

Elections Mega-Centers: A Pathway for Electoral Reform in Lebanon



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Introduction

Lebanon's electoral process is distinctively rooted in the system of mandatory registration¹ in the civil status registry. Under successive electoral laws,² voters are automatically listed on the electoral rolls according to their place of original registration, regardless of their actual place of residence, and are therefore required to vote strictly in that location. This reality creates practical challenges for a wide segment of voters, particularly those who reside far from their towns of origin. As a result, some abstain from participating altogether, while others are compelled to bear significant financial and logistical burdens in order to travel there.

The concept of elections mega-centers in Lebanon has emerged as a proposed reform measure aimed at facilitating voters' ability to exercise their democratic right by casting their ballots in their place of residence rather than their place of original registration. However, this debate extends beyond administrative and logistical considerations. It is, at its core, a political and social issue tied to the nature of the Lebanese electoral system. Voting according to civil registry records is not merely a technical procedure; in many respects, it serves as a mechanism for reproducing sectarian and regional balances and is a fundamental pillar of the political clientelist system that binds voters to their electoral districts. Within this framework, local leaders, parties, and political actors exert direct influence through networks of services and mobilization.

The idea of establishing elections mega-centers has emerged as one of the electoral reform proposals advocated by Lebanese civil society organizations, with the aim of:

- Reducing overcrowding in traditional polling stations;
- Lowering the cost borne by voters who must travel to their original registration areas;
- Providing integrated electoral services, including voting and technical assistance as needed;
- Encouraging higher voter turnout, particularly in districts with historically low participation rates;
- Supporting transparency by standardizing administrative and supervisory procedures in a small number of highly equipped centers.

This proposal has gained increased prominence in recent years, especially amid the economic and social crises that hinder citizens' ability to travel. Nevertheless, the project remains a subject of political and legal debate and has not been approved or implemented to date, due to divergent positions among political forces regarding its potential impact on voting outcomes and power balances.

1- Article 24 of Electoral Law № 44/2017: "Registration in the electoral rolls shall be mandatory for voters, and no person may be registered in more than one roll, under penalty of the provisions of Article 461 of the Penal Code."

2- Article 26 of Electoral Law № 25/2008: "The Directorate General of Personal Status shall prepare, for each electoral district, computerized electoral rolls containing the names of voters in accordance with the civil status records. These rolls shall include the names of all voters whose registration in the electoral district has been in effect for at least one year as of the date on which the revision of the electoral rolls begins, namely the 20th of November of each year."

Legal, Logistical, and Political Considerations

Advocates for the adoption of elections mega-centers in Lebanese elections do not base their position on abstract principles; rather, they rely on a comprehensive set of legal, logistical, and political considerations that reflect the urgent need to improve the mechanisms of the electoral process. The proposal to establish such centers is not merely a technical demand aimed at facilitating voter access. It is also part of a broader electoral reform trajectory that seeks to strengthen citizens' confidence in the democratic nature, integrity, and transparency of elections, and to reduce the chaos and clientelism associated with voting in one's original place of registration.

Moreover, the adoption of mega-centers contributes to a fairer and more transparent approach by reducing the political and social pressures that voters may face in their hometowns or native regions. It also helps lower the financial and organizational costs borne by both the state and the voter.

From this perspective, the main justifications supporting the establishment of mega-centers can be summarized as follows:

i. Facilitate voting and reduce the burden of travel: Voters registered in distant towns are forced to travel long distances on election day, leading many to abstain from participating.

ii. Ensure fairness in exercising the right to vote: The current system effectively discriminates between those who live near and/or within their place of registration and those who reside far from their hometown or in central urban areas, resulting in indirect discrimination.

iii. Reduce electoral bribery and local political influence: The existing system facilitates family or clientelist pressure, particularly in small towns and villages.

iv. Use of modern technologies and digitization of the electoral process: The adoption of mega-centers is usually accompanied by the introduction of technologies such as biometric ID cards or electronic readers, creating a qualitative shift in election management and enhancing transparency.

v. Reduce overcrowding and improve organization: Mega-centers allow for better distribution of voters and help reduce congestion outside polling stations, especially in major cities, while enabling more effective monitoring of the electoral process by civil society and international observers.

vi. Aligned with electoral reform trends: International observer missions monitoring Lebanese elections have repeatedly called for developing electoral administration through mega-centers and other measures. These reforms form part of a broader electoral reform project³ aimed at establishing a contemporary law and ensuring more accurate representation.

