



Lebanon's National Security Between the Hammer of Parallel Arms and the Anvil of Regional Conflicts!

By
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Introduction

In political science and international relations, **National Security** is understood as the foundation for the survival of the state, the stability of its institutions, and the protection of its citizens and resources from internal and external threats. In Lebanon, however, this concept is affected by structural and historical complexities that have rendered it vulnerable to sectarian competition and conflicting interpretations.

The problem does not lie merely in the country's limited geographic size or scarcity of resources. At its core lies the difficulty of consolidating "sovereignty" within a political system historically based on sectarian power-sharing and fragile balances, where sectarian and regional loyalties have often prevailed over a broader national allegiance.

National Security defines the state's capacity to protect its internal and external sources of strength military, economic, political, and social—from existing and potential threats in times of peace and war, and to preserve this security in the present and the future through a strategically prepared and previously agreed-upon vision. Such a definition presupposes the existence of a single political and legal authority capable of formulating and implementing that vision. Difficulties arise when several centers of power coexist within one state, as is the case in Lebanon.

Lebanon represents a unique case in the fields of National Security and strategic studies. Its consensual political system, deeply rooted in sectarian pluralism, has prevented the emergence of a modern state founded on citizenship and loyalty to the homeland. At the same time, its geographic position places it directly at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict and amid complex regional and international rivalries. Combined, these circumstances have produced a highly complicated security environment in which the state's official institutions, the Lebanese Armed Forces and security agencies, have coexisted with parallel military structures. In the past, these included Palestinian organizations, Lebanese armed factions allied with foreign states and regional axes, as well as Israeli and Syrian occupations. Today, this parallel structure is embodied primarily by Hezbollah, which began to take shape in 1982 and formally announced its existence in 1985, under the justification of resisting the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon prior to 2000. Over time, it became a structural dilemma for the country, raising fundamental questions regarding who holds the authority to decide on war and peace and who represents the sovereign will of the Lebanese state.

The State of Greater Lebanon was established in the Middle East in **1920** as a unique model based on religious and cultural pluralism, a character later formally consolidated in the National Pact of **1943**. While some viewed this pluralism as a source of cultural richness, it also carried within it the beginnings of a lasting structural weakness: the inability of the Lebanese state to fulfil the requirements of a modern nation-state. Since political life in Lebanon has historically relied on relationships between sectarian leaders and foreign powers, every shift in the regional balance of power has repeatedly generated instability on the domestic scene.

This paper focuses on a complex strategic dilemma: how can a state preserve its sovereignty and political independence, protect its national security, and at the same time confront military and security organizations operating alongside its legitimate institutions, organizations whose decisions and motivations are rooted in ideological and political loyalties that transcend national borders? In Lebanon's case, the question also concerns how to rebuild a coherent sovereign security doctrine founded on the state's exclusive authority over defense, security, and strategic decision-making.

Lebanese National Security cannot be reduced to the technical military question of protecting land and maritime borders. It is a structural dilemma rooted in the very nature of the state itself. Without a single armed force, and with military decision-making distributed among multiple centers, the concept of sovereignty itself becomes weakened. Lebanon is consequently transformed into an arena for proxy warfare, while constitutional institutions lose their ability to perform their sovereign functions. The result is political paralysis and continuing international isolation.

I. The Impact of Armed Structures Operating Outside State Authority on Lebanese Sovereignty and the National Security Doctrine

German sociologist **Max Weber**¹ defines the state as "that human community which successfully claims, within a defined territory, the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force." In Weber's understanding, what distinguishes the modern state is that other groups or individuals may resort to force only to the extent permitted by the state. The state therefore becomes the sole source of the "Right" to use force. Like the political formations that preceded it historically, the state is a relationship of domination based on the exercise of what is regarded as legitimate coercive force. For the state to continue to exist, those governed must ultimately submit to the authority claimed by those who govern.

