



THE LEBANESE CONSTITUTION

PROMULGATED MAY 23, 1926
WITH ITS AMENDMENTS

1995

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE

FUNDAMENTAL PROVISIONS

Preamble

Chapter One: THE STATE AND ITS TERRITORY

Chapter Two: THE LEBANESE:
Their Rights and Duties

PART TWO

POWERS

CHAPTER ONE : GENERAL PROVISIONS

CHAPTER TWO : LEGISLATIVE POWER

CHAPTER THREE: GENERAL PROVISIONS

CHAPTER FOUR: EXECUTIVE POWER

One:

The President of the Republic

Two:

The Prime Minister

Three:

The Council of Ministers

PART THREE

A: Election of the President of the Republic

B: Amendment of the Constitution

C: Procedure of the Chamber of Deputies

PART FOUR

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

A: Supreme Council

B: Finances

PART FIVE

PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE MANDATORY POWER AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

PART SIX

FINAL AND TEMPORARY PROVISIONS

CHAPTER FOUR

EXECUTIVE POWER

ONE: THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

ARTICLE 49

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927,
and by the Constitutional Law of May 8, 1929,
and by the Constitutional Law of January 21, 1947,
and by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990)

The President of the Republic is the Head of the State and the symbol of the nation's unity. He shall safeguard the Constitution and Lebanon's independence, unity, and territorial integrity. The President shall preside over the Supreme Defense Council and be the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces which fall under the authority of the Council of Ministers.

The President of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot and by a two-thirds majority of the Chamber of Deputies. After a first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient. The President's term is six years. He may not be re-elected until six years after the expiration of his last mandate. No one may be elected to the Presidency of the Republic unless he fulfills the conditions of eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies and the conditions which are not incompatible with candidacy to the said Chamber.

It is also not possible to elect judges, grade one civil servants, or their equivalents in all public institutions to the Presidency during their term of office or within two years following the date of their resignation and their effective cessation of service, or following retirement.

The original Article 49 was:

The President of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot and a two-thirds majority of the total votes of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies joined in a Parliamentary Assembly. After the first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient. He shall be elected for a term of three years. He may not be re-elected for a third term until three years have elapsed since the date of expiration of his last mandate. No one may be elected to the Presidency of the Republic unless he fulfills the conditions of eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 49 as amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927:

The President of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot and a two-thirds majority of the total votes of the Chamber of Deputies. After the first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient. He shall be elected for a term of three years. He may not be re-elected for a third term until three years have elapsed since the date of expiration of his last mandate. No one may be elected to the Presidency of the Republic unless he fulfills the conditions of eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 49 as amended by the Constitutional Law of May 8, 1929:

The President of the Republic shall be elected by secret ballot and a two-thirds majority of the total votes of the Chamber of Deputies. After the first ballot, an absolute majority shall be sufficient. He shall be elected for a term of six years. He may not be re-elected for a term of six years. He may not be re-elected until six years have elapsed since the date of expiration of his last mandate. No one may be elected to the Presidency of the Republic unless he fulfills the conditions of eligibility for the Chamber of Deputies.

Provisional paragraph: The present President of the Republic shall not benefit from the provisions of this Article which made the term of the Presidency six years instead of three years. Accordingly, his term shall end on May 26, 1932.

(This paragraph was abrogated by the constitutional law of January 21, 1947.)

Article 49 as amended by the Constitutional Law of May 22, 1947
stipulating the re-election of the President of the Republic (Sheikh Bechara al-Khoury) for a second term:

Contrary to the provisions of Article 49 of the Constitution, and only exceptionally, the present President of the Republic may be re-elected for a second term, and he may not be re-elected for a third term until six years have elapsed since the date of expiration of his second mandate.

ARTICLE 50

Upon assuming office, the President of the Republic shall take an oath of fidelity, before the Parliament, to the Nation and the Constitution, in the following terms:

"I swear by Almighty God to observe the Constitution and the laws of the Lebanese Nation and to maintain the independence of Lebanon and its territorial integrity".