The concept of elections mega-centers represents, in principle, a major reform step toward modernizing and making the Lebanese electoral process more equitable and efficient. However, achieving this objective is accompanied by a set of interrelated technical, legal, political, and financial challenges – challenges that can be overcome, provided there is genuine political will.

3- For more details on the proposed electoral reforms, please refer to the publications and reports of the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) available on LADE's official website: <http://www.lade.org.lb/Home.aspx>

The project to establish elections mega-centers in Lebanon faces structural, legal, financial, political, and logistical challenges that make its implementation a highly complex undertaking. In the absence of clear legal provisions, coupled with anticipated high financial costs and existing administrative obstacles, a further complication arises: the deep mistrust felt by a large segment of voters toward potential state interference at the national level, in addition to the influence exerted by dominant political forces in many electoral districts. All these factors place the project before a set of interconnected barriers that require careful consideration and broad political consensus to ensure its success and transform it into a genuine reform measure, rather than leaving it as a purely theoretical proposal. The most prominent of these obstacles are:

I. Technological infrastructure:

The absence of a comprehensive, real-time electronic electoral database capable of securely, transparently, and safely supporting voting outside voters' original registration areas, in addition to the lack of accurate information regarding voters' addresses and actual places of residence.

II. Logistical capacities:

The need to equip mega-centers with advanced technologies and devices, train personnel to operate and manage them efficiently, and provide sophisticated electronic systems (ID verification devices, real-time voting management systems, secure networks), as well as ensure continuous and safe connectivity to a centralized electoral data management platform. Given frequent power outages and weak internet networks, the current infrastructure appears unprepared to support such an operation. Establishing elections mega-centers requires fast mechanisms for verifying voter IDs and electoral registration. In the absence of biometric ID technology or real-time digital verification tools, implementation becomes risky due to the potential for fraud or double voting.

III. Financial and human resources:

Establishing and equipping such centers entails financial costs that the Lebanese government is currently unable to bear, including:

- 1. High cost:** Creating and equipping mega-centers with the necessary technologies requires a substantial budget, including the purchase of electronic devices, the training of electoral staff, and the provision of logistical services (electricity, telecommunications, transportation of electoral materials).
- 2. Shortage of qualified technical staff:** Operating elections mega-centers requires trained teams capable of managing electronic equipment and information systems, as well as providing rapid technical support to address any malfunctions that may occur on election day.

IV. Cybersecurity challenges:

Protecting voter data and electronic voting systems, if adopted, from hacking or digital manipulation represents an additional challenge that requires an advanced security architecture and strict protection measures.

V. Legal framework:

The absence of detailed legal provisions regulating voting procedures in elections mega-centers necessitates substantial amendments to the electoral law. Accordingly, the new legal provisions must guarantee all voters equal access to mega-centers, ensure their fair geographic distribution, and take into account the number of voters who wish to use this mechanism.

VI. Concerns about political manipulation:

Although this project is technical in nature, the implementation of elections mega-centers in Lebanon is closely tied to existing political calculations. Some actors fear that changing voting locations could reshape the electoral map, particularly given the concentration of certain voter blocs in major cities, which may affect traditional power balances. There are also concerns among some political forces that mega-centers could be used to sway votes or influence voters outside their traditional environments.

These multiple and interlinked challenges may initially appear difficult to resolve or implement. However, the experience of several countries has shown that establishing such centers, with due consideration of the specific characteristics of local communities, ultimately depends on the existence of a serious political will aimed at rebuilding an electoral process that aligns with international electoral standards and obligations, as well as with domestic laws, in a manner compatible with each country's political, electoral, cultural, and societal context.

3 Key International Experiences

Many countries have adopted elections mega-centers as part of efforts to develop their electoral systems, with the goal of facilitating voter participation and enhancing transparency. These experiences demonstrate that the success of the model depends on how well it is adapted to local specificities, as well as on the presence of sufficient political and administrative will to provide an appropriate legal and regulatory environment. These countries include:

The United States: The US is one of the leading countries in implementing the mega-center model, particularly in presidential elections. Many states use large-scale polling centers located in sports arenas, convention halls, and major social or community venues.

