

# 2022 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS OBSERVATION REPORT



**LADE**

LEBANESE ASSOCIATION FOR  
DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

## FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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# 2022 Parliamentary Elections Observation Report from a Gender Perspective

**Prepared jointly by:**

**Abir Chebaro**

Expert on gender equality issues

**Dayana El Baba**

Senior Project Coordinator

**Attorney Judy Fatfat**

Long-term Observers Coordinator



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women's political participation is one of the main indicators of justice and democracy, and their access to Parliament contributes to the advancement of gender issues, which in turn promotes human rights and democracy and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In line with its objectives of promoting democracy, equality and equal opportunities, the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) has prepared its 2022 report on the observation of parliamentary elections from a gender perspective in order to promote women's rights and political participation. The report highlights the obstacles and gaps women face and details the social, cultural, political and economic obstacles and challenges that restrict their access to Parliament. The report assesses the participation of female voters, women candidates and political parties in the electoral process. LADE had previously prepared its first report on the observation of parliamentary elections from a gender perspective after the 2018 parliamentary elections.

Through monitoring and documentation, LADE found that there is a major imbalance in the political representation of women in Lebanon, which is clearly manifested in the low female representation currently, as only eight women have succeeded in reaching the Parliament. This proves that the problem is not the lack of women willing to participate, but rather the electoral law and several other discriminatory laws, in addition to many challenges related to social and political life in Lebanon. In addition, the total number of female candidates hardly increased in the 2022 elections: in the 2018 elections, there were 86 female candidates out of 597 total candidates (i.e. 14.41%), while in 2022 there were 118 female candidates out of 718 total candidates (i.e. 16.43%). This represents a 2.02% increase only.

From a gender perspective, the figures show that 118 female candidates were able to join lists, i.e. 16.43% of total candidates, while only 86 female candidates joined lists in the previous parliamentary elections. The number of female candidates varies greatly from one electoral district to another, as there were female candidates in all major constituencies except the South III electoral constituency. For example, the number of female candidates in the Beirut II constituency reached 23, while this number was significantly less in the South I constituency (three female candidates) and the Bekaa III constituency (two female candidates). There were 65 lists containing female candidates, i.e. only 10.63% of the total registered lists.

This report sheds light on the great difficulties and obstacles that women still face in politics. In fact, the 2022 elections were characterized by grave breaches and pressures at all levels (family, social and political). LADE also notes that in the 2022 Parliamentary elections, female candidates in Lebanon were still vulnerable to gender-based violence, and no preventive measures were taken by the competent authorities to protect them, nor were there any punitive measures towards aggressors.

In addition, female candidates have suffered for two consecutive elections from a lack of financial, administrative and logistical resources for their electoral campaigns, meaning that special effort is required at the legislative, supervisory and social levels in order to secure better opportunities for Lebanese women.

At the legislative level, LADE calls upon the elected Parliament to amend Law No. 44/2017 and to approve a 50% gender quota for electoral lists as a temporary measure to ensure that female candidates enjoy the same opportunities as their male counterparts. LADE also calls for the implementation of the zebra system for candidate lists, alternating between women and men on the candidate lists. It also recommends the abolition of the preferential vote or the adoption of a gender quota that would guarantee 33% of the seats for women, pursuant to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). LADE also demands the amendment of Articles 61 and 45 related to the nomination fee and electoral spending, in addition to the establishment of major polling centers (mega centers) in order to facilitate the voting of women, persons with disabilities and pregnant women. Last but not least, LADE reiterates the importance of adopting a unified, civil personal status law and of allowing Lebanese women to pass on their nationality to their children and husbands – a right given only to men in Lebanon.

LADE also presents in this report a series of recommendations related to the Electoral Supervisory Commission, Lebanese political parties and media outlets, which constitute a road map towards the achievement of more female representation and justice for women in Lebanon.

# INTRODUCTION

The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) observed the 2022 Parliamentary elections from a gender perspective. Fifteen female observers served as gender focal points, and one gender expert aided in the monitoring and documentation of the main challenges related to women's participation and representation in the 2022 electoral process, in addition to the identification and assessment of the different elements that undermined women's equal political participation. LADE also focused on the experiences of female candidates and voters, political parties and electoral management in the parliamentary elections held in May 2022.

The report examines the results of the monitoring and observation of the elections from a gender perspective, and it documents women's experiences during the electoral process, whether as candidates, voters, party members and activists, electoral management officers or observers.

The interviews with 88 female candidates focused on their experiences in the 2022 elections, as well as the challenges and pressures they faced since the announcement of their candidacy, the difficulties they underwent to form lists and launch their electoral campaigns, and the problems they faced on voting day.

This report also addresses the challenges facing female voters and influencing their voting decisions, the challenges they faced in reaching polling centers, in addition to the practices of political parties in terms of nominating (partisan or non-partisan) female candidates on their lists and including them in their political agenda, as well as the role of the media in women's political empowerment.

The electoral management and supervisory body play a major role in ensuring the transparency, integrity and legitimacy of the electoral process. The report touched on how gender can be integrated in these bodies in order to empower women in the electoral process.

The report concludes with recommendations at several levels in order to enhance the representation of women in elected office in particular and in political participation in general. This report aims to shed light on the electoral experiences of female candidates and voters and pressure decision-makers towards improving the reality of women's political participation, including them in the agendas of political actors and parties, and offering them legal protection.

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology included qualitative and quantitative tools for data collection. The former helps to understand the formal and informal challenges women face when participating in the electoral process, including structural, legal, social and economic challenges. Quantitative tools, on the other hand, help visualize this data.

## QUALITATIVE TOOLS INCLUDE:

1. A desk review of studies, reports, articles and the legal framework, including an analysis of the legal framework (national laws and policies and international conventions ratified by the Lebanese Republic), as well as an analysis of the results of the 2022 parliamentary elections and the observation reports issued by LADE.
2. Institutional monitoring, including a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the following institutions (before, during and after the elections) in terms of the measures they took (or failed to take) to enhance women's participation: Electoral Supervisory Commission, political parties and media outlets.

In order to observe the elections from a gender perspective, gender issues have been mainstreamed into LADE's work in such a way that all observers were required to assess how the elections affected both men and women. A team of 15 female observers who had received training on gender issues and women's electoral rights was also appointed. These observers acted as gender focal points,

and each one of them was appointed to a different electoral constituency.

Observation teams collected gender-disaggregated data on the electoral process through interviews with female candidates and voters, as well as long- and short-term observation. Each female observer worked within her assigned electoral constituency.

3. Critical analysis and documentation: Analysis of the electoral system and the electoral environment through women's experiences and by adopting a gender justice perspective.<sup>1</sup>
4. Recommendations: In conclusion, LADE makes a number of recommendations to address the inefficiencies outlined in the report.

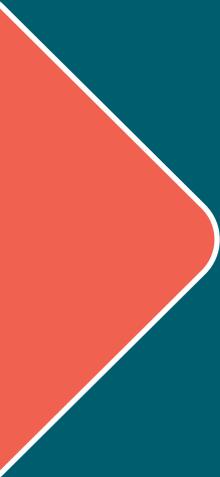
## QUANTITATIVE TOOLS INCLUDE:

Official figures released by the Ministry of Interior on the 2022 elections.

Reports and monitoring statistics collected by LADE observers on election day and through interviews during the campaign period and after the results were released. The figures available from the desk review and research on women's political and economic participation in Lebanon.

This methodology aims to assess the electoral process from a gender perspective and draw attention to critical issues where women may be denied the ability to exercise their rights, such as incidents of violence against women in politics and during the elections and other practices.

<sup>1</sup> Gender justice refers to a just attitude towards both men and women based on full respect for their needs, including fair or different treatment that is based on equal rights, benefits, civil and political freedoms and opportunities.



# CHAPTER I

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## BACKGROUND

## SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

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Ever since the country's independence, Lebanese women have been at the forefront of all national turning points, including the October 17, 2019 uprising and the protests that erupted after the Beirut Port explosion on August 4, 2020. However, this presence remained limited and circumstantial and did not take root in Lebanese politics, where women were discouraged, marginalized and prevented from actively participating in leadership political positions. Women were intentionally left out of the different national dialogue roundtables and have not participated in the conclusion of any political agreement.<sup>2</sup>

Lebanese women live under a patriarchal, sectarian and elitist system with deep historical roots. The national culture, customs and traditions dictate gender roles that marginalize women, restrict their potential through stereotypes and confine them to the private sphere, excluding them from public life. When a woman tries to break this stereotype, she is confronted with violence from her family, community members and the guardians of the patriarchal temple in an attempt to silence her and restrict her role to reproduction and child care. The extent of discrimination against women is illustrated by the number of unjust laws<sup>3</sup> against them that the Lebanese Parliament has not amended, despite repeated demands from the feminist movement. For example, Lebanese women are denied the right to pass on their nationality

to their children and husbands, unlike Lebanese men. Personal status laws not only discriminate between men and women, but also between women of different religions and confessions when it comes to the age of marriage, custody, alimony, child support, divorce and inheritance.

Due to outdated personal status laws,<sup>4</sup> married women are removed from their family's civil registry and placed on their husband's civil registry, thus preventing them from voting in their hometowns. This has a political impact on women, should they choose to run for elections in their hometowns. Legislators had noted this discrimination against women during the municipal elections, where women were prevented from running and voting in their hometowns. Therefore, Parliament passed a law allowing women to run in their hometowns, but they were only allowed to vote in the region where they are registered, i.e. in the region where they are included in the voter lists.<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, Lebanon ranks 119th out of 146 countries on the World Economic Forum's 2022 Gender Equality Index.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the low level of illiteracy and the high level of education of females versus males,<sup>7</sup> the level of female workforce participation is still far from the global average, which negatively reflects on women's economic empowerment, access to resources and financial independence, as well as on their contribution to sustainable development.

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<sup>2</sup> Sfeir, M. (2019, August). The role of Lebanese women in consolidating peace during the civil war. The Peace Building in Lebanon, 22. <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/CrisisPreventionRecovery/SupplementArticles/22/PEACE%20BUILDING%2022%20H%20ENG%20p04.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). (2019). Gender Justice and Law in the Arab States Region: Lebanon. [https://arabstates.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Chart.19.Ar\\_\\_4.pdf](https://arabstates.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Chart.19.Ar__4.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Personal Status Registration Law (1951). <http://77.42.251.205/LawView.aspx?opt=view&LawID=197742>

<sup>5</sup> Amendment of Law No. 665 of 29/12/1997, which amended Legislative Decree No. 118 of 30/6/1977 (Municipalities Law). <http://www.legiliban.ul.edu.lb/Law.aspx?lawId=274019>

<sup>6</sup> World Economic Forum. (2022, July). Global Gender Gap Report 2022. [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2022.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2022.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Lebanese Republic Central Administration of Statistics (CAS); International Labour Organization (ILO); European Union (EU). (2020). Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey 2018-2019 Lebanon <http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/Publications/Labour%20Force%20and%20Household%20Living%20Conditions%20Survey%202018-2019.pdf>

Women's lack of financial independence and the high cost of electoral campaigns are a direct cause of their low political participation. Despite some legal reforms in the field of employment, the labor market is still characterized by strong occupational separation, and there is still a discrepancy in employment and wages between genders. Although women graduate with better results than men from universities, the economic crisis has led to the decline of an already poor economy. The Labor Force Survey in Lebanon, conducted recently by Lebanon's Central Administration of Statistics and the International Labour Organization (ILO),<sup>8</sup> showed that women's rate of participation in the national workforce fell to 22.2%, while the female unemployment rate rose to 32.7%. In addition, 27% of working women are considered low-paid workers, and the total share of women in managerial positions recorded a decline of about 2 percentage points, from 28.9% in 2018 and 2019 to 26.7% in January 2022.

As the economic and financial crisis worsens, women continue to suffer from high rates of poverty and financial dependence, which directly affects their independence, freedom and participation in public life, especially in politics.

Women in Lebanon contribute more actively to social work through civil associations and institutions than to partisan political life. This is due to the flexibility of civil work that takes into account women's needs, especially need to maintain a work-family balance.

This flexibility is not often found in partisan work, which is still a male-dominated field. This has affected women's participation and experience in political work, which is why we notice that political is mostly limited

to men within political parties despite the presence of women.<sup>9</sup>

In 1953, Lebanese women obtained the right to run and vote in parliamentary elections, but it wasn't until 1963 that women entered Parliament when Mirna Boustany inherited her father's seat by acclamation, marking the beginning of political inheritance for Lebanese women, thus the oft-repeated adage "Lebanese women enter parliament wearing black."

Since the country's independence, only 19 women have been elected to Parliament, and 7 women have been elected more than once.<sup>10</sup>

Only 19 women have been appointed as cabinet members since independence, noting that women had not participated in any cabinet until 2014, and they were absent from some cabinets in subsequent years. Currently, only one woman holds the position of Minister of State in a cabinet made up of 24 ministers. After the May 2022 elections, the number of female Members of Parliament reached 8 out of 128 MPs, a slight increase of 1.5% compared to the 2018 elections. There has been no change in the low representation of women in municipalities (5.4%)<sup>11</sup> since 2016, as the municipal elections have been postponed until 2023.

After the October 17, 2019 uprising, new political parties emerged, three of which were headed by women: Laury Haytayan was elected as head of the Taqaddom Party, Salam Yamout head of the National Bloc Party, and Rola Al-Mourad head of the 10452Km<sup>2</sup> Party. The traditional and family-based political parties continued their tradition of passing down political leadership within the family. As the demands for greater

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<sup>8</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO). (2022, May 12). Lebanon and the ILO release up-to-date data on national labour market. ILO. [https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS\\_844831/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_844831/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>9</sup> Political parties do not have any official figures on women's participation, but the majority of parties report that about 30% of their members are women.

<sup>10</sup> Information International. (January 2014). [https://monthlymagazine.com/ar-article-desc\\_4885\\_](https://monthlymagazine.com/ar-article-desc_4885_)

<sup>11</sup> IPU. (2022, May). IPU comparative data on structure of parliament [Dataset]. <https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=5&year=2022>

representation of women intensified, some parties<sup>12</sup> adopted a gender quota in leadership positions, but this was not reflected in the traditional parties' choices to nominate a sufficient number of women or to offer women the necessary support to ensure they get the same chances of winning as their male counterparts.

This might indicate that gender issues are used only for partisan mobilization and remain empty promises. This is also reflected in the refusal of parliamentary blocs to approve amendments to the laws to abolish marginalization and injustice against women and to strengthen them, in addition to their refusal to pass laws that enhance women's political status such as the gender quota.<sup>13</sup>

It was surprising to see that one political party opposed the political participation of women in elections through candidacy, thus denying women one of their basic rights and keeping them subject to men's choices by religiously requiring them to vote for men, which is a violation of the rights of women and the principles of democracy, justice and equal opportunities. It is also contrary to constitutional provisions guaranteeing freedoms.

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## CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Articles 7 and 8<sup>15</sup> of the Lebanese Constitution guarantee the freedom of choice and freedom of expression. The Constitution ensures equality of citizens before the law and not in the law. Article 12 also guarantees equal opportunities to hold all public positions. However, the Electoral Law<sup>16</sup> restricts candidacy to joining an electoral list, thus giving citizens conditional rather than equal rights. These legal obstacles have led to the withdrawal of 25% of female candidates due to their inability to join electoral lists, which deprived some areas such as the South III constituency of the presence of any female candidates.

The current law does not include a women's quota as required by the international treaties and conventions ratified by the Lebanese Republic, most notably the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Covenant on Political and Economic Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the government's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Beijing Platform for Action.

<sup>12</sup> Allaw, S., Salibi, G. (2014). التجمع النسائي الديمقراطي اللبناني. الاحتياجات تنظيمية لتعزيز مشاركة النساء في الأحزاب والانتخابات في لبنان. (Organizational Needs to Enhance Women's Participation in Parties and Trade Unions in Lebanon). Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering. <https://www.rdfwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/final-book.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Astih, B. (8 October 2021). سقوط «الكويتا النسائية» بـ«الضربة القاضية» في البرلمان اللبناني. ("Women's Quota" Receives Fatal Blow in the Lebanese Parliament). Asharq Al-Awsat <https://bit.ly/3Blllqi>

<sup>14</sup> Seif, M. (April 2022). النساء في "حزب الله" ممنوعات من الترشح والقرار... مجرد آلة تنفيذ. (Women in Hezbollah are not allowed to be nominated, a decision that is merely an implementation mechanism). Daraj Website <https://daraj.com/89672/>

<sup>15</sup> Presidency of the Republic of Lebanon: The Lebanese Constitution and all its amendments. <https://www.presidency.gov.lb/Arabic/LebaneseSystem/Documents/LebaneseConstitution.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Law No. 44/2017 on the Election of Members of the Parliament and its amendments. [https://elections.gov.lb/getattachment/00bbe177-0eec-4f8a-a4df-e47c7e19b4de/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84-\(PDF\).aspx](https://elections.gov.lb/getattachment/00bbe177-0eec-4f8a-a4df-e47c7e19b4de/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D8%B5-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%84-(PDF).aspx)

## ELECTORAL LAW

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The current Electoral Law is based on the proportional system, which is universally believed to help more women, marginalized groups and minorities to be elected to parliament; however, the law did not take into account the equitable distribution of seats in its establishment of major electoral constituencies, and it did not give citizens' votes equal weight or value due to the great variation in the number of voters from one constituency to another.

The number of voters in the electoral constituency affects the electoral spending limit and the number of votes required to win, contrary to the principle of equal opportunity and fairness.

The principle of preferential vote currently adopted in the electoral system increases the chances of men, especially those with political and financial leverage, at the expense of other men, women and marginalized political groups not allied with businessmen or historical and traditional political families.

The preferential vote consolidates the control of politically and financially influential figures over political life, and it gives them political advantage over competitors. These figures are "men" who provide services during or even before the electoral campaign period, in return for political loyalty that is translated through votes. This is how people who provide services exploit voters. This is how the political *za'im* (powerful leader) controls the different aspects of political life in Lebanon, as he is the one who provides services rather than the State (or public institutions).

The parties represented in parliament agreed to pass the current law, which constitutes a breach of democracy. They did so without consulting with civil associations and organizations. It is important to note that the right of appeal to the Constitutional Council, in accordance with Article 19 of the law on the Council's establishment,<sup>17</sup> it is limited to the President of the Republic, the Speaker of Parliament, the Prime Minister or ten MPs, which prevents those affected by the law from outside the ruling class to appeal it.

For more information on the Electoral Law, readers can refer to the detailed study prepared by LADE titled "The Electoral Law: A Further Impediment to Women's Political Participation."<sup>18</sup>

## THE MEDIA

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The media plays a key and influential role at the political, social and economic levels in Lebanon. Through balanced media coverage, female candidates can maximize their reach during their electoral campaign. However, once again, there was an imbalance in media coverage between male and female candidates in the 2022 elections, despite the increasing number of female candidates. This increase was not reflected in the media's coverage of their activities, compared to that of their male counterparts.

