Turk	40,459
Hassan Yaacoub	40,463
Rida El Mays	40,064
Magda Breidi	1966
Varoujan Arakelian	1304
Naji Skaff	1272

As for the Armenian candidates whose names were on the list of registered candidates, although they had withdrawn, they received the following number

of votes: Aprahamian 19, Kurdian 12, Neshanagian 4 and Havatian no votes.³¹³

The low turnout in Beirut II was explained by the fact that Sebouh Kalpakian and Arthur Nazarian were already considered elected, as no one opposed them.

The Beirut I, Beirut III and Zahlé March 14 forces candidates were elected as MPs. In Northern Metn Gen. Aoun's National Free Current list won, with the exception of two seats won by Michel Murr and Sami Gemayel.

The TPLCC representative declared in Beirut I 6740 Armenians had voted, 5026 (i.e. 74.57%) in their favor and 1714 (i.e. 25.43%) for the March 14 lists. In Metn out of 13,700 Armenian voters 10,900 voted in favor of the Tashnag allies, and out of their 10,900 votes Murr had obtained 2200 votes (i.e. 20%).³¹⁴ In Zahlé electoral district 80% of the Armenian votes had gone to the Tashnag candidate.³¹⁵

The newspapers commented on the results as follows: -

L'Orient-Le Jour: "Rebelote pour le 14 Mars, test réussi pour la démocratie. La majorité remporte près de 70 sièges. Achrafieh dit "non" à Aoun, le CPL conserve Kesrouan et Jbeil. Siniora tripomphe à Saïda et Zahle bascule dans le camp loyalistes."³¹⁶

The Daily Star – "March 14 coalition retains majority after parliamentary elections, opposition sources concede defeat, accept "will of people. Lebanon's elections day relatively calm despite some minor security incidents".³¹⁷

Aztag – "The parliamentary elections of Lebanon took place. Unprecedented Armenian participation by the leadership of Tashnagsoutioun."³¹⁸

Zartouk – "Tashnagsoutioun's Armenian Bloc 2 seats without competitors, by *tezki'a*, and March 14 Armenian forces 3 elected and one without competitor, *tezki'a* deputies."³¹⁹

Ararad - "Saad Hariri. The main victor of the elections became Lebanon. The majority of the Lebanese people reconfirmed their confidence in the March 14 forces."³²⁰

Detailed results were published in the newspapers some time after the elections. As these are of particular interest, the results concerning the members of the lists which included Armenian candidates are given below.³²¹

Beirut I

Quarters	# of registered voters	Actual voters	Percentage
Ashrafieh	53,904	23,620	43.8%
Rmeil	29,452	10,495	35.6%
Saifi	9411	3253	34.6%
Officials	75	75	100%
Total	92,843	37,443	40.3%

Quarters	Tueni	Pharaon	Gemayel	Oghassapian	Toursarkissian
Ashrafieh	12,649	12,545	12,265	12,249	12,241
Rmeil	5345	5234	5150	5148	5116
Saifi	1952	1922	1887	1879	1886
Officials	39	41	38	41	38

Quarters	AbouJamra	Sahnaoui	Ashkar	Sabounjian	Kaloust
Ashrafieh	10,305	10,463	10,777	10,532	10,522
Rmeil	4,889	4,991	5,098	4,981	5,035
Saifi	1,194	1,294	1,301	1,235	1,229
Officials	33	30	33	30	31

Voting according to the communities.

Comm.	Registered voters	Actual voters	%	Opp. voters	%	Loyal. voters	%
Gr. Orth.	24,072	11,250	46.7%	4550	40.4%	6,360	23.1%
Arm. Orth.	15,637	5,100	32.6%	3750	73.5%	1,180	56.5%
Arm. Cath.	5,487	1,700	31.0%	1050	61.8%	590	34.7%
Protestants	1,046	150	14.3%	100	66.7%	40	26.7%
Syr. Cath.	9,955	3,200	32.1%	1500	46.9%	1,640	51.3%
Sunnite	6,713	3,700	55.1%	481	13.0%	3,073	83.1%
Shiite	1,842	950	51.6%	840	88.4%	100	10.5%
Gr. Cath.	12,245	4,600	37.6%	1820	39.6%	2650	57.6%
Maronite	15,668	6,793	43.4%	2700	39.7%	3900	57.4%
Others	177	0	-----	-----	-----	---	

Voting according to total Christian, Sunnite and Shiite voters

	Christians	Sunnites	Shiites	Total
Registered Voters	84110	6713	1842	92842
Actual Voters	32793	3700	950	37443
Percentage	39%	55.1%	51.6%	40.3%
Nayla Tueni	51.5%	82.8%	10.5%	53.4%
Michel Pharaon	50.8%	83.0%	10.7%	52.7%
Nadim Gemayel	49.7%	81.8%	9.3%	51.7%
Jean Oghassapian	49.5%	82.7%	10.1%	51.6%
Serge Toursarkissian	49.4%	82.7%	10.0%	51.5%
Massoud Ashkar	48.2%	13.9%	89.1%	46.0%
Gregoire Kaloust	47.0%	13.6%	88.2%	44.9%
Vrej Sabounjian	46.9%	13.5%	88.4%	44.8%
Issam Abou Jamra	45.8%	13.7%	88.6%	43.9%

It is clear from the above that, with the exception of the Armenian communities, the majority of Christians voted for the March 14 forces. The crushing majority of Sunnites voted for the March 14 forces, while the crushing majority of Shiites voted for the opposition list.

Beirut II³²²

As the Armenian candidates were already elected, the number of Armenian voters was not significant.

Community	# of registered	# of actual voters	% voters
Armenian Orthodox	26,108	1708	6.5%
Armenian Catholic	2977	196	6.6%
Protestants	2017	106	5.3%

The Armenian voters voted as follows:

	Orthodox	Catholic	Protestant
Mashnouk	1353	140	92
Arakji	144	30	3
Qubaysi	1247	130	69

As can be seen from above, the Armenian voters voted for the agreed candidates of March 14 and March 8. The Protestant votes include non-Armenians.

Beirut III³²³

The registered Armenian voters numbered 6400, of whom only 475 voted i.e. 7.4%. Of these 240 voted for Hariri's list, i.e. 50.5%, and 180 for the oppositions list, i.e. 37.9%. As for the Protestants (Armenian and non-Armenian), out of 2500 registered voters 250 voted, i.e. 10%, of these 150 voted for Hariri's list, i.e. 60%, and 60 for the opposition, i.e. 24%.

Below is a comparison of the percentages of the votes obtained by the Protestant candidates.

Candidates	Christian	Sunnite&Druze	Shiite	Jewish	Total
Bassem Shab	51.4%	87.8%	8.4%	100%	73.3%
G. Ishkhanian	37.2%	5.8%	87.6%	0%	20.2%

As can be seen, the great majority of the Sunnites voted for the Hariri list, and the great majority of the Shiites for the opposition list. The majority of the Christians also voted for Hariri's list. Out of 4900 Jewish voters only 5 voted. All 5 voted for Hariri's list.

Northern Metn³²⁴

Although the Tashnag candidate was already elected as he had no contestants, the Armenians massively participated in the elections, as can be seen from the Bourdj Hammoud results.

Below are the detailed results of Ibrahim Kana'an, Sami Gemayel and Michel Murr.

Township	# of reg. voters	Actual voters%	Kanaan	Gemayel	Murr	
Abou Mizen	26	20	76.9	19	2	4
Antelias	4330	2623	60.6	1496	1080	1137
Beteghrin	3003	2222	74.0	620	1514	1742
Beharsaf	770	622	80.8	138	374	367

Bourdj Hammoud	37,834	15,226	40.2	10671	4123	5778
Broummana	3075	1618	52.6	757	874	840
Biskanta (south)	3302	2145	65.0	1146	1006	1061
Biskanta (north)	3151	2145	68.4	1183	986	1004
Bessalim	1013	749	73.9	400	365	344
Ba'abdat	2109	1181	56.0	525	610	556
Beknaya	652	433	66.4	255	192	191
Bickfaya	4642	2128	45.8	602	1558	1453
Benabil	108	76	70.4	35	40	41
Boushrieh	7304	4385	60.0	2113	2256	2278
Biakout	597	454	76.0	223	250	247
Beit el Shaar	893	577	64.6	327	252	273
Beit Kikko	346	179	51.7	105	77	76
Beit Shabab Tahtani	4369	2081	47.6	1109	975	931
Beit Shebab Fawkani	1278	817	63.9	325	488	470
Beit Mery	3567	1977	55.4	1000	1024	917
Jdeidé	4216	2546	60.4	1211	1329	1315
Jal el Dib	4003	2377	59.4	1225	1149	1133
Jiwar	555	368	66.3	120	248	240
Jora'tel Ballout	784	502	64.0	258	214	235
Himlaya	1001	669	66.8	224	472	455
Khale el Mtein	246	210	85.4	78	147	140
Khenshara	2600	1652	63.5	870	788	794
Dekwane	3918	2542	64.9	987	1514	1602
Douar	815	624	76.6	216	427	410
Deir Shamra	192	171	89.1	58	117	113
Dashounieh	128	117	91.4	49	72	66
Dick el Mehdi	484	280	57.9	193	80	80
Rabiyé	426	220	51.6	83	140	134
Roumiyé	1749	1116	63.8	586	559	526
Zabougha	610	385	63.1	161	234	206
Zar'oun	607	337	55.5	94	241	264
Zeghrin	322	222	68.9	59	166	157
Zakrit	898	635	70.7	306	327	317
Zalka	2386	1614	67.6	847	789	861
Zouk el Kherab	1468	771	52.5	421	361	325
Sakiyet el Misk	1537	1055	68.6	350	744	705
Sed Boushriyeh	6121	3717	60.7	1775	1913	1912
Safila	218	194	89.0	21	171	174
Sin el Fil Balda	4658	2819	60.5	1339	1454	1534
Sin El Fil Jisr El Basha	1662	955	57.5	447	475	514
Sin el Fil Hay Jedid	1458	697	47.8	472	199	229
Sinel Fil Hay el Harj	1288	790	61.3	403	389	367
Shawiya el Quneitra	581	544	59.2	169	170	160