Benefits:

- a. Reduced overcrowding:** Such mega-centers can accommodate large numbers of voters efficiently, which helps reduce long waiting lines that may discourage some individuals from voting.
- b. Improved accessibility:** These sites are often centrally located and easy to reach using various modes of transportation, and they typically provide ample parking space.
- c. Resource efficiency:** Operating a smaller number of large centers may be more cost-effective than running a large number of small polling stations.
- d. Additional services:** These centers can offer supplementary services, such as assistance for voters with disabilities.

Challenges:

- a. Complex logistics:** Managing a large polling center requires meticulous logistical planning to organize voter flow and ensure an adequate number of staff and devices.
- b. Security concerns:** These centers require heightened security measures to ensure the safety of voters and staff and to maintain the integrity of the electoral process.
- c. Potential inequity:** It is essential to ensure that the distribution of elections mega-centers reflects the geographic distribution of the population, guaranteeing equal access for all voters and preventing any group from being excluded from voting.

Canada: Canada similarly uses larger polling centers in federal and provincial elections, particularly in major urban areas.

Emphasis on technology: Canada often integrates technology into these centers to expedite the registration and voting process.

Extensive staff training: Canada places significant emphasis on training staff in these centers to ensure smooth operations and efficient voter assistance, under the management of an independent federal electoral administration.

Australia: Australia is considered a pioneer in the field of elections and uses a wide variety of polling centers, including large centers in densely populated areas.

Given the confluence of challenges associated with the electoral process and the proposal of elections mega-centers as one of the available reform options, the discussion now turns to the possible scenarios Lebanon could pursue in the period ahead. Each option carries its own advantages and drawbacks, requiring a realistic and careful approach before a final decision is made.

1. Maintain the current system

- **Advantages:** Does not require legal amendments or significant financial investment.
 - **Drawbacks:** Existing challenges persist, including low voter turnout and the financial burden placed on voters.
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2. Introduce pilot elections mega-centers in major cities

- **Advantages:** Allows for testing the model on a limited scale, reduces initial costs, and minimizes risks.
 - **Drawbacks:** Limits the benefits to a specific segment of voters.
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3. Implement elections mega-centers nationwide

- **Advantages:** Reduces burdens across the board, increases voter participation, and standardizes administrative procedures.
 - **Drawbacks:** Requires comprehensive legislative amendments, substantial financial and technological investments, and entails significant security and administrative challenges.
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Organizing the structure of elections mega-centers requires precise and comprehensive planning to ensure that the electoral process proceeds efficiently and with integrity. Therefore, any adopted structure must take into account the following key aspects:

1. Site Identification and Selection

- **Accessibility:** Select centrally located sites that are easy to reach using various forms of public and private transportation.
- **Sufficient space:** Ensure that the site is spacious enough to accommodate large numbers of voters, staff, devices, and necessary equipment.
- **Parking facilities:** Provide an adequate number of parking spaces to meet the needs of voters and staff.
- **Accessibility for persons with disabilities and special needs:** Equip the site to facilitate access for persons with disabilities, as well as individuals with health conditions, pregnant women, and older adults.
- **Security:** Ensure that the location is safe and can be easily secured by the competent security authorities.
- **Infrastructure:** Verify the availability of essential infrastructure such as electricity, water, and telecommunications.

2. Design and Layout of the Interior Space

- **Voter check-in areas:** Allocate spacious, well-organized areas for voter check-in and ID verification.
- **Polling stations:** Provide a sufficient number of polling stations, arranged in an orderly manner to prevent overcrowding and facilitate voter movement.
- **Waiting areas:** Ensure comfortable, shaded waiting areas for voters before casting their ballots.
- **Administrative offices:** Designate offices for the management of the center.
- **Ballot box storage rooms:** Provide secure rooms for storing ballot boxes before and after the voting process.
- **Media center (optional):** Reserve a dedicated area for media representatives to cover the electoral process.
- **Logistical service areas:** Allocate areas for storing necessary equipment and materials.
- **Restrooms:** Provide an adequate number of clean, accessible restrooms.
- **Wide corridors:** Design wide corridors to facilitate the movement of voters and staff and prevent congestion.
- **Clear signage:** Install clear signage to guide voters throughout the center.

3. Human Resources (Staff)

- **Center manager:** Establish the position of primary official responsible for the overall management of the center and the supervision of all operations.
- **Polling station supervisors:** Responsible for assisting voters and managing the voting process in each polling station.
- **Flow management assistants:** Responsible for guiding voters and maintaining order inside the center.
- **Security personnel:** Responsible for ensuring safety and maintaining order inside and outside the center.
- **Technical support staff:** Responsible for maintaining devices and equipment and resolving technical issues.
- **Volunteers (optional):** Volunteers may be engaged to assist with certain tasks, particularly to support older adults and persons with disabilities when needed (e.g., the Red Cross and Red Crescent, or relevant civil society organizations).
- **Intensive training:** Comprehensive training must be provided to all staff on electoral procedures, voter interaction, and handling unexpected issues.