Although the Electoral Law allocates equal media coverage for male and female candidates, especially in Article 71, women have less access to the media. The Electoral Supervisory Commission, whose task is to monitor media appearances, did not issue

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<sup>17</sup> Law No. 250 of 14/7/1993 on the Establishment of the Constitutional Council. [https://www.cc.gov.lb/sites/default/files/loi\\_ar.pdf](https://www.cc.gov.lb/sites/default/files/loi_ar.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> LADE. The Electoral Law: A Further Impediment to Women's Political Participation <https://docs.google.com/gview?embedded=true&url=http://www.lade.org.lb/getattachment/a9699d25-ab06-4036-b2a4-68d7759caafc/%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3.aspx>

any circular during its campaign observation period to enforce equal media coverage for female and male candidates, nor did it issue a reminder of the need to comply with this requirement.

For example, Maharat Foundation's report on TV coverage shows that 5% of the airtime during news broadcasts was allocated for female candidates, with a significant increase in the appearance fee. The monitoring exercise revealed that this number increased to 14% due to a television program that was funded by an association specifically for the coverage of female candidates.<sup>19</sup>

## ELECTORAL SUPERVISORY COMMISSION

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- The Electoral Supervisory Commission was established by virtue of Law No. 44/2017 with the aim of monitoring electoral campaigns and the media, educating voters, conducting electoral awareness campaigns, supervising electoral spending, handling complaints and submitting the necessary reports to the Constitutional Council. According to Article 19 of Electoral Law No. 44/2017, one of the Commission's tasks is to issue decisions and circulars that fall within the scope of its mandate and to submit proposals as it deems appropriate to the Minister (Minister of Interior and Municipalities).
- Any visual, audio, print and electronic media outlet wishing to cover the voting and vote counting and tabulation process should obtain and submit to the Commission the necessary permits, and the Commission should specify the rules of conduct for media coverage.
- The Commission is responsible for receiving requests from private print, visual and audio media outlets wishing to run paid electoral advertisements, in accordance with the provisions of this Law.
- The Commission monitors the compliance of the various candidate lists, candidates and the media with the laws and regulations that govern electoral competition, in accordance with the provisions of this Law.
- The Commission determines the conditions and principles for conducting opinion polls as well as publishing, broadcasting or distributing the results thereof during the electoral campaign period, and it monitors compliance with the pre-election silence period.
- The Commission receives and audits the financial statements of the electoral campaigns within one month prior to the date of the elections.
- The Commission receives requests for the registration of financial commissioners for each candidate's electoral campaign and issues receipts.
- The Commission monitors electoral spending in accordance with the provisions of this Law.
- The Commission accepts and examines the applications of local and international electoral observers, grants them permits and establishes a code of conduct for them.
- The Commission is in charge of spreading voter awareness, guiding voters and promoting democratic practices by all available means.
- The Commission receives and adjudicates complaints in cases related to its functions, and it is up to it to act when it determines that there was a violation and to take the necessary measures.
- The Commission may, if necessary, seek the help of experts in matters related to elections and electoral affairs.

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<sup>19</sup> Maharat Foundation. (2022). The Electoral Media Performance During the Parliamentary Elections 2022. Maharat and UNESCO Office in Beirut. [https://maharatfoundation.org/en/TVcoverage\\_ParliamentaryElections2022](https://maharatfoundation.org/en/TVcoverage_ParliamentaryElections2022)

In accordance with Article 10, the Commission is composed of 11 members and exercises its role in accordance with the functions set out for it in the Electoral Law independently and in coordination with the Minister of the Interior and Municipalities (MoIM).

Although Article 9 of the Electoral Law stipulates that “gender representation shall be taken into account in the selection of candidates for membership in the Commission,” the representation of women in the Commission was low, as there was 1 woman out of the total 11 members. After the end of the parliamentary elections, LADE submitted a written letter inquiring about the extent to which the Commission integrated a gender perspective in its work. The letter included questions about the number of female members in the Commission’s executive body, the type of tasks entrusted to them, the type of educational campaigns for female and male voters about the electoral process, whether there were efforts directed at female voters or illiterate women in particular to encourage them to vote, the Commission’s follow-up on media discourse, whether the Commission had specified any guidelines for the media to ensure equal coverage for male and female candidates, its adoption of a discourse that does not discriminate against female candidates on the basis of their gender, whether the Commission had detected any violent practices, whether verbal or physical, inflicted on female candidates during the electoral campaign period, and the measures it had taken to monitor and ensure the fairness of candidates’ electoral spending and advertising. However, the Commission did not respond to the letter, despite LADE’s many attempts.

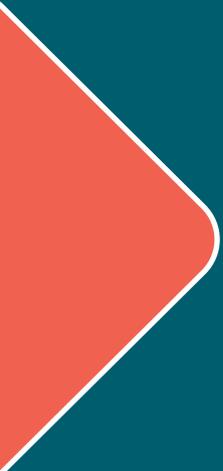
According to a report titled “Breaking the Silence of Violence Against Women in Politics,”<sup>20</sup> the Commission does not have a gender specialist or gender mainstreaming

plan, and it only has one female member out of its 11 total members, which is a decrease in the number of women compared to 2018 when one-third of the Commission’s members were females. According to Dr. Faisal Al-Qaq who is a member of the Commission, the latter does incorporate a gender perspective in its work in general, but it had not carried out any electoral awareness campaigns targeting women specifically.

In conclusion, it is clear that the Electoral Supervisory Commission does not actually take into account any aspects of gender justice in its structure, decisions and circulars. It could have played an effective role, in accordance with the powers granted to it by law, to rectify this situation through the development of practices or other guidelines that guarantee gender justice and the prevention of discrimination on the basis of gender. These practices and guidelines undermine female candidates’ equal opportunities when it comes to electoral spending, electoral awareness and media guidance.

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<sup>20</sup> Chebaro, A. (2022). Breaking the Silence of Violence against Women in Politics. UNDP. <https://orgwnlb.files.wordpress.com/2022/08/undp-eng-vawp-report-1.pdf>



# CHAPTER II

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## MONITORING FINDINGS

# SURVEY OF LEBANESE FEMALE VOTERS

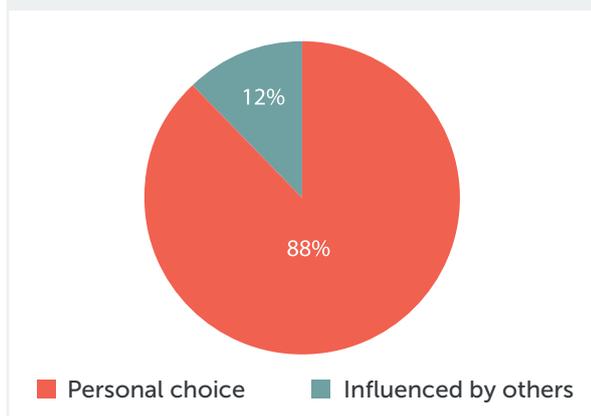
## On the May 15, 2022 Lebanese Parliamentary Election Day

Fifteen long-term observers surveyed female voters on election day. 75 randomly selected female voters participated in the 15 electoral constituencies where the elections were held, with an average of 5 female voters in each constituency.

The survey included a set of questions aimed at gathering information on the various aspects of women’s voting and identifying any obstacles faced by female voters which may affect their participation in the voting process, in addition to detecting any pressures and difficulties that limit their freedom to practice their convictions or make their political decisions independently. They were also asked about how they are treated inside polling centers and stations, whether by members of the electoral campaigns or by the head officers of polling stations.

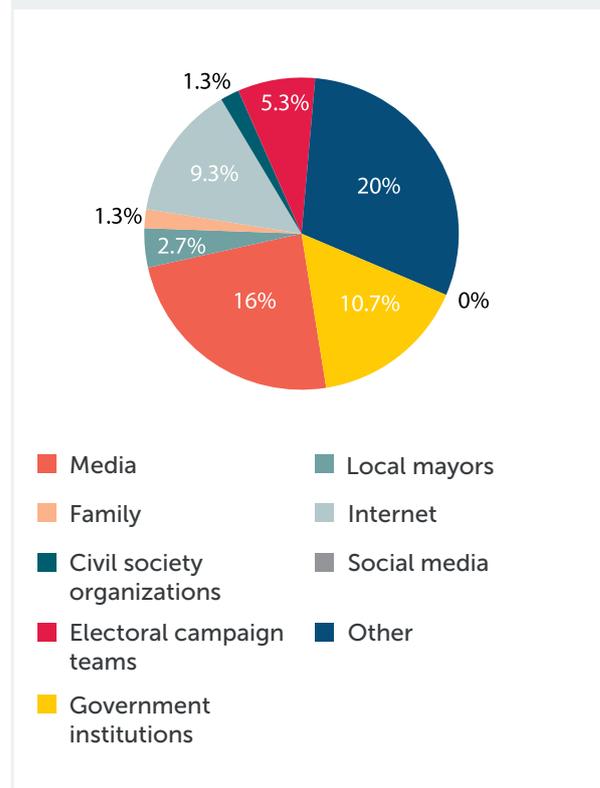
88% of the respondents reported that they freely chose who to vote for, while 12% reported being influenced by their family’s choices, whether their own or their husband’s family, for several reasons, including the candidate’s provision of certain services to the family, kinship in or the commitment of some relatives to a party decision (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Choice of Candidates**



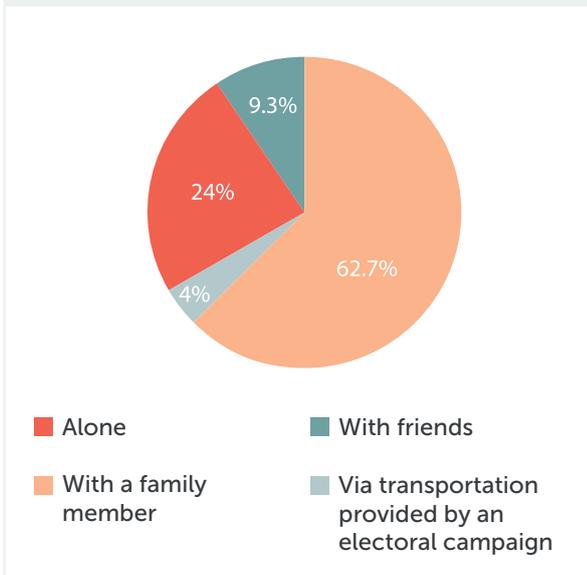
Family (36%) and social media (20%) were found to be the primary sources of information about the Electoral Law and the voting mechanism, while government institutions, whether the Electoral Supervision Commission or the Ministry of Interior, as well as party entities and civil society associations, were secondary sources of information (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Sources of Information on the Voting Mechanism**



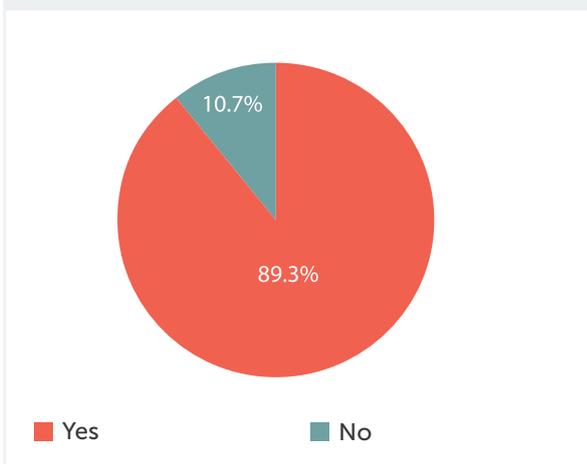
Only 11% of respondents had difficulties reaching polling centers, especially those living in far areas, due to the high cost of transportation, forcing them to go there with family members (62.7%) or friends or through transportation provided by electoral campaign teams even from remote areas (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: How did you reach the polling center?**



Some (10.5%) also faced difficulties related to the distance between the parking lots and the polling centers and the long distances they had to walk, in addition to the lack of elevators in most polling centers. The large influx of people also caused long queues at the entrance of polling centers and stations, which exhausted pregnant women, the elderly or people suffering from certain diseases (Figure 4).

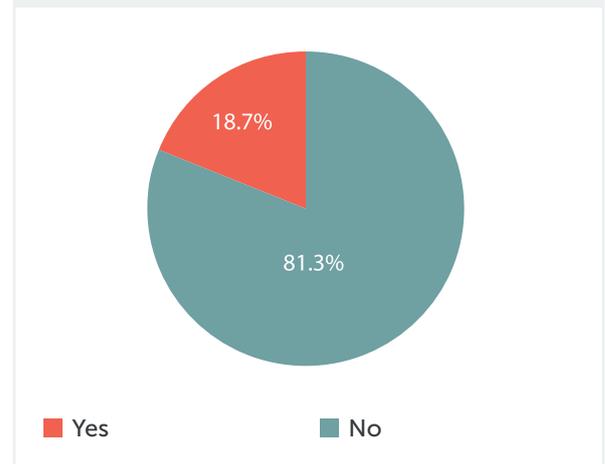
**Figure 4: Did you face any difficulty in reaching the polling center?**



About 19% of respondents indicated that they faced difficulties during the voting process (Figure 5), most notably the lack of knowledge of the voting mechanism, especially in light of the lack of sufficient

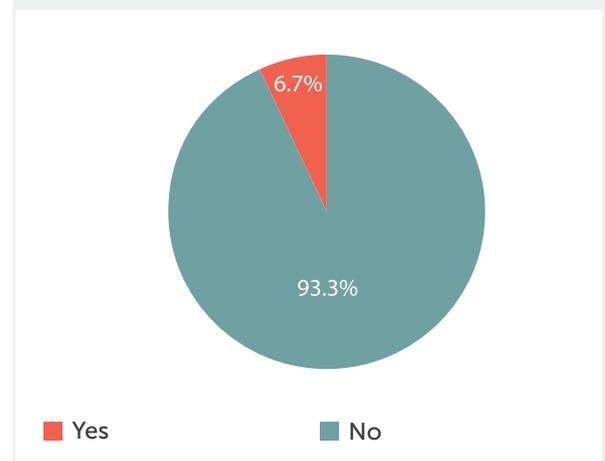
understanding of the Electoral Law and the preferential vote, in addition to the small size of the ballot paper in proportion to the large number of candidate lists, which led to difficulty in reading the names of candidates and a reliance on photos to select candidates.

**Figure 5: Did you encounter any difficulties during the voting process?**



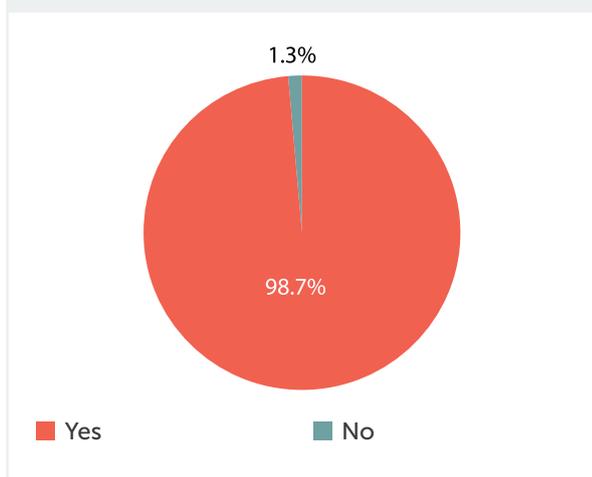
7% of female voters indicated that they were pressured to vote for a particular list, either by the representatives of lists and political parties or due to a breach of ballot secrecy, causing them to be reluctant to vote freely. Some also reported being pressured by their family and social environment, while 93% of the female voters who were surveyed reported not having been subjected to any kind of pressure (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Did you face any pressure to vote for a particular list?**

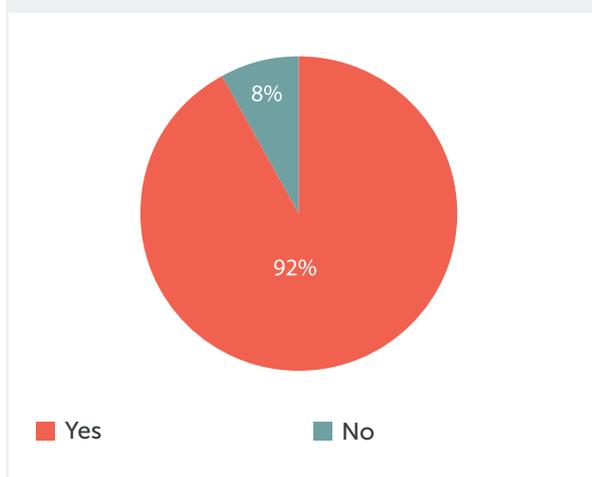


The answers to the questions on how women were treated at polling centers by the head officers of polling stations and by male and female permanent and mobile candidate representatives were mostly positive across all Lebanese regions (**Figures 7 and 8**). A few female voters who participated in the survey reported that they were mistreated, noting that the failure of head officers to explain the voting mechanism clearly caused the candidate representatives from various lists to interfere. This led to chaos and confusion among female voters. The women also reported being pressured by candidate representatives from different lists and political parties to vote for a particular list.

**Figure 7: Were you treated adequately by the male and female head officers and their assistants at the polling stations?**

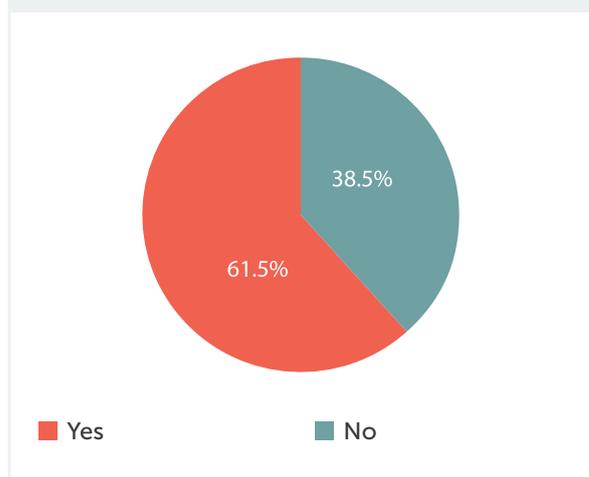


**Figure 8: Were you treated adequately by the male and female candidate representatives?**



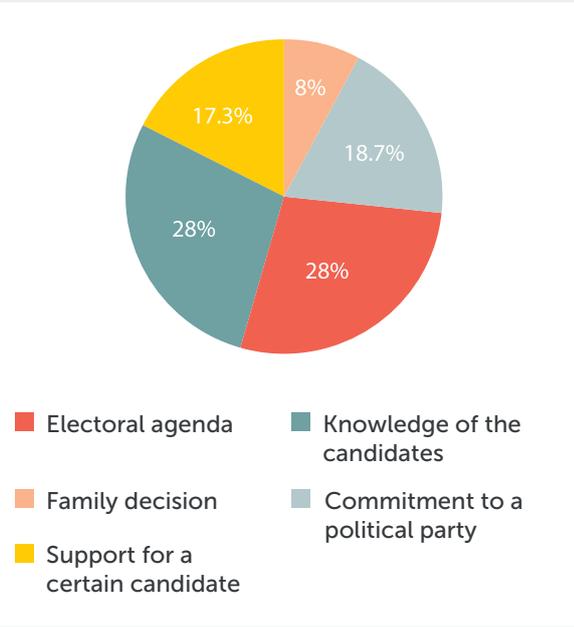
38.5% of the female voters surveyed reported errors in civil registry data or identification documents (**Figure 9**), as some of them were not included in the voter lists, despite having checked in advance, either online or through the local mayor in their region. Others reported not being included in the lists despite having submitted a request in advance for the correction of the voter lists. Most of these errors affected newly married women whose names were not added to the voter lists neither at their place of birth nor on their husband's civil registry. In addition, one woman was unable to vote because there was no photo of her on her ID, and she did not have any other identification document.