Sharin	569	416	731	219	197	195
Shoya	350	266	76.0	101	182	168
Shoueir	4319	2052	475	1356	692	825
Debayé	1420	975	68.7	539	425	419
Dahr el Siwan	864	583	67.5	287	307	309
Atshané	271	213	78.6	98	118	111
Amarat Shalhoub	1375	814	59.2	406	412	463
Awkar	278	198	71.2	141	56	61
Airoun	397	293	73.8	147	161	162
Ain el Teffaha	215	190	88.4	17	172	167
Ain el Khourouba	867	710	81.9	115	611	581
Ain el Zeitouné	194	141	72.7	57	80	84
Ain el Sindiyena	620	334	53.9	216	105	113
Ain el Safsaf	521	352	67.6	60	298	284
Ain el Goubour	211	106	50.2	56	50	50
Ain Saadé	1106	730	66.0	373	381	352
Ain A'ar	642	359	55.9	137	212	207
Ain Alak	395	273	69.1	89	199	181
Aintoura	3370	2202	66.5	1133	1135	1095
Ayoun	217	141	650	47	94	104
Ghabal el Miska	253	167	66.0	75	87	81
Farika	636	423	66.5	206	223	208
Fanar	822	654	79.6	352	319	313
Kernet el Hamra	1162	607	52.2	194	360	341
Kernet Shahwan	345	624	49.4	279	348	337
Ka'akour	1161	841	72.4	429	420	468
Kanabat Broummana	345	158	45.8	78	77	68
Kanabat Salima	150	117	78.0	25	91	86
Kfartiya	308	195	63.6	93	116	109
Kfar Akab	632	277	43.8	160	128	125
Mar Boutros KarmelTin	318	280	88.1	20	257	254
Mar Shaya wa Mazka	283	179	63.3	86	99	103
Mar Michael Benabil	274	207	75.5	19	191	183
Mar Moussa Douar	303	236	78.1	96	146	159
Mtein	3596	2080	57.8	1007	1072	859
Mejdel Tarshish	465	370	79.6	359	17	76
Majzoub wa Mzher	527	416	78.9	306	114	129
Mheiderra	1065	511	48.0	164	353	325
Marjaya	564	472	83.7	201	266	277
Mrouj	1538	1175	76.4	540	652	631
Mazra'at Yashouh	1447	860	59.4	388	477	471
Miska	364	239	65.7	116	118	113
Mashrah	119	49	41.2	27	23	24
Mashaikha	255	187	73.3	84	115	111

Mteileb	482	352	73.0	155	201	188
Mkas	287	200	69.7	116	81	84
Mansourieh	1954	1227	62.8	600	634	615
Mayassa	731	612	83.7	231	408	399
Nabiya	1875	1385	73.9	781	602	593
Nakkash	723	469	64.9	285	189	199
Wadi El Kourm	358	287	80.2	158	135	128
Wadi Shahin	44	21	47.7	3	21	18
Wata Mrouj	594	431	72.6	132	299	291
Officials	242	235	97.1	128	115	114
Total	170,580	97,488	57.2	49,558	47,698	48,966

In Bourdj Hammoud where out of a total of 37,834 Armenian and non-Armenian voters, 15,226 voted (i.e. 40.2%); the candidates obtained the following votes.³²⁵

Ibrahim Kana'an	10,671
Edgard Maalouf	10,662
Nabil Nicholas	10,644
Selim Salhab	10,635
Ghassan Ashkar	10,471
Ghassan Rahbani	9872
Ghassan Moukheiber	8932
Michel Murr	5788
Sami Gemayel	4123
Sarkis Sarkis	4024
Eddy Abillamah	3953
Elias Moukheiber	3939
Emile Kana'an	3933
Elias Karramé	3858
Fuad Abi Nader	109

As can be seen from the above, Bourdj Hammoud voted in its great majority for Gen. Aoun's list and Michel Murr, and the Armenian majority vote became the determining factor of their success.

Zahle³²⁶

Location	Registered voters	Actual voters	%	Chinchinian	Kassardji
Ablah	2014	1180	58.6	503	645
Bar Elias	9112	6089	66.8	5045	802
Bouarej	1274	943	74.0	661	249
Terbol	3247	2253	69.4	1491	706
Ta'albaya	5807	3762	64.8	2707	974
Ta'anayel	697	513	73.6	411	82
Tel Akhdar	85	42	49.4	34	2

Toutiyeh	147	110	748	55	46
Jdita	3682	2431	66.0	1543	85
Jalala	368	171	46.5	88	82
Hazerta	2770	2144	77.4	114	1995
Hosh el Ghannem	398	209	52.5	23	185
Hosh Hala	4932	2798	56.7	803	192
Hay el Fikani	1197	927	77.4	43	853
Dahmiyeh	2464	1890	76.7	1678	174
Deir Ghazal	810	508	62.7	187	298
Rahayt	1588	1049	66.1	399	572
Rayak	2580	1426	55.3	502	877
Rayak Hay el Selm	296	197	66.6	1	180
Zahle el Barbara	4201	1661	39.5	761	860
“ el Rasiyé Tahta	3098	1614	52.1	871	664
“ el Rasiyé Fawka	4090	2053	50.2	1097	881
“ midan al Sharki	5458	1720	31.5	747	912
“ midan al Gharbi	4734	1709	36.1	801	747
“ Housh el Omara	6785	4142	61.0	2242	1783
“ Housh el Zera’aina	4154	1989	47.9	1003	892
Zahle hay el Saydé	1463	1029	70.3	723	284
“ Saydet el Najat	2817	1435	50.9	699	683
“ Mar Elias	4622	2223	48.1	1129	1010
“ Mar Antonios	173	7843	485	418	399
“ Mar Mikhael	4462	1998	44.8	1034	910
“ Mo’alaka	6902	3584	51.9	1866	1589
“ Mo’alaka Shemali	3101	2093	67.5	347	1689
“ Wadi el Arayish	1684	1105	65.6	773	306
Saadnayel	4933	3342	67.7	3085	200
Shtora	334	185	55.4	77	97
Ali al-Nahri	6087	4371	71.8	37	4171
Anjar Wakef	439	179	40.8	3	173
“ Bitias	1386	533	38.5	22	469
“ Haji-Habibli	829	134	16.2	12	117
“ Khderbek	1905	889	46.7	38	831
“ Kabousiyeh	892	195	21.9	12	179
“ Yoghoun-Olouk	953	331	34.7	13	307
Ain Kfarzabd	1842	1147	62.3	202	914
Ferzol Tahta	2061	1481	71.9	843	593
Ferzol Fawka	1372	968	70.6	439	497
Qah el Rim	1719	1176	68.4	508	647
Kab Elias Tahta	5926	3894	66.7	3197	588
Kab Elias Fawka	3613	2005	55.5	1028	917
Kosaya	1014	595	58.7	208	372
Kerk Nouh	2935	1887	64.3	364	1487

Karma	299	238	79.6	1	234
Kfarzabd	3628	2363	65.1	1546	771
Masa	421	329	78.1	0	318
Majdal Anjar	6158	4621	75.0	4280	242
Mereyjat	1736	1028	59.2	542	442
Maksa	995	756	77.0	615	132
Nasseriyeh	749	513	68.5	25	475
Nabi Ayla	1191	774	65.0	18	739
Niha	1304	736	56.4	391	328
Wadi el Delm	670	428	63.9	226	192
Officials	406	396	97.5	169	190

As can be seen, the crushing majority of Armenians in Anjar voted for Kassardji, while the great majority of Sunnite villages voted for Fattoush's list, on which was Chinchinian, and the great majority of Shiite villages voted for Elias Skaff's list, on which was Kassardji.

International observers praised Lebanon's elections. President Barak Obama of the USA congratulated the Lebanese on the vote. Much praise was given to the Minister of Interior's handling of the elections.³²⁷

Soon after the elections several pro-March 14 newspapers, particularly *L'Orient-Le Jour*, blamed the Tashnags for the defeat of March 14 candidates in Northern Metn.