The issue therefore goes beyond the mere possession of instruments of force. It concerns the exclusive authority to determine the legitimacy of their use. The state alone must determine who is entitled to carry arms, when their use is permitted, and under what circumstances such use is considered necessary. This monopoly cannot simply be taken for granted; its legitimacy must continually be earned and renewed through social acceptance. When the state fails to impose its monopoly, or when domestic groups reject its authority, power becomes fragmented. Depending on the degree of fragmentation, the state may either be weakened, or its institutional structure may collapse altogether.

According to this definition, the state loses the essence of its authority when control over coercive power is shared with irregular organizations or forces, or when security, military, social, economic, and

¹ Max Weber "Science and Politics as a Vocation" Arabic translation by Georges Abi Saleh (Beirut: Arab Organization for Translation, 2011), p. 131.

financial systems operate outside national laws and institutions accountable to the public and the Constitution.

In **Lebanon**, the state suffers from a persistent condition of weakness vis-à-vis illegitimate armed actors. Although the Lebanese Armed Forces and Security Institutions remain committed to a national doctrine and maintain a high level of professionalism, they confront, in practice, extensive geographic areas and security or strategic issues that remain outside their effective control. Over time, the accumulation of these “parallel military organizations” has led to a distorted management of authority.

This process began with the Palestinian armed presence, particularly following the **1969** Cairo Agreement, under which the Lebanese state relinquished aspects of its sovereignty in the Arqoub area and within Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. It was followed by repeated Israeli invasions and occupation beginning in **1978**, and by the entry of the former Syrian regime’s army into Lebanon in **1976**, initially through the Palestine Liberation Army and later under the cover of the Arab Deterrent Force. All participating Arab states eventually withdrew from that force except Syria, whose forces came to dominate Lebanese political, security, and social life until **2005**, the year of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri’s assassination and the subsequent Syrian withdrawal.

The pattern continued with the expansion of Hezbollah’s military power after **1982** under the justification of resisting Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon. The outcome has been the emergence of a model in which the central authority lacks exclusive control over deterrence and military initiative.

The Consequences for Law and Sovereignty are Extremely Serious, Including the Following:

- a. The erosion of constitutional authority, the decline of state prestige, and the fragmentation of sovereignty. Although the Lebanese government is constitutionally expected to exercise executive authority over security and defense, it has increasingly been reduced to an administrative body concerned with service provision and managing the consequences of collapse. Key sovereign prerogatives have effectively been removed from their control, including the authority over war and peace and over major international agreements.
- b. The emergence of security zones outside the effective authority of the Lebanese state and its official security services. Access to certain areas may require informal approval, while these same areas may be used as safe havens for criminals or as storage locations for military equipment beyond government oversight. Such conditions undermine the principle of equality before the law, because armed organizations effectively impose their own rules in matters of security, education, social life, and culture.
- c. The practical weakening of the judiciary. The judiciary has often found itself unable to prosecute members of armed organizations or effectively investigate sensitive cases, including the Beirut Port explosion and a series of political assassinations, from the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri and other figures associated with the Cedar Revolution to the killings of Lokman Slim in **2021** and Elias Hasrouni in **2023**. Fear of triggering civil unrest or armed confrontation has contributed to entrenching a culture of impunity.