**Figure 9: In case of an error in your civil registry or identification documents, was it resolved quickly and effectively?**



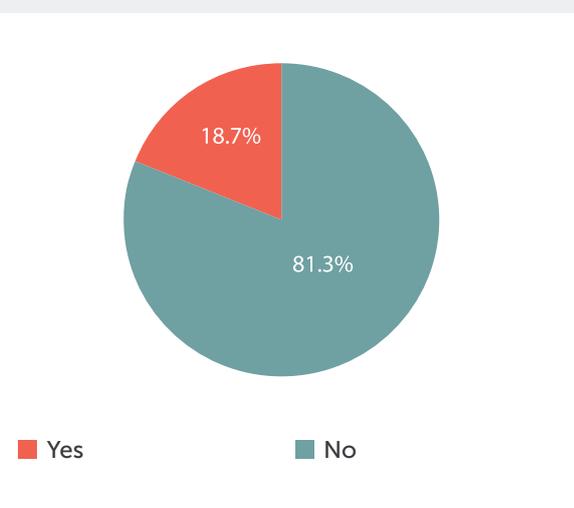
28% of the female voters surveyed indicated that their choice to vote for a particular list was based on personal knowledge of the candidates, another 28% approved of the electoral agenda of the list (**Figure 10**), while the rest of the answers varied between commitment to family choices or to a certain political party. This percentage becomes especially higher in minor electoral constituencies or those dominated by a single political party and decreases in other constituencies. Some female voters also cast blank ballots because they feared making the wrong choice about candidates or did not believe in the possibility of change in certain constituencies.

**Figure 10: Why did you choose to vote for the list?**

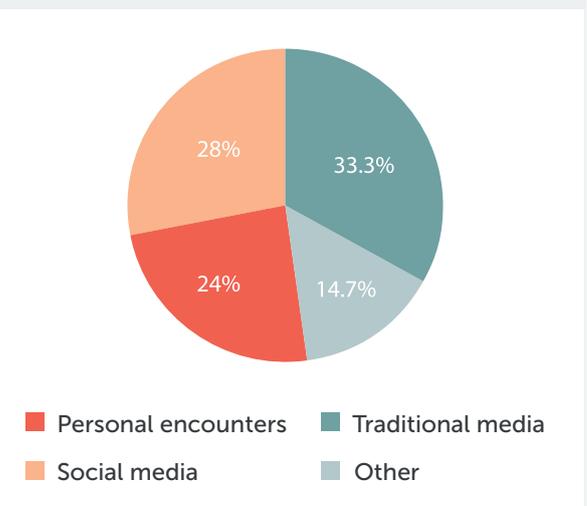


81% of female voters surveyed reported that they had not participated in any electoral events, festivals or party meetings (figure 11). 61.3% of female voters reported that their knowledge of the candidates was mostly through social and traditional media, which were a major source of information. However, some of them also had prior knowledge of candidates who had previously run or been elected to Parliament for several terms (Figure 12).

**Figure 11: Have you participated in electoral events?**

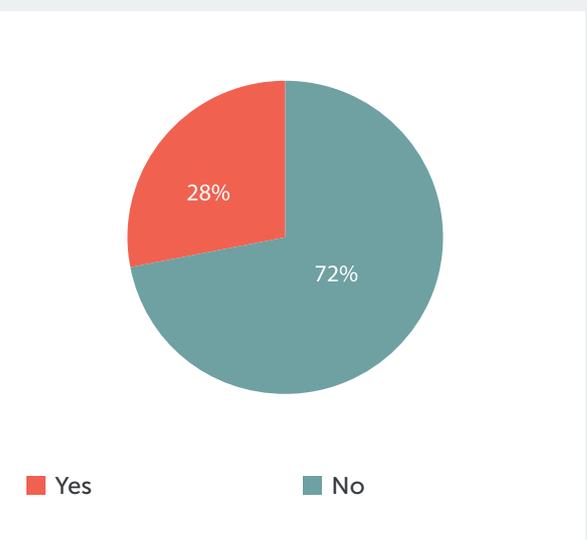


**Figure 12: How did you meet/learn about the candidates?**



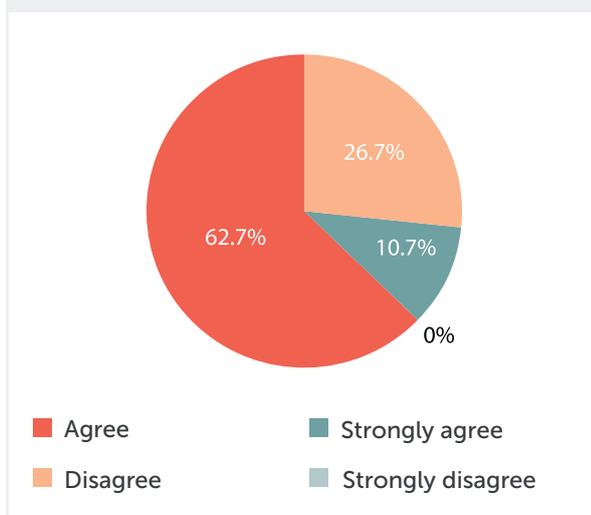
Although the percentage of women running for the elections in 2022 was higher than in the 2018 elections, some minor and major constituencies such as South III, had no female candidates. 28% of the respondents also reported that there were no female candidates in the minor constituency in which they vote, such as in Hasbayya and the Minieh-Danniyeh region. Due to this issue, female voters were not able to give their preferential vote to a woman, even if they wanted to (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Are there any female candidates running in your electoral constituency?**



The answers to the questions regarding whether female voters would rather give their preferential vote to a female candidate and vote for a list that includes a female candidate were as follows: 62.7% agreed and 26.7% strongly agreed across the various constituencies of Lebanon, with some respondents stating that this would be conditional (**Figure 14**).

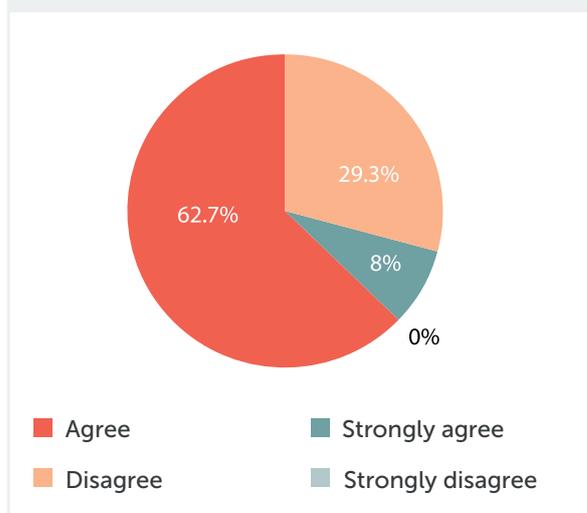
**Figure 14: Would you rather give your preferential vote to a female candidate?**



Female voters stated that in order for them to vote for a female candidate, she would need to be qualified for parliamentary political work. They would not vote for a candidate simply because she is a woman, especially since most former female MPs inherited their positions.

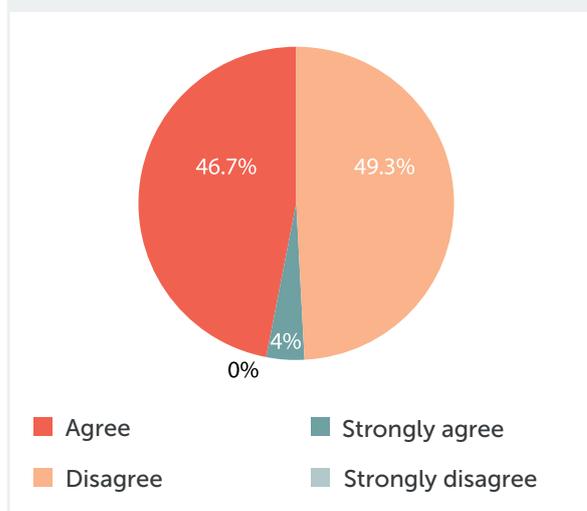
However, a small percentage (10.7%) expressed their disagreement with regards to giving their preferential vote to a female candidate because they were not convinced that these candidates (regardless of their gender) would be capable of effecting change in their constituencies or because they were not convinced of their electoral agendas (**Figure 15**).

**Figure 15: Do you prefer voting for lists that include female candidates?**



The overwhelming majority of female voters (96%) support women’s participation in politics (**Figure 16**).

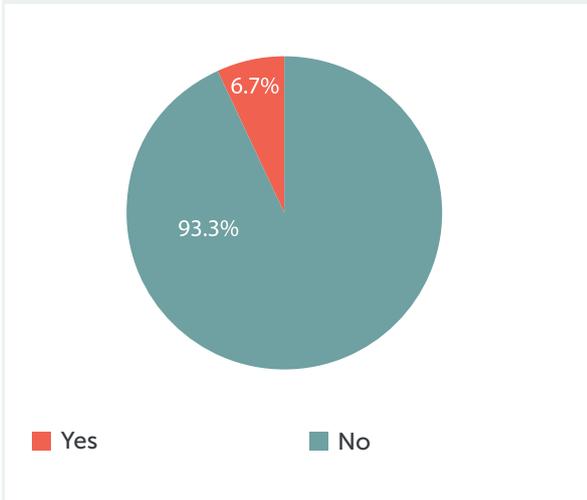
**Figure 16: Do you support women’s participation in politics?**



The female voters who disagreed with the above questions said this is due to traditional gender roles and stereotypes, customs, traditions and patriarchal beliefs. Among the answers were traditional reasons related to the social environment, women’s commitment to other priorities related to housework and caring for children, and the association of politics with men, with 6% of female voters reporting that they believe that politics should be limited to men, because men are more serious than

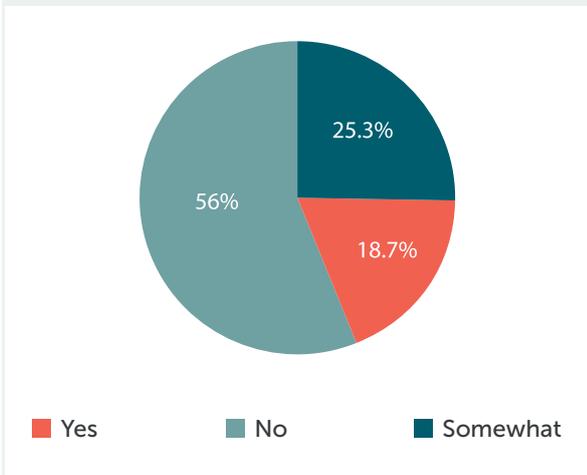
women, because women’s feelings affect their decision-making or because the field of politics is too chaotic for women and they should stay away from it (Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Do you think politics should be limited to men only?**



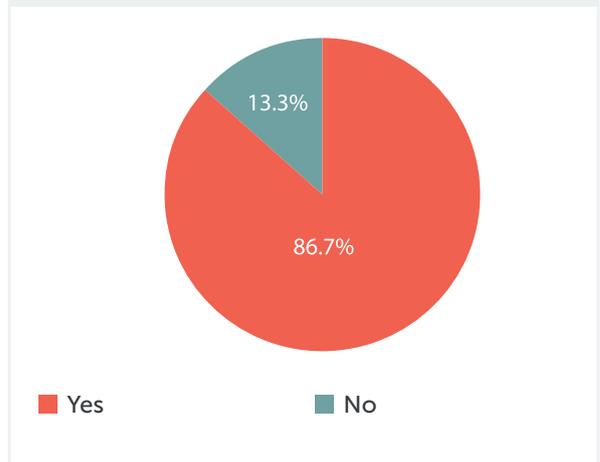
The survey showed a high percentage of female voters (56%) who expressed dissatisfaction with the current representation of women in politics (Figure 18). This is due to the very low percentage of female representation in political positions, which hinders female officials/MPs from making a difference or advocating for women’s rights, even if they wanted to.

**Figure 18: Are you satisfied with the current representation of women in politics?**

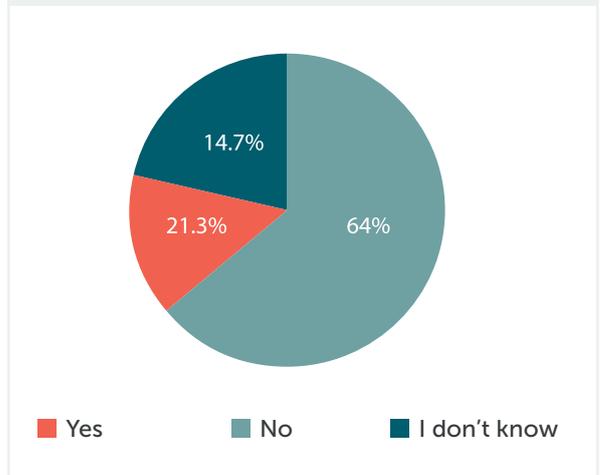


Therefore, 86.7% of the female voters surveyed believe in the need to enact new laws and legislations to allow for higher female representation (Figure 19), the most important of which is the gender quota to increase the percentage of women in Parliament, ministries and municipalities. Those who answered with a “no” consider that it is not necessary to enact any laws related to women’s political representation, as this is not currently a priority, although 64% of the respondents stated that no women from their electoral constituencies were ever elected to Parliament (Figure 20).

**Figure 19: Should there be any laws or legislations to increase women’s participation in politics?**

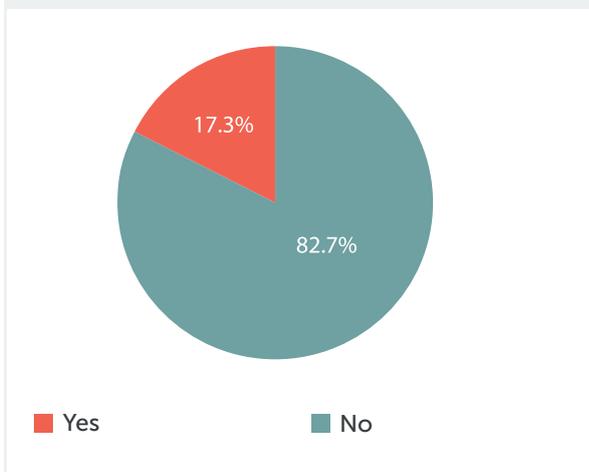


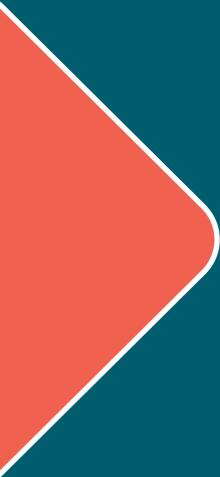
**Figure 20: Were any women from your community/region elected to Parliament in previous elections?**



The surveyed female voters reported that politicians in their regions are not involved in promoting women's rights (**Figure 21**); on the contrary, they are trying to suppress women to limit decision-making to men, on the grounds that men should dominate the field of politics due to the widespread patriarchal mentality. In addition, politicians are hindering the adoption of any law related to women's rights to prevent women from challenging their authority.

**Figure 21: Do political leaders in your community participate in women's development of women and the promotion of their rights?**





# CHAPTER III

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## PERSPECTIVE OF FEMALE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR THE 2022 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

LADE conducted interviews with 88 female candidates out of the 157 who submitted their candidacy for the elections on March 15 from all governorates of Lebanon (**Figure 22**) and from various political, sectarian and regional affiliations during the pre- and post-election phase from April 20 to July 20, 2022. These interviews aimed at identifying the obstacles and challenges limiting the effective participation of female candidates in the elections based on their experiences. These interviews were conducted by female observers who served as gender focal points after receiving special training on election observation from a gender perspective. Many female candidates preferred doing these interviews in person, while some interviews were conducted by phone or digitally due to time constraints or the candidates' preoccupation with other commitments.

LADE also adopted a Code of Conduct that was read out to the female candidates before they were surveyed (Code of Conduct attached as an appendix to the present report).

The results of the survey showed that female candidates faced multiple challenges that hindered the nomination process and electoral competition. The first person to submit their candidacy for the 2022 parliamentary elections was Josephine Zgheib, a female candidate.