Ziyad Makhoul in *L'Orient-Le Jour* said one of the "myths" of the election was shattered. The Tashnags did not have a bloc of 5 MPs in the new parliament. They would have 2 MPs elected without a contest. All understand the will of the party to put the security of Armenians in the region, especially in Syria and Iran, top of all concerns. But instead of taking the example of the Socialist Progressive Party, which had the main concern for Druzes, the Tashnag was on the way to being hezbollahised, in other words to aligning itself with an axis rather than privileging the nature, culture and identity of Lebanon.³²⁸

In another article signed by Michel Touma in *L'Orient-Le Jour* under the title "a very costly, suspect, excessively zealous" vote, the writer stated it is an established fact that the Tashnags have always benefitted from a preponderant influence in the Armenian community thanks to a vast political, media, social, economic, educational and cultural infrastructure. Then he added, before the war the Tashnag Party was the traditional ally of the Kataeb Party and Michel Murr, and had a traditional political attitude of supporting the president of the Republic and the legality and refused to take sides in domestic tensions. The obstinacy of the Tashnags in confirming and consolidating their alliance with March 8 forces for the 7 June election is in total contradiction to the Party's traditional and historical line. First, by so doing, the Tashnags had taken sides with one faction against the other and, what is more serious, it had brought its support to a party which had not hidden throughout the campaign its criticism

and unfavorable comments towards the President of the Republic. Worse, it was clear that a victory of March 8 forces would have had the consequence of further cutting the wings of the Head of the state and would have constituted a real danger for the force and identity of Lebanon. As the last partial election in Metn showed, it was clear where the majority of the non-Armenian electorate stood. As the last electoral campaign showed, the Tashnags were not satisfied with reconfirming their alliance with the opposition but also launched a vast and very, very costly operation of great scale to bring thousands of voters from the far corners of the world to break the vote of non-Armenians in Metn, Beirut and Zahle. Thus the Tashnags tried to break the March 14 forces, in order to profit from an alliance whose middle-eastern ramifications and regional geographical designs, in their essence, were against the exclusively Lebanese reason of state and supreme interests of the legality. Touma added it is this excel of zeal, strong determination, and the limitless efforts deployed by the Tashnags to try to break the will of one part of the Lebanese in favor of the other that is in total contradiction to its historical conduct of positive neutrality, which characterized the party during the Lebanese war, that has created many questions, even in Armenian circles. In this one should not confuse the political calculation of the Tashnag Party's leadership with the position of the Armenian community in its totality, which does not necessarily agree with the options chosen by the leadership of the party. Touma concluded what made this excel of zeal serious, was the worrying engagements the Party leadership had concluded with regional forces. Some attributed this unnatural line of the Tashnag Party with the privileged relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran with Armenia, where Tehran brought its support to Armenia in its conflict with Azerbaijan. "Things get spoiled when exclusively regional considerations create a serious menace to the *raison d'être*, historical foundations, specifics, sovereignty, independence, and autonomy of decisions of the land of Cedars".³²⁹

In an editorial *Aztag* blamed Lebanese TV political commentators and journalists in *Nahar*, *Safir*, *L'Orient-Le Jour*, *Diar* and *Shirah*, who had launched a campaign of negative articles against the Lebanese Armenians through the Tashnag Party. It was not the first time that the Lebanese Armenian electoral mass, with its close, disciplined ranks, had accepted the appeal of the Tashnag Party, so why this uneasiness. The case does not have purely electoral overtones; obviously it is the Lebanese Armenian involvement that has upset various sides. As long as the Lebanese Armenians do not represent an internal force neither the Lebanese politicians nor the Lebanese press are upset by this exemplary, constructive and hard working Armenian citizen. However, when the time comes for that exemplary citizen to have an influence in the process of redesigning Lebanon's political maps, he/she becomes a second class citizen. The Armenian community is turned from a collectivity that flourishes in the Lebanese fatherland into a collectivity of citizens who live with the psychology of a colony, from a community with a

constructive bridging role, into one that lives with a ghetto psychology behind walls. This is said to a people who has paid a high price for following the Tashnag Party, which always makes wrong choices.³³⁰

The newspaper added that these slandering authors were forgetting that in their electoral recriminations they were hurting the self-respect of a whole well-organized people.³³¹

In the post-electoral period both Armenian sides celebrated. On 9 June, 2009 the Huntchag Party Executive Body of Lebanon organized a mass rally in the neighborhood of St. Kevork Church in Nor Hadjen in the presence of MPs Kalpakian, Toursarkissian, Oghassapian, and thousands of supporters. Former Huntchag and Ramgavar MPs were also present as well as the Ramgavar District Council representatives.³³² On 11 June, in a gathering of supporters, the Ramgavar Azadagan Party organized a reception and received congratulations in the Tekeyan Club. The newly elected MPs Oghassapian, Kalpakian, Toursarkissian and Chinchinian were present, as well as Kassarian and Djeredjian.³³³ On 12 June the Ramgavar District Council organized a dinner to honour the Electoral Committee. The presence of Oghassapian, Chinchinian, Kassarian, and Gen. Aprahamian was noted. Kassarian said in a speech there must be more respectful cooperation, tolerance, concord, and exchange of ideas, not their enforcement, through cooperation between the Ramgavars, Huntchags, AGBU, AYA, LASA and independents, which constituted the March 14 Armenian Front.³³⁴

Similarly, all the elected MPs of the victorious list of Beirut I held a public rally at Sassin Square on 10 June. All the newly elected MPs spoke and thanked their supporters.³³⁵

The Tashnag Party organized a mass rally in the presence of thousands at the parking lot near the Shaghzoyan Centre on 12 June 2009. The rally was to thank the Lebanese Armenians who had supported them. MPs Pakradouny and Nazarian were present, as well as ex-MP Kassardji, defeated candidates Sabounjian, Kaloust, Ishkhanian and ex-MP Dr. Nourjean Demirdjian. MP Pakradouny said that “We are forming the Armenian Bloc with two MPs who represent 80 percent of our people.” The Tashnag Party had given a place to Michel Murr on its ballots as agreed; however, the people also had its role and the Party could not exercise any force on it.³³⁶

In a declaration to *AlSafir*, the TPLCC representative Mekhitarian said out of 13,700 Lebanese Armenian voters 10,900 voted in their favour. Of these 10,900, 2200 votes, i.e. 20%, were given to Michel Murr. He said there was an uneasiness among their supporters about voting for Murr, and 10 days before the elections the TPLCC had received comments from the ranks of their supporters that they would boycott the elections if they were to be obliged to vote for Murr.³³⁷

Although elected, Michel Murr was very upset with the electoral results. He held a press conference on 16 June, denounced his former allies and said he planned to contest the election results in the Metn district “due to alleged

irregularities in the Armenian votes.” He added, “a sizeable increase in ballots cast by Armenian voters and the presence of 10 forged cards raised suspicion” over the legitimacy of the Metn results. Murr said in the partial election of Metn in 2007, the Armenian votes were 9200, 7366 of which were for Camille Khoury and 1834 for Amine Gemayel. The total number of Armenian voters in Metn was 32,341 of whom 28% voted. The Tashnags had mobilized all their forces in 2007 and 28% of their voters had participated, so in 2009 the number of votes should have been 9300 taking into consideration that there were 500 new voters on that list between 2007 and 2009. So he was surprised that the number of voters had risen to 13,700, in other words 4400 more than foreseen, and he questioned whether this increase was due to falsified ID cards or voters who could mask their identity. If these 4400 were removed, the Metn Salvation List would have won with one from Gen. Aoun’s list.³³⁸

Murr also declared the Armenian votes in his favor were reduced to about 3200 votes, 1700 from the Huntchags and the Ramgavars and 1500 from the AGBU Antranik Club members³³⁹ and friends, with whom he had had relations for the last 50 years. He reminded people that he had left the Armenian seat vacant on the March 14 list and the Tashnag candidate was elected without contestants; the Tashnag Party had promised to vote for him, but in the end the Tashnags had ceded to Aoun’s will. Murr said he had turned down a contact by the party after the elections, as they had promised him 8000 votes but not delivered.³⁴⁰

MP Pakradouny immediately replied, Murr was a friend of long standing and would stay their friend. A cloud had gathered but would pass in time. He acknowledged Murr’s role in his election without contestants but rejected Murr’s assertion that he would have failed had there been an Armenian candidate on the rival list. He said, “Michel Murr’s words remind us of Gabriel Murr in 2007. We vote and those who win thank us but those who lose insult us”. Pakradouny specified that Murr had obtained 2200 votes from the Tashnag Party, others had erased his name for reasons both the voters and Murr knew and they had declared there was an uneasiness among Armenian voters concerning Murr. Pakradouny further criticized those parties in Lebanon which “do not consider Armenians Christians or Lebanese. The Armenians are a basic pillar of this nation whether they like it or not”.³⁴¹

The TPLCC also issued a communiqué. It said in 2007 10,300 Armenians had voted in the partial election, 20% for Gemayel. The percentage of Armenian voters was not 28% but 32%. Furthermore, while in the partial election of 2007 all in all in Northern Metn 82,000 had voted, this time the number had risen to 97,000. So the increase in the participation of Armenian voters in Metn should not create suspicions in Murr. The communiqué said they were astonished that Murr had also supported the Armenian voters in Metn and cooperated with them. It was upon his request, made three days before the elections, that the Tashnag Party agreed to give its votes equally to the two Greek Orthodox candidates of the Change and Reform Group.