- d. Confusion and erosion within the military and security doctrine of legitimate state institutions. One of the most serious consequences of illegitimate armed organizations concerns national strategic decision-making and the formulation of a coherent military doctrine for the Lebanese Armed Forces. Such a doctrine must clearly identify threats, define strategic priorities, distinguish between allies and adversaries, and establish appropriate deterrence mechanisms.
- e. Contradictions regarding decisions of war and peace and the exercise of command and control constitute a fatal structural defect for any state. The authority to declare war or conclude peace is among the highest expressions of national sovereignty. Under Article **65** of the Lebanese Constitution, the Council of Ministers bears responsibility for major national decisions, including general mobilization and war. Yet practical experience demonstrates that, at several moments in Lebanese history, including the **July 2006** war, intervention in the Syrian conflict, and subsequent regional support wars, decisions to enter into conflict were made by an armed faction outside the constitutional chain of command. Once an armed faction can independently determine when a war begins and when it ends, the Lebanese Armed Forces are reduced to a reactive force. This prevents the army from developing and implementing a comprehensive, integrated national defense plan and makes coordination with an armed structure operating beyond its military command impossible.
- f. Political restrictions on deployment and missions. At different times, illegitimate armed groups have imposed red lines on the movements and deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces. A notable example was the prevention of the army's full deployment in areas from which Israel withdrew in **2000**, prior to the deployment that followed United Nations Security Council Resolution **1701** in **2006**. Such arrangements empty the concept of "comprehensive national security" of its substance, transforming the deployment of legitimate forces from a military necessity into an issue of political bargaining.
- g. Destructive consequences for civil peace and for the meaning of citizenship itself. The impact of parallel weapons extends beyond borders and military installations into Lebanon's social fabric. Arms have been used as instruments of domestic intimidation, most notably during the events of **7 May 2008**, the seizure of parts of Beirut, the political outcome represented by the Doha Agreement, threats directed against the judiciary, the Tayyouneh clashes, and other instances in which force was used to impose political or security realities.
- h. Partial international restrictions on the arming of the **Lebanese Armed Forces**. The Lebanese military depends heavily on international assistance, particularly from the United States and European countries, for equipment, weapons, and training. Because several international actors classify Hezbollah as a terrorist organization or view it as an Iranian military proxy, donor governments remain cautious regarding the provision of advanced military capabilities to Lebanon. They fear that sensitive weapons systems or technologies could fall into the hands of armed non-state actors. As a result, the Lebanese Armed Forces remain constrained in developing autonomous strategic deterrence capacities.

- i. The state is forced to bear the consequences of decisions it did not make. When an armed confrontation begins without an official government decision, Lebanese state institutions, including diplomatic, economic, health, and public-service institutions, must nonetheless bear the consequences of destruction, displacement, reconstruction, and international accountability. The Lebanese state is treated internationally as the legally responsible party even when it did not participate in the original decision to initiate hostilities.

II. The Impact of Regional Geopolitical Conflicts and Transnational Loyalties on Lebanon's Internal Security and Strategic Independence

Lebanon occupies an exceptionally sensitive and complex geographic position. It lies directly along the fault lines of the Arab-Israeli conflict and borders Syria, itself deeply affected by overlapping regional and international conflicts. Over time, this position transformed Lebanon from a potentially stable homeland into an exposed arena.

The problem becomes even more dangerous when dominant armed actors embrace ideological doctrines and political loyalties that transcend national borders and place the interests of a regional axis above those of the Lebanese state. Their relationships with external powers extend beyond normal political alliances and may encompass ideological, financial, and military commitments.

Several Principal Axes Can be Identified:

- a. The Iranian axis, commonly described as the "Axis of Resistance," includes Hezbollah, which represents one of the Islamic Republic of Iran's most significant strategic assets on the Mediterranean coast. The ideological relationship is rooted in the principle of Wilayat al-Faqih, while extensive financial and military ties further reinforce the relationship. Hezbollah's arsenal has consequently become part of Iran's regional deterrence architecture. As a result, confrontations involving Iran, Israel, and the United States have repeatedly exposed Lebanon to destructive wars without a sovereign Lebanese decision and without the approval of the majority of the Lebanese population.
- b. The Syrian axis and the legacy of political dependency. For decades during the Syrian occupation, the Syrian regime dominated Lebanon's security and political environment. Although Syrian forces withdrew in 2005, Lebanon continued for years to function in certain respects as a geopolitical extension of Damascus through networks of Lebanese and Palestinian allies, both armed and unarmed. These relationships significantly complicated the ability of the Lebanese state to establish complete control over its land borders and to suppress the smuggling of people, goods, weapons, and fuel.