4. Equipment and Materials

- **ID verification devices:** Modern, fast devices for verifying voter IDs.
- **Information display screens:** To display guidance and information about the electoral process and the locations of polling stations.
- **Voting devices:** A sufficient number of voting devices (traditional or electronic, depending on the system in use) should be provided.
- **Ballot boxes:** Secure, sealed ballot boxes should be supplied.
- **Computers and printers:** For check-in, administration, and reporting purposes.
- **Backup power generators:** To ensure uninterrupted operations in the event of power outages.
- **Safety equipment:** Fire extinguishers and first-aid kits.

5. Protocols and Procedures

- **Voting procedures:** Establish clear steps for the secure and confidential casting of ballots.
- **Violation-handling protocols:** Set clear protocols for addressing any violations or disputes that may arise.
- **Security protocols:** Implement strict security procedures to protect the center, voters, staff, and ballot boxes.
- **Emergency plan:** Develop an emergency plan to address any unforeseen incidents.

6. Technology (depending on the system in use)

- **Electronic voter management system:** To check voters in, verify their IDs, and prevent double voting.
- **Electronic voting machines:** To facilitate the voting process and speed up the counting process.
- **Results-tracking system:** To transmit results securely and rapidly.

7. Communication and Voter Awareness

- **Voter awareness campaigns:** To inform voters about the center's location and voting procedures.
- **Clear information within the center:** Through signage and trained staff providing guidance.

Challenges to Consider When Organizing the Structure of Elections Mega-Centers

Cost:

Establishing and operating a large polling center can be costly.

Complex Logistics:

Managing the flow of large numbers of voters and staff requires meticulous logistical planning.

Security:

Ensuring the safety of the center and the integrity of the electoral process requires substantial effort.

Public buy-in:

Building public trust in this new system is essential.

In brief, organizing the structure of elections mega-centers requires a comprehensive vision and careful planning that cover all aspects related to site selection, design, human resources, equipment, procedures, technology, and communication. The goal is to create an efficient, secure, and accessible polling center that supports the integrity of the electoral process and encourages broad participation.

Building on the proposals presented above and the challenges surrounding the project, there is a clear need to develop practical recommendations that can serve as a guiding framework for the electoral reform process. These recommendations span legal, technical, financial, and societal dimensions, enabling the gradual introduction of elections mega-centers and strengthening public confidence in their effectiveness, with the aim of eventually adopting them on a nationwide scale. These recommendations include:

- **Enact dedicated legislation:** Introduce amendments to the electoral law that allow voting in elections mega-centers, supported by legal safeguards to prevent double voting.
- **Implement phased technical preparation:** Develop a secure central database electronically connected to all polling centers.
- **Launch a pilot model:** Establish a limited number of elections mega-centers in Beirut and major cities during the next electoral cycle to assess effectiveness.
- **Collaborate with civil society:** To ensure transparency and gain public trust.
- **Asses cost and resources:** Prepare a detailed financial study to identify required resources and determine funding sources (whether domestic or supported by international donors).
- **Build an integrated electronic electoral database,** ensuring direct linkage between the database and the civil status registry.
- **Adopt a revised electoral law,** incorporating clear provisions that allow voting through elections mega-centers while guaranteeing the principle of equality among voters.
- **Invest gradually in electronic infrastructure,** in coordination with international donor organizations.

To build a pioneering model in Lebanon, several key considerations must be taken into consideration:

- Explore a partial implementation of the concept, meaning that elections mega-centers could first be applied in selected areas only, particularly in major cities with large concentrations of voters originating from other electoral districts.
- Make use of existing large venues, such as sports stadiums, universities, and exhibition halls, in order to reduce costs.
- Ensure strong oversight by local civil society organizations, accompanied by extensive media coverage.
- Take into account all Lebanese local, political, and electoral dynamics and address the previously mentioned challenges in a way that leads to positive outcomes and achieves the intended purpose of establishing these centers.