Furthermore, it was surprising that Murr said Tashnag Party supporters did not vote for him. The ballot boxes that were set out for the Armenian voters showed he had received 5000 votes; in other words he had received 2200 votes from the Tashnag Party supporters. The party would wait impatiently for the decision of the Attorney General's office confirming that the party was far from guilty of the accusations that were made by personalities or forces who did not receive the votes of Lebanese Armenian voters, whom they accused after each election. Furthermore, the elections were one additional step in enforcing democracy in Lebanon.³⁴²

In an interview with the daily *Al-Akhbar*, the TPLCC representative said out of the 13,700 Armenian voters 10,900 had voted for the Change and Reform List. Murr was given 5046 Armenian votes, more than 2200 of whom were from Tashnag supporters. He added Ghassan Mukheiber had received 8700 Armenian votes and Ghassan Rahbani 8345, the Party halved its support for Murr by voting less for both Ghassans. The TPLCC representative denied the existence of fraudulent IDs. He then cited the reasons that moved the Armenian voters not to vote for Murr in larger numbers. The first reason was Murr's leaving the Change and Reform Bloc of Gen. Aoun, his cooperation with the Kataebs, whose president Gemayel had insulted the Armenians in 2007, his silence and non-publication of a denial of some incidents and declarations about Armenians that were made by Metn *mukhtars* and mayors. Furthermore, there were two Armenian offices in Amara that had been getting in touch with Lebanese Armenians, including Tashnag Party members and supporters, inviting them to vote for the March 14 list, thus trying to create a division of ranks.³⁴³

In the post-electoral period two separate declarations of the Hezbollah chief Hassan Nassrallah were notable. He said he accepted the results of the elections, but he said the Resistance had obtained the majority of the popular vote.³⁴⁴ Later he criticized the Maronite Patriarch for announcing on the eve of the elections that Lebanon was under threat. He referred to the Zahlé electoral district and said votes were purchased for up to \$2000 towards the end of the electoral day, and had not thousands of emigrants flown to Zahlé, the opposition would have won and the total electoral results in Lebanon would have been even, 64 seats for each side. He said the Shiites and Armenians were targets of incitement. He added the Armenians had become Lebanese a hundred years ago and it was shameful to distinguish between the different ethnic origins of citizens.³⁴⁵

Some visits caught the attention of observers. The TPLCC delegations composed of Mekhitarian, Hovnanian and MP Pakradouny visited Jumblat's Beirut residence on 16 June. The Party commended Jumblat, who had strictly condemned the accusations of treason against the Armenians and the Tashnag Party.³⁴⁶ The TPLCC, accepting the invitation of MP Sami Gemayel, who had visited them earlier, visited former president Amin Gemayel in his Bikfaya residence in 14 October 2009. After the meeting the Kataeb Party issued a

statement stressing the historical relations between the two parties, as well as the importance of closing the black pages and opening new pages, confronting the threats Lebanon faces, having united interpretations and returning to the historical principles that had brought the two parties close to each other. The TPLCC representative said their relations had more positive sides than negative.³⁴⁷

The four March 14 Armenian MPs constituted a bloc entitled Armenian Concord Parliamentary Bloc. The four MPs of the newly formed bloc visited Catholicos Aram I on 7 July and informed him that their Bloc would be following the social and national interests of the Lebanese Armenians and would strengthen the community's solidarity. According to them, the Catholicos appreciated their initiative.³⁴⁸

Once the former parliament's term ended, president Suleiman started his consultations with the new MPs. As a result he appointed the new parliamentary majority leader, Saad Hariri, to form the new government. MPs Oghassapian, Kalpakian and Toursarkissian were received together³⁴⁹ and Chinchinian with the Lebanese Forces delegation. Afterwards Hariri in his turn met all the MPs. The Armenian Concord Bloc MPs who had met the president also met the Prime Minister. Toursarkissian afterwards said he refused the participation of the Tashnag Party in the government.³⁵⁰ It was rumoured Oghassapian had proposed former MP Kassarian as minister.³⁵¹

Separate visits were made by the Huntchag Executive Body to president Suleiman. MPs Kalpakian and Toursarkissian and former MP Djeredjian met the President on 21 June.³⁵² On 2 July the Ramgavar Azadagan Lebanon District Council Delegation, which included MP Oghassapian and former MP Kassarian, met President Suleiman.³⁵³ Later, on 3 July the Ramgavar delegation visited Hariri.³⁵⁴ All four pro-March 14 Armenian MPs declared their solidarity with Hariri on 6 August.³⁵⁵

On 10 August Catholicos Aram I visited President Suleiman and stressed in his talks that despite the fact that his community's MPs and ministers were elected from different lists and were on different sides, the Armenian community was above all sides and had been and still was on the side of Lebanon.³⁵⁶

Hariri failed to form the new government as his first proposed list of 30 personalities³⁵⁷ (including Oghassapian and Pakradouny) was not accepted by the president and as the opposition objected. Eventually new consultations were held by the President after the formal resignation of Hariri.

Once more, as the majority of MPs had nominated Hariri, he was appointed Prime Minister. Eventually he succeeded in forming a new government of 30 personalities,³⁵⁸ including Jean Oghassapian as Minister of State and Apraham Dedeyan, a former Protestant MP who had converted to Armenian Orthodoxy in 2005, as Minister of Industry. The latter was suggested by the Tashnag Party and Gen. Aoun had endorsed him.

On 25 September, 2009 Jose Ignacio Salafranca, head of the European Mission of Observers to the elections, said he wanted to underline the degree of maturity of the Lebanese electors. Despite minor problems the elections were successful. Much of the success was due to the Minister of Interior's work. The report made 36 recommendations for further improvement.³⁵⁹

On 25 November 2009 the Constitutional Council unanimously rejected all the complaints presented to them as there were no illegalities in the parliamentary elections.³⁶⁰

On 11 December the Huntchag and Ramgavar Party local Chairmen and the 4 Armenian MPs allied to them, met President Suleiman and discussed the rights of the community within the state framework.³⁶¹

The Tashnag daily continued to ignore the March 14 Armenian MPs and did not refer to their presence in activities in the community. The Ramgavar Azadagan organ surprised all by printing an interview with the Tashnag MP Pakradouny. The latter said the inter-party meetings had continued.³⁶²

Indeed the inter-party meetings on the pan-Armenian or local level continued. The highest bodies of the Huntchag, Tashnag and Ramgavar Azadagan parties criticised the signing of the Turkey-Armenia Protocol for the establishment of diplomatic relations and development of mutual relations on 10 October 2009.³⁶³ Also in Yerevan, Armenia, the highest bodies of the three parties met on 28 December 2009,³⁶⁴ as well as on 14 February 2010³⁶⁵ and decided upon the joint commemoration of the 95th anniversary of the genocide perpetrated on Armenians in Ottoman Turkey. A joint declaration to this effect was issued by them on 25 February 2010.³⁶⁶ The genocide commemorations took place as agreed.

ENDNOTES

¹ This study is the tenth in a series of articles by the same author on Armenian participation in successive Lebanese legislative elections since 1934. The first nine articles in this series were published in volumes 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 of the *Haigazian Armenological Review*.

² *Aztag*, 81st year, 24 July 2007, No. 115 (22635).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Aztag*, 81st year, 13 August 2007, No. 131(22651), p. 3; *Aztag*, June 2009, No. 73 (23178) page 12.

⁵ *Aztag*, 81st year, 28 July 2007, No. 119 (22639).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 81st year, 30 July 2007, No. 120 (22640).

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ararad*, 69th year, 31 July-1 August 2007, No. 61 (17524).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 69th year, 2-3 August 2007, No. 62 (17525).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Aztag*, 81st year, 4 August 2007, No. 125(22645).