c. The Arab and Western axis. Other Lebanese political forces maintain close relationships with Gulf states, the United States, and European countries. Although these relations are not military in the militia sense, they nonetheless interact with Lebanon's internal divisions. These political groups generally advocate the disarmament of non-state actors and the implementation of international resolutions, whereas opponents frequently portray them as agents of Western projects. Such mutual accusations reduce the space available for building a shared national identity.

d. Armed actors pursuing transnational agendas also directly affect the efficiency and continuity of Lebanese constitutional institutions. In a parliamentary democracy, the parliamentary majority normally determines the general political direction of government. Lebanon has often functioned differently, because political arrangements have been shaped by the reality of armed power. Whenever constitutional procedures conflict with the strategic interests of armed organizations or their regional allies, institutional obstruction may be used to alter the balance of power.

This Creates Serious Domestic and Strategic Repercussions for Lebanon's Security and Independence, Most Importantly:

a. The Confiscation of the Decision of War and Peace and the Erosion of Strategic Independence.

The first victim of transnational loyalty is the strategic independence of the state. In any sovereign state, the decision to enter a war or maintain peace is among the most consequential national decisions. It should only be taken following extensive deliberation within the Council of Ministers and Parliament, and after a rigorous assessment of the supreme national interest and the country's military and economic capabilities.

b. The Erosion of International Protection and the Weakening of Resolutions 1559, 1680, 1701.

Failure to respect international obligations and the undertaking of offensive military operations or cross-border support operations represent serious violations of international commitments accepted by Lebanon, particularly United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701. Such actions weaken Lebanon's international protection and expose the country to external military retaliation and destruction.

c. The Increased Risk of Internal Conflict and the Collapse of Preventive and Anticipatory Security.

Official military and security institutions face considerable difficulty in fulfilling their missions in the presence of parallel security structures equipped with their own investigative

mechanisms, detention facilities, intelligence capabilities, cyber capabilities, and electronic networks. The existence of such parallel structures generates potential friction with citizens and with official institutions. It also increases sectarian and regional tensions and produces among certain Lebanese communities a sense of inequality and vulnerability in the face of the disproportionate armed power held by another domestic actor. Such an environment may become fertile ground for the emergence of counter-radicalization along sectarian, religious, or regional lines. Calls for self-armament or “self-security” may consequently gain traction, further weakening confidence in the state and threatening civil peace.

d. Systematic institutional and constitutional paralysis used as a strategic instrument.

This is particularly evident in recurring presidential vacancies, which have repeatedly transformed the election of a President of the Republic into a tool of political bargaining. Political actors that believe they possess overwhelming leverage may attempt to impose candidates who protect their influence and institutional networks despite lacking a parliamentary majority. Their influence may instead derive from their ability to obstruct parliamentary sessions or constitutional processes. The same phenomenon has appeared in so-called national unity governments. When particular parties obtain a blocking minority within Cabinet, the Council of Ministers can effectively become a miniature parliament. Accountability and executive effectiveness are consequently weakened, allowing a minority to block or dominate major decisions.

e. Diplomatic isolation and its repercussions for economic security.

National Security is inseparable from economic and financial security. Once Lebanon lost effective control over important aspects of its foreign policy and became associated with regional conflicts and illicit cross-border activities, it also lost significant elements of its economic safety net. Lebanon's relations with Arab states, particularly Gulf countries, have historically represented a critical economic lifeline through foreign investment, tourism, employment opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Lebanese citizens, and financial inflows. Hezbollah's involvement in regional conflicts, including Yemen and other regional theatres, and accusations of interference in the internal affairs of Gulf states, severely damaged these relationships. Restrictions on Lebanese exports and travel advisories against Lebanon contributed to the decline of vital foreign currency flows. Confidence in Lebanon also declined among international financial institutions and donor states. This weakened the international willingness to provide economic and financial assistance, particularly following Lebanon's sovereign default in **2020** and the subsequent financial and banking collapse.