Conclusion

The adoption of elections mega-centers constitutes a significant reform measure that can help enhance public participation and reduce the burdens placed on voters in Lebanon. However, the success of this model depends on ensuring an appropriate legal and legislative environment, developing advanced technical infrastructure, and securing serious political will that transcends factional calculations and narrow interests. The project is not merely a logistical or administrative arrangement; it represents a pathway toward rebuilding trust between citizens and the state by providing a fairer and more transparent voting mechanism.

In this regard, elections mega-centers can be viewed as a reform tool that reflects Lebanon's commitment to international electoral standards while also aligning with the country's local needs and political and social specificities. The central challenge, therefore, lies in transforming this proposal from a conceptual idea for reform into a practical reality that contributes to modernizing the electoral process and lays the groundwork for a more solid and sustainable democratic path.

Annex 1:

The following are proposals⁴ related to amending the legal framework (articles of applicable Law N° 44/2017) in order to enable the adoption of elections mega-centers:

Article	Text	Amendment
Article 32: On publishing and disseminating the electoral rolls	<p>Before the 1st of February of each year, the Directorate General of Personal Status shall send copies of the preliminary electoral rolls to municipalities, mukhtars, and the governorate and district centers, for the purpose of publishing and disseminating them to facilitate their final revision. The recipients must receive these rolls no later than the 1st of February, so that they may invite voters to review them and carry out the necessary revisions based on the verified information available to them.</p>	<p>Before the 1st of February of each year, the Directorate General of Personal Status shall send copies of the preliminary electoral rolls to municipalities, mukhtars, and the governorate and district centers, for the purpose of publishing and disseminating them (including the lists of voters who have chosen to vote in their place of residence) to facilitate their final revision. The recipients must receive these rolls no later than the 1st of February, so that they may invite voters to review them and carry out the necessary revisions based on the verified information available to them.</p> <p>(When an elections mega-center is established in each district, registration becomes mandatory for voters who choose to vote in their place of residence, and their names shall be removed from the electoral rolls in their original district.)</p>
Article 33: On announcing the electoral rolls in the media	<p>The Ministry of Interior and Municipalities shall announce, through audiovisual and print media, between the 1st of February and the 10th of March, that the electoral rolls are ready, and shall invite voters to review them. For this purpose as well, the Ministry must publish the preliminary electoral rolls, within the same timeframe, on its website and issue CDs containing them. Any person has the right to obtain copies thereof for a fee determined by the Ministry. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall also publish the preliminary electoral rolls, within the same timeframe, on its website and issue CDs containing them.</p>	<p>The following paragraph shall be added:</p> <p>The Ministry shall also publish the preliminary electoral rolls of voters who have chosen to vote in the elections mega-center, within the same timeframe, on its website and shall issue CDs containing them.</p>

⁴- Dr. Rima Adhamy and Dr. Abbas Abouzeid, Legal Amendments for the Implementation of Elections Mega-Centers in Lebanon, Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE), Beirut, 2024.

<p>Article 34: On correcting the electoral rolls</p>	<p>Any interested party may, as of the 1st of February of each year, submit to the competent Registration Committee stipulated in this law a request seeking the correction of any error related to them in the electoral rolls, such as an omitted registration or an error in their name caused by negligence, material error, or any other reason. The correction request shall be submitted to the Registration Committee within a deadline ending on the 1st of March of the same year and must be accompanied by the documents and evidence supporting the validity of the request. The request shall be exempt from any fees. Requests for correction involving the addition of names whose registration was omitted must be accompanied by a criminal record extract issued no more than one month prior.</p> <p>Any voter registered in one of the electoral rolls shall also have the right to request that the competent Registration Committee remove or add the name of any person who was registered or omitted in the same roll in violation of the law. The governor, district commissioner (qaimaqam), and the competent mukhtar shall also have the right to exercise this authority, within the one-month period ending on the 1st of March of each year.</p> <p>Non-resident voters shall have the right to submit the same requests provided for in items 1 and 2 of this Article to Lebanese embassies and consulates abroad, which shall immediately transmit them to the Directorate General of Personal Status through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Directorate General of Personal Status shall, in turn, refer these requests to the competent Registration Committees to take the necessary action.</p>	<p>The following paragraph shall be added:</p> <p>3. Every Lebanese citizen residing on Lebanese territory has the right to exercise their right to vote in electoral centers located in their place of residence, in centers designated by the Ministry in accordance with the provisions of this law, provided that their name is registered in the civil status records and that no legal impediment prevents them from voting pursuant to Article 4 of this law.</p> <p>Voters who do not reside in their original electoral districts shall have the right to submit the same requests referred to in items 1 and 2 of this Article at special centers established by decision of the Minister of Interior in all electoral districts for the purpose of registering their names to vote in their place of residence, in accordance with conditions and procedures to be determined.</p>
<p>Article 36: On primary registration committees</p>	<p>A primary registration committee (or more) shall be established in each electoral district. Each registration committee shall be composed of a serving judicial or administrative judge as chair, one of the presidents or members of the municipal councils within the electoral district, and an employee from the Directorate of Personal Status as members. One or more employees from the Directorate of Personal Status shall be assigned to each registration committee by decision of the Minister.</p>	<p>It shall be amended as follows:</p> <p>A primary registration committee (or more) shall be established in each electoral district and in every elections mega-center. Each registration committee shall be composed of a serving judicial or administrative judge as chair, one of the presidents or members of the municipal councils within the electoral district, and an employee from the Directorate of Personal Status as members. One or more employees from the Directorate of Personal Status shall be assigned to each registration committee by decision of the Minister.</p>

