HOW TO CHOOSE
THE RIGHT CANDIDATE
FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS?

Whether it is a local race that impacts our immediate community or a national race that could influence the trajectory of our country, elections present an opportunity to reflect on the issues we care deeply about and decide which candidate best aligns with our values and priorities. Here's a brief overview of how municipal elections work in Lebanon.

1 - Understand the Electoral Law

- Familiarizing ourselves with Lebanon's municipal electoral law is essential for making an informed voting decision. The structure of elections, the way votes are counted, and how candidates are elected all influence the outcome. Here's a brief overview of how municipal elections work in Lebanon:

- Municipal council members and mukhtars are elected, as individual candidates or as part of electoral lists, with seats going to those who secure the highest number of votes. However, electoral outcomes are often influenced by political alliances, sectarian considerations, and local family dynamics. In some cases, municipalities are shaped through consensus agreements among influential local figures, resulting in uncontested councils where competition is minimal.

- Each municipality serves as a distinct electoral district, and the size of its municipal council depends on its population:

Large municipalities	**Medium-sized municipalities**
over 80,000 residents, **elect a 24-member council.**	25,000–80,000 residents, **elect a 18-member council.**
Small municipalities	**Very small municipalities**
2,000–25,000 residents, **elect a 12-member council.**	fewer than 2,000 residents **elect a 9-member council.**

- Voters can either select candidates from closed lists (pre-formed electoral lists) or open lists (choosing individual candidates). However, informal agreements between political factions and families often play a decisive role. In some cases, entire councils are elected by acclamation when no opposing candidates run.

- While voters elect municipal council members, the mayor and deputy mayor are not directly elected by the public. Instead, they are chosen from among the council members, often through political negotiations that reflect broader alliances at the local and national levels.

- Mukhtars, who handle civil status records (birth, marriage, and death certificates) and often mediate community affairs, are elected directly by residents during municipal elections. Their role is crucial in villages and small towns, as they serve as a bridge between citizens and government institutions.

IDENTIFY THE ELECTORAL LIST IN OUR DISTRICT

Municipal electoral lists in Lebanon are often shaped by alliances between political parties, influential families, and community leaders. It is crucial to examine the motivations behind these alliances to make an informed choice. By understanding how and why these lists were formed, we can support candidates who truly represent the needs and priorities of our local community.

What to look for?

1 - Who is backing the list?
Investigate whether the list is supported by political parties, family alliances, or independent civil society groups.

2 - Are there unexpected alliances?
In some cases, rival political factions or families unite for electoral convenience rather than shared values.

3 - What does the alliance stand for?
Look beyond the names—does this alliance have a clear and actionable development plan, or is it just a product of political bargaining and power-sharing? A strong electoral list should be built on vision, commitment, and concrete solutions, not just alliances of convenience.

DEFINE OUR PRIORITIES

Before casting our vote, we must reflect on what truly matters for our community. Municipal elections have a direct impact on our daily lives—from infrastructure and public services to local development. Our choice should align with the real needs of our district, ensuring that elected officials work toward meaningful and lasting improvements.

Assess your community needs
- What are the most pressing issues in our area? (e.g., infrastructure, waste management, water supply, local economic development)
- Does the list or candidate have a clear plan to address these concerns?

Evaluate political and social considerations
- Do we want to support qualified candidates who bring expertise, or are we inclined to vote based on family or sectarian ties?
- Is party affiliation a decisive factor, or do we prioritize independent candidates with a local development agenda?

Look for commitment to public service
- Have the candidates been engaged in community projects or local governance before?
- Do they have a history of transparency and accountability in their work?

Consider representation and inclusion
- Does the list include women, youth, people with disabilities, or diverse community voices, reflecting broader participation in decision-making?
- Are the candidates advocating for fair and equal municipal services for all residents?

HERE'S HOW WE CAN THOROUGHLY ASSESS CANDIDATES BEFORE CASTING OUR VOTE

Research the candidate
Explore their official platforms, but also verify their claims through independent sources. Political campaigns often highlight achievements while downplaying weaknesses. Look into their political history, have they delivered on past promises?

Watch interviews, debates, and fact-checked reports in local media (newspapers, radio, TV)
Pay attention to how candidates respond under pressure. Do they provide clear, solution-oriented answers, or do they deflect difficult questions? Candidates who avoid media engagement or refuse debates might not be transparent or accountable to voters.

Observe how they engage with the public and respond to community concerns
Do they take the time to visit different neighborhoods and meet with citizens? Are they open to dialogue with diverse groups, including youth, women, and marginalized communities?

Listen to their vision for local development and assess how realistic their plans are
A well-prepared candidate should have concrete, feasible solutions for municipal challenges like traffic congestion, waste management, and public safety. Are their proposals backed by data, expert consultation, or successful models from other municipalities? Be wary of populist promises that lack financial or logistical viability.

Attend candidate meetings, door-to-door visits, or town halls to ask direct questions and gauge their commitment
Engaging with candidates in person allows you to assess their knowledge, integrity, and ability to address local concerns. Ask them about their policy priorities, their plans for working with different stakeholders, and how they will ensure transparency.

EVALUATING THE CANDIDATE'S COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Examine their track record
- Investigate their past involvement in any corruption scandals or misuse of public funds.
- Assess their previous roles in governance and whether they actively promoted fairness and accountability.

Assess their commitment to good governance
- Do they propose concrete measures to ensure financial transparency in municipal budgets?
- Are they transparent about their financial dealings, such as publicly disclosing their campaign expenditures?
- Have they committed to involving citizens in decision-making and keeping the public well-informed?

Scrutinize their campaign promises
- Are their plans realistic and well-structured, or are they offering vague promises simply to gain votes?
- Do they support policies that enhance municipal oversight and prevent corruption or favoritism?

Our towns and cities shape our lives, and every vote counts in making them better.
Let's vote wisely to build a more transparent, inclusive, and resilient community!

VOTE