



Electoral Reform Consortium: We Warn Against Using the Six Expat Seats as a Pretext to Postpone the 2026 Elections

With nearly two years of presidential vacancy and ongoing delays in electing a president without a solution in sight, speculation is growing that this deadlock could extend to the 2026 parliamentary elections due to Article 122 of Electoral Law 2017/44, which calls for the addition of six seats for expatriates, increasing the number of parliament members from 128 to 134.

Based on the principle of equality, which prohibits discrimination between resident and non-resident Lebanese, and in line with Article 7 of the Lebanese Constitution, which states that “all Lebanese shall be equal before the law; they shall equally enjoy civil and political rights and be bound by public obligations and duties without distinction,” the Electoral Reform Consortium urges the cancellation of Articles 112, 121, and 122 of the Electoral Law. These articles, which stipulate the addition of six seats allocated for expatriates, not only marginalize the votes of non-residents but also limit their influence across all electoral districts. Furthermore, limiting expatriate representation to a fixed number of seats creates an imbalance in the overall representation between resident and non-resident voters.

The Electoral Reform Consortium calls on the parliament not to use electoral law reforms as an excuse to postpone the 2026 general elections. The current law does not explicitly outline the geographical divisions for non-resident voters, nor does it provide the necessary criteria for distributing the six seats across continents objectively, taking into account sectarian considerations and voter numbers. In this regard, the Consortium notes that, in the 2022 elections, the absence of this six-seat provision allowed over 100,000 expatriates to vote based on their original electoral districts, just like residents.

The Electoral Reform Consortium strongly urges the parliament to adopt essential electoral reforms, including the removal of the six-seat allocation, to ensure free, fair, and democratic elections. Rather than citing the challenges of implementing this provision as a pretext for postponing elections, the Consortium urges serious reform discussions to begin now. Engaging in serious discussions on necessary reforms now ensures that decisions regarding amendments to the electoral law will not be postponed until just months before the elections. At that point, any

talk of reform risks either becoming a tool for scoring political points or serving as a potential pretext for postponing the elections under the guise of insufficient time to amend the law properly.

In this regard, the Electoral Reform Consortium underscores the urgent need to elect a president as soon as possible to ensure the smooth functioning of state institutions and uphold constitutional obligations, including the timely organization of municipal and parliamentary elections.

The Electoral Reform Consortium:

- Lebanese Union for People with Physical Disabilities - LUPD
- Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections - LADE
- Transparency International Lebanon - No Corruption
- Maharat Foundation

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