<p>Article 84: On the electronic magnetic card</p>	<p>The Government shall, by decree issued in the Council of Ministers by a two-thirds majority upon the proposal of the Minister, take the necessary measures to adopt the electronic magnetic card in the upcoming electoral process, and shall propose to the Parliament the amendments to this law required for the adoption of the electronic magnetic card.</p>	<p>The Government shall, by decree issued in the Council of Ministers by a two-thirds majority upon the proposal of the Minister, take the necessary measures to adopt the electronic magnetic card in the upcoming electoral process, and shall propose to the Parliament the amendments to this law required for the adoption of the electronic magnetic card.</p> <p>The identity card shall continue to be used until the issuance of the biometric ID as a unified national identity card for all citizens, at which time it shall be adopted for use in elections.</p> <p>Justifications:</p> <p>The electoral magnetic card shall not be adopted due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its high financial cost; if funding is available, it would be more effective to use it for issuing biometric identity cards; • Concerns regarding its potential misuse by electoral machines (as occurred with the electoral card in the 2000 elections).
<p>Article 85: On polling centers and polling stations</p>	<p>The electoral district shall be divided, by decision of the Minister, into a number of polling centers, each comprising several polling stations. Each village with no fewer than one hundred and no more than four hundred voters shall have one polling station.</p> <p>This number may be increased to more than four hundred voters per polling station if required for the proper conduct of the electoral process, provided that the number does not exceed six hundred voters. The number of polling stations in each polling center shall not exceed twenty.</p> <p>The Minister's decision regarding the distribution of polling stations shall be published in the Official Gazette and on the Ministry's website at least twenty days prior to the scheduled date of the elections. This distribution may not be amended during the week preceding election day except for serious reasons and by a reasoned decision.</p>	<p>The following shall be added:</p> <p>Special polling centers (mega-centers) shall be established for voters who have chosen to vote in their place of residence, provided that the above-mentioned provisions regarding the establishment of polling stations in each governorate are respected. The number of voters in each polling station shall be no fewer than one hundred and no more than five hundred.</p> <p>The following shall be added:</p> <p>A similar set of procedures shall apply to non-resident voters (Article 113), including those related to registration, timeframes, and other relevant requirements...</p> <p>The competent departments within the Directorate General of Personal Status shall verify that the names are duly recorded in the civil status registry and shall, after the conclusion of the registration period, prepare independent electoral rolls for each electoral district listing the names of those who meet the legal requirements. The number of registered voters from each district in the elections mega-center shall not be fewer than 200 voters. A notation shall be added to prevent them from voting in their original place of registration (the civil status district), in addition to specifying their place of registration within the district.</p>

**Article 100:
On counting
procedures
inside polling
stations**

After the close of the voting process, the polling station shall be sealed, and no one may remain inside except the polling station officials, the fixed and/or roaming agents of the electoral lists, the accredited observers, and media representatives holding authorization from the Supervisory Commission to cover and film inside polling stations. The head of the polling station shall open the ballot box and count the ballots it contains. If the number of ballots exceeds or falls short of the number of voters marked as having voted in the electoral rolls, this shall be noted in the report.

The head of the polling station shall then open each ballot paper individually and read aloud the name of the list for which the voter has cast their vote, followed by the name of the candidate who has received the preferential vote on that list. This shall take place under the effective oversight of the candidates or their agents, as well as the accredited observers, if present.

