

# Chronology

## Seventh century CE

Arab Muslim conquest of Syria. Islamisation of southern tribes while northern ones remain Christian. Maronites split from the Byzantine Church.

## Ninth–eleventh centuries

Spread of Shiism in Lebanese territories.

Maronites pushed south to Mount Lebanon by Byzantine advance.

Development of the Druze sect and its spread in Syria.

## Twelfth–thirteenth centuries

The Pope leads European powers in the Crusades. Maronites split over allegiance to the Pope, leading to a lasting schism.

## Sixteenth century

Ottoman rule begins.

## Nineteenth century

Sectarian conflict builds between Druze and Christians around Mount Lebanon. After the eruption of war in 1860 French troops intervene and a Maronite-dominated autonomous political entity in Mount Lebanon is declared.

## Early twentieth century

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War, the League of Nations grants France a mandate over the empire's northern Arab Levant provinces in 1920. In response to demands from Maronite elites, France creates the State of Greater Lebanon, which includes the former autonomous district of Mount Lebanon as well as the coastal districts of North Lebanon (Tripoli), South Lebanon (Sidon and Tyr) and the Beqaa and Hermel Valley, all historically parts of the Ottoman province of Syria. A Lebanese Republic with its own constitution is declared in 1926, instituting a formula governing the proportional distribution of power.

Independence is obtained on 22 November 1943.

## 1943

The National Pact is agreed. It is an unwritten agreement between the Maronite President and his Sunni Prime Minister constituting a grand bargain among Lebanon's Christians and Muslims. It sets out mutual guarantees in which Christians agree to accept Lebanon's Arab identity and Muslims agree to recognise the legitimacy of the Lebanese state.

## 1948

The state of Israel is declared. The first Arab-Israeli war in 1948–49 provokes the arrival of more than 100,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

## 1958

With growing domestic political tensions exacerbated by external interference, mainly from the Syrian part of the United Arab Republic,

civil war breaks out. President Camille Chamoun asks US troops to re-establish order. The crisis ends with a 'no winner, no loser' agreement. Chamoun is replaced by General Fouad Chehab.

## 1967–69

Lebanon declines to participate in the Six Day War (1967) between Israel and the Arab states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The decisive Israeli victory leads to a further influx of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon. In December 1968, Israel raids Beirut airport in response to Palestinian armed groups using Lebanon as a base. The following year the Cairo Agreement is signed between the Lebanese army and the PLO, legalising Palestinian armed groups' activities in South Lebanon. It also endorses Palestinian self-rule within refugee camps.

## 1970

The PLO relocates its headquarters from Jordan to Lebanon. Over the following years, hostilities between Israel and Lebanon-based Palestinian armed groups worsen, provoking Israeli reprisals and discord within the Lebanese ruling elite. All major groups in the country arm themselves.

## 1975–76

Fighting breaks out pitching Christian conservative forces led by the Kataeb (Phalangists) against Palestinian armed groups and their leftist and Muslim allies grouped under the umbrella of the National Movement. A major spark for the escalation is the killing of some 25 Palestinians by the Kataeb in a Beirut suburb in April 1975. Rounds of shelling and street fighting destroy the capital's centre, business district and harbour. Kataeb's killing of several hundred civilians in December (also known as Black Saturday) ushers in all-out fighting, and massacres by both sides follow in January 1976. As fighting increases, Beirut is divided into sectarian enclaves. 'East Beirut' becomes homogeneously Christian, 'West Beirut' predominantly Muslim.

In February 1976, following a Syrian-mediated ceasefire, President Suleiman Frangieh announces a Constitutional Document stipulating constitutional reforms, including the equal division of parliamentary seats between Christians and Muslims. The National Movement rejects the proposals.

Amidst renewed fighting, Frangieh formally approves the entry of Syrian troops in June. The first phase of intense fighting draws to an end with the defeat of the National Movement and their Palestinian allies. In October, the Arab League formalises the Syrian troop presence in Lebanon as the Arab Deterrent Force.

## 1978

The Christian leadership and the central Christian region revolt against the tutelage of Syrian troops, who bomb East Beirut in retaliation in July and September. Frangieh's Marada militia group sides with Syria and breaks its alliance with the Lebanese Forces.

Israel launches a major military operation in Lebanon in March, occupying the southern areas of the country. The UN Security Council

passes Resolution 425 calling for Israel's withdrawal and establishing the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Israel hands over territory not to UNIFIL but to a proxy militia group called Lebanon's Free Army, which is renamed the South Lebanon Army (SLA) in 1979.