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹³ *The Daily Star*, Beirut, 7 August 2007, No. 12383.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

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- ¹⁵ *Monday Morning*, Beirut, volume XXXVI, 13 August 2007, No. 1807, page 15.
- ¹⁶ *La Revue du Liban*, Beirut, 18-25 August 2007.
- ¹⁷ *Aztag*, 81st year, 6 August 2007, No. 126 (22646).
- ¹⁸ *Ararad*, 69th year, 7-8 August 2007, No. 64 (17527).
- ¹⁹ *Aztag*, 81st year, 6 August 2007, No. 126 (22646).
- ²⁰ *The Daily Star*, Beirut, 7 August 2007, No. 12383.
- ²¹ *Aztag*, 81st year, 7 August 2007, No. 127(22647).
- ²² *Ararad*, 69st year, 9-10 August 2007, No. 65(17528).
- ²³ *Aztag*, 81st year, 7 August 2007, No. 127(22647).
- ²⁴ *Aztag*, 81st year, 8 August 2007, No. 128(22648).
- ²⁵ *Ibid.* page 10.
- ²⁶ *Aztag*, 81st year, 7 August 2007, No. 127(22647).
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 81st year, 9 August 2007, No. 129(22649).
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 81st year, 8 August 2007, No. 128(22648).
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 81st year, 9 August 2007, No. 129(22649).
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 81st year, 10 August 2007, No. 130(22650).
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 81st year, 8 August 2007, No. 128(22648).
- ³² *Ibid.*, 81st year, 9 August 2007, No. 129(22649).
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ *Ararad*, 69th year, 14-17 August 2007, No. 66(17529), page 1; *Aztag*, 81st year, 9 August 2007, No. 129(22649), page 2.
- ³⁵ *Aztag*, 81st year, 13 August 2007, No. 131(22651).
- ³⁶ *Ararad*, 69st year, 11-15 October 2007, No. 89(17552).
- ³⁷ *Azad Lipanahayerou Sharjoum*, Beirut, 31 August 2007, page 16-17.
- ³⁸ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 21 May 2008, No. 12272.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ *Nahar*, Beirut, 22 May 2008.
- ⁴⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 12 July 2008, No. 12318.
- ⁴⁵ *Aztag*, 81st year, 7 November 2007, No. 203(22723).
- ⁴⁶ *Ararad*, 70th year, 8-10 December 2007, No. 8(17576); *Aztag*, 81st year, 8 December 2007.
- ⁴⁷ *Ararad*, 69th year, 1-2 November 2007, No. 97(17560); *Ibid.*, 69th year, 6-7 November 2007, No. 99(17562).
- ⁴⁸ *Ararad*, 71st year, 12 February 2008, No. 33(17601).
- ⁴⁹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 12-13 April 2008, No. 12241, page 2.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 25 April 2008, No. 12252.
- ⁵¹ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 10 May 2008, No. 52(22867), page bottom left; *Ararad*, 71st year, 10 May 2008, No. 70(17638), page 1 top right.
- ⁵² *Ararad*, 71st year, 13 May 2008, No. 71(17639).
- ⁵³ *Aztag*, 81st year, 31 May 2008, No. 69(22884); *Zartonk*, 71st year, 13 June 2008, No. 4(19703).
- ⁵⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 12 July 2008, No. 12318.
- ⁵⁵ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 4 July 2008, No. 97(22912).
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 82nd year, 11 July 2008, No. 103(22918).
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 82nd year, 17 July 2008, No. 108(22923).
- ⁵⁸ TV declaration by Michel Murr, 25 July 2008.
- ⁵⁹ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 19 July 2008, No. 110 (22925).

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- ⁶⁰ Ibid, 82nd year, 22 July 2008, No. 112 (22927).
- ⁶¹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 5 August 2008, No. 12337, page 3.
- ⁶² *Ararad*, 71st year, 22 July 2008, No. 101(17669).
- ⁶³ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 28 July 2008, No. 116(22931), page 5.
- ⁶⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 30 September 2008, No. 12384.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 15 December 2008, No. 230(23045).
- ⁶⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 31 January-1 February 2009, No. 12481, page 4.
- ⁶⁸ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 7-8 February 2009.
- ⁶⁹ A Newspaper advertisement was put in *Zartonk* (71st year, 19 September 2008, No. 18 (19717) page 16) indicating citizens who had property in Metn could contact him. Minister Oghassapian confirmed, on 31 October 2008, his intention to the present writer, when questioned about rumours of his candidacy in Northern Metn.
- ⁷⁰ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 30 September 2008, No. 12384.
- ⁷¹ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 3 October 2008, No. 170(22985).
- ⁷² *Ararad*, 71st year, 4 November 2008, No. 143(17711).
- ⁷³ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 17 November 2008, No. 208(23023).
- ⁷⁴ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 29 November 2008, No. 10(17722).
- ⁷⁵ *Zartonk*, 71st year, 29 August 2008, No. 15(19714).
- ⁷⁶ *Aztag monthly*, November 2008, page 15-16.
- ⁷⁷ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 2 December 2008, No. 221(23036).
- ⁷⁸ Ibid, 82nd year, 17 December 2008, No. 234(23049), page 3.
- ⁷⁹ *Aztag monthly*, February 2009, No. 2, page 12.
- ⁸⁰ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 23 January 2009, No. 258(23073).
- ⁸¹ Ibid, 82nd year, 12 February 2009, No. 274 (23089).
- ⁸² Ibid, 82nd year, 82nd year, 23 February 2009, No. 282(23097).
- ⁸³ *Al-Akhbar*, Beirut, 27 November 2008.
- ⁸⁴ Information based upon the invitation tickets of the event and information by those who attended the event.
- ⁸⁵ A reliable source informed the present writer on 28 July 2008 that two Ramgavar Party members Asdourian and Nokhoudian appropriated party electoral lists and handed them to Pharaon and Mkhjian. Both were later expelled from the Ramgavar Party.
- ⁸⁶ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 6 December 2008, No. 13 (17725).
- ⁸⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 6-7 December 2008, No. 12440, page 2.
- ⁸⁸ *Lradou*, Beirut, March 2009, No. 1, page 1. The non-publication of the Ramgavar Azadagan Central Council communiqué did not prevent the District Council's cooperation with the Central Council. On 6 February 2009, Central Council's president Mike Kharabian, accompanied by District Council Chairman Dr. A. Dakessian and Aram Sepetjian, met Catholicos Aram I at Antelias, (*Hask, monthly* Antelias, February 2009, page 213).
- ⁸⁹ *Zartonk*, 71st year, 19 December 2008, No. 31(19730), pages 1-2.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid, 72nd year, 30 January 2009, No. 4(19735), page 8.
- ⁹¹ Ibid.
- ⁹² Ibid, 72nd year, 4 March 2009, No. 12(19743), page 5.
- ⁹³ *Lradou*, Beirut, March 2009, No. 1, page 7.
- ⁹⁴ *Zartonk*, 72nd year, 18 March 2009, No. 16(19747), page 8.
- ⁹⁵ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 15 January 2009, No. 24(17736).
- ⁹⁶ Ibid, 72nd year, 20 January 2009, No. 28 (17740).
- ⁹⁷ Ibid, 72nd year, 22 January 2009, No. 30 (17742).
- ⁹⁸ Ibid, 72nd year, 21 February 2009, No. 41 (17753).

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- ⁹⁹ Ibid, 72nd year, 28 February 2009, No. 44 (17756).
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 72nd year, 29 February 2009, No. 32(17744).
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰² *Zartok*, 72nd year, 30 January 2009, No. 4(19735).
- ¹⁰³ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 29 January 2009, No. 32(17744).
- ¹⁰⁴ *Zartok*, 72nd year, 18 February 2009, No. 8(19739), page 1 and 8.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 26 January 2009, No. 260(23075).
- ¹⁰⁶ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 12 February 2009, No. 276(23091).
- ¹⁰⁷ *Nor Gyank* (weekly), Los Angeles, 31st year, 19 February 2009, No. 11, page 40.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 28 February 2009, No. 44(17756), page 2; *Zartok*, 72nd year, 21 March 2009, No. 17(19748), page 2.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Aztag monthly*, March 2009, No. 3, page 13.
- ¹¹⁰ The present writer was informed by a reliable source that according to a Kataeb Party member, who worked in the airport, 3854 Armenians from abroad had come to Lebanon to participate in the elections.
- ¹¹¹ *Diar*, 27 May 2009, No. 7324.
- ¹¹² *Aztag*, 83rd year, 4 June 2009, No. 71(23176).
- ¹¹³ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 2 June 2009, No. 115(17827).
- ¹¹⁴ LBC TV news broadcast on 23 February 2009.
- ¹¹⁵ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 25 February 2009, No. 284(23099), page 2.
- ¹¹⁶ *Balad*, 27 February 2009.
- ¹¹⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 21-22 March 2009, No. 12521.
- ¹¹⁸ LBC TV news broadcast on 31 March 2009.
- ¹¹⁹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 6 April 2009, No. 12534.
- ¹²⁰ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 21 April 2009, No. 38(23143), page 2.
- ¹²¹ *Zartok*, 72nd year, 9 May 2009, No. 32(19763), page 16.
- ¹²² Ibid, 72nd year, 12 May 2009, No. 33(19764), page 8.
- ¹²³ Ibid, 72nd year, 19 May 2009, No. 36 (19767).
- ¹²⁴ Ibid.
- ¹²⁵ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 27 May 2009, No. 110(17822).
- ¹²⁶ *Zartok*, 72nd year, 28 May 2009, No. 39(19770).
- ¹²⁷ Ibid, 72nd year, 30 May 2009, No. 40(19771), page 5; *Ararad*, 72nd year, 5 June 2009, No. 118(17830), page 2.
- ¹²⁸ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 28 May 2009, No. 66(23171), page 2.
- ¹²⁹ Ibid, 83rd year, 18 May 2009, No. 58(23163).
- ¹³⁰ Ibid, 83rd year, 1 June 2009, No. 68(23173).
- ¹³¹ Ibid.
- ¹³² Ibid, 83rd year, 5 June 2009, No. 72(23177).
- ¹³³ Future (Mustaqbal) TV news broadcast on 4 June 2009.
- ¹³⁴ *Zartok*, 71st year, 19 september 2008, No. 18(19717), page 16.
- ¹³⁵ *Aztag*.
- ¹³⁶ Ibid, 82nd year, 5 February 2009, No. 269(23084); *Zartok*, 72nd year, 6 February 2009, No. 5(19736).
- ¹³⁷ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 12 February 2009, No. 274(23089).
- ¹³⁸ Ibid.
- ¹³⁹ *Zartok*, 72nd year, 14 February 2009, No. 7(19738).
- ¹⁴⁰ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 19 February 2009, No. 40(17754).
- ¹⁴¹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 20 February 2009, No. 12497.
- ¹⁴² Ibid, page 2.
- ¹⁴³ *Aztag*, 82nd year, 27 February 2009, No. 286(23101).