**This chapter is divided into five parts:**

**Part I:** Demographic Information about Female Candidates

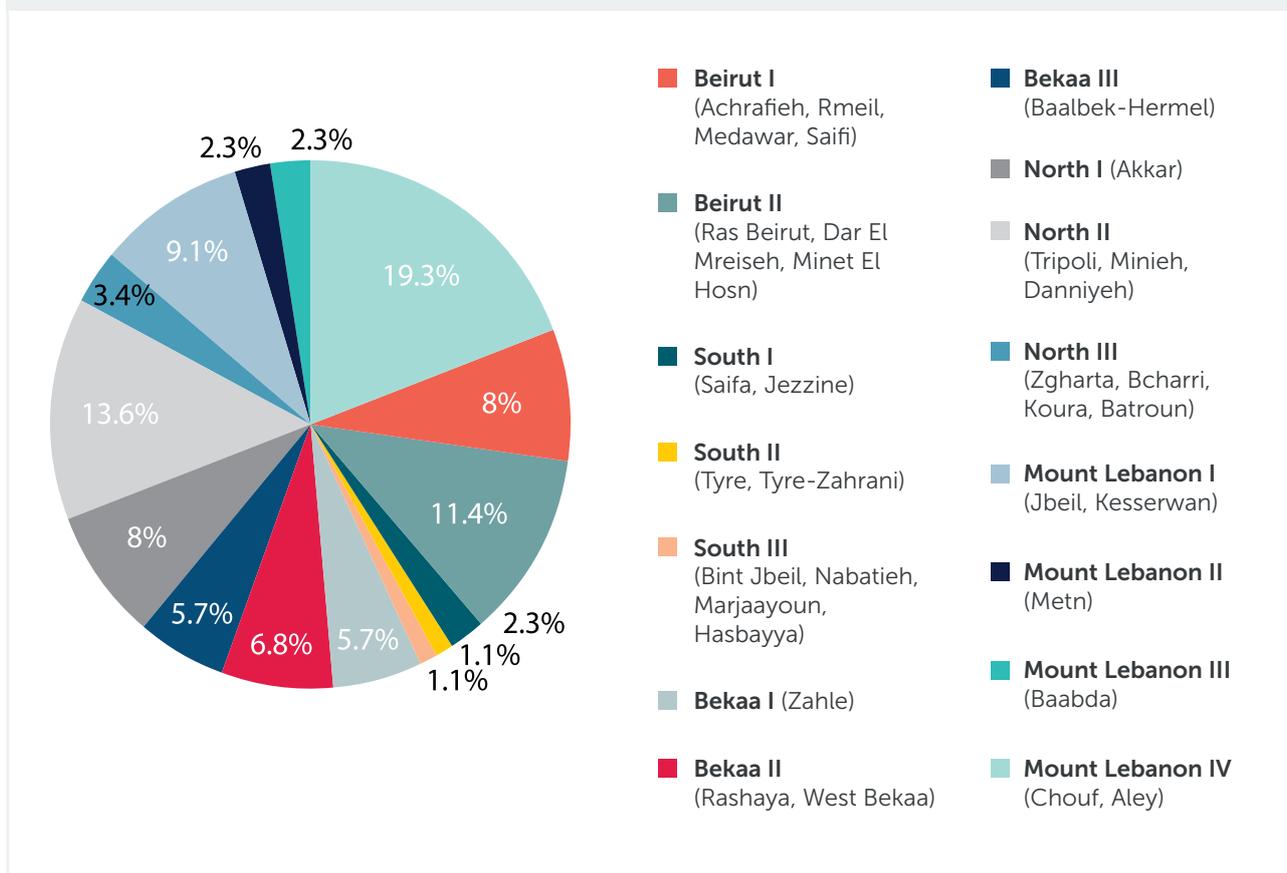
**Part II:** Political Experience and Work

**Part III:** Factors Encouraging Candidacy

**Part IV:** Main Obstacles Faced by the Female Candidates

**Part V:** Main Offences against Female Candidates and Activists during the Elections

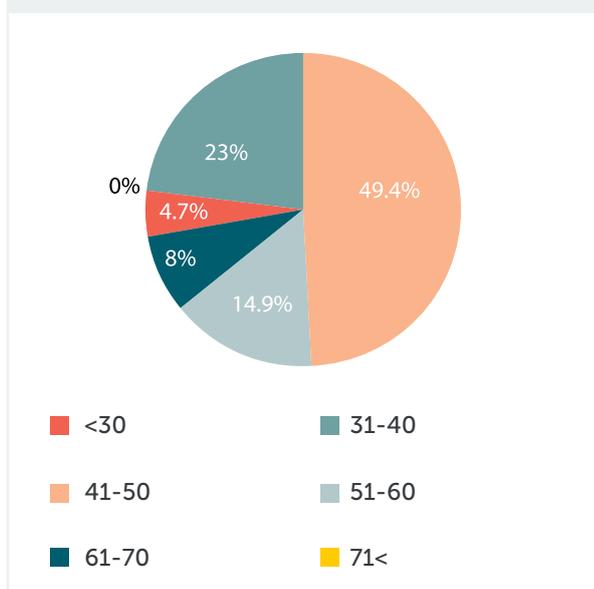
**Figure 22: Percentage of female candidates per constituency**



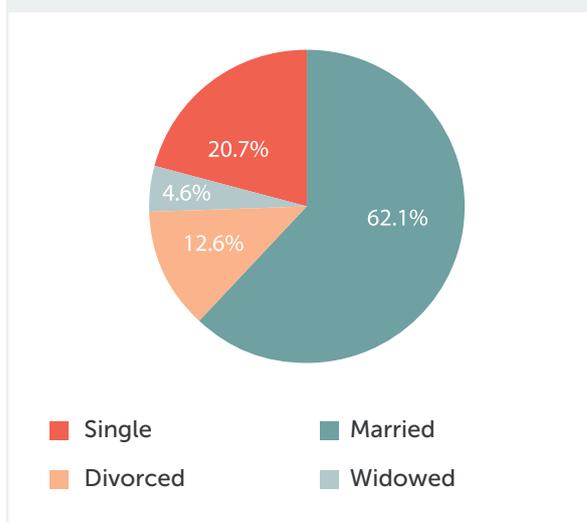
# PART I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ABOUT FEMALE CANDIDATES

The results of LADE’s survey showed that the ages of the female candidates were mostly between 31 and 50 years (**Figure 23**). Interestingly, 62% of them are married (**Figure 24**), and their marriage did not stand in the way of their participation in political and social life. All female candidates also had academic backgrounds, including PhDs, master’s degrees and university studies (**Figure 25**).

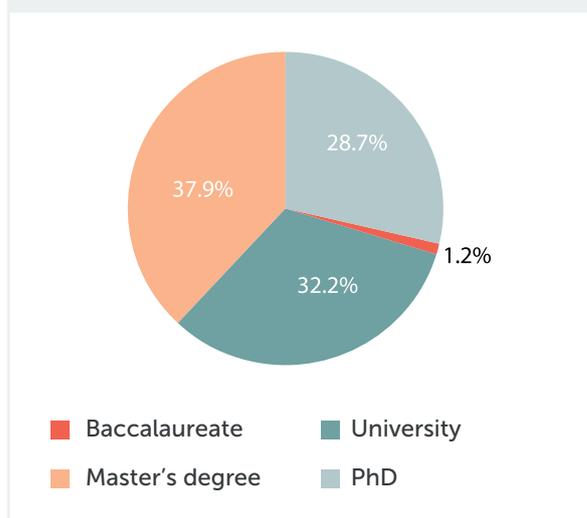
**Figure 23: Ages of Female Candidates**



**Figure 24: Marital Status**



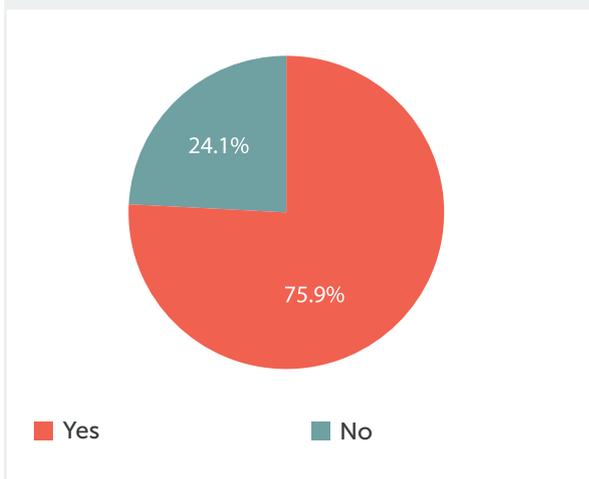
**Figure 25: Educational Attainment**



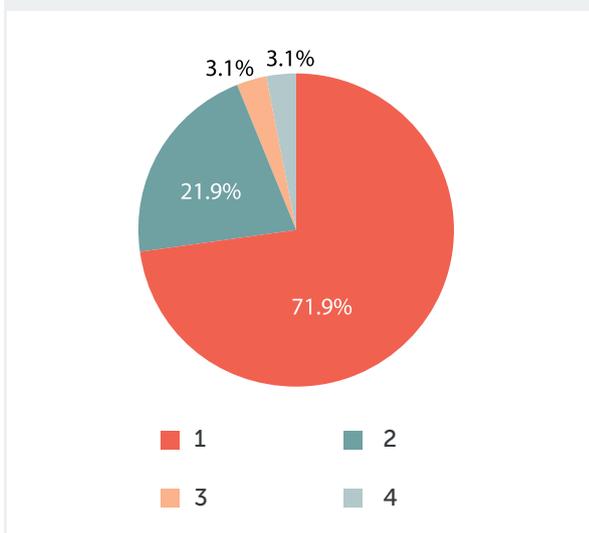
# PART II: POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AND WORK

76% of female candidates ran for the first time in the 2022 elections (**Figure 26**). As for those who ran in previous elections, it was likely their second time only, while the percentage of female candidates who ran more than twice did not exceed 2% in all constituencies (**Figure 27**).

**Figure 26: Is this your first time running for the elections?**



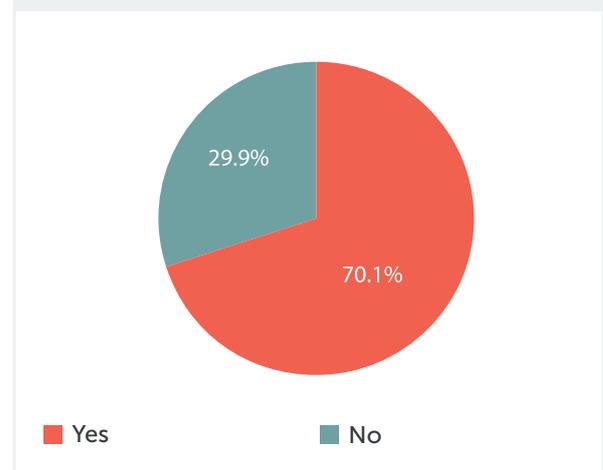
**Figure 27: Number of elections you participated in as a candidate**



70% of female candidates had participated in political, trade union and collective work before they ran for the elections (**Figure 28**). Many of them have a long history and extensive experience in politics, sometimes exceeding 20 years. Their political experiences ranged from membership, active role or founding role within political parties, to membership in municipal councils, trade unions and associations (which are institutional experiences), as well as political experiences that started after the October 17 uprising.

Many female candidates have an academic background in law or political science, and a lot of them had work experience in senior positions in management, university education and community work.

**Figure 28: Have you ever been involved in any kind of political/trade union/collective work?**



# PART III: FACTORS ENCOURAGING CANDIDACY

Female candidates stated that their motivation for running for the parliamentary elections was their faith in their ability to bring about change if they were to win, along with other competent candidates, in light of the dire economic, social and political circumstances.

Another encouraging factor is the hope to advance women's rights issues, especially with the deteriorating economic conditions and the recent increase in cases of violence against women in Lebanon. In addition, they felt a sense of responsibility, especially with the absence of the actual (legislative) role of women in previous parliaments. Some female candidates also reported that the reason behind their candidacy was to support the presence of women politics, which in their opinion would automatically promote their presence in decision-making positions.

One female candidate also believes that women generally have a more comprehensive outlook and are able to run the country politically, economically and socially, and that women should advocate for certain priority issues such as the independence of the judiciary, the separation of powers and the personal status law.

Some female candidates ran at the request of certain political parties and joined their lists despite the fact that they had not previously decided to run and were not members of these parties.

# PART IV: MAIN OBSTACLES FACING FEMALE CANDIDATES

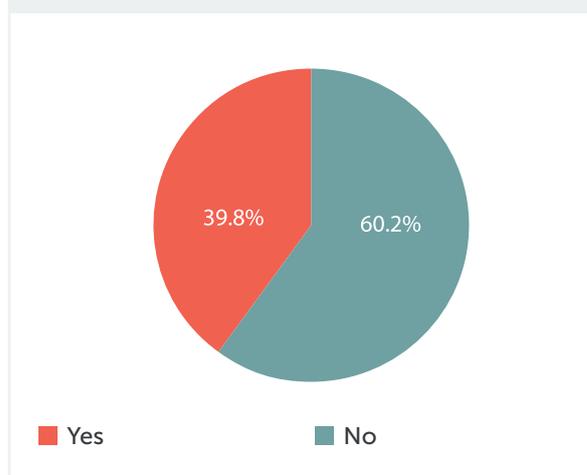
Based on the results of the survey conducted by LADE's female observers, it was determined that there are many obstacles and difficulties that limit women's participation in parliamentary elections, the most prominent of which are:

1. Political and social pressures
2. Lack of electoral support
3. Loopholes in the Electoral Law and in the management of the electoral process
4. Lack of support from the Electoral Supervisory Commission
5. Violence against women
6. Difficulties in running female candidates' electoral campaigns and advancing women's' rights issues

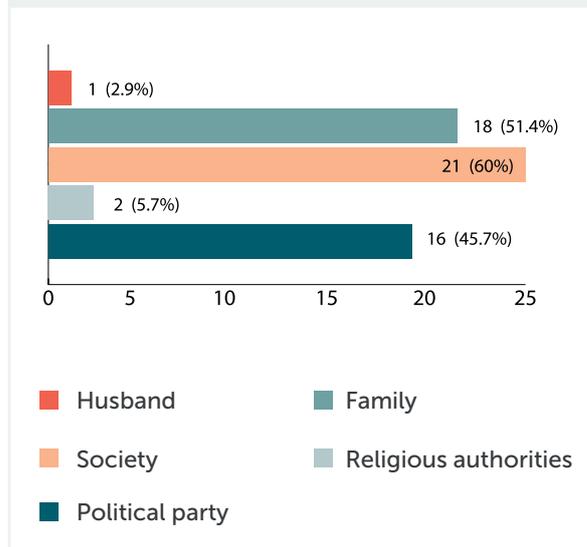
## 1. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PRESSURES

The survey showed that 40% of the total female candidates who were interviewed faced many pressures from different parties to discourage them from running and try to keep them out of politics (**Figure 29**). Society, family and political parties ranked highest among those who opposed the nomination of women (**Figure 30**).

**Figure 29: Were you subject to any kind of pressure to discourage you from running?**



**Figure 30: Who pressured you?**



60% of respondents saw society as one of the biggest obstacles that put pressure on women by holding on to stereotypes and gender roles. There were many attempts to pressure female candidates to discourage them from running and restrict them to the private sphere and to social gender expectations. One female candidate faced considerable pressure because of her father's political affiliation and was asked to withdraw her candidacy or be disowned. The pressure exerted by society was not limited to female candidates only, but it also affected their families and husbands, who were sometimes bullied because they supported female representation.

Many female candidates have been attacked and harassed on social media. The comments made against them included bullying, insults, blackmail, threats, verbal harassment and sexual innuendo. They were also subjected to moral pressure due to prevailing perceptions that women were not suitable for political work and that "politics is for men." One of them said, "My brother told me at the beginning, 'why are you involving yourself in this whole ordeal?', as he considers that politics is a 'dirty business.'" Other female candidates were told, "why are you involving yourself in this? You're going to embarrass yourself." Many of them endured bullying due to their physical appearance, including verbal harassment and sexual innuendo, as well as insults and blackmail, not to mention that many people considered that they are just running after the title. Religious discourses clearly opposed female candidacy, and one female candidate was accused of "sabotaging the village and tarnishing Christianity."

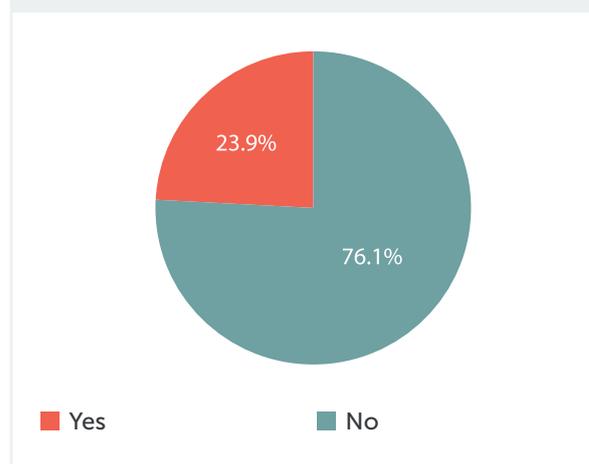
In terms of family pressure, although many families have abandoned the traditional notions relating to women and provided significant support to female candidates who bear their last name, other families have put great pressure on them and tried by all means to dissuade them from running. They have gone so far as to disown them and issue statements in this regard, often because these families support their male candidates

and do not want to be represented by a woman, or because of their unquestioned loyalty to a particular political party. At other times, family pressure was due to fear over the violence and defamation the female candidate may be subjected to.

Some female candidates were ignored by the political parties that nominated them on their candidate lists or even mistreated by them. In fact, some parties offered electoral bribes to female candidates in exchange for their withdrawal in favor of other candidates. In addition, some political parties opposed female candidacy, even by the women active in these parties, as they preferred to choose male candidates whenever the opportunity arose and pressured female candidates to withdraw their candidacies, considering that they are incapable of handling parliamentary work.

76% of the female candidates surveyed faced no difficulties in joining an electoral list (**Figure 31**), especially partisan female candidates who were included in the lists of their parties by default.

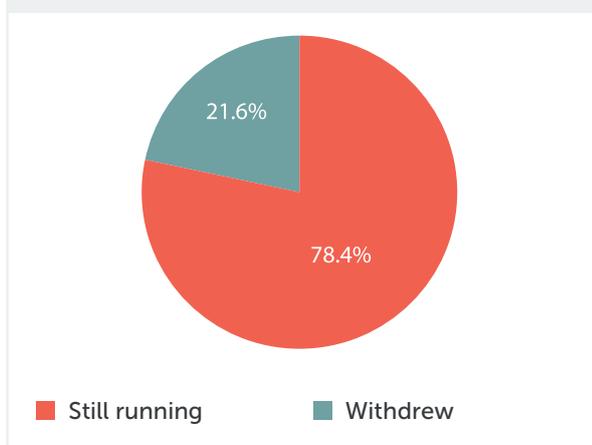
**Figure 31: Did you face difficulties in joining an electoral list?**



Independent female candidates, by contrast, faced many difficulties due to the Electoral Law, which requires male and female candidates to join lists so that their candidacy is not cancelled. Thus, female candidates stated that they had to find lists that had a political vision and an electoral agenda that were consistent with their aspirations. Even

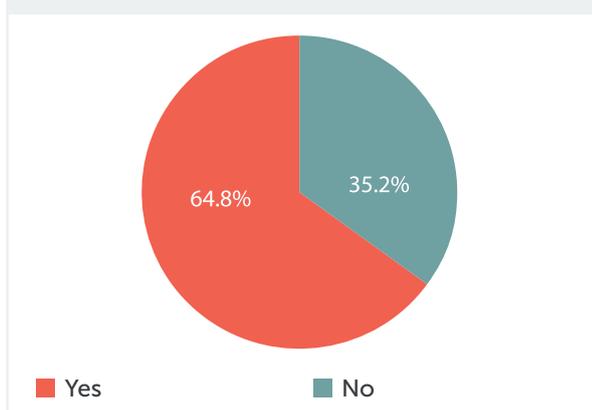
when they did find such lists, the final list composition remained up to the head of the political party and the people funding the list, and the female candidates had no say in the process. That is why some female candidates were not able to join lists or were forced to withdraw their nomination so that they are not forced to approve party decisions (Figure 32). Some female candidates also considered that certain lists only wanted to include a woman, regardless of her competencies.

**Figure 32: Are you still running or have you withdrawn your candidacy?**



65% of female candidates stated that women in decision-making positions in political parties and groups had contributed to the inclusion of women candidates in candidate lists, but that the final word and all negotiation processes were reserved for men, even when debates were held to evaluate male and female candidates (Figure 33).

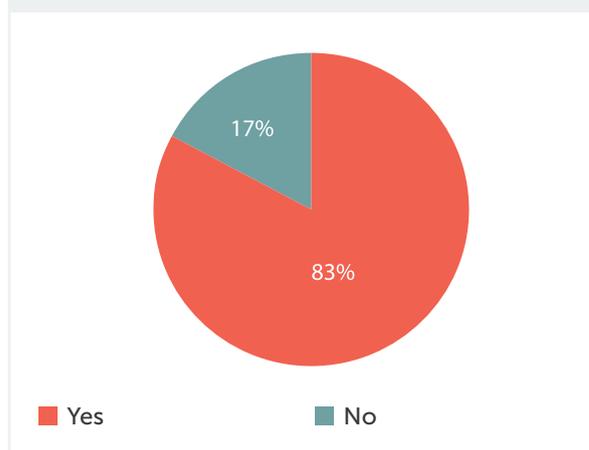
**Figure 33: Are there women in decision-making positions influencing the selection of candidates on the lists?**



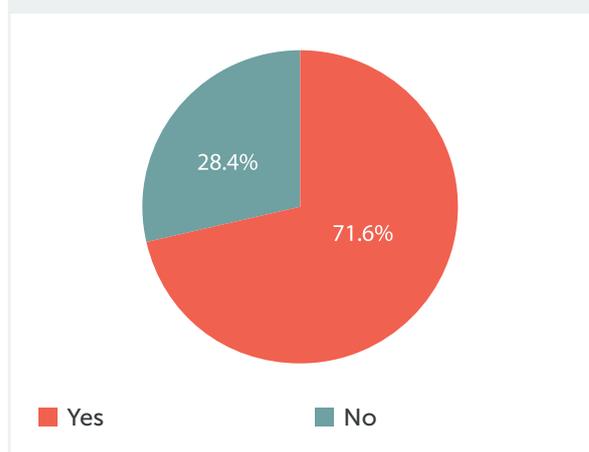
There were some contradictions in the statements of female candidates from the same party or from within the same list. While one of female candidate stressed that women had no role in making those decisions, which were reserved for the leadership of the party and the financiers to make, another candidate on the same list insisted on the participatory and decision-making role she played.