#### **1980**

Syrian troops bombard the town of Zahleh in Beqaa in order to expel Christian militias who have entered the town with Israeli support.

#### **1982**

Israel launches a full-scale invasion of Lebanon in June, defeating the Syrian air force and forcing some 14,000 Palestinian *fidayeen* to withdraw. Its attempt to establish a pro-Israeli government is frustrated when its ally President-elect Bachir Gemayel is assassinated. In response Israeli forces occupy West Beirut; their ally, the Lebanese Forces, massacres hundreds of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Bachir's brother Amin Gemayel is elected President. A multinational peacekeeping force consisting mainly of US, French and Italian troops arrives.

#### **1983**

Israel and Lebanon sign a US-sponsored agreement in May predicated on simultaneous Israeli and Syrian withdrawal and the establishment of a jointly-protected 'security region' in southern Lebanon. Syria rejects the plan, forcing Amin Gemayel's government to renege as well.

The Lebanese Forces militia takes advantage of Israeli occupation and establishes a presence in mixed areas of Mount Lebanon. Conflict with the Druze PSP militia degenerates into the 'War of the Mountain' in September. With Syrian support the PSP defeats the LF and drives a number of Christians out of the Chouf region. At the same time, Amal and its leftist allies defeat the army in West Beirut in spite of US artillery shelling in support of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). In September, the Lebanese government and opposition meet in vain in Geneva for a national reconciliation conference under the auspices of Saudi Arabia and Syria.

The Multinational Force leaves Lebanon after two deadly bomb explosions at their barracks. Islamic Jihad, a branch of the nascent Hezbollah movement, claims responsibility.

#### **1984**

A second national conference for peace and reconciliation is held under Saudi and Syrian auspices in Lausanne in March. It fails to achieve consensus between Amin Gemayel's government and his Muslim, leftist and pro-Syrian opponents on constitutional reforms.

Militias consolidate their control of West Beirut and Amal fights for supremacy.

#### **1985**

In May, heavy fighting erupts between Amal and Palestinian militias for control of refugee camps around Beirut. Amal receives support from Syria and pro-Syrian Palestinian groups, and destroys large parts of several camps.

In December, Amal, the PSP and the LF sign a Tripartite Accord in Damascus to organise militia power sharing under Syrian rule. It never comes into effect as the LF leader, Hobeika, is ousted the following month.

#### **1986**

The 'War of the Camps' reignites with further ferocious fighting between Amal and Palestinian groups supported by pro-Palestinian Sunni militias in May-June. Fighting spreads to Rashidiyye camp in Tyre, and Sidon's Ain al-Helweh camp.

#### **1987**

Fighting spreads throughout West Beirut in February amid Amal's continuing blockade of the camps, which is finally lifted in April.

#### **1988**

With no candidate elected to succeed him, outgoing President Amin Gemayel hands interim power to the Maronite Commander-in-Chief of the army, Michel Aoun. Aoun forms a six-member interim military government in a break with the National Pact. The three Muslims appointed to the council refuse to serve and Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss refuses to step down, leaving Lebanon with two governments: one in West Beirut led by Hoss and backed by Syria; and one in East Beirut, led by Aoun.

#### **1989**

LAF units loyal to Aoun clash with the LF in Christian central Lebanon. Aoun declares a 'war of liberation' against the Syrian presence in March. Heavy artillery exchanges with the Syrian army around Beirut follow.

In October, Lebanese parliamentarians meet in Taif, Saudi Arabia to discuss a Charter of National Reconciliation. The Taif Agreement is signed, reconfiguring the political system to give Muslims equal legislative representation vis a vis Christians, and dividing executive powers between the Maronite President and the Council of Ministers. The agreement also gives Syria political and military tutelage over Lebanon. Aoun rejects the accord on the grounds that it does not lay out a clear timetable for Syrian withdrawal.

In November, President-elect Rene Moawad is assassinated and succeeded by pro-Syrian Elias Hrawi. Aoun is replaced as Commander-in-Chief by General Emile Lahoud but refuses to leave the Presidential palace.

## 1990

Further rounds of fighting between Aounists and the LF, as well as between Amal and Hezbollah competing for control of Shia suburbs in Beirut. Under Syrian air force attacks, Aoun is forced to take refuge in the French embassy in October. He is later exiled to France.

Armed hostilities officially end in October with a ceasefire between Amal and Hezbollah negotiated by Syria and Iran. A Government of National Reconciliation is formed, led by Omar Karami.

## 1991

### March

Parliament orders the dissolution of all militias by 30 April, but Hezbollah is allowed to retain its arms, ostensibly to liberate southern Lebanon from Israeli control.