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- ¹⁴⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 28 February 2009-1 March 2009, No. 12504, page 2.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 9 March 2009, No. 4(23109), page 1 and 10; *Diar*, 21st year, 8 March 2009, No. 7251.
- ¹⁴⁶ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 9 March 2009, No. 12511.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁸ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 16 March 2009, No. 9(23114).
- ¹⁴⁹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 18-19 April 2009, No. 12544, No. 2 and *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 24 April 2009, No. 12548.
- ¹⁵⁰ LBC TV news broadcast on 19 March 2009.
- ¹⁵¹ Michael Bluhm, "Outcome of Metn Polls May Hinge on Armenians," *The Daily Star*, 7 March 2009.
- ¹⁵² *Aztag*, 83rd year, 9 March 2009, No. 4(23109), page 3.
- ¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 23 March 2009, No. 15(23120).
- ¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 24 March 2009, No. 16(23121) page 2. No picture or text mentioned H. Pakradouny's presence, but on 23 March 2009 he was seen on the TV with the opposition parliamentary blocs united meeting at Rabiye.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 24 March 2009, No. 16(23121) pages 1 and 3.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 28 March 2009, No. 20(23125), page 2.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Nahar*, 29 March 2009.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 3 April 2009, No. 71(17783).
- ¹⁵⁹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 72nd year, 6 April 2009, No. 12534.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 7 April 2009, No. 28(23133).
- ¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 8 April 2009, No. 29(23134).
- ¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 9 April 2009, No. 30(23135).
- ¹⁶³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 10 April 2009, No. 31(23136).
- ¹⁶⁵ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 18-19 April 2009, No. 12544.
- ¹⁶⁶ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 21 April 2009, No. 38(23143), page 2.
- ¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 22 April 2009, No. 39(23144).
- ¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 14 April 2009, No. 33(23138).
- ¹⁷⁰ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 24 April 2009, No. 12548, page 3; *Aztag*, 83rd year, 24 April 2009, No. 41(23146).
- ¹⁷¹ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 21 May 2009, No. 61(23165), page 8.
- ¹⁷² *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 25 May 2009, No. 64(23169).
- ¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 28 May 2009, No. 66(23171).
- ¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 2 June 2009, No. 69(23174).
- ¹⁷⁶ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 28 April 2009, No. 88(17800).
- ¹⁷⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 25 May 2009, No. 12752.
- ¹⁷⁸ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 3 June 2009, No. 116(17828).
- ¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 72nd year, 5 June 2009, No. 228(17830).
- ¹⁸⁰ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 6-7 June 2009, No. 12582, page 2.
- ¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, page 3.
- ¹⁸² *Aztag*, 83rd year, 9 March 2009, No. 4(23109).
- ¹⁸³ LBC TV Marcel Ghanem's "Kalam el Ness" program on 12 March 2009.
- ¹⁸⁴ *Zartonk*, 72nd year, 12 March 2009, No. 14(19745); *Ararad*, 72nd year, 15 March 2009, No. 52(17763).
- ¹⁸⁵ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 14 March 2009, No. 8(23113).
- ¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 18 March 2009, No. 11(23116).

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- ¹⁸⁷ LBC TV news broadcast 14 March 2009.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Zartouk*, 72nd year, 25 March 2009, No. 18(19749); *Ararad*, 72nd year, 25 March 2009, No. 63(17775).
- ¹⁸⁹ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 25 March 2009, No. 17(23122), page 2.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 30 March 2009, No. 21(23126).
- ¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 2 April 2009, No. 24(23129); *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 2 April 2009, No. 12531.
- ¹⁹² *Ararad*, 72nd year, 2 April 2009, No. 70(17782); *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 2 April 2009, No. 12531, page 2.
- ¹⁹³ Robert F. Worth "In Lebanon's Patchwork, A Focus on Armenians' Political Might," *New York Times*, 26 May 2009.
- ¹⁹⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 2 April 2009, No. 12531, page 2.
- ¹⁹⁵ The above position did not prevent MP Pakradouny as one of the signatories on 30 April 2009 with Christian March 8 allies, to welcome the release upon the orders of the prosecutor of the International Court on Lebanon of four generals who had occupied important security posts and who had been imprisoned in September 2005 on suspicion of being implicated in Hariri's demise (*L'Orient-Le Jour*, 1 May 2009, No. 12554, page 2).
- ¹⁹⁶ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 14 April 2009, No. 33(23138), page 3.
- ¹⁹⁷ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 4 April 2009, No. 72(17784); *Zartouk*, 72nd year, 4 April 2009, No. 21(19752).
- ¹⁹⁸ *Azk Daily*, Yerevan, 29 July 2009, No. 141(4277), page 1 and 4.
- ¹⁹⁹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 2 April 2009, No. 12531.
- ²⁰⁰ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 3 April 2009, No. 25 (23130); *Ibid*, 83rd year, 4 April 2009, No. 26(23131); *Ibid*, 83rd year, 7 April 2009, No. 28(23133); *Ibid*, 83rd year, 16 April 2009, No. 35(23140); *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 15 April 2009, No. 12541; *Aztag*, 83rd year, 18 April 2009, No. 37(23142); *Aztag*, 83rd year, 17 April 2009, No. 36(23141);
- ²⁰¹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 7 April 2009, No. 12535; *Ararad*, 72nd year, 7 April 2009, No. 74(17786); *Aztag*, 83rd year, 7 April 2009, No. 28(23133), page 2.
- ²⁰² *Ibid*.
- ²⁰³ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 6 April 2009, No. 27(23132), page 2.
- ²⁰⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 8 April 2009, No. 12536, page 3.
- ²⁰⁵ According to some sources Nar Khatchadourian of the Ramgavar opposition and another person, met Saad Hariri on 5 April 2009 to dissuade him from supporting Kassarian.
- ²⁰⁶ *Zartouk*, 72nd year, 7 April 2009, No. 22(19753).
- ²⁰⁷ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 5 April 2009, No. 73(17785); *L'Orient-Le Jour*, No. 12534, page 3; *The Daily Star*, 6 April 2009, No. 12859.
- ²⁰⁸ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 27 March 2009, No. 65(17777); *Ibid*, 72nd year, 9 April 2009, No. 76(17788).
- ²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 72nd year, 8 April 2009, No. 75(17787).
- ²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 72nd year, 9 April 2009, No. 76(17788).
- ²¹¹ "Murashahun lil-intikhabat el-niyebieh fi 7 hezeyran 2009", www.tayyar.org
- ²¹² *Ararad*, 72nd year, 8 April 2009, No. 75(17787).
- ²¹³ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 11 April 2009, No. 32(23137).
- ²¹⁴ Kassarian, in an interview with *Azk* of Yerevan (29 July 2009, No. 141(4277)), said after the Doha Agreement he told his fellow Party leaders that he did not wish to present his candidacy in 2009, but after the electoral campaign began, the Party leadership in Lebanon proposed his candidacy and he was obliged to accept it. He said the Central Council president, Mike Kharabian, created a duality of position in the party with the Lebanon District Council, who had the right to propose candidates. The Central Council's appeal of solidarity put them in a difficult position and the District Council refused to abide by it. However, the Central Council's interference was not the main reason; the

Party's internal matters (the opposition – Z.M.) became the more important reason for resigning from his candidacy.

Ararad, 72nd year, 22 May 2009, No. 107(17819) referred to an interview in *al-Liwa* daily of Beirut about his reasons for withdrawing his candidacy.

Zartouk, 73rd year, 28 July 2009, No. 64(19795), page 2 wrote "Ramgavar dissidents did all they could to keep Hagop Kassarian away from the electoral campaign and parliament."

²¹⁵ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 12 April 2009, No. 79(17791).

²¹⁶ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 14 April 2009, No. 33(23138).

²¹⁷ *Zartouk*, 72nd year, 16 April 2009, No. 25(19756); *L'Orient-Le Jour* 16 April 2009, No. 12542.

²¹⁸ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 16 April 2009, No. 80(17792).

²¹⁹ LBC TV news broadcast 17 April 2009.

²²⁰ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 17 April 2009, No. 81(17793).