The answers were slightly different with regard to the selection of campaign team members and leaders, as 83% of the campaigns took into account the inclusion of women (Figures 34 and 35).

**Figure 34: Has the inclusion of women been taken into account when selecting members of your campaign team?**



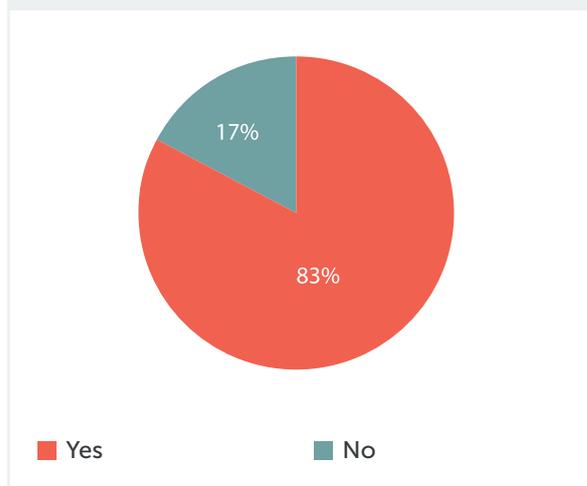
**Figure 35: Are women involved in decision-making within the campaign team?**



Regarding their role in the election campaign, female candidates reported that they were involved in drafting electoral agendas and statements and developing a political vision for the lists. At least one female candidate also headed a list, while another female candidate reported that she had established a list. Some of them participated in the selection of candidates on the lists, and, in general, all of the respondents reported that the members of the lists worked in harmony and complementarity. Other female candidates reported that their role was merely perfunctory, with one of them saying: "I only had the last word in topics pertaining to women and the youth." Another candidate said that she conducted field visits or appeared in the media only if members of the list gave her the chance to do so. Her exact words were: "If they presented me with an opportunity to appear."

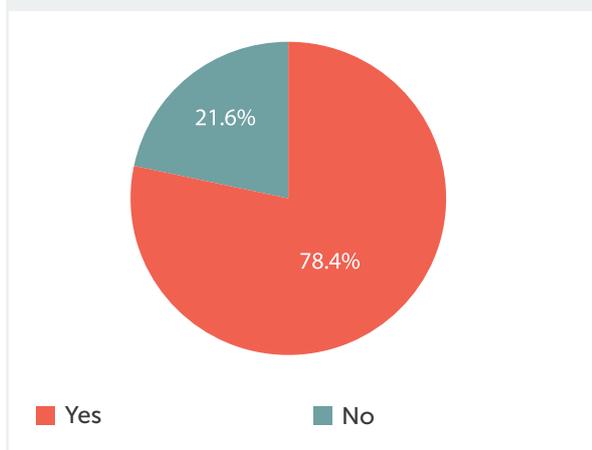
While 78% of female candidates participated in field visits, events and electoral rounds (Figure 36), this was limited to attending the announcement of electoral lists and programs. 17% of female candidates were not asked to be speakers at these events (Figure 37).

**Figure 37: Were you selected as a speaker at any electoral event?**

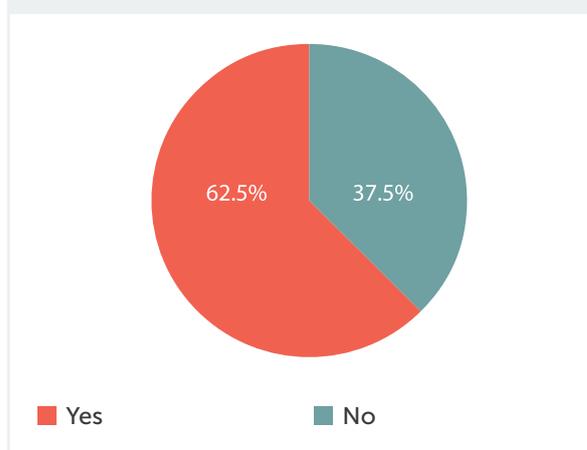


Although 62.5% of the female candidates who participated in the survey were speakers on behalf of their lists in some seminars and events (Figure 38), their representation was insufficient. The head of the list or one of the male candidates was often the guest during media interviews airing during peak hours and on major news stations. In addition, at least two female candidates were asked to sign a letter of resignation in advance before joining the list (Figure 39).

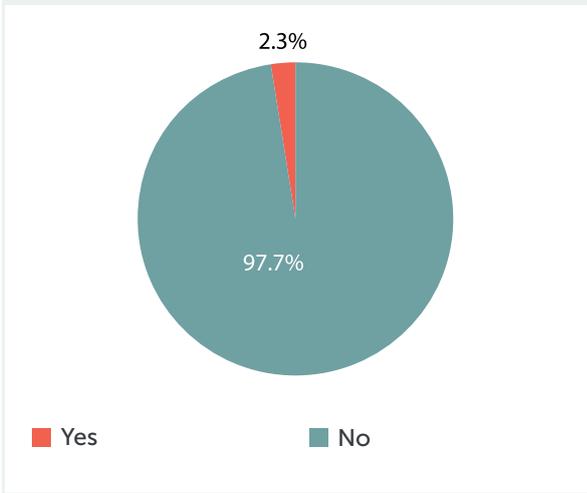
**Figure 36: Have you participated in electoral rounds/events held by your list?**



**Figure 38: Have you been a representative of the list in press conferences/events?**

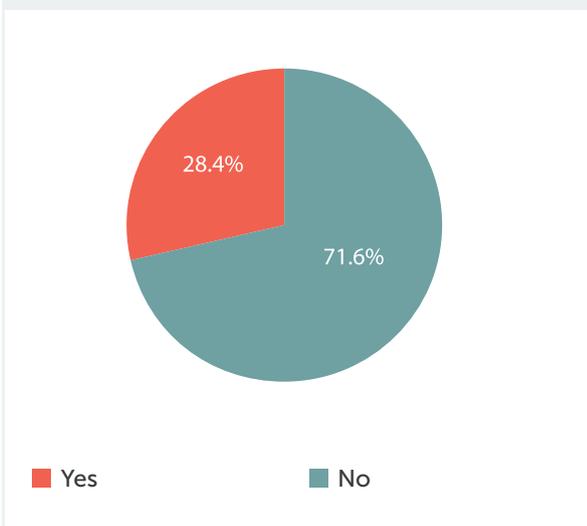


**Figure 39: Have you been asked to sign a resignation letter in advance before joining a list?**



For all of these reasons, 28% of female candidates felt marginalized by their lists (Figure 40). They were not given attention or opportunities to appear in the electoral constituencies where they were nominated, and they felt that their candidacy on a particular list was a formality and a mere addition to fill the required number of candidates. Some of them considered that their nomination was a way for the head of the list and its members to appear as supporters of women by simply nominating a woman, and thus it was a way for them to attract women’s votes and increase the electoral quotient of the list.

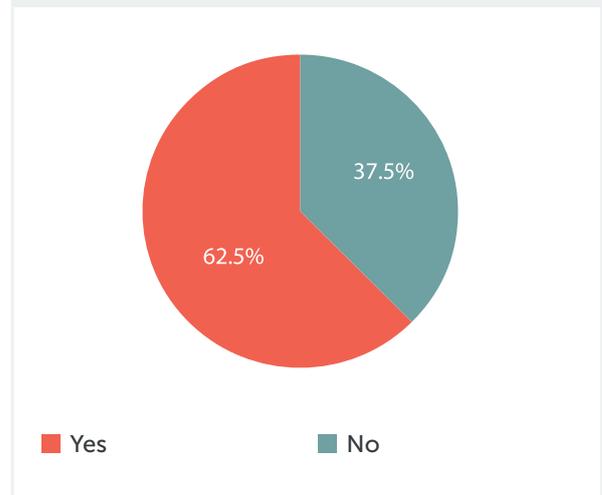
**Figure 40: Did you feel subjected any kind of marginalization?**



## 2. ELECTORAL SUPPORT

38% of the female candidates who participated in the survey did not receive any support whatsoever from the lists or political parties that backed their candidacy (Figure 41). The lack of support and financial resources that female candidates were promised created obstacles for them and led to a difficulty in reaching voters within their electoral constituencies. In fact, campaigns were often organized and funded by personal and family initiatives. Some female candidates also reported that they had received support through some non-governmental organizations, often to support their appearance in media and advertisements.

**Figure 41: Has your list, party or group provided you with the support you deserve?**

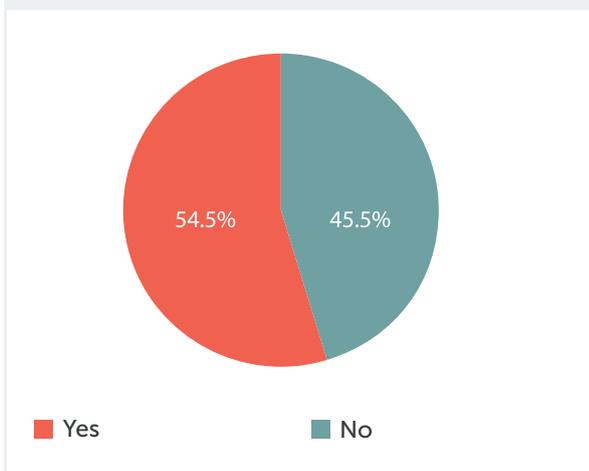


Notably, however, some of the candidates have undertaken projects to secure campaign funding, with one of them suggesting to the group that supported her the idea of preparing and selling bread to secure a portion of the funds required for electoral activities.

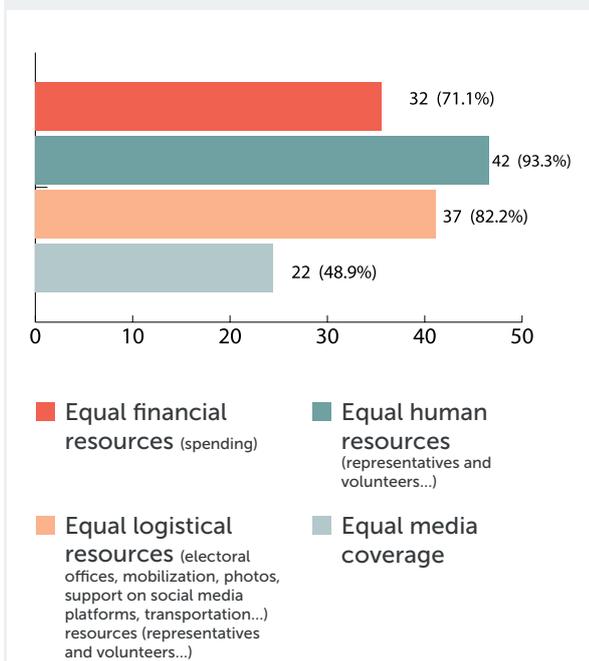
Funding and securing financial resources did not constitute obstacles for financially capable female candidates or for those who were actually supported by political parties. These few and “lucky” female candidates received all kinds of support – material,

moral, human and logistical – while this support was often not equal among all the candidates (**Figure 42**). Although female candidates were provided with equal human resources consisting of volunteers and representatives (**Figure 43**), 49% of them were not given equal media coverage with the rest of the candidates on their list. 71% of them did not receive equal financial resources or logistical support (electoral offices, photos, transportation...), according to the answers provided by the respondents.

**Figure 42: Was this support equal among the members of the list or the male and female candidates of the party/group?**



**Figure 43: Have you been given the following?**

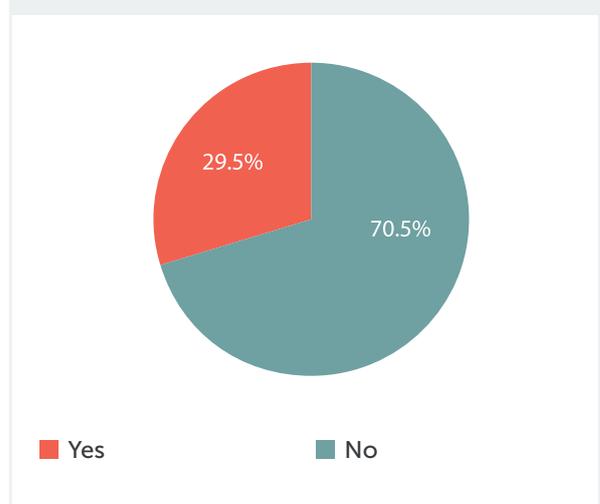


Some lists also supported certain candidates but not others, and it was clear from the responses of female candidates that significant support is often directed towards candidates who are more likely to win and receive the highest percentage of preferential votes.

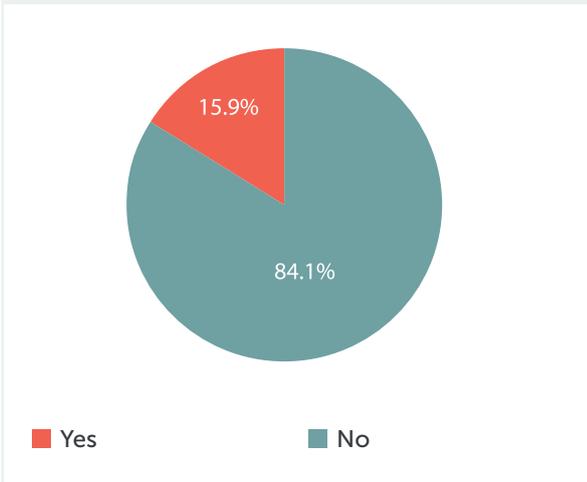
68% of the female candidates did not receive fair media coverage, and 84% of them believe that the media did not dedicate equal coverage to male and female candidates, as media outlets charged high sums for appearances. Since most of female candidates lack significant financial resources, media coverage was unequal. This was compensated for by the support some of them received from a non-governmental organization, where some female candidates participated in a TV program sponsored by it.

29.5% of the female candidates who were surveyed received support from women’s associations, including training on running for elections and conducting political work, how to write and deliver a speech, how to communicate with voters, how to present their electoral agendas and how to launch websites for female candidates (**Figures 44, 45 and 46**).

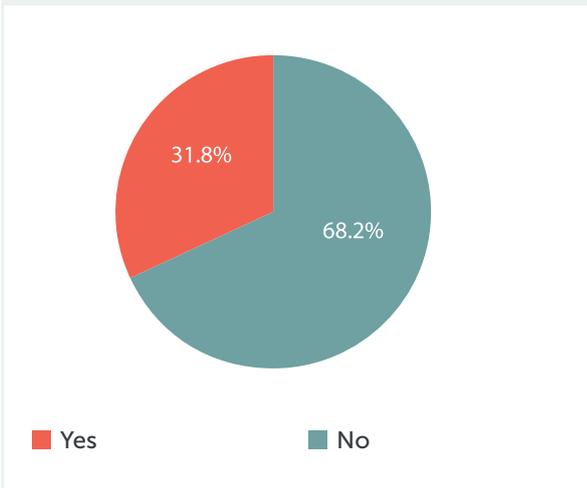
**Figure 44: Have you received support from women’s associations?**



**Figure 45: Did the media dedicate equal coverage to all candidates?**



**Figure 46: Have you received fair media coverage?**

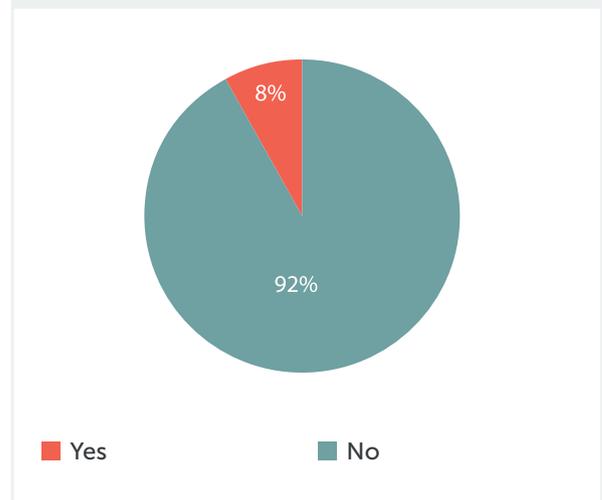


These contributions have helped in the empowerment of women and the establishment of common spaces for cooperation. Female candidates benefited from these trainings, especially those who wished to work in politics and did not have sufficient experience, while other female candidates considered that this support was given to some but not others, especially with regard to media appearances.

### 3. ELECTORAL LAW

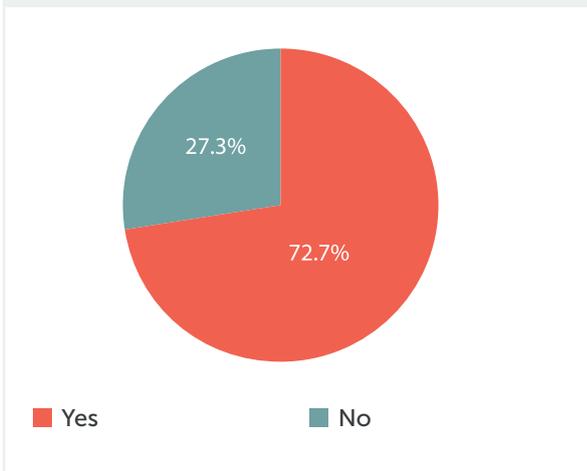
The surveyed female candidates unanimously agreed that the current electoral law did not enhance the representation of women (**Figure 47**). On the contrary, it constituted a main barrier to their election, especially since the adoption of the preferential vote led to intense competition within the same list and to men securing the majority, with parties distributing preferential votes to men, based on the prevailing patriarchal mentality and the unfavorable views towards women's potential and opportunities for political leadership.

**Figure 47: Did the electoral law enhance the representation of women?**



Most female candidates consider that the law's failure to integrate a women's quota was the main reason why women did not enter Parliament. 28% of the respondents confirmed that they do not intend to run in the future under this law due to its unfairness towards women (**Figure 48**).

**Figure 48: Will you run again for elections under this Electoral Law?**



In order for women to be further represented in Parliament, female candidates believe it is necessary to adopt a women's quota, in addition to making Lebanon one electoral constituency, while other candidates consider that the current Electoral Law should be amended and political sectarianism should be abolished.

#### 4. LACK OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The surveyed female candidates unanimously agreed that the challenge lies in the ineffectiveness of the institutions, the absence of their oversight role and their failure to limit electoral breaches and to ensure equal opportunities for candidates.