ARTICLE 51

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927, and by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990)

The President of the Republic shall promulgate the laws after they have been approved by the Chamber in accordance with the limits specified by the Constitution. He asks for the publication of these laws, and he may not modify these laws or exempt anyone from complying with their provisions.

The original Article 51 was:

The President of the Republic shall promulgate the laws after they have been approved by the two Chambers or by the Chamber of Deputies under the conditions stated in Article 9. He shall assure their execution on the basis of the organizational power granted to him. He may not modify these laws or exempt anyone from complying with their provisions. He shall have the right to pardon. However, amnesties may not be granted except by law.

Article 51 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990:

The President of the Republic shall promulgate the laws after they have been approved by the Chamber. He shall assure their execution on the basis of the organizational power granted to him. He may not modify these laws or exempt anyone from complying with their provisions. He shall have the right to pardon. However, amnesties may not be granted except by law.

ARTICLE 52

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927,
and by the Constitutional Law of November 9, 1943,
and by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990)

The President of the Republic shall negotiate and ratify international treaties in agreement with the Prime Minister. These treaties are not considered ratified except after approval by the Council of Ministers. They shall be made known to the Chamber and Deputies whenever the national interest and security of the state permit. However, treaties involving the finances of the state, commercial treaties, and in general treaties that cannot be renounced every year shall not be considered ratified until they have been approved by the Chamber of Deputies.

The original Article 52 was:

In accordance with Article 3 of the Mandate Pact, the President of the Republic shall negotiate and ratify international treaties. He shall make them known to the two Chambers whenever the interest and safety of the state permit. However, treaties involving the finances of the state, commercial treaties, and in general treaties which cannot be denounced every year shall not be considered ratified until they have been approved by the two Chambers.

Article 52 as amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927:

In accordance with Article 3 of the Mandate Pact, the President of the Republic shall negotiate and ratify international treaties. He shall make them known to the Chamber whenever the interest and safety of the state permit. However, treaties involving the finances of the state, commercial treaties, and in general treaties which cannot be denounced every year shall not be considered ratified until they have been approved by the Chamber.

Article 52 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990:

The President of the Republic shall negotiate and ratify international treaties. He shall make them known to the Chamber whenever the interest and safety of the state permit. However, treaties involving the finances of the state, commercial treaties, and in general treaties which cannot be denounced every year shall not be considered ratified until after they have been approved by the Chamber.

ARTICLE 53

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927,
and by the Constitutional Law of January 21, 1947,
and by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990)

1. The President of the Republic shall preside over the Council of Ministers when he wishes without participating in voting.

2. The President of the Republic shall designate the Prime Minister in consultation with the President of the Chamber of Deputies based on binding parliamentary consultations, the content of which he shall formally disclose to the latter.

3. He alone shall issue the decree which designates the Prime Minister.

4. He shall issue, in agreement with the Prime Minister, the decree appointing the cabinet and the decrees accepting the resignation of ministers or their dismissal.

5. He alone shall issue the decrees accepting the resignation of the cabinet or considering it resigned.

6. He shall forward to the Chamber of Deputies bills that are delivered to him by the Council of Ministers.

7. He shall accredit ambassadors and accept the credentials of ambassadors.

8. He shall preside over official functions and grant official decorations by decree.

9. He shall grant particular pardons by decree, but a general amnesty cannot be granted except by a law.

10. He shall address, when necessary, messages to the Chamber of Deputies.

11. He may introduce, from outside the agenda, any urgent matter to the Council of Ministers.

12. He may, in agreement with the Prime Minister, call the Council of Ministers to an extraordinary session whenever he deems it necessary.

The original Article 53 was:

The President of the Republic shall appoint and dismiss ministers from among whom he shall designate a Prime Minister. He shall appoint a number of deputies as provided in Article 22. He shall appoint officials to state posts except where the law specifies other methods of appointment. He shall preside over official ceremonies.

Article 53 as amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927:

The President of the Republic shall appoint and dismiss ministers from among whom he shall designate a Prime Minister. He shall appoint a number of deputies as provided in Article 24. He shall appoint officials to state posts except where the law specifies other methods of appointment. He shall preside over official ceremonies.

Article 53 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990:

The President of the Republic shall appoint and dismiss ministers from among whom he shall designate a Prime Minister. He shall appoint officials to state posts except where the law specifies other methods of appointment. He shall preside over official ceremonies.

ARTICLE 54

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990)

The decisions of the President of the Republic must be countersigned by the Prime Minister and the minister or ministers concerned with the exception of the decree designating a new Prime Minister and the decree accepting the resignation of the cabinet or considering it resigned.

Decrees issuing laws must be countersigned by the Prime Minister.

Article 54 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990:

The decisions of the President of the Republic must be countersigned by the minister or ministers concerned except when ministers are designated or dismissed.

ARTICLE 55

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927
and by the Constitutional Law of May 8, 1929
and by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990)

The President of the Republic may, in accordance with the conditions stipulated in Articles 65 and 77 of this Constitution, ask the Council of Ministers to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies before the expiration of its mandate. If the Council, based on this request, decides to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies, the President shall issue the Decree dissolving it, and in this case, the electoral bodies shall meet as provided for in Article 25, and the new Chamber shall be called to convene within fifteen days after the proclamation of the election.

The bureau of the Chamber of Deputies shall continue to function until the election of a new Chamber.

If elections are not held within the time limit specified in Article 25 of the Constitution, the Decree dissolving the Chamber shall be considered null and void, and the Chamber of Deputies shall continue to exercise its powers according to the stipulations of the Constitution.

If the time limit expires without the law being issued or returned, the law shall be considered automatically operative and must be promulgated.

The original Article 57 was:

The President of the Republic shall have the right to request the reconsideration of a law once during the period prescribed for its promulgation. This request may not be refused. When the President of the Republic exercises this right, he shall not be required to promulgate the law until it has been reconsidered and approved by an absolute majority of the members composing each Chamber.

Article 57 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990:

The President of the Republic shall have the right to request the reconsideration of a law once during the period prescribed for its promulgation. This request may not be refused. When the President exercises this right, he shall not be required to promulgate the law until it has been reconsidered and approved by an absolute majority of all members legally composing the Chamber.

ARTICLE 58

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927
and the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990)

By means of a decree issued after the approval of the Council of Ministers, the President of the Republic may put into effect any bill which has been previously declared to be urgent by the Government with the approval of the Council of Ministers in the decree of its transmission to the Chamber, and on which the Chamber has not given a decision within forty days following its communication to the Chamber, and including it in the agenda of a general meeting and reading it therein.

The original Article 58 was:

Should the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate disagree upon a bill, the President of the Republic may call them to a General Assembly to discuss the bill. If the bill is approved by an absolute majority of the total membership of the joined bodies, it shall be considered adopted and the President of the Republic shall promulgate it.

Article 58 before its amendment by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990:

By means of a decree issued with the approval of the Council of Ministers, the President of the Republic may put into effect any bill which has previously been declared to be urgent by the Government in the decree of transmission issued with the approval of the Council of Ministers, and on which the Chamber has not given a decision within forty days following its communication to the Chamber.

ARTICLE 59

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927)

The President of the Republic may adjourn the Chamber for a period not exceeding one month. He may not do so twice during the same session.

The original Article 59 was:

The President of the Republic may adjourn the Chambers for a period not exceeding one month. He may not do so twice during the same session.

ARTICLE 60

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of January 21, 1947)

While performing his functions, the President of the Republic shall not be held responsible except when he violates the Constitution or in the case of high treason.

However, responsibility with respect to ordinary crimes shall be subject to the ordinary laws. For such crimes, as well as for violation of the Constitution and for high treason, he may not be impeached except by a two-thirds majority decision of the total members of the Chamber of Deputies. He shall be tried by the Supreme Council provided for in Article 80. The function of public prosecutor at the Supreme Council shall be performed by a judge appointed by the Supreme Court formed from all its chambers.