²²¹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 18-19 April 2009, No. 12544.

²²² *Aztag*, 83rd year, 17 April 2009, No. 36(23141).

²²³ *Ibid*, page 2; *Ibid*, 83rd year, 18 April 2009, No. 37(23142), page 2; *Ibid*, 83rd year, 21 April 2009, No. 38(23143), page 2

²²⁴ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 22 April 2009, No. 84(17796); *L'Orient-Le Jour* 22 April 2009, No. 12546, page 3.

²²⁵ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 22 April 2009, No. 84(17796).

²²⁶ LBC TV news broadcast 21 April 2009; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 22 April 2009, No. 12546

²²⁷ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 21 April 2009, No. 38(23143), page 2.

²²⁸ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 22 April 2009, No. 12546, page 3.

²²⁹ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 23 April 2009, No. 40(23145), page 2; *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 23 April 2009, No. 12547.

²³⁰ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 24 April 2009, No. 41(23146), page 2.

²³¹ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 23 April 2009, No. 40(23145), page 2.

²³² *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 24 April 2009, No. 12548, page 2.

²³³ *Azk Daily*, Yerevan, 22 April 2009, No. 72.

²³⁴ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 23 April 2009, No. 40(23145); *Ararad*, 72nd year, 23 April 2009, No. 85(17797).

²³⁵ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 9-10 May 2009, No. 12559.

²³⁶ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 24 April 2009, No. 41(23146), page 12.

²³⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 25 April 2009, No. 12549 pages 1 and 3.

²³⁸ *Ibid*.

²³⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁴⁰ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 29 April 2009, No. 44(23149), page 2; *Ararad*, 72nd year, 26 April 2009, No. 87(17799) had indicated that Toursarkissian said the boycott would include Beirut I and other districts.

²⁴¹ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 25 April 2009, No. 89(17801).

²⁴² *Ibid*, 72nd year, 30 April 2009, No. 90(17802); *Zartouk*, 72nd year, 1 May 2009, No. 30 (19761).

²⁴³ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 3 May 2009, No. 92 (17804).

²⁴⁴ *Al-Mustaqbal*, 4 May 2009, No. 3294.

²⁴⁵ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 5 May 2009, No. 93(17805).

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

²⁴⁷ *Aztag*, based on information from *Diar*, 83rd year, 6 May 2009, No. 49(23154), page 2; *Ararad*, 72nd year, 6 May 2009, No. 94(17806).

²⁴⁸ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 8 May 2009, No. 50(23155), page 2.

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- ²⁴⁹ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 9 May 2009, No. 96(17808); *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 9-10 May 2009, No. 12559, page 3.
- ²⁵⁰ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 12 May 2009, No. 98(17810).
- ²⁵¹ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 13 May 2009, No. 54(23159), page 2. During a TV interview on OTV's "Al Hak Youkal" program with Serge Sarkissian, the latter had a dispute with Kouyoumjian and this created further difficulties (*Aztag*, 16 May 2009, No. 57(23162).
- ²⁵² *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 9-10 May 2009, No. 12559.
- ²⁵³ *Ibid*, 16-17 May 2009, No. 12565.
- ²⁵⁴ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 12 May 2009, No. 53(23158), page 2; *Ararad*, 73rd year (15 May 2009, No. 101(17813).
- ²⁵⁵ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 17 May 2009, No. 103(17815).
- ²⁵⁶ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 20 May 2009, No. 60(23165), page 2.
- ²⁵⁷ *Ibid*.
- ²⁵⁸ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 20 May 2009, No. 105(17817).
- ²⁵⁹ *Zartok*, 72nd year, 21 May 2009, No. 37(19768).
- ²⁶⁰ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 22 May 2009, No. 12570; *Araard*, 72nd year, 22 May 2009, No. 107(17819); *Zartok*, 72nd year, 23 May 2009, No. 38(19769).
- ²⁶¹ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 22 May 2009, No. 107(17819).
- ²⁶² *Ibid*, 72nd year, 23 May 2009, No. 108(17820).
- ²⁶³ *Ibid*, 72nd year, 24 May 2009, No. 109(17821).
- ²⁶⁴ *Zartok*, 72nd year, 19 May 2009, No. 36(19767), page 1, stated that Gen. Aoun, Hezbollah and Suleiman Frangie had criticized president Suleiman.
- ²⁶⁵ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 23-24 May 2009, No. 12571.
- ²⁶⁶ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 28 May 2009, No. 111(17823).
- ²⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 72nd year, 29 May 2009, No. 112(17824); *Aztag*, 83rd year, 16 April 2009, No. 35,(23140); *Ibid*, 83rd year, 17 April 2009, No. 36(23141).
- ²⁶⁸ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 29 April 2009, No. 44(23149).
- ²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 1 May 2009, No. 46(23151).
- ²⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 9 May 2009, No. 51(23156).
- ²⁷¹ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 14 May 2009, No. 55(23160).
- ²⁷² *Ibid*, 83rd year, 16 May 2009, No. 57(23162).
- ²⁷³ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 18 May 2009, No. 58(23167).
- ²⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 12 May 2009, No. 53(23158).
- ²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 11 May 2009, No. 52(23157).
- ²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 18 May 2009, No. 58(23163). Khatchig Barsoumian, in the name of the TPLCC, mockingly said in this meeting, without naming Toursarkissian, that he "like a worm with a bent neck, is waiting for Koraytem Porte's decision to know whether he shall be a candidate or not." He also had disfavorable comments on the other March 14 Armenian candidates, with the intention of showing that "their decisions and attitudes are left to others."
- ²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 11 May 2009, No. 52(23157).
- ²⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 19 May 2009, No. 59(23164).
- ²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, page 2.
- ²⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 20 May 2009, No. 60(23165).
- ²⁸¹ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 23 May 2009, No. 63(23168).
- ²⁸² *Ibid*, 83rd year, 27 May 2009, No. 65(23170).
- ²⁸³ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 30 May 2009, No. 67(23172).
- ²⁸⁴ *Zartok*, 73rd year, 9 May 2009, No. 32(19763); *Hask Monthly* (Antelias) May 2009, No. 5.

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- ²⁸⁵ *Zartouk*, 73rd year, 9 May 2009, No. 32(19763); *Ibid*, 73rd year, 23 May 2009, No. 38(19769).
- ²⁸⁶ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 27 May 2009, No. 65(23170).
- ²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 30 May 2009, No. 67(23172), page 3.
- ²⁸⁸ *Zartouk*, 73rd year, 9 May 2009, No. 32(19763).
- ²⁸⁹ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 18 May 2009, No. 58(23163).
- ²⁹⁰ *El-Jadid* TV news broadcast of 17 May 2009.
- ²⁹¹ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 18 May 2009, No. 58(23163).
- ²⁹² *Ararad*, 72nd year, 30 May 2009, No. 113(17825). *Zartouk* did not publish the declaration perhaps as its size did not permit it.
- ²⁹³ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 30-31 May 2009, No. 12576.
- ²⁹⁴ *Zartouk*, 72nd year, 30 May 2009, No. 40(19771).
- ²⁹⁵ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 4 June 2009, No. 117(17829).
- ²⁹⁶ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 30 May 2009, No. 67(23172), pages 1 and 10.
- ²⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 83rd year, 27 May 2009, No. 65(23170).
- ²⁹⁸ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 27 May 2009, No. 110(17822).
- ²⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 72nd year, 2 June 2009, No. 115(17827).
- ³⁰⁰ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 5 June 2009, No. 72(23177).
- ³⁰¹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 6-7 June 2009, No. 12582.
- ³⁰² *Ibid*, page 3.
- ³⁰³ *Ibid*, page 2.
- ³⁰⁴ Robert F. Worth, "Money Pours in to Lebanon to Buy Votes," *International Herald Tribune*, 24 April 2009, pages 1 and 5.
- ³⁰⁵ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 18 June 2009, No. 12592.
- ³⁰⁶ *As-Safir*, Beirut, 9 June 2009, No. 11313, p. 4.
- ³⁰⁷ *Nahar*, 9 June 2009, No. 23720.
- ³⁰⁸ *As-Safir*, 9 June 2009, No. 11313, page 4.
- ³⁰⁹ *Ibid*.
- ³¹⁰ *Nahar*, 9 June 2009, No. 23720.
- ³¹¹ *As-Safir*, 9 June 2009, No. 11313, page 4.
- ³¹² *Ibid*.
- ³¹³ *Nahar*, 9 June 2009, No. 23720.
- ³¹⁴ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 13 June 2009, No. 79(23184). In the same newspaper Avo Gidianian of the TPLCC had declared in Metn 13,800 Armenians had voted in their favour and 2900 for the March 14 Forces.
- ³¹⁵ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 13 June 2009, No. 79(23184). Gidianian gave the Zahle percentage in their favour as 80%, the votes being out of 3300, 3000 in their favour and 300 for the March 14 forces.
- ³¹⁶ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 8 June 2009, No. 12583.
- ³¹⁷ *The Daily Star*, 8 June 2009, No. 12908.
- ³¹⁸ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 8 June 2009, No. 74(23179).
- ³¹⁹ *Zartouk*, 72nd year, 9 June 2009, No. 44(19775).
- ³²⁰ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 9 June 2009, No. 120(17832).
- ³²¹ *Al-Balad*, 9 July 2009, No. 1933, page 7.
- ³²² *Ibid*.
- ³²³ *Ibid*, 10 July 2009, No. 1934, page 7.
- ³²⁴ *Ibid*, 12 July 2009, No. 1936, page 7.
- ³²⁵ *Ibid*.
- ³²⁶ *Ibid*, 3 July 2009, No. 1928, page 7.
- ³²⁷ *The Daily Star*, 9 June 2009, No. 12909.