In polling female candidates about their perception of the role of the Electoral Supervisory Commission, some considered that the Commission does not have the power to effectively exercise its role and that there is a lack of political will to enable it to do so. The candidates agreed that the Commission did not have any prominent role, neither in the 2022 elections nor in the previous elections, although electoral breaches and violations were obvious. One candidate considered that the Commission is not impartial and does not perform its work independently. Others believed that the

Commission's performance is exclusively theoretical and documentary, as it only documents the breaches it receives, without taking any measures to address them.

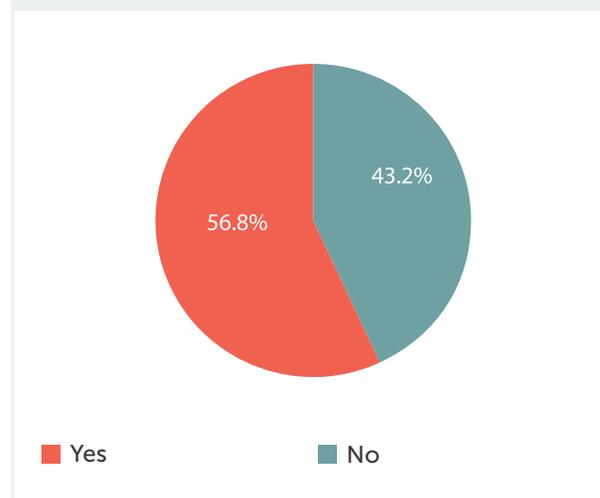
Some candidates also expressed their dissatisfaction with the Commission's behavior due to its failure to address financial concerns and how to act in light of the current circumstances.

While at least two candidates were unfamiliar with the Electoral Supervisory Commission and its role, some confused the tasks of the Commission with those of the European Union observers. Moreover, some candidates hardly knew of the Commission's existence and were unfamiliar with its functions, powers and how to contact it, and they thought that it was responsible for registering lists.

#### 5. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

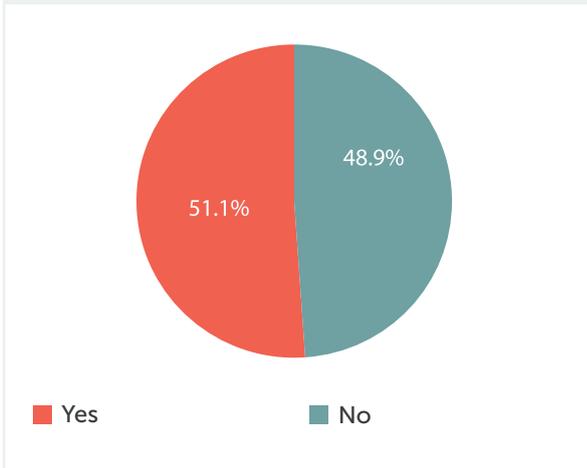
57% of the surveyed female candidates were directly and indirectly pressured during their electoral campaigns (Figure 49) to withdraw from the elections, and their supporters and representatives were pressured to quit working for them.

**Figure 49: Did you face pressures during the electoral campaign?**



51% of female candidates experienced violence during their electoral campaigns (**Figure 50**), such as threats and defamation. This is due to the stereotypes and superiority exhibited towards women, as well as the ease of attacking and pressuring female candidates within the patriarchal environment.

**Figure 50: Did you face any form of violence during the campaign?**



Many female candidates were defamed through the spreading of rumors and accusations and direct interference in their personal lives and the lives of their families by society, the press and the media. News was also fabricated about some candidates with the aim of discrediting them. One candidate said: "The aim of some journalists who manage tabloid-like websites and yellow press is to blackmail and demand money in return for praise, otherwise they start rumors and accuse of corruption."

It was also found that the threat of violence was widespread and used as a method of intimidation by opponents. According to the candidates we interviewed, political sessions and meetings were suspended or canceled by through threats and "thuggery."

Many female candidates were also insulted and subjected to misogynistic slurs. One candidate said that she could not handle this violence, as she was embarrassed before

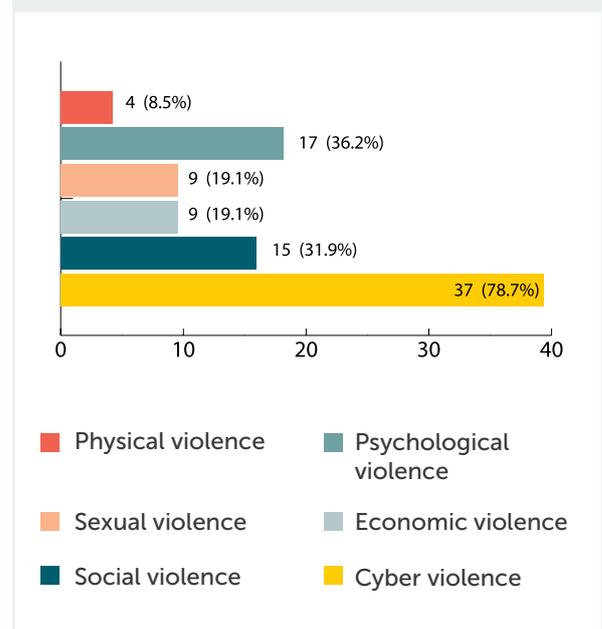
her family and children, who urged her to withdraw to avoid this kind of pressure.

The photos of many candidates were vandalized in different areas.

Female candidates endured psychological, physical, cyber, economic, sexual and social violence. Cyber violence was experienced the most by candidates during their electoral campaigns, at 79% (**Figure 51**), as cyber armies led fierce campaigns against female candidates, even going as far as accusing one of them of treason. Furthermore, old photos of her were republished to blackmail her in order to prompt her to withdraw her candidacy.

Despite the violence that the candidates endured, many were determined to go through with the elections, without being affected by any of these pressures. Although some of them reported incidents of violence to the relevant security authorities, others preferred not to file any complaint as they were convinced that the perpetrators would not be held accountable and pursuing the complaint would be a waste of time.

**Figure 51: What is the nature of this violence?**



## 6. FEMALE CANDIDATES' ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS AND WOMEN'S' RIGHTS ISSUES

Overall, candidates were asked about the main issues they addressed in their electoral campaigns. The answers varied according to each candidate's vision and political views. The answers mostly centered on what the candidates considered as priorities to improve living conditions in terms of food and education, modernize educational curricula, provide basic services to ensure a decent living and work to establish universal healthcare and improve the economic situation.

The electoral agenda of at least one candidate also included seeking to establish a secular state in Lebanon based on a unified Personal Status Law, in addition to abolishing the sectarian system, in line with the demands of the October 17 uprising. Some of the answers focused on the independence of the judiciary, the abolition of the sectarian political system, the adoption of a law on transparency and access to information, the liberation of Beirut Municipality from the control of the governor, confronting Iranian expansion, limiting arms to the Lebanese Army, recovering embezzled funds, preventing impunity, protecting depositors' money and establishing a sustainable country by embedding the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and integrating them into curricula and focusing on research.

Some also stated that they will work on passing laws or taking decisions related to: pleading guilty, managing bankruptcy, securing a social safety net, amending unfair legislation and establishing new legislation (such as digitization and automation, golf club, public maritime domain, etc.).

In terms of the priority given by the candidates' agendas to women's issues, some included the adoption of a unified

Civil Personal Status Law, the adoption of a comprehensive law to combat violence against women, the prevention of early marriage (minimum of 18 years), the adoption of a fair labor law to include domestic workers, granting the Lebanese nationality to the children of Lebanese women, the abolition of the "Kafala" (sponsorship) system, the decriminalization of homosexuality, the adoption of a quota for women, in addition to the abolition of some articles related to adultery due to their unfairness towards women.

The agendas of some female candidates did not include any sections related to women's rights, on the grounds that the current stage is very critical and there are more pressing priorities and that the electoral agenda targets both men and women in general. It seems that these candidates have re-employed the same patriarchal methods that politicians resort to, perhaps inadvertently, in order to marginalize women and their issues despite the public benefit and the economic and developmental advantages of empowering women and achieving gender justice.

In response to the question about why no female bloc managed to reach Parliament and why women did not constitute a lobbying force to influence decision-makers, despite the fact that the number of registered female voters (2,022,387 out of 3,967,507 registered voters)<sup>21</sup> exceeded the number of registered male voters, some female candidates considered that:

1. The prevailing patriarchal system looks down on and marginalizes the role of women in politics, and it imposes traditional roles on women which subject them to patriarchal and family authority. This system supports men and even defends the inheritance of political power.
2. The Electoral Law requires significant financial resources and strong political relations and experiences, which undermines women's opportunities in

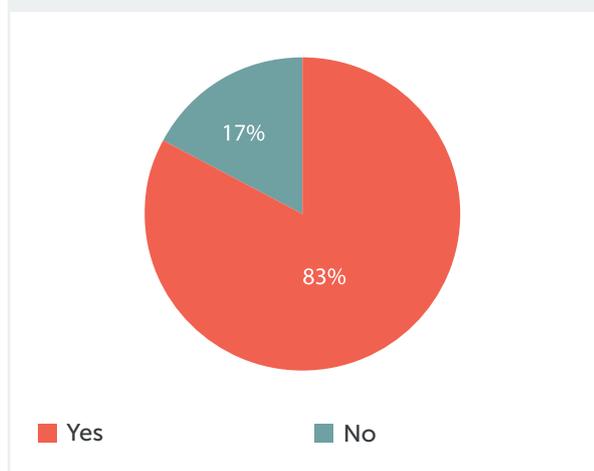
<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, Directorate-General of Civil Status (2022). Statistical data based on *Mohafaza*. <https://www.dgcs.gov.lb/arabic/statistics-map>

the face of the ruling political class, as evidenced by the fact that 38 lists out of 103 did not include a female candidate (i.e. 37% of the total lists).

3. Women’s lack of awareness of the importance of candidacy and the lack of sufficient political awareness.

In order to overcome these obstacles, 83% of the female candidates indicated that they would push for the formation of a strong women’s bloc if they reached Parliament (Figure 52).

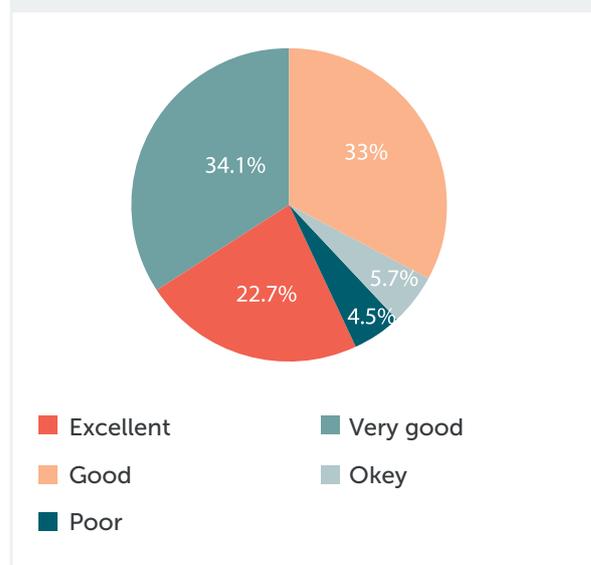
**Figure 52: If you reach Parliament, will you push for the formation of a women’s bloc?**



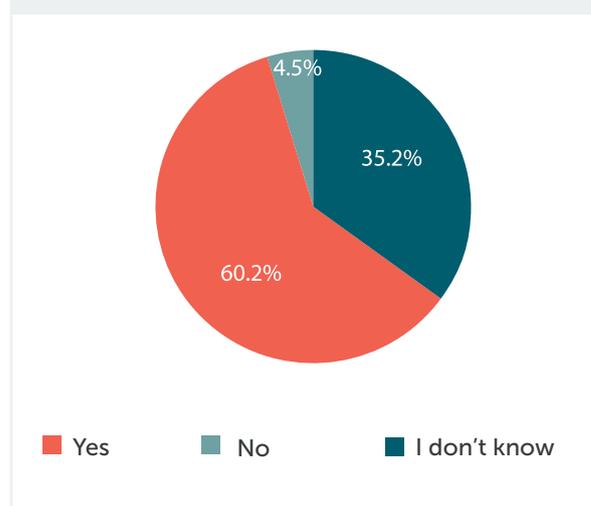
As for female candidates’ assessment of their experience in nomination, joining lists and running for the elections, most of them were positive (Figure 53). Despite all the obstacles and challenges faced by female candidates and the pressures they endured, most of them considered it a valuable learning experience through which they acquired political culture and acumen and knowledge of how to fight the electoral battle. This explains the desire of 60% of them to run in the upcoming elections (Figure 54), as many candidates considered

that they gained the necessary experience to run for another election with deeper political understanding and awareness. Furthermore, they are working to change the current mentality and will constantly try to fight this battle, which requires years of struggle, as they cannot give in to the current situation.

**Figure 53: How would you rate this experience in general?**



**Figure 54: Will you run in the upcoming elections?**



# PART V: MAIN OFFENCES AGAINST FEMALE CANDIDATES AND ACTIVISTS DURING THE ELECTIONS

## Candidate Daad Azzi - Mount Lebanon IV Constituency:

One LADE observer interviewed candidate Daad Azzi after she had contacted the Association to report that she was beaten and assaulted one day before the elections. After obtaining her consent to publish her name, story and the photos she sent to the LADE observer via WhatsApp, she briefed us on the course of the incident. On Saturday, May 14, 2022, Azzi was insulted outside her office by young men riding in a car with tinted windows, and she had reported the incident to the Lebanese Army Intelligence Directorate. On the same day – the eve of the elections – and after she had finished her meeting at Beit Byout café in Khalde around 11:00 p.m., she and her friend were chased on their way back by a car at the Barja-Jiyyeh junction, until they reached a side road where another car intercepted them. Two young men, wearing masks and hats, got out of the car, beat and punched them and threatened her: “If you want to run for elections, go ahead and do so.” Then, they got back in their car and headed to her office, where they fired shot in its direction before fleeing.

Azzi and her friend immediately went to the hospital to get examined, and then to Barja police station, where they were asked to go to the Saadiyat police station, as the incident occurred outside their geographic scope.

Azzi says that her campaign manager and one of the campaign team members were also assaulted; their cars were vandalized,

including the removal of license plates, in an attempt to intimidate her and force her to withdraw from the elections.



## In the Bekaa I constituency – Zahle

The Abou Daya family issued a statement disavowing candidate Dima Abou Daya. The family stated that it opposes and denounces Dima’s candidacy on the Lebanese Forces (LF) list and considers that her candidacy does not reflect the identity of Abou Daya family and its history of struggle and sacrifice.

## In the Bekaa III constituency – Baalbek-Hermel

The Zaiter clan issued a statement in which it indicated that the candidate for the Baalbek-Hermel constituency, Sarah Mansour Zaiter, does not represent the family, but rather represents whoever nominated her in the “Citizens in a State” movement, and stressed that the family remains loyal to the current MP Ghazi Zaiter.

## In the Beirut I constituency

The photos of candidate Paulette Yacoubian were repeatedly torn, and one of her billboards was vandalized with black paint.



## In the Mount Lebanon I constituency – Jbeil Keserwan,

A video was fabricated accusing candidate Karen Boustany of stealing from a supermarket. A LADE observer immediately interviewed her to find out the truth of what happened; she emphasized that she was being subjected to a smear campaign by the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and Hezbollah and that she would address the matter in a press conference, as her media office had issued a statement accusing the FPM of fabricating the video.

## In the Bekaa II constituency – Rashaya and West Bekaa

An anonymous statement was disseminated against candidate Ghinwa Al-Asaad calling for her family to disavow her. After LADE observers communicated with the candidate, the latter indicated that she did

not know the source of the statement, but she filed a complaint and is awaiting the results of the investigations.



## In the Mount Lebanon III constituency – Baabda

Supporters of the Amal Movement and Hezbollah threatened candidate Farah Kassem and candidate Mounir Doumani (Qadrin list), who were heading to Chiyah to hold an electoral meeting in Hadi Nasrallah’s café. After contacting the candidate, she confirmed to us that the owner of the café canceled the meeting hours before it was held.





## In the Beirut II constituency

Candidate Nahida Khalil was pressured to withdraw her candidacy. During a phone call with LADE, Khalil confirmed being targeted by parties that she does not wish to disclose, in an attempt to pressure her to withdraw from the electoral race due to her daughter's sexual orientation.

## In the South II constituency – Tyre and Zahrani

Candidate Bushra Al-Khalil submitted a letter to LADE about a death threat she received, stating that the Amal Movement had instructions from its leader, Nabih Berri, to assault and intimidate candidates running on the rival list. She added that they threatened to burn her car. Further, she and her family were intimidated by firing stun grenades at her house's door and threatening to kill her by shooting at her house, in addition to her being subjected to insults and defamation targeting her reputation, honor and dignity.

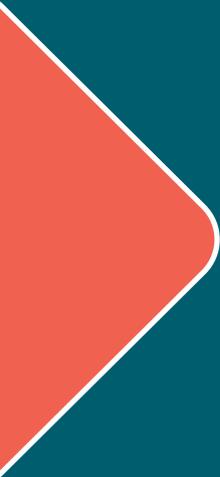




In turn, LADE responded to candidate Bushra Al-Khalil with a letter confirming the follow-up of her complaint through its observers deployed in various regions, in addition to documenting it in the violations report that it issues periodically. It also affirmed the right of candidates to participate in the elections in a calm and safe environment free of any pressure. LADE also considered that it is necessary to inform the authorities of such breaches, especially the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities and the Electoral Supervisory Commission, to demand them to guarantee the right of candidates to participate in a safe and democratic electoral process. It should be noted, however, that LADE does not have any decision-making or executive powers, as its mission remains limited to observing the integrity and democracy of elections.



Accordingly, LADE calls upon the authorities to address the obstacles and barriers facing female candidates to ensure the empowerment of women in a transparent and democratic electoral process.



# CHAPTER IV

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## RESULTS OF THE POLITICAL PARTY SURVEY

Political parties are essential arenas to achieve a greater representation of women in decision-making positions, especially since most women have limited access to large social networks and enjoy fewer financial resources and social support compared to men. In Lebanon, only one party is headed by a woman, the “Taqaddom” party, an emerging party headed by Laury Haytayan, as Salam Yamout resigned from the presidency of the National Bloc before the elections. This lack of representation is due to several reasons, including the popular belief that politics should be limited to men, that women have fewer chances of being elected and that women’s political positions are not independent but are rather influenced by those of the men in their lives. The lack of representation in leadership positions within parties is due to structural reasons within the parties themselves, including the severe centralization of decision-making mechanisms, which are often controlled by a few (male) leaders. This undermines the role of female candidates despite their competence. In most political parties, women are active in women’s bodies despite their presence in other sectors, which leads to the marginalization of women within the party. Recently, some parties have begun to adopt a women’s quota in their bylaws, such as the Kataeb Party, the Progressive Socialist Party and “Lana” party.

This chapter assesses the role of women in political parties and as candidates. It also examines the extent to which political parties have integrated women and their issues into their campaign activities and strategies.

LADE conducted interviews with 12 traditional and modern political parties and groups, while it was not possible to interview other parties for various reasons.