III. A Possible Framework for Building a Unified Sovereign Defense and Security Strategy under Constitutional Legitimacy

The **1989** National Accord Document adopted in Taëf constitutes the modern constitutional reference framework of the Lebanese Republic. It ended the Lebanese war on the principle of “**No Victor and No Vanquished.**” Its provisions relating to security and sovereignty were clear and decisive. Under the relevant provisions of the Taëf Accord, all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias were to be dissolved and their weapons surrendered to the Lebanese state within six months of the document's ratification. The state was also expected to extend its authority throughout Lebanese territory through its own legitimate forces.

Hezbollah was subsequently excluded in practice from this framework under the justification of “**Resistance**” aimed at liberating Israeli-occupied territory in southern Lebanon, within the context of Syrian influence at the time. From a strictly constitutional and legal perspective, however, the continued existence of any armed organization outside the official armed forces remains inconsistent with the spirit and provisions of the Taëf Accord, which was incorporated into the Lebanese constitutional order and linked national stability and security to the exclusive authority of the state throughout Lebanese territory.

Following the events of **7 May 2008** and the Doha Agreement, successive Lebanese governments incorporated the formula of “the Army, the People, and the Resistance” into several ministerial statements. This granted political legitimacy to Hezbollah's weapons.

From Strategic and Constitutional Perspective, However, this Formula Contains Major Structural Flaws:

1. The Absence of Legal Equivalence.

The formula places a constitutional institution, the Lebanese Armed Forces and official security agencies, on an equivalent footing with a partisan armed organization operating under the justification of resistance and outside parliamentary or judicial accountability. This makes the chain of command fundamentally ambiguous.

2. The Absence of National Consensus.

The formula does not enjoy broad political or popular consensus and has instead deepened internal divisions. Many Lebanese communities perceive it as allowing one political-sectarian force to impose its will through superior armed power, thereby undermining the principle of a shared national compact.

A National Security Strategy is the necessary framework for organizing the relationship between the capabilities of society and the capacities of the state. Under the Lebanese constitutional framework, any legitimate defense policy should aim at ending the existence of autonomous militias rather than institutionalizing or legitimizing them.

From a practical standpoint, dismantling a deeply entrenched and heavily armed organization cannot realistically be achieved through a simple immediate decree, nor through an internal military confrontation that could trigger another destructive conflict. Lebanon therefore requires a gradual and phased roadmap for placing all defense capabilities under legitimate state authority. This could be pursued through an internal negotiation mechanism, such as a National Dialogue framework or an equivalent structure, dedicated to discussing the integration of military capabilities existing outside the state into official institutions within a clearly defined timeframe.

Such a Roadmap Should Pursue the Following Objectives:

- a.** Restricting the possession of heavy, medium, and light weapons, as well as the legitimate use of coercive force, exclusively to the Lebanese Armed Forces and other state security institutions operating under the authority of the constitutional executive. Transferring all relevant weapons to the Lebanese Armed Forces, returning certain weapons to their original sources where appropriate, or otherwise removing them from the Lebanese theatre, as occurred with other militia arsenals following the end of the Lebanese war.
- b.** Opening pathways for individuals who meet legal criteria to enlist in the Lebanese Armed Forces, security institutions, and other state bodies, while respecting Lebanon's constitutional and institutional balance, provided they renounce previous partisan military affiliations and commit exclusively to loyalty to the state.
- c.** Extending the authority of the Lebanese state throughout all Lebanese territory and along all national borders through its legitimate forces without any parallel security partner. (Implementation of the Lebanese Government resolutions of **5 and 7 August 2025**, **2 March 2026** based on the Taëf Agreement, the Lebanese Constitution and the relevant Security Council resolutions **1559**, **1680** and **1701**.)
- d.** Restoring full strategic decision-making authority, including decisions regarding war, peace, states of emergency, and military agreements, to the Council of Ministers acting collectively as the country's highest constitutional executive authority.
- e.** Adopting a policy of Positive Neutrality, distancing Lebanon from regional and international conflicts and avoiding alignment with competing military axes or alliances. Such a policy should safeguard Lebanon's independence, prevent the country from becoming a platform for military or media hostility against Arab states or the broader international community, and restructure Lebanese foreign policy around the principle of "Lebanese interests first." This approach should remain consistent with the Charter of the