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- ³²⁸ Ziyad Makhoul, "Mythologies," *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 9 June 2009, No. 12584, page 2.
- ³²⁹ Michel Touma, "Un Tres Couteux, et Suspect, Exces de Zele," *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 13-14 June 2009, No. 12588, page 3. *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 20 June 2009, No. 49(19780), page 3, gave Touma's article in its Armenian translation.
- ³³⁰ Editorial, "Beyond the Criticisms," *Aztag*, 83rd year, 18 June 2009, No. 83(23188).
- ³³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³³² *Ararad*, 72nd year, 11 June 2009, No. 122(17834).
- ³³³ *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 13 June 2009, No. 46(19777).
- ³³⁴ *Ibid.*, 72nd year, 16 June 2009, No. 47(19778).
- ³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 72nd year, 11 June 2009, No. 45(19776).
- ³³⁶ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 13 June 2009, No. 79(23184).
- ³³⁷ *Ibid.*, page 3.
- ³³⁸ *The Daily Star*, 17 June 2009, No. 12926; *Ararad*, 72nd year, 17 June 2009, No. 127(17839); *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 17 June 2009, No. 12591; *Al-Shark*, Beirut, 17 June 2009, No. 18037.
- ³³⁹ Vicken Cherchian of AGBU-Antranik Club actively worked for Murr.
- ³⁴⁰ Same as footnote 338.
- ³⁴¹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 17 June 2009, No. 12591.
- ³⁴² *Aztag*, 83rd year, 18 June 2009, No. 83(23188); *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 18 June 2009, No. 12592.
- ³⁴³ *Al-Akhbar*, Beirut, 17 June 2009, as translated in *Aztag*, 83rd year, 18 June 2009, No. 83(23188).
- ³⁴⁴ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 9 June 2009, No. 12584, page 4; *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 11 June 2009, No. 45(19776).
- ³⁴⁵ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 18 June 2009, No. 12592.
- ³⁴⁶ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 17 June 2009, No. 82(23187).
- ³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 83rd year, 15 October 2009, No. 182(23287).
- ³⁴⁸ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 8 July 2009, No. 145(17857).
- ³⁴⁹ *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 30 June 2009, No. 53(19784).
- ³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵¹ *Al-Diar*, Beirut, 22nd year, 24 July 2009, No. 7382, page 5; *Al-Akhbar*, Beirut, 17 July 2009.
- ³⁵² *Ararad*, 72nd year, 23 June 2009, No. 132(17844).
- ³⁵³ *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 4 July 2009, No. 55(19786).
- ³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵⁵ *Ararad*, 72nd year, 7 August 2009, No. 170(17882); *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 8 August 2009, No. 69(19800).
- ³⁵⁶ *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 11 August 2009, No. 70(19802).
- ³⁵⁷ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 8 September 2009, No. 12661, page 2.
- ³⁵⁸ *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 10 November 2009, No. 108(19839).
- ³⁵⁹ *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 26-27 September 2009, No. 12676, page 4.
- ³⁶⁰ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 26 November 2009, No. 217(23322).
- ³⁶¹ *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 12 December 2009, No. 121(19852); *Ararad*, 72nd year, 12 December 2009, No. 273(17985).
- ³⁶² Hamo Moskofian, "Interview with MP Hagop Pakradouny", *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 26 January 2010 No. 136(19867), pages 3-4. The interview was reprinted in some Armenian papers such as *Nor Gyank* of Los Angeles, but not in *Aztag*.
- ³⁶³ *Aztag*, 83rd year, 2 September 2009, No. 147(23252); *Ararad*, 72nd year, 3 September 2009, No. 192(17903); *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 5 September 2009, No. 81(19812).
- ³⁶⁴ *Zartontk*, 72nd year, 29 December 2009, No. 126(19857).

³⁶⁵ Ibid, 72nd year, 18 February 2010, No. 146(19877).

³⁶⁶ Ibid, 72nd year, 25 February 2010, No. 149(19880). *Aztag* and *Ararad* also published the same declaration, as well as the world-wide partisan and non-partisan Armenian press, such as *Nor Gyank*, Los Angeles, 32nd year, 4 March 2010, No. 13, page 1.

**ՀԱՅՈՑ ՄԱՄՆԱԿՑՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ ՄԻՇԷԼ ՍԼԷՅՄԱՆԻ ՆԱԽԱԳԱՀՈՒԹԵԱՆ
ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԱՇՐՋԱՆԻ (2008-) ԼԻԲԱՆԱՆԻ ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՐԱՐԱՆԱԿԱՆ
ԸՆՏՐՈՒԹԻՒՆՆԵՐՈՒՆ
(Ամփոփում)**

ԶԱԻՔՆ ՄՍԸՐԼԵԱՆ

Հեղինակը հիմնուելով ժամանակակից լիբանանահայ, առաւել՝ Լիբանանի մէջ լոյս տեսնող մի քանի ֆրանսատառ, անգլիատառ եւ արաբերէն, նաեւ՝ հայկական թերթերու մէջ տեղական թերթերէ թարգմանաբար տրուած տեղեկութիւններու, ինչպէս նաեւ անձնական հաղորդակցութեամբ կուտակուած տեղեկութիւններու վրայ, հանգամանորէն կը ներկայացնէ Լիբանանի 2009ի խորհրդարանական ընտրութիւններուն հայկական մասնակցութիւնը Պէյրութի, Հիւսիսային Մեթնի եւ Զահլէի ընտրաշրջաններուն մէջ, ուր հայ համայնքներուն յատկացուած էին վեց երեսփոխանական աթոռներ:

Հեղինակը նիւթին մէջ խորանայէ առաջ կու տայ արագ ակնարկ մը Լիբանանի երկրեւեռ քաղաքական կացութեան եւ 2007ի Մեթնի մասնակի ընտրութեան մասին, որուն մէջ յաղթանակած էր Զօր Աունի թեկնածուն ՀՅԴաշնակցութեան ցուցաբերած գորաւոր օժանդակութեան չնորհիւ: Հուսկ կ'անդրադառնայ 7 Մայիս 2008ի արիւնալի դէպքերուն, եւ անոր իբրեւ հետեւանք Տոհայի Համաձայնութեան, լիբանանեան բանակի հրամանատար Զօր Միշէլ Սլէյմանի միաձայնութեամբ համաձայնական հանրապետութեան նախագահ ընտրութեան եւ ընտրական նոր օրէնքին:

Խորհրդարանական ընտրութիւնները կայացան մէկ օրուան ընթացքին 7 Յունիս 2009ին, պրկուած, բայց ընդհանրապէս հանդարտ մթնոլորտի մը մէջ: Պայքարող կողմերն էին Սաատ Հարիրիի գլխաւորած Մարտ 14ի ուժերը եւ Հրգպալլա-Ամալ-Զօր Աուն եւ այլ դաշնակիցներու Մարտ 8ի ուժերը: ՀՅԴ կրկին Մարտ 8ի ուժերուն հետ եղաւ, քանի որ Սաատ Հարիրի՝ հետ համաձայնութիւն չգոյացաւ: Իսկ ՄԴՀնչակեան եւ ՌԱԿուսակցութիւնները Մարտ 14ի ուժերուն հետ էին եւ անոնց նեցուկով չորս երեսփոխաններ (մէկը անմրցակից եւ Յը՝ ընտրութեամբ) ընտրուեցան այլեւայլ վերիվայրումներէ ետք, ինչպիսին էր հայ կաթողիկէ թեկնածուին հարցը: ՀՅԴաշնակցութիւնը ապահովեց երկու աթոռ, Մեթնի եւ Պէյրութ Բ-ի մէջ երկուքն ալ անմրցակից կերպով: ՀՅԴ նաեւ մեծ թիւով Լիբանանէն դուրս բնակող լիբանանահայեր Լիբանան բերաւ ընտրութեան քուէարկելու համար:

Լիբանանահայ գաղութին մէջ որոշ լարուածութիւն մը գգալի էր նախընտրական եւ յետ-ընտրական անմիջական շրջանին, սակայն միջկուսակցական կապերը շարունակուեցան Լիբանանէն դուրս եւ ներս եւ կարելի եղաւ հայոց վրայ գործադրուած Յեղասպանութեան 95ամեակը միասնական կեցուածքով ոգեկոչել:

Կառավարութեան մէջ 30 նախարարի վրայ հայկական կողմերը ներայացուած էին մէկական նախարարով եւ երկու կողմերը մասնակցեցան Լիբանանի Ազգային երկխօսութեան համաժողովին: