



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Lebanese campaign for democracy (Independence Intifada or Cedar Revolution), 2005

- Colour Revolutions (2000s)

Time period notes: Although demonstrations and actions surely continued afterwards, April 7 is marked as the end date because this marked the assurance of the achievement of all goals.

14 February

2005

to: 7 April

2005

Country: Lebanon

Goals:

The removal of Syrian troops from Lebanon; the resignation of the current government; and an investigation into the murder of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 025. Displays of portraits
- 034. Vigils
- 039. Parades
- 040. Religious processions
- 045. Demonstrative funerals
- 046. Homage at burial places
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 118. Hartal › Most businesses close to allow people to attend demonstrations

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors

- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 034. Vigils
- 046. Homage at burial places
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 034. Vigils
- 046. Homage at burial places
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 4th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 033. Fraternalization
- 034. Vigils
- 037. Singing
- 046. Homage at burial places
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 147. Deliberate inefficiency and selective noncooperation by enforcement agents

Methods in 5th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 034. Vigils
- 046. Homage at burial places
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 6th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 034. Vigils
- 046. Homage at burial places
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Additional methods (Timing Unknown):

- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 010. Newspapers and journals

- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 038. Marches
- 162. Sit-in › Threatened

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Democracy

National/Ethnic Identity

Group characterization:

- Anti-Syrian Lebanese citizens
- Christians
- Opposition political parties
- Shi'ites
- Sunnis

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Hariri's Sunni Future Movement was one of many leadership groups

Partners:

Socialist Party (mostly Druze), Qornet Shahwan Gathering, Christian Lebanese Forces party, Christian Free Patriotic Movement, Christian Phalangist Party, Amal and Hizbollah Shi'ites, student groups, women's groups, trade unions, Lebanese Bar Association, and several chambers of commerce

External allies:

French and U.S. governments, Lebanese newspapers and media outlets

Involvement of social elites:

French President Jacques Chirac and the French Government; U.S. Government

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

- Soldiers refuse to disband demonstrations

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Additional notes on joining/exiting order:

Joining order not known. Most groups seemed to join very early on.

Segment Length: Approximately 9 days

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Lebanese Government, including Prime Minister Omar Karami, President Emile Lahoud, and their cabinets.

Syrian government, led by President Bashar al-Assad

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not known

Campaigner violence:

None known

Repressive Violence:

Bombings of opposition members continued through March and the year following the Cedar Revolution.

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

Syrian troops were removed from Lebanon on April 26, 2005. The United Nations launched an investigation into the death of Rafic Hariri. Free elections were held in Lebanon on May 29, with an opposition coalition taking the majority of the seats.

The campaign began large, with 250,000 people attending the public funeral for Rafic Hariri, and grew even larger; an estimated 1.2 million people attended the demonstration on March 14, 2005, one month after the campaign had begun.

On February 14, 2005, a massive car-bomb explosion rocked Beirut, Lebanon, which killed twenty-two people, including former prime minister and leader of the opposition parties Rafiq Hariri. Suspicions were high that Syria, which had occupied Lebanon with troops and intelligence agents for three decades, was behind the attack. Parliamentary elections were approaching and the anti-Syria opposition was widely expected to win. Rafiq Hariri was a charismatic billionaire businessman who had become the most popular opposition politician in Lebanon. After his death his family called for a public funeral but made it clear (with the support of opposition parties in parliament) that government officials were not welcome at the funeral. Two hundred fifty thousand people came to the funeral at the Martyr's Square in downtown Beirut, the largest public space in the city. Opposition parties began organizing street mobilizations. There were marches near Hariri's grave every night and open demonstrations and vigils around Beirut. The campaigners wore red and white scarves, held placards with the image of the Lebanese cedar tree, and chanted slogans.

The groups involved in the growing movement included Hariri's Sunni Future Movement, now led by his son Saad, along with a largely Druze Socialist Party, the Christian Free Patriotic Movement, and the student movement of the outlawed Christian Lebanese Forces Party. Many individual Shi'is who were not members of the two biggest Shi'i parties (Hizbullah and Amal) also joined in the rallies and demands for change. The civil society groups that were involved included student and youth movements, women's groups, syndicates of writers, journalists, artists and workers, the Lebanese Bar Association, industry

groups and many chambers of commerce.