The original Article 60 was:

While performing his functions, the President of the Republic shall not be held responsible except when he violates the Constitution and in the case of high treason.

However, responsibility with respect to ordinary crimes shall be subject to the ordinary laws. For such crimes, as well as for violation of the Constitution and for high treason, he may not be impeached except by a two-thirds majority decision of the total members of the Chamber of Deputies. He may not be tried except by the Supreme Council provided for in Article 80. The functions of public prosecutor at the Supreme Council shall be performed by two judges appointed every year by the Court of Cassation during its General Assembly.

ARTICLE 61

Should the President of the Republic be impeached, he shall be suspended from his functions. The Presidency shall remain vacant until the Supreme Council has settled the matter.

ARTICLE 62

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of September 21, 1990)

Should there be a vacancy in the Presidency for any reason whatsoever, the Council of Ministers shall exercise the authorities of the President of the Republic by delegation.

The original Article 62 was:

Should there be a vacancy in the Presidency for any reason whatsoever, the Council of Ministers shall exercise the executive power by delegation.

ARTICLE 63

The remuneration of the President of the Republic shall be determined by a law. It may not be increased or reduced during his term of office.

A. ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

ARTICLE 73

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927,
and the Constitutional Law of May 22, 1948,
and the Constitutional Law of April 24, 1976)

One month at least and two months at most before the expiration of the term of office of the President of the Republic, the Chamber shall be convened by its President to elect the new President of the Republic. However, should it not be convened for this purpose, the Chamber shall meet automatically on the tenth day preceding the expiration of the President's term of office.

The original Article 73 was:

One month at least and two months at most before the expiration of the term of office of the President of the Republic, the President of the Senate shall convene the two Chambers in a joint Parliamentary Assembly to elect the new President of the Republic. However, should they not be convened for this purpose, the two Chambers shall automatically meet on the tenth day preceding the expiration of the President's term of office.

Article 73 as amended by the Constitutional Law of May 22, 1948 aiming at the re-election of the President of the Republic (Sheikh Bechara al-Khoury) for a second time:

Contrary to the provisions of Article 73 of the Constitution and in an exceptional manner, the Chamber shall be convened by its President to elect the President of the Republic within one month of the promulgation of this Constitutional Law. His new term of office shall begin as of the expiration of his present term.

Article 73 as amended by the Constitutional Law of April 24, 1976 aiming at advancing the date of the election of the President of the Republic (Elias Sarkis):

One month at least and six months at most before the expiration of the term of office of the President of the Republic, the Chamber shall be convened by its President to elect the new President of the Republic.

However, should it not be convened for this purpose, the Chamber shall meet automatically on the tenth day preceding the expiration of the President's term of office.

The application of this amendment shall terminate on September 23, 1976.

ARTICLE 74

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927)

Should the Presidency become vacant through the death or resignation of the President or for any other cause, the Chamber shall meet immediately and by virtue of the law to elect a successor. If the Chamber happens to be dissolved at the time the vacancy occurs, the electoral bodies shall be convened without delay and, as soon as the elections have taken place, the Chamber shall meet by virtue of the law.

The original Article 74 was:

Should the Presidency become vacant through the death or resignation of the President or for any other cause, the Chambers shall meet immediately and by virtue of the law to elect a successor. If either Chamber happens to be dissolved at the time the vacancy occurs, the electoral bodies shall be convened without delay and as soon as the elections have taken place, the Chambers shall meet by virtue of the law.

ARTICLE 75

(As amended by the Constitutional Law of October 17, 1927)

The Chamber meeting to elect the President of the Republic shall be considered an electoral body and not a legislative assembly. It must proceed immediately, without discussion of any other act, to elect the Head of the State.

The original Article 75 was:

The Parliamentary Assembly meeting to elect the President of the Republic shall be considered an electoral body and not a legislative assembly. It must proceed immediately, without discussion of any other act, to elect the Head of the State.