The following shall be added:

The provisions of this Article shall apply to the counting and tallying procedures in the polling stations designated for voters casting their ballots in their place of residence (in the mega-center).

Each polling station shall prepare a report on the electoral process, indicating the number of registered voters, the number of voters who cast their ballots, and the number of ballot papers. This report shall be signed by the polling station officials and by the accredited representatives present, if any, and shall be sent to the primary registration committee assigned to each elections mega-center. The committee shall, in turn, prepare the general table indicating the results obtained by each list and each candidate, and shall submit it, pursuant to Article 37, to the higher registration committees of the relevant electoral districts.

Annex 2:
Table of Polling Centers and Polling Stations

Center	Minimum	Maximum	Remarks
Number of registered voters	200 voters ⁵ per major district	500 voters ⁶ per major district	
Number of registered voters	300 voters per major district	650 voters ⁷ per major district	
Primary registration committees	One committee per center	2-3 committees	The number of committees may be increased depending on the number of polling stations and is linked to the number of registered voters.
Number of polling stations	14 stations	20 or more	Some major districts may require two or more stations depending on the number of registered voters.
Electoral districts			The major district, regardless of the number of minor districts.

Table HL.16A: Distribution of Residents by Place of Registration and Place of Residence, Lebanon, 2018 (in thousands)

5- Based on the number used in the registration mechanism for non-resident voters (Law 44/2017, Article 114).

6- Based on the number used in the mechanism for the distribution of polling stations for in-country voters (Law 44/2017, Article 85).

7- Taking into account the logistical arrangements required for this measure (Law 44/2017, Article 85).

In line with the table⁸ below, the proposal to establish elections mega-centers in Lebanon will be examined in relation to the distribution of voters (in thousands) across selected areas. It should be noted that these proposals take into consideration that the 2026 parliamentary elections will serve as a pilot phase, which will inform the decision on whether elections mega-centers should be expanded and formally adopted for the 2030 elections.

Place of Registration	Place of Residence								
	Beirut	Mount Lebanon	North Lebanon	Akkar	Bekaa	Baalbek - Hermel	South Lebanon	Nabatieh	Lebanon
Beirut	137	168	2	-	1	1	13	8	329
Mount Lebanon	29	890	4	0	3	2	7	4	938
North Lebanon	4	56	484	6	0	0	0	0	553
Akkar	1	43	49	291	0	0	0	0	385
Bekaa	6	58	1	-	221	1	2	1	290
Baalbek - Hermel	4	122	1	1	10	216	2	1	357
South Lebanon	20	97	0	-	0	0	378	6	503
Nabatieh	35	135	1	-	2	0	32	301	506
Under study/ Stateless/ Unregistered	0	1	0	0	1	0	-	0	2
Non-Lebanese	106	462	95	26	58	23	151	58	978
Total	342	2,033	638	324	298	245	584	379	4,842

Estimates below 2,500 have a relative standard error above %20.

Due to rounding, numbers presented may not add up precisely to the totals.

Accordingly, based on the data in the table, centers will be proposed in the following areas, in line with the number of registered voters, as shown below.

Approach to Estimating the Proposed Number of Elections Mega-Centers	Total Number (after excluding non-Lebanese and those registered in the same governorate) (in thousands)	Merged Areas
Residents in Beirut whose place of registration is in other areas	99	99
Residents in Mount Lebanon whose place of registration is in other areas	681	681
Residents in North Lebanon whose place of registration is in other areas	59	66
Residents in Akkar whose place of registration is in other areas	7	
Residents in the Bekaa whose place of registration is in other areas	18	23
Residents in Baalbek-Hermel whose place of registration is in other areas	5	
Residents in South Lebanon whose place of registration is in other areas	55	75
Residents in Nabatieh whose place of registration is in other areas	20	
Alternative Approach to Merge Geographically Adjacent Governorates		
Residents in North Lebanon and Akkar Governorates whose place of registration is in other areas	65.72	
Residents in South Lebanon and Nabatieh Governorates whose place of registration is in other areas	75	Thirty-two residents of Nabatieh live in South Lebanon and are included in the total; excluding them results in a total of 43.
Residents in the Bekaa and Baalbek–Hermel Governorates whose place of registration is in other areas	23	Ten residents of Baalbek–Hermel live in the Bekaa and are included in the total; excluding them results in a total of 13.