The opposition began to unite around a set of demands: that the government suspend the heads of the security apparatus, allow a UN Security Council investigation into the assassination, hold parliamentary elections on time and without Syrian influence, and that Syria pull out all of its troops and Mukhabarat (intelligence) officers out of Lebanon at once.

Participants in the growing mass demonstrations and rallies began shouting anti-Syrian and anti-government slogans—an unknown occurrence in Lebanon previously. Building their courage, the public used cell phones, email, and public announcements to mobilize people to attend the marches and vigils that took place at various locations around Beirut every day. This activity reached a climax in late February and early March as many businesses shut down to join the marches. The government banned the protests but they continued on, and the troops and police were unable or unwilling to enforce the bans.

By this time both the French and American governments were using the protests to actively pressure Syria to pull out of Lebanon. Furthermore, many television and radio stations and newspapers supported the protesters, providing lengthy and favorable coverage of demonstrations.

Syria announced on February 24 that it would withdraw most of its troops in a two-stage redeployment, but the opposition groups decided this wasn't enough and kept pushing. On February 28 Lebanese Prime Minister Karami faced a no-confidence vote he could easily win because his allied parties controlled two-thirds of Parliament. With protesters surrounding the building chanting and singing, many opposition ministers spoke out openly against Syrian occupation and oppression of Lebanon, and without telling anyone, and before the vote was taken, Karami stood up and announced his resignation.

The president of Lebanon, pro-Syrian Emile Lahoud, was stunned by Karami's announcement and asked him to form a new government rather than stay out of office, to which the opposition responded with a call for open strikes and sit-ins. In the face of the growing opposition rallies, Hizbullah, the largest Shi'ite party in Lebanon and one with strong support from Syria, organized a massive rally in Martyr's Square which was attended by half a million people. The Hizbullah group supported some of the goals of the opposition, but wanted to go about reform in a more moderate way. The opposition responded with the largest demonstration ever seen in the modern Middle East.

The March 14 demonstration in Martyr's Square was the culmination of the campaign and demonstrated an amazing ability to get Lebanese of all backgrounds involved. An estimated 1.2 million people attended the demonstration—more than a quarter of the population of the entire country! The demands were the same as before, except that Karami had resigned and momentum was on the demonstrator's side. The marchers used the Lebanese flag as a symbol, which was picked up by Western media who called the movement the "Cedar Revolution," because of the Lebanese cedar on the flag. The Lebanese demonstrators called the movement the "Independence Intifada," which the Western media was assumedly uncomfortable with using. The Lebanese Army was under orders to stop the demonstrations, and though demonstrators were put through security checks to keep weapons out of the marches, the Army seems to have just ignored the orders to keep out the marchers. The demonstrators also greeted the soldiers with flowers and gifts.

A few days before the March 14 rally, Syrian dictator Bashar al-Asad announced Syria would be removing all of its troops from Lebanese soil in a matter of weeks. And on April 26, 2005, the last Syrian soldier left Lebanon, ending 29 years of occupation by the army and intelligence services.

On April 7, the U.N. passed Resolution 1595, which called for an international investigation into Hariri's killing.

There were a number of bombs that went off in Beirut throughout May, targeting various groups in an attempt to incite sectarian violence. But the elections proceeded as scheduled on May 29, with international and domestic observers making sure the outcome was determined fairly. The opposition led by Saad Hariri took a majority of the seats in Parliament.

Fourteen more car bombs exploded in East Beirut between June and September 2005, and it was widely assumed that Syria was behind them. The initial U.N. report on Hariri's killing was announced on October 19, and it concluded that Syria was definitely

involved in the plot to kill Hariri.

Research Notes

Influences:

Inspired by the Rose Revolution in Georgia and the Orange Revolution in Czechoslovakia. (1)

Sources:

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Additional Notes:

The narrative and primary research was done by Markus Schlotterbeck (25/02/2005); the database entry and its fields and additional research were done by Max Rennebohm (15/08/2011).

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Markus Schlotterbeck 25/02/2009 and Max Rennebohm 15/08/2011

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