### May

Lebanon and Syria sign a Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination, which allows Syrian political control over Lebanon.

### June

Law 88 proposes the rehabilitation of 6,000 militiamen into army or security forces and recruits 2,000 into the civil service.

### August

The Amnesty Law offers impunity for all war crimes except 'political crimes' committed before 28 February.

## 1992

### February

Hezbollah leader Sheikh Abbas al-Musawi is killed in an Israeli helicopter gunship attack. Hassan Nasrallah succeeds him.

### August–October

The first parliamentary elections since 1972 are held. Many Christians boycott them in protest of Syrian control of the process. A large majority of pro-Syrian candidates from all denominations are elected. Rafiq al-Hariri becomes Prime Minister.

## 1993

In July, Israel launches attacks on targets in southern Lebanon aimed at quelling Hezbollah ('Operation Accountability'). Hundreds of thousands of civilians are displaced.

## 1995

Under heavy Syrian pressure and in a break with constitutional rule, Elias Hrawi's presidential mandate is extended for three years.

## 1996

Israel again bombs Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, Beirut and the Beqaa Valley. 'Operation Grapes of Wrath' leads to the death of up to 170 civilians and displaces hundreds of thousands more. The US and France negotiate the Israel–Lebanon Ceasefire Understanding between Israel and Hezbollah, signed 26 April. An Israel–Lebanon Monitoring Group is established to monitor the truce.

## 1998

Army Commander-in-Chief Emile Lahoud succeeds Hrawi as president. New Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss leads a cabinet with no militia leaders in it.

## 2000

### May

Israel pulls out of southern Lebanon after its 22-year occupation. The withdrawal provokes the collapse of the SLA and a Hezbollah take-over of Shia border regions. The UN demarcates, and UNIFIL supervises, a provisional Blue Line separating Lebanon from Israel.

### October

Rafiq al-Hariri becomes Prime Minister for a second time after his coalition gains a parliamentary majority in legislative elections in May and June.

## 2003

In December, the US Congress passes the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, calling on Syria to withdraw from Lebanon.

## 2004

On 2 September UN Security Council Resolution 1559 calls for free presidential elections and all foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon. The following day, under Syrian pressure, Parliament votes to extend Lahoud's presidential term by three years. Al-Hariri and his cabinet resign in October. Lahoud appoints Omar Karami as Prime Minister.

## 2005

### February

Former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri is assassinated in a car bomb explosion in Beirut. Syria is widely suspected of being responsible. Karami and his cabinet resign. Over the following weeks, huge demonstrations both against and in support of Syria are held in Beirut; on 8 March in support of Syria and 14 March, signalling Lebanon's 'freedom surge (*intifada*)'.

### April

The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1595, which calls for an investigation into the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri and establishes an 'independent international commission' to do so.

The remaining 14,000 Syrian troops withdraw from Lebanon after 35 years.

Karami steps down after failing to form a government. Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati forms a new government to organise legislative elections.

### **May-June**

General Aoun and Amin Gemayel return from France. Parliamentary elections are held in three rounds. An electoral alliance between Hariri's block, Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and Hezbollah wins a majority of seats. Fouad Siniora is nominated as Prime Minister-designate.

### **August**

Four pro-Syrian security chiefs are arrested in connection with the investigation into Hariri's killing.

### **October**

The first UN investigation's report on Hariri's killing points to Syrian involvement in the assassination. Investigator Detlev Mehlis is criticised for reaching hasty, definitive conclusions.

### **December**

The Security Council adopts Resolution 1644 asking the Secretary-General to identify the means to bring those responsible before an international tribunal.

## **2006**

### **February**

Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) signs a memorandum of understanding with Hezbollah, allying it with the Shia group 'in view of full return of Lebanon's sovereignty and improving bilateral relations with Syria'.

### **March**

The National Dialogue talks take place between leaders of the main communities and political parties on issues of political reform and national security.

The Security Council adopts Resolution 1664, in which it requests the Secretary-General to negotiate an agreement with the Government of Lebanon aimed at establishing a tribunal.

### **July-August**

The Israel-Hezbollah war. In response to Hezbollah killing seven Israeli soldiers and capturing two more, Israel launches airstrikes, naval bombardments and troop movements targeting infrastructure all over the country and flattening Beirut's Shia southern suburbs.

UNSC Resolution 1701 calls for an end to hostilities and enlarges UNIFIL's peacekeeping mission across the border.

### **September**

The first major reinforcement of UN forces arrives and Israel lifts its air and naval blockade.