**The surveyed parties are the following:**

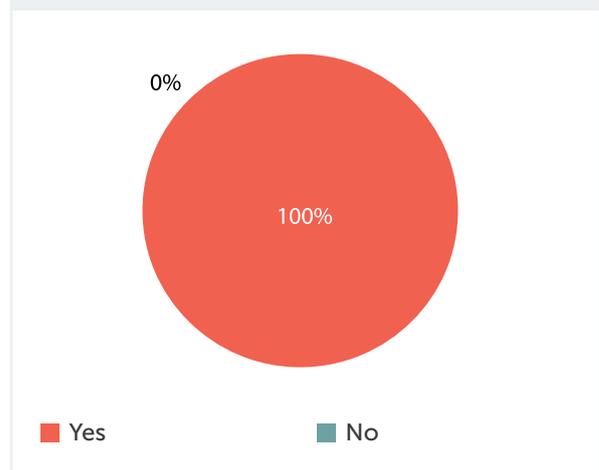
1. Lana party
2. Shamalouna Alliance
3. Progressive Socialist Party
4. Amal Movement

5. Islamic Group Party (Al-Jama’ah Al-Islamiyah)
6. Free Patriotic Movement
7. Lebanese Forces
8. Lihaqqi
9. National Movement

**PARTY INTERNAL REGULATIONS AND STRUCTURE AND THEIR IMPACT ON WOMEN**

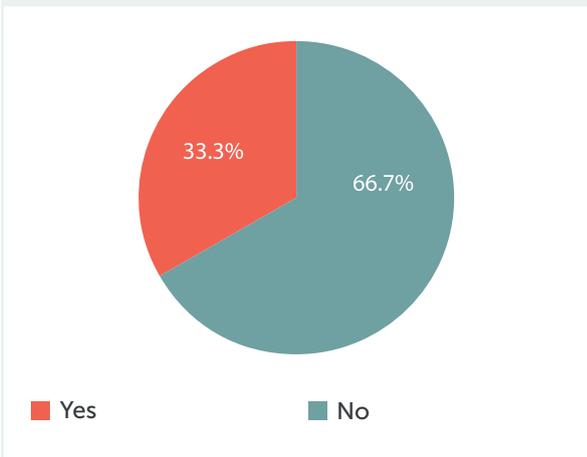
All the interviewed parties confirmed that they are keen to promote equality to enhance the representation of men and women (Figure 55). According to what the parties stated, they provide equal opportunities for participation in periodic trainings that include education and political action tools in order to enable access to party positions. They have developed written policies to promote equality, such as the adoption of quotas and a gender-sensitive language.

**Figure 55: Are there rules to enhance the representation of women within the political party?**



The survey revealed that the gender gap is still large in political party membership (Figure 56), especially in some traditional and religious parties, although they have been working to promote the inclusion of women and increase their percentage to overcome this gap.

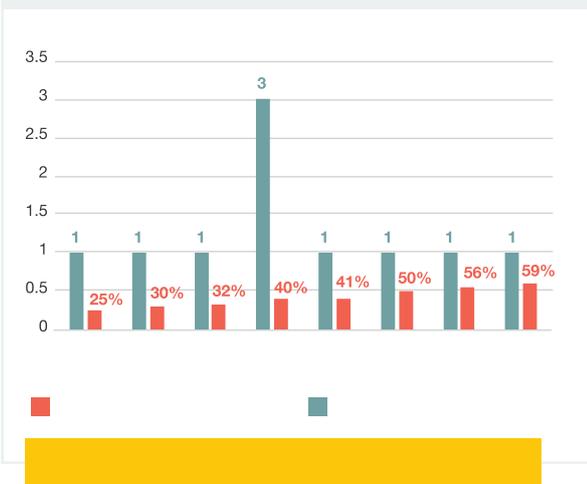
**Figure 56: Is there a gender gap in the political party membership?**



As for emerging parties, such as the “Taqaddom” party, the gap is attributed to the fact that the founders of the party are 6 men and only one woman, noting that the latter heads the party. This number is likely to change upon the election of a new political office.

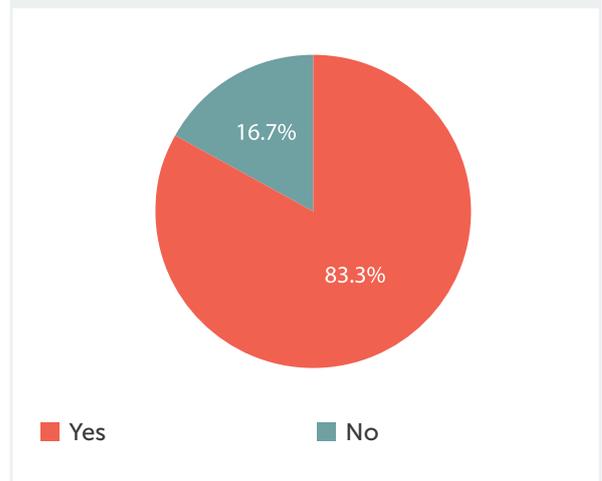
The percentage of female members in other parties varies, as the participation of women in “Lana” party is 56% and 59% in the Amal Movement (Figure 57).

**Figure 56: Is there a gender gap in the political party membership?**



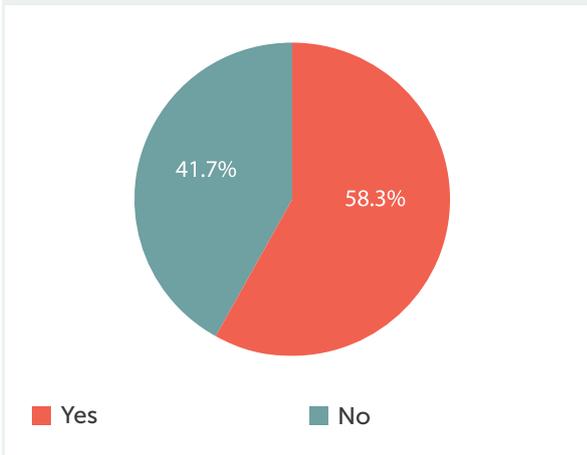
The majority of the surveyed parties confirm the existence of rules that enhance the representation of women in decision-making positions within the party (83.3%) (Figure 58). The general regulations of some parties guarantees the representation of women by at least 20% in the political bureau and executive committees, and their participation is mandatory when issuing any circulars related to the party. Further, some parties involve a larger number of women by organizing conferences, meetings, seminars and political, social and cultural training workshops, in addition to encouraging women’s productive working life, as well as preparing and submitting studies on laws related to women’s affairs.

**Figure 58: Are there rules to enhance the representation of women in decision-making positions in political parties?**



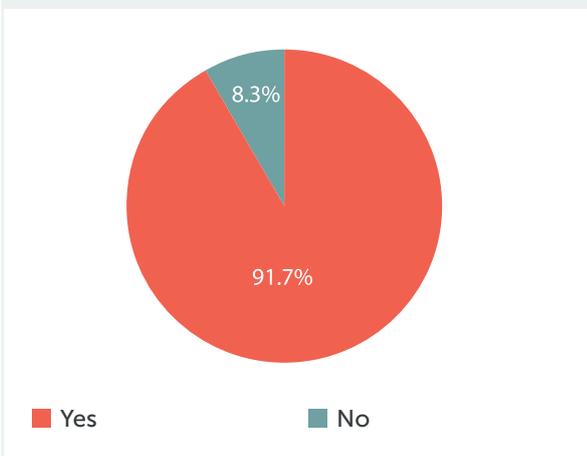
The survey also found that 58.3% of the polled parties have female representatives in Parliament and have nominated female ministers in previous cabinets (Figure 59), including the Amal Movement, the LF Party, the FPM, “Lana” Party, “Taqaddom” Party and “Liwatani.”

**Figure 59: Are any of the party's MPs or ministers women?**



These parties confirm that their winning candidates entered Parliament because of their own competence and not because they are related to the party leadership 92% (Figure 60), except for the LF Party, as MP Sethrida Geagea is the wife of the party leader.

**Figure 60: Are these women related to the party leader or leadership?**

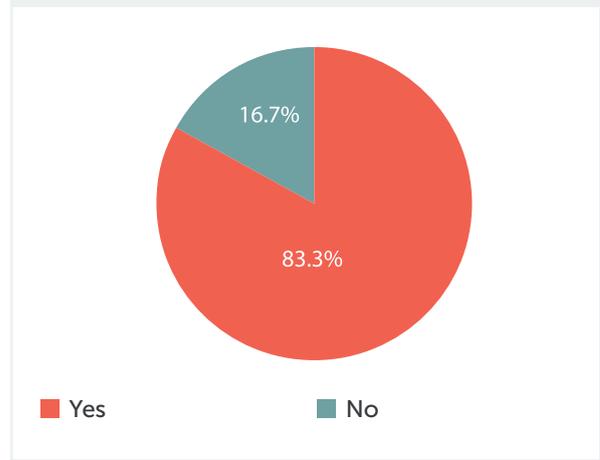


As such, 7 out of the 8 current female MPs are not related to the heads of the parties that nominated them.

## INTERNAL POLICIES

Most traditional parties (83.3%) have an office or a unit concerned with women's affairs, instead of fully integrating women in party and political issues and offices. These units work on the principles of equality and non-discrimination (Figure 61) and empowering women in various fields.

**Figure 61: Do the internal regulations of the party promote the principles of equality and non-discrimination?**



These units have traditional roles in the electoral process, including awareness-raising meetings, electoral education and participation in campaign teams. Some also tried to develop laws on women's rights within the party, such as the women's quota system.

These parties elect or appoint their leaders through their political bureaus and executive committees once every four to six years, depending on their bylaws, which constitutes a barrier to women's access to leadership positions due to structural barriers.

On the other hand, emerging parties have worked to integrate women into all of their structures and did not limit their partisan contribution to a specific sector, thus enabling them to participate in party decision-making, including selecting candidates and forming alliances. Most emerging parties have councils elected by the General Assembly, and they include women without discrimination.

## LEADERSHIP AND CANDIDACY

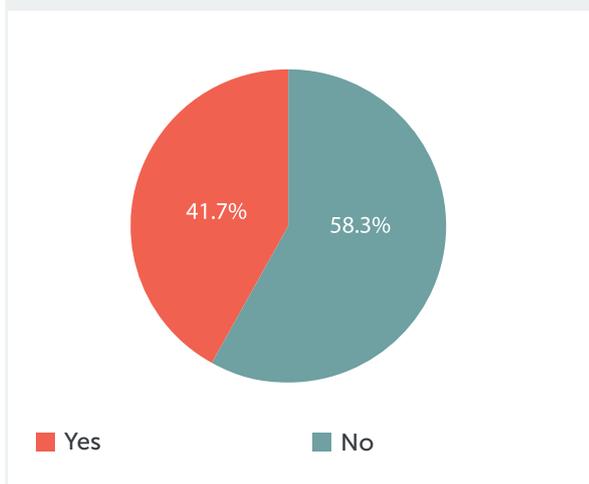
The majority of the polled parties have nominated women on their lists, but in limited numbers compared to men, especially among traditional parties. As for the religious parties (Hezbollah, the Islamic Group and the Islamic Charitable Projects Association), they did not nominate any women.

Each party has its own way of determining the list of partisan candidates:

- While political offices nominate candidates, women's bodies in only 42% of the polled parties participate in selecting female candidates (**Figure 62**).
- Other parties consider that candidates are predetermined in view of their "popular support base and competence and their continuous political work."
- Some parties reported that they conducted internal primaries in which their supporters voted for their preferred candidates and relied on the results to select the candidates from among the winners.

The overwhelming majority of parties do not adopt any written rules concerning the candidacy of women, except "Lana" party, which adopts a quota for candidacy as part of its internal regulations.

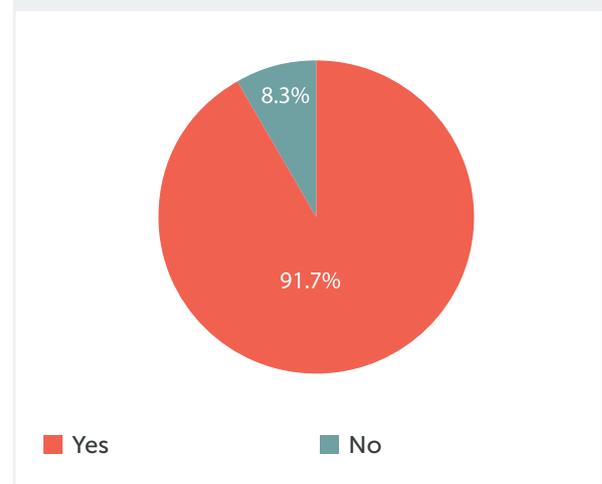
**Figure 62: Do women who are members of the women's bodies participate in selecting candidates?**



## CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

Political parties may support issues that concern women and their rights as a means of attracting women's votes, as 92% consider that they rely on specific strategies to attract female voters (**Figure 63**) by highlighting in their electoral agendas and campaigns issues that concern women and developing programs related to their rights.

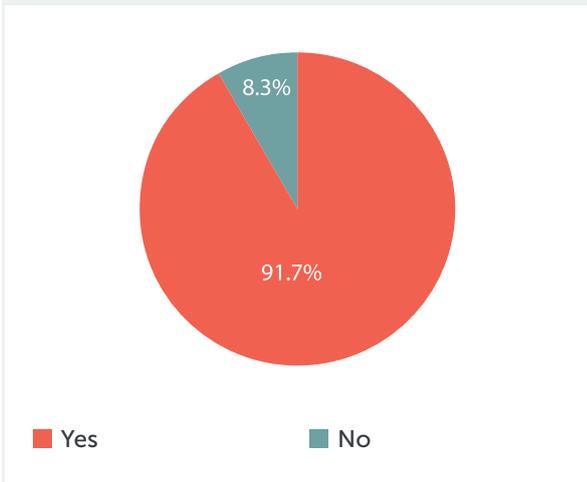
**Figure 63: Does the party have a strategy to attract women's votes?**



Some parties demanded, in their electoral agenda, the adoption of the nationality law, the adoption of a quota system, and the adoption of a unified Civil Personal Status Law. These same parties were previously represented in Parliament and could have passed such laws, yet they did not do so, nor did they approve or submit any draft law reflecting their electoral agenda.

Political parties may also seek the support of non-governmental or women's organizations, with 92% of polled parties (**Figure 64**) confirming that they have the support of these organizations, with the exception of religious parties.

**Figure 64: Is the party supported by women's organizations?**



## SUPPORT FOR FEMALE CANDIDATES

LADE asked the parties how they support and finance female candidates, which are essential factors for the success of electoral campaigns and the victory of female candidates.

**1. Financial support** varied between parties and groups, as they claim, as follows:

- Some parties did not provide financial support to female candidates because they did not have any financial support in the first place and not due to discrimination between male and female candidates.
- 42% of the parties did not provide financial support to female candidates on their lists.
- Some parties supported candidates they believed were the most likely to win.

**2.** In terms of directing **partisan votes**, many parties did not grant any votes to women, especially traditional parties, but rather turned the candidacy of women into a sham.

One party considers that the nomination of women on its lists in the 2022 elections was strictly to highlight their presence and importance in the party, and therefore it did

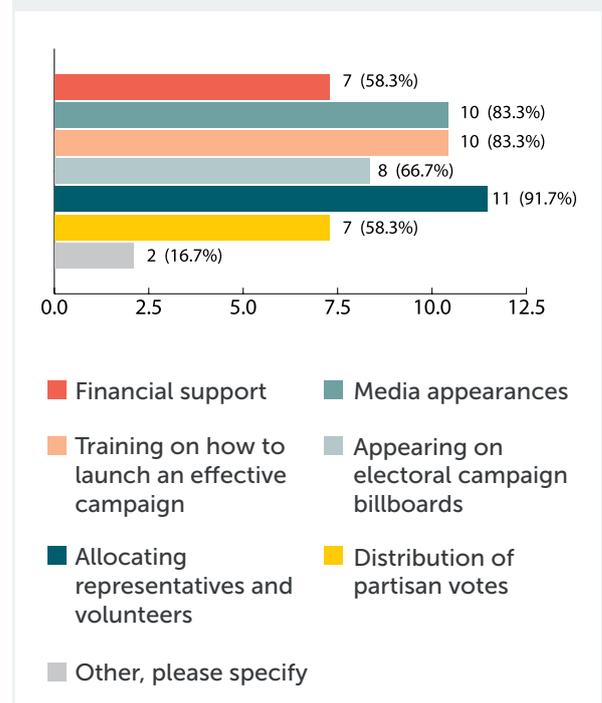
not grant them any votes: “these elections are a cornerstone to support them in winning in the next elections.”

**3.** The only support that the parties claim to have provided without discrimination is the **allocation of representatives and volunteers** during the elections at polling centers and stations. This is of course in the interest of the parties that are keen to obtain the electoral quotient by securing the largest number of voters for their lists.

**4.** Although 83.3% of the polled parties stated that they supported their candidates in **managing their electoral campaigns and appearing in the media**, this percentage is contradicted by the opinions of female candidates, who stressed that they faced difficulties in securing media appearances and in reaching eligible voters.

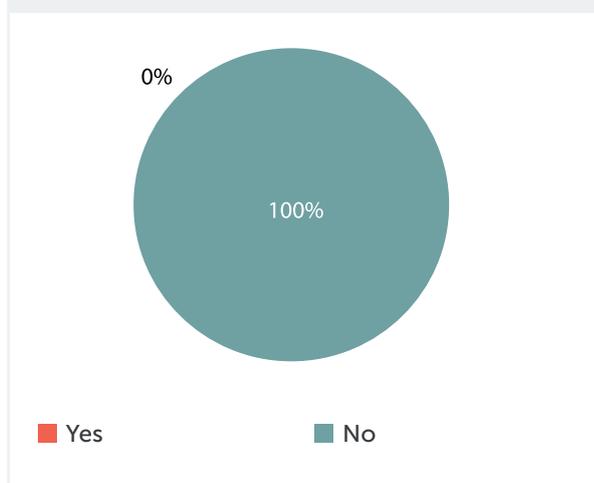
The photos of female candidates appeared on the electoral campaign billboards without discrimination (**Figure 65**) among the lists that adopted this advertising method in order to attract women’s votes, noting that this does not require any additional financial cost, unlike paid television and digital media.

**Figure 65: What kind of support does the party provide to its candidates?**



All parties confirmed that female candidates participated in different roles and tasks on the electoral list; representing it and speaking on its behalf in electoral conferences, seminars and meetings. All surveyed parties also affirmed that they did not require any candidate to submit a letter of resignation in advance before joining the list or in the event of victory (**Figure 66**). Some parties stated that they did everything they could to support the candidates on their lists without any gender discrimination.