Annex 3:
Choosing the Type of Buildings to Be Used for Elections Mega-Centers, with a Practical Recommendation for the Upcoming Elections

The table below presents a proposed summary of the types of elections mega-centers suggested, within the Lebanese context. Three options are compared in terms of specifications, cost, and operational readiness.

Proposed types of elections mega-centers based on feasibility, location, cost, and required technical procedures:

Category	Option 1 New, Purpose-Built Mega-Center	Option 2 Semi-Reconstructed	Option 3 Ready Buildings
General Description	Construction of a fully dedicated new building serving as a central polling center equipped with all required services and infrastructure	Rehabilitation of existing buildings or large halls by adding pre-fabricated components (metal roofing, internal partitions, ventilation)	Use of existing buildings (universities, schools, exhibition halls, stadiums) with minor operational modifications
Estimated Cost	Highest – includes construction, electricity, networking, full security and technological equipment	Moderate – depends on the size of the building and its baseline readiness	Lowest – limited to additional operational equipment only
Implementation Timeline	12-18 months	3-6 months	1-2 months
Operational Readiness	Permanent – can be used in subsequent electoral cycles as a fixed center	Temporary – can be dismantled, reassembled, or modified later	Immediate – can be directly used during the upcoming electoral cycle
Required Space	3,000–6,000 m ² (depending on the number of polling stations and voters)	2,000–4,000 m ²	1,500–3,000 m ²
Construction Requirements	Full infrastructure: flooring, walls, electrical and network installations, parking areas, generators, security and surveillance systems	Pre-fabricated roofing, interior partitions, additional electrical installations, temporary ventilation systems	Very limited equipment (additional lighting, signage, limited networking setup)
Accessibility Requirements	Building fully accessible pathways and ramps, appropriate entry and exit points, and restrooms designed for persons with disabilities	Modifications to existing entrances and facilities to meet accessibility needs, including ramps and restrooms	Mandatory provision of suitable access even in existing buildings (ramps, appropriate restrooms), subject to technical oversight
Human Resources Needs	High – engineering teams, construction supervision, contractors, full operational staffing, and a relatively large budget depending on the number of proposed centers	Moderate – limited engineering teams for oversight of installation and modification	Low – limited to operational teams: organization, security, IT
Logistical & Technical Needs	Fully preparing for the gradual future adoption of the electronic voting system (scalable)	Fully preparing for the gradual future adoption of the electronic voting system (scalable), or at minimum basic technological setup (results entry systems, network connection, servers if registration committees are located onsite)	Only operational equipment such as QR codes after pre-registration, and information display screens

Category	Option 1 New, Purpose-Built Mega-Center	Option 2 Semi-Reconstructed	Option 3 Ready Buildings
Additional Basic Equipment	Ballot boxes, voting booths, tables, chairs, display boards, surveillance cameras, air-conditioning and ventilation	Additional boxes, temporary partition units, information display screens, electrical installations, fans or air-conditioners	Additional ballot papers, staff, and ballot boxes, wall-mounted screens, printed informational materials
Reliance on Existing Government Resources	Low – relies entirely on new construction	Moderate – some existing facilities can be utilized	High – relies on available public, governmental, or university buildings (e.g., Hadath University Complex and other Lebanese University structures suitable for this purpose)
Operational Lifespan	15–25 years (as a permanent facility)	5–10 years (modifiable)	Temporary – used only as needed
Financial Feasibility vs. Sustainability	Not feasible in the short term, but a long-term investment	Good balance between cost and operational flexibility	Most cost-effective in the short term
Risks / Challenges	High cost, long timelines, need for regulatory approvals	Limited space or technical constraints in certain sites	Administrative constraints, limited control over the facilities used
Most Suitable for the Upcoming Elections	Not practical at this time	Possible in specific cases or select areas	Currently the most suitable option given time, budget, and technical considerations

Recommendations

- Option 3 (use of ready buildings) emerges as the most suitable and realistic choice for the upcoming parliamentary elections, given current time and budget constraints. It is imperative, however, to ensure the readiness of technical infrastructure and provide full accessibility for persons with disabilities and older adults.
 - Option 2 (semi-reconstructed buildings) is recommended for the subsequent phase (2030–2026) as a transitional solution, particularly in areas with high concentrations of voters.
 - Option 1 (purpose-built construction) constitutes a long-term strategic investment that could be part of a broader national plan to develop permanent electoral infrastructure. This option is typically implemented alongside the establishment of an independent national electoral commission.
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