### **November**

The cabinet approves the establishment of an international tribunal to bring those responsible for killing Rafiq al-Hariri to justice. President Lahoud and Speaker Nabih Berri announce they will not approve the tribunal, pointing to a lack of Shiite representation (after the withdrawal of Shia ministers) in the cabinet.

### **December**

Hezbollah launches a mass demonstration against the 'unconstitutional government'. Hezbollah and FPM organise an 18-month sit-in, imposing a blockade on government offices.

## **2007**

### **May**

After being the target of deadly attacks in Tripoli by Fatah al-Islam, the LAF launches an all-out attack against the fundamentalist group based inside Nahr al-Bared Palestinian refugee camp, near Tripoli. Thousands of Palestinian refugees are displaced to the Beddawi camp. The LAF achieves control of Nahr al-Bared on 2 September after using armed helicopters sent by the US and Gulf countries.

After receiving a formal request from the Prime Minister, UN Security Council Resolution 1757 resolves to establish a Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL).

### **July**

At France's invitation, 31 representatives from Lebanon's 14 main political parties hold two days of closed-door talks inside the La Celle-Saint-Cloud Château outside Paris. They agree not to resort to political violence to resolve the crisis and to continue dialogue.

### **November**

The term of President Emile Lahoud comes to an end. With no successor acceptable to both the major groupings, Siniora's cabinet assumes temporary executive powers.

## **2008**

### **May**

Fighting breaks out between Muslim factions after Hezbollah announces that the government's decisions to declare the group's private telecommunications network illegal and to sack the head of security at Beirut International Airport (an alleged Hezbollah sympathiser) amounted to a 'declaration of war'. Hezbollah's forces and its pro-Syrian allies soon control West Beirut. The government revokes its decisions.

A Lebanese National Dialogue Conference held in Doha under Qatari and French auspices concludes with the signing of the Doha Agreement. This gives the opposition a greater share of seats in cabinet amounting to veto power.

Parliament elects the LAF commander General Michel Suleiman as President.

### **July**

A 'Unity Government' is formed by Fouad Siniora, as agreed in Doha, with a fragile majority for the 14 March coalition.

### **September**

Sunni and Alawite leaders in Tripoli sign a reconciliation agreement to end fighting that has taken place since June.

### **October**

Lebanon and Syria establish diplomatic relations for the first time.

### **2009**

#### **March**

The STL officially opens in The Hague.

#### **April–May**

The STL advises the Lebanese judiciary to release the four senior Lebanese security officials who had been arrested in 2005 on Mehlis's recommendation.

The German magazine *Der Spiegel* names the suspected Hariri culprits, linking Hezbollah to the crime.

### **June**

In parliamentary elections, the March 14 alliance wins 71 seats and the March 8 bloc 57 seats. The opposition demands a number of cabinet seats, which would give them a veto over key government decisions.

### **November**

Saad al-Hariri forms a new government with 15 members from his March 14 Alliance, 10 from the Hezbollah-led March 8 opposition, and 5 appointed by President Suleiman.

### **December**

The cabinet endorses Hezbollah's right to keep its arsenal of weapons.

### **2010**

#### **March**

Druze leader Walid Jumblatt meets with the Syrian President in a meeting that marks his move away from the anti-Syrian March 14 Alliance.

### **August–September**

Nasrallah criticises the STL and suggests that Israel had a hand in the Hariri killing. The STL calls for Hezbollah to hand over evidence supporting this claim. Saad al-Hariri vows to stay committed to the STL. He withdraws his earlier claim that Syria was behind his father's killing.

### **October**

Iranian President Ahmadinejad's controversial visit to Lebanon culminates in a rally at a Hezbollah stronghold near the Israeli border.

### **November**

The US pledges another \$10 million to the STL.

### **2011**

#### **January**

The Unity Government collapses with the resignation of Hezbollah and March 8 Alliance ministers over the government's refusal to distance itself from the STL.

The UN prosecutor issues a sealed indictment for the murder of Rafiq al-Hariri.

Jumblatt announces he will back Hezbollah's efforts to form a new government and Tripoli businessman Najib Mikati is appointed Prime Minister.

### **June**

Mikati finally succeeds in forming a cabinet. Hezbollah and its allies are given 16 out of 30 seats.

The STL Pre-Trial Judge confirms the indictment against Salim Jamil Ayyash, Mustafa Amine Badreddine, Hussein Hassan Oneissi and Assad Hassan Sabra. The accused are members of Hezbollah, which says it will not allow their arrest. International arrest warrants are issued on 8 July.

### **2012**

#### **February**

The STL Trial Chamber decides to proceed to try the four accused in the Ayyash et al. case in their absence.