League of Arab States and the Charter of the United Nations. It could provide Lebanon with a form of diplomatic protection, transforming it from an arena of conflict and regional instability into a recognized platform for intercultural dialogue, conflict resolution, humanitarian action, and international cooperation. Such a transformation would also create conditions more favorable to investment and economic reconstruction.

f. Supporting the initiative of the constitutional executive authority, represented by the President of the Republic and the Lebanese Government, in conducting direct negotiations with Israel aimed at ending attacks, securing withdrawal from occupied Lebanese territory, recovering detainees, rebuilding destroyed villages, and ensuring that no external actor negotiates on behalf of Lebanon.

g. Strengthening the combat, technological, and institutional capacities of the Lebanese Armed Forces through Arab and international support, enabling the military to exercise state authority throughout Lebanese territory and eliminating the argument that non-state military structures are required to perform defensive functions.

h. Securing formal Arab and international guarantees aimed at protecting Lebanon from external aggression and supporting its economic stability, thereby reducing the perceived need for parallel deterrence capabilities.

i. Ensuring Lebanon's full compliance with relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, particularly:

1. **Resolution 1559 (2004):** which affirms Lebanon's sovereignty and political independence and calls for the disbandment and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias and for the extension of state authority throughout Lebanese territory.
2. **Resolution 1680 (2006):** which emphasizes the importance of controlling and demarcating the Lebanese-Syrian border in order to prevent the transfer of weapons to armed non-state organizations.
3. **Resolution 1701 (2006):** which ended the July 2006 war, reaffirmed previous international resolutions concerning Lebanon, and called for an area free of unauthorized armed personnel, assets, and weapons between the Blue Line and the Litani River, except for the Lebanese state's legitimate forces and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (**UNIFIL**). The incomplete implementation of Resolution 1701 has repeatedly exposed southern Lebanon, and consequently the entire country, to successive cycles of warfare, military escalation, destruction, displacement, and occupation.

j. Subjecting the entire process to transparent parliamentary and judicial oversight in order to consolidate its constitutional legitimacy and prevent the re-emergence of parallel armed organizations under alternative institutional or political labels.

Conclusion and Horizons

Lebanon today faces a decisive existential choice. The model based on the “coexistence of the state with a state-within-the-state,” or of legitimate authority alongside parallel armed structures, has reached a dead end. It has demonstrated its structural failure and contributed to an unprecedented financial, economic, social, and moral collapse in modern Lebanese history, in addition to destructive wars and renewed foreign occupation of parts of Lebanese territory.

The continuation of this reality would accelerate the disintegration of what remains of state institutions and gradually transforms the country into a territory vulnerable to security breakdown, legal fragmentation, and changing regional balances.

Lebanon’s current reality therefore leads to a fundamental strategic conclusion: sustainable National Security cannot coexist with fragmented sovereignty or with a state whose constitutional powers are incomplete.

Temporary compromises may provide short-term stability or allow political actors to adapt to changing regional balances, but they ultimately deepen Lebanon’s structural crisis and accelerate institutional fragmentation.

The establishment of a genuine Lebanese state—sovereign, independent, and viable—requires, as an indispensable national condition, the unification of legitimate authority and the restoration of the state’s absolute and exclusive monopoly over the legitimate use of force under constitutional institutions and international legitimacy.