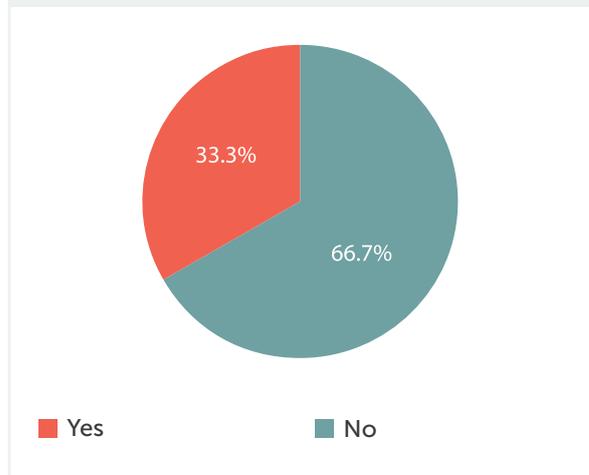
**Figure 66: Do female candidates have to submit a pre-signed letter of resignation before joining the list or if they win?**



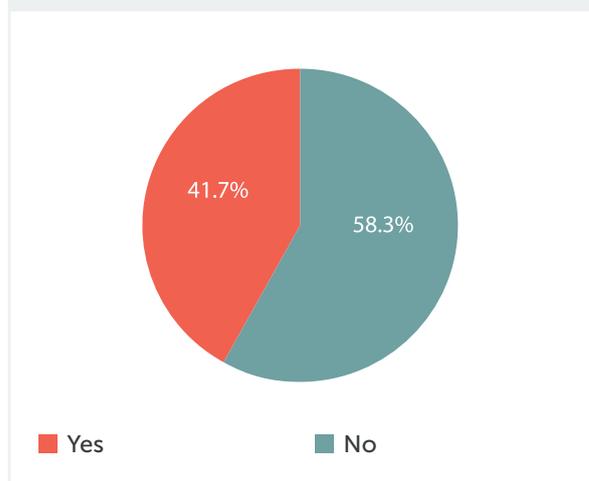
## PROBLEMS DURING THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN PERIOD

Women’s candidacy, especially in one of the traditional parties, was met with the ridiculing of their political abilities and potential, and they were not taken seriously, especially at internal party meetings. Their abilities were constantly questioned, and 33.3% of female candidates were subjected to partisan interference in their campaign efforts (**Figure 67**). Naturally, these problems were not faced by male members of the party due to the patriarchal mentality prevailing in some traditional parties, where women are still striving to prove their worth. Thus, it is more difficult for them to overcome barriers compared to men who are nominated by the same parties (**Figure 68**).

**Figure 67: Have any of the party’s female candidates been subjected to violence or interference during their electoral campaign efforts?**

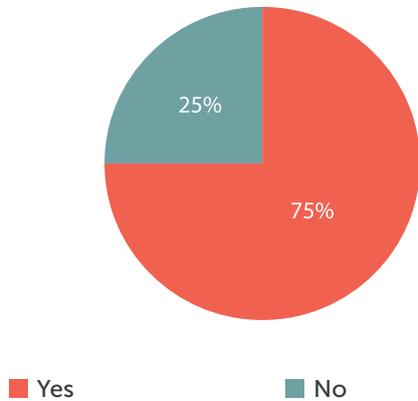


**Figure 68: Were these problems different than those faced by men?**

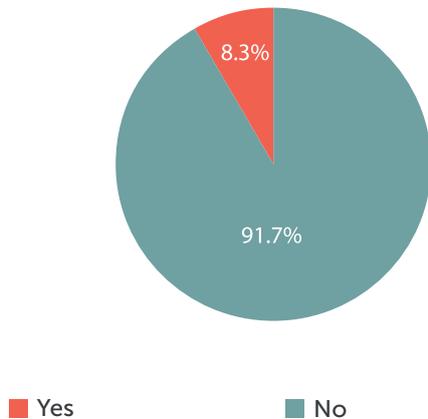


25% of the polled parties (**Figure 69**) did not adopt any rules to promote equal representation between men and women as observers at polling centers, as 92% confirm that there is no gender gap between representatives at said centers. On the contrary, the parties needed a large number of volunteers and representatives and did not discriminate between men and women at all in this regard (**Figure 70**).

**Figure 69: Are there rules to promote equal representation between men and women as party observers at polling centers?**



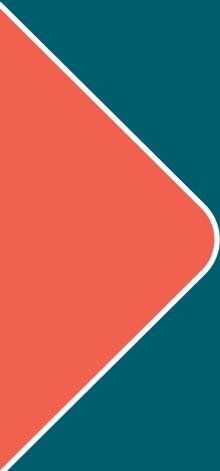
**Figure 70: Is there a gender gap in the participation of men and women as representatives at polling centers?**



Paradoxically, although most parties in Lebanon are willing to increase women's participation, as reinforced and promoted by international instruments, some parties have failed, for different reasons, to revise their statutes and internal structures in order to enhance the role of women at the leadership level, although almost all of them claim to have:

- Taken steps to increase women's awareness of the importance of voting.
- Urged women to participate in internal leadership structures and bodies.
- Encouraged women to run for internal and parliamentary elections.

All parties claim that they analyze the results of the vote to assess the chances of success for both men and women in order to take future steps. However, these claims have not materialized, as evidenced by the elections and the results of the survey.



# CHAPTER V

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**EXPERIENCE OF LADE'S  
FEMALE OBSERVERS  
DURING THE ELECTORAL  
PROCESS**

LADE has observed all stages of the electoral process, taking into account gender considerations in the selection of its long-term and short-term observers.

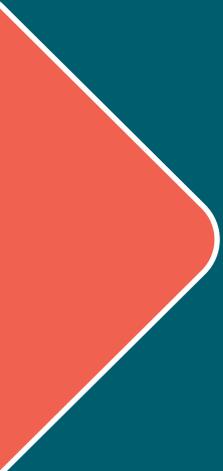
LADE also documented some of the female observers' experiences to identify the difficulties that women face when they engage in the electoral process and set up a hotline to be informed of any emergency situation they might be exposed to. It also ensured continuous communication with coordinators to intervene in the event of any problem. Many of the female observers were apparently subjected to violence, including verbal harassment on election day by party supporters and representatives and even by polling station head officers, leading some to leave the polling centers to avoid being subjected to physical harm.

LADE female observers were severely beaten in more than one electoral center simply for carrying out their observation duties. In the Metn constituency, an observer was beaten by party representatives during an altercation that occurred at the polling center at the new municipality building in Mansourieh.

While filming an electoral violation on her mobile phone to document it, she was threatened and forced to leave the polling center for fear of being harassed. After the arrival of the Metn coordinator to ensure the protection of the LADE representative at the center, the representatives of the concerned party threatened the observation team and asked them to delete the video immediately.

An observer in Saida – at the Kfar Melki Public School polling center – was severely beaten by party representatives for filming a breach of ballot secrecy; the polling station head officer also forcefully took her phone and deleted the photo, forcing the observer to leave the polling center immediately.

A LADE observer at the Aqaba neighborhood polling center in Nabi Chiit, in the Baalbek-Hermel constituency, was also beaten and abused. In Aley, an observer's phone was confiscated at the Ramlieh polling center and she was verbally abused.



# CHAPTER VI

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

Women's issues should be integrated in political and legal frameworks and agendas through substantial legal reforms in Parliament, an internal process within Lebanese political parties and an in-depth discussion of these issues in the media, rather than relying on spontaneous efforts to promote women's issues. The elected Lebanese Parliament should amend several articles of Electoral Law No. 44/2017, and political parties and trade unions should strive to break the stereotypes surrounding women in politics, by promoting women's presence in leadership positions, especially since all parties and unions include women that are capable of occupying decision-making positions.

LADE's 2022 Parliamentary Elections Observation Report presented recommendations for improving the entire electoral process. If these recommendations are implemented, the political participation of women and men would be enhanced by improving the transparency and democracy of the electoral process in general.

In order to improve the political participation of women in the electoral process particularly, LADE presented the following recommendations:

## LEGAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Electoral Law No. 44/2017

1. Adopt a female candidate quota of 50% as a provisional measure to ensure that female candidates have equal opportunities as male candidates. This can be achieved by adopting a set of measures in this regard and amending Article 98 to abolish the preferential vote and adopt a closed list system with a pre-arranged order of candidates based on the zebra system (alternating between women and men on the candidate lists); or adopting women's quota consisting

of 33% of seats in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

2. Reduce the electoral spending limit stipulated in Article 61 of Law No. 44/2017 and abolish the nomination fee stipulated in Article 45 as amended on 3/11/2021, which set the nomination fee at LBP 30,000,000; or significantly reduce this fee and enable candidates to recover it in certain cases.
3. Repeal the second paragraph of Article 62 of the Electoral Law, which legalizes electoral bribery in the form of "aid," giving male candidates with greater financial and political influence preference over others and enhancing the power of male za'ims.
4. Establish mega polling centers in all electoral constituencies to facilitate the voting process for women, especially pregnant women and those with disabilities and special needs in their places of residence and not in their places of registration.
5. Amend Article 85 of the Electoral Law to guarantee ballot secrecy, noting that polling stations currently contain a relatively small number of voters of one gender and sect, which means that it is easy to count the votes after vote tabulation.

### Other Laws

1. Enact a Unified Personal Status law and enable Lebanese women to grant their citizenship to their children and husbands on equal grounds with men.
2. Enact all legislations on offering legal protection to the victims of gender-based violence who are denied the right to practice any political or partisan activities and eliminate all forms of discrimination related to fundamental rights and freedoms.

## ELECTORAL SUPERVISORY COMMISSION

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1. Increase the number of women within the Electoral Supervisory Commission to at least one-third of the Commission's members.
2. Consider the gender perspective in spreading electoral culture, explaining the voting mechanism and raising awareness on the rights of female voters.
3. Ensure the equal and fair access of female candidates to the various media platforms on equal grounds with men.

## FEMALE CANDIDATES

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1. Promote women's involvement in the political and economic fields to gain experience and build networks with voters.
2. Develop a strategy for financing, having access to the media and communicating with voters.
3. Reach all groups of people without limiting the role of women to stereotypical areas, enable women to work on topics of interest to all groups, and give them full authority to legislate and practice MP powers.
4. Prepare for electoral campaigns beforehand and in an organized manner.
5. Work on setting up an efficient electoral campaign team and train representatives before the elections.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

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1. Promote women's status within the party and give them pioneering and non-stereotypical political roles by integrating the gender perspective into the party's internal regulations.
2. Include voluntary quotas within the party's internal regulations.
3. Adopt a unified support mechanism for male and female candidates without gender discrimination.

## MEDIA

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1. Offer female candidates more media interviews and cover their political agendas, grant them unpaid media coverage and promote their appearance at peak times.
2. Provide more coverage for women away from negative stereotypes.
3. Highlight gender justice issues that inform people on women's situation, rights, challenges and achievements in Lebanon.
4. Develop a Code of Ethics for media outlets to end stereotypes and the "personal questions" that are directed only to female politicians and leaders, and adopt a more gender-sensitive approach in communicating messages to the public.

# CODE OF CONDUCT PRESENTED TO CANDIDATES BEFORE THE SURVEY

## Consent to Participate in the Survey of Female Candidates Running for the 2022 Parliamentary Elections

### PURPOSE

LADE is conducting this survey with female candidates running for the 2022 parliamentary elections in order to document their experiences and build on them. The collected information will shed light on the elections from a gender perspective through the experiences shared by female candidates. The information will also contribute to the development of strategies and future action plans with the aim of empowering women politically and supporting them in reaching decision-making positions and working to overcome the obstacles and challenges that inhibit their political participation.

We would like to invite you to participate in this endeavor by filling out the following survey.

There are no known risks, damages or inconveniences associated with this survey, apart from those we face in our normal daily life.

The information you provide will be used to promote and improve gender equality in Lebanon.

You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Filling the survey will take up to 30 minutes. This interview will be recorded to ensure the accuracy of the information, but it will

not be used for any purpose other than the current research.

**By pursuing the survey, you agree to the following:**

- 1.** I have received enough information about this project.
- 2.** I am aware that my answers will not be disclosed to any third party and that my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be mentioned in the survey and will not be kept in any other record.
- 3.** When the results of the study are published, I will not be identified by my name or by any other information that can be used to infer my identity. The researchers will only have access to the data collected during this research, but the data cannot be linked to me.
- 4.** I am aware that I can withdraw from this research at any time and that I have the right to skip any question I do not want to answer.
- 5.** I am aware that the research abides by all recognized ethical rules.
- 6.** I am aware that I can ask the research team members mentioned below any questions I might have.
- 7.** I have read and understood all the statements in this form.
- 8.** I voluntarily agree to participate in this project by completing the following survey.

## Letter to the Electoral Supervisory Commission

**Honorable Judge Nadim Abdelmalak,**  
**Chairman of the Electoral Supervisory Commission,**  
**Dear Sir,**

The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) is observing the 2022 Parliamentary Elections from a gender perspective to highlight the challenges and violations faced by female candidates and analyze gender discrepancies and the various obstacles that limit women's political participation in the 2022 elections, with the aim of overcoming these obstacles.

The observation of the elections from a gender perspective aims to assess the status of female candidates, female voters and women working in the electoral management under the current law, as well as to identify the obstacles that limit women's effective participation in the electoral process. It also contributes to drawing attention to critical points in the electoral process that may lead to depriving women of the ability to exercise their political rights. Therefore, LADE would like to ask the members of your esteemed Commission some questions in order to complete the assessment of the entire electoral process and to collect your opinion on women's participation in the 2022 parliamentary elections:

- What is the percentage of women at the Commission?
- What are the tasks assigned to female employees at the Commission? Do they hold leadership positions?
- Is there coordination between the Electoral Supervisory Commission and civil society or international organizations to support the gender approach? How?
- Has the Commission launched an educational campaign for female voters to encourage them to vote or to educate them about the electoral process?
- Are there special campaigns for illiterate women?
- Does the Commission issue any directives to the media regarding the adoption of a discourse that does not discriminate against female candidates on the basis of gender?
- Does the Commission issue any directives to the media as to ensure equal coverage for male and female candidates?
- Has the Commission put in place a mechanism to monitor any violent practices, whether verbal or physical, against female candidates? Were any of these practices detected?
- Has the Commission taken measures to monitor candidates' electoral spending?
- Has the Commission taken any measures to monitor the electoral campaign and ensure its fairness?

## Survey on the work of the Directorate-General of Political Affairs on Gender Issues during the Electoral Process

The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) conducted an interview with Ms. Faten Younes, Director-General of Political Affairs and Refugees at the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities and member of the National Commission for Lebanese Women, on July 28, 2022 in her office at the Directorate, in order to ask her about the Ministry's achievements during the preparation and management process of the parliamentary elections in terms of gender equality in the distribution of leadership positions, polling station head officers and their assistants. This interview also aimed at reviewing the measures adopted by the Ministry to take into account gender considerations and training and programs intended for women at this stage.

Ms. Younes indicated that, in her capacity as the Director-General of Political Affairs and Refugees at the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, she has been preparing and implementing the electoral process and that she was the one entitled to make most official, media and press statements on behalf of the Minister in all matters related to the elections.

She also stressed that gender equality is observed in the distribution of leadership and decision-making positions within the electoral management framework, as well as in the composition of the team supervising the elections. The Directorate drafts the necessary decrees and sends them to the various departments and ministries six months before the date of the elections and asks the employees to fill out a form indicating whether or not they wish to participate, without any discrimination. She also indicated that all individuals working in the electoral management field have received training on all electoral matters, including sessions on gender sensitivity and how to deal with women, especially pregnant women, the elderly and disabled persons.

Although there are no laws, circulars or written rules that promote gender equality and women's representation in the electoral management, the Directorate has taken several measures, including amending the receipt confirming the candidate's nomination with a gender-sensitive language and a "gender" checkbox, thus allowing the disaggregation of data by gender.

As for the presence of an office or a unit concerned with women's affairs at the Directorate, the Director-General claimed that there is no division on the bases of gender in the Directorate's organizational structure. She considers that there is no point in having such an office because there is no discrimination between women and men in the Directorate, claiming that any violation or act of violence is addressed in the same way.

Before the elections, the Directorate had launched the website "Where to Vote" (أين تقترع/ين), which enables voters residing in Lebanon and Lebanese expats registered to vote to view the address of the polling station where they can vote in the 2022 parliamentary elections. It also launched electoral awareness campaigns on social and traditional media, through which it tried to reach all voters to urge them to vote, but it did not launch campaigns targeting women exclusively because of the limited budget.

## Centers where Female Voters Were Surveyed (names of centers under review)

MINOR CONSTITUENCY	CENTER
Chouf	New municipal building in Mechref
Chouf	Public School in Jiyye
Chouf	Public Middle School Naameh
Chouf	New municipal building in Damour
Chouf	Technical School in Damour
Saida	Al Islah School
Saida	Public school
Saida	Iman High School
Saida	Public Middle School for girls
Saida	Al Kanaya neighborhood
Baalbek-Hermel	Al Ram Public School
Baalbek-Hermel	Laboueh Public School
Baalbek-Hermel	Karha Public Middle School
Baalbek-Hermel	Husayniyya of Mechmechi
Baalbek-Hermel	Shaat Public School
Tripoli, Minieh-Danniyeh	Rawda Public School
Tripoli, Minieh-Danniyeh	Al-Dehaibi Mosque Hall
Tripoli, Minieh-Danniyeh	Al Makalee Public Middle School
Tripoli, Minieh-Danniyeh	Zehriye High School
Tripoli, Minieh-Danniyeh	Deir Ammar Kindergarten
Baabda	Al Laylaki Mixed Public School
Beqaa	Ain Arab School
Beqaa	Ghazze Public School
Beqaa	Jib Janine Public High School
Beqaa	Ghazze Mixed High School
Beqaa	Houch El Harime Public High School
Beqaa	El Marj High School
Beqaa	El Qaraoun Public High School
Hasbaya	Al Kafir Public School
Hasbaya	Chwayya Public School
Hasbaya	Hasbaya Public School for Girls
Hasbaya	Ain Qinia Public School
Hasbaya	Maimes Public School

MINOR CONSTITUENCY	CENTER
Jbeil - Keserwan	St. Georges Church Hall
Jbeil - Keserwan	Don Bosco Public School
Jbeil - Keserwan	Tabarja Municipality
Jbeil - Keserwan	Bouar Municipality
Jbeil - Keserwan	St. Jacob Church Hall
Akkar	Halba Public Complementary School
Akkar	Cheikh Taba Church Hall
Akkar	Jdeidet El Joumeh Complementary Public School
Akkar	Halba Complementary Public School
Beirut II	Ali Bin Abi Talib School
Beirut II	Ras El Nabeh Public School
Beirut II	Khaled Bin Al-Walid Al-Horj College
Beirut II	Raml Al Zarif Public - School
Beirut II	Al-Makassed Islamic High School for Girls, Ahmad Tabbara Street
Tyre	Arzoun Husayniyya for Women
Koura	Deddeh Public School
Koura	Batroumine Public School
Koura	Khalil Salem Public School
Koura	Amioun Public School
Koura	Barsa Public School
Zahle	Houch El Omara Public Middle School
Zahle	Bar Elias Elementary Public School
Zahle	Taalabaya Public High School
Zahle	Saadnayel Public Middle School
Zahle	Bar Elias Public Middle School
Baabda	Al Laylaki Public School
Metn	Polling Center at the Jdeidet El Metn High School for Girls
Metn	Burj Hammoud Municipality
Metn	High School for Girls
Metn	Sin El Fil School





**LADE**  
LEBANESE ASSOCIATION FOR  
DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

Sodeco, Petro Trad St.,  
Sodeco 7 Bldg., 5<sup>th</sup> Fl.,  
Beirut, Lebanon  
+961 1 333713/4  
info@lade.org.lb  
**lade.org.lb**