Accordingly, the Principal Executive Recommendations of this Policy Brief are ss Follows:

- a.** Convene an immediate closed National Dialogue Conference devoted exclusively to translating the constitutional principles of the Taëf Accord into practical implementation mechanisms leading to the adoption of a comprehensive National Security Strategy. Such a strategy should identify Lebanon’s military, economic, political, and social sources of national power and determine how they can best serve the supreme national interest. It should establish a binding timetable for ending the existence of illegitimate Lebanese and Palestinian armed organizations and place all decisions concerning war and peace exclusively under the unified authority of the Council of Ministers.
- b.** Remove political protection from illegitimate arms, restrict weapons to legitimate state forces, criminalize their use or threatened use in political, judicial, family, sectarian, or regional disputes, and strengthen the rule of law and the authority of the judiciary equally over all citizens and political actors.
- c.** Reaffirm Lebanon’s full and practical commitment to United Nations Security Council Resolutions **1559**, **1680**, and **1701**, while strengthening operational cooperation between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL, or any future international mechanism

that may succeed it, in order to guarantee stability along Lebanon's land and maritime borders and eliminate pretexts for continued Israeli occupation or aggression.

d. Develop a national armament strategy to modernize the capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces, with particular emphasis on modern air-defense systems, anti-armor capabilities, explosive-ordnance disposal, mine and unexploded-ordnance clearance, cyber-defense capabilities, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance technologies. The objective must be to enable the Lebanese Armed Forces to perform their defense responsibilities with a high degree of professionalism, operational autonomy, and national capability.

e. Adopt and formally declare a policy of Positive Neutrality, implemented through active diplomacy and the restoration of Lebanon's political, economic, and security relations with the international community, particularly the Gulf Cooperation Council states. Such a policy would contribute to mitigating Lebanon's severe economic crisis and restoring its regional and international role.

f. Establish full state control over all land, maritime, and air border crossings; eliminate partisan and militia influence from their administration; suppress organized smuggling, transnational crime, illicit weapons transfers, and the movement of armed personnel across borders; and prevent Lebanese territory from being used to undermine the security or stability of neighboring and friendly countries. Restoring effective control of Lebanon's borders and legitimate institutions is essential to rebuilding international confidence in the Lebanese economy and state.

Following this clear sovereign and constitutional path, based on freedom, sovereignty, legitimacy, and neutrality, is the only secure route toward rescuing Lebanon and rebuilding it as a free, sovereign, independent homeland and a country with a distinctive mission, in which all citizens stand equal beneath the authority of the Lebanese Constitution.

Authors' Short Bio

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A distinguished military and strategic analyst who provides expert insights on geopolitical conflicts, defense strategies, and security developments. He is a frequent guest on various Arab and international satellite TV channels, engaging in discussions on counterterrorism, military operations, and diplomatic resolutions.

Brigadier General El Kozah is the co-founder of the Research Center for Cooperation and Peacebuilding, a Beirut-based NGO specializing in **Track II Diplomacy** and reconciliation efforts. He is also a lecturer at **E-Campus** University in Italy, where he teaches Defense Strategies for Human Rights Amidst Conflicts and Wars, and at the China Institute for International and Strategic Studies (**CIISS**). Throughout his career, he has participated in numerous local and international conferences and seminars on International Humanitarian Law, Military Staff Courses, Counterterrorism Strategies, and Human Rights Leadership. Brigadier General El Kozah served as the Director of the Research & Strategic Studies Center in the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) from **2018** to **2019**. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Military Sciences and graduated from the Lebanese Military Academy on **May 6, 1985**. Additionally, in **2010**, he graduated from the **École de Guerre** in Paris, France, earning an Expert Certification in Defense Management, Command, and Strategy. His career progression saw him rise through the ranks: First Lieutenant (**1988**), Captain (**1993**), Major (**1998**), Lieutenant Colonel (**2003**), Colonel (**2008**), and Brigadier General (**2015**).

In recognition of his service and valor, Brigadier General El Kozah has been awarded numerous military decorations,

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