

## Refugee Review Tribunal

### AUSTRALIA

#### RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

**Research Response Number:** LBN17243  
**Country:** Lebanon  
**Date:** 15 April 2005

Keywords: Lebanon – Tripoli – Australian Defence Forces – Anti-Syrian Movement – Wassef Ali Hassoun

This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

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#### Questions

- 1. I would be grateful for references for any reported local/sectional backlash against the anti-Syrian push, especially in the Tripoli area.**
- 2. Is there further analysis of localised violence in Tripoli connected with the Hassoun case?**
- 3. Are there public reports of any resentment/action against relatives of Lebanese-Australian members of the ADF?**

#### RESPONSE

- 1. I would be grateful for references for any reported local/sectional backlash against the anti-Syrian push, especially in the Tripoli area.**

This report provides an overview of the security situation in both Tripoli and Lebanon generally in the context of the recent “anti-Syrian push”. Tripoli is principally populated by Sunni Lebanese who support the loyalist (pro-Syrian) politics of Lebanon’s sometime Prime Minister, and Tripoli resident, Omar Karami. That said, Tripoli is also host to a number of MPs who have advocated for Syria’s withdrawal (including opposition MPs, who are party to the anti-Syrian coalition known as the “Bristol Gathering”; and the separate anti-Syrian non-opposition MPs, known as the “Tripoli gathering”) and these politicians, and their supporters, are reported to have suffered at the hands of a significant backlash as a consequence of the event surrounding the anti-Syrian push. Reportage of this backlash has been limited to a specific sequence of events which occurred in early March 2005. Since this time there have been few reports of a comparable nature. Furthermore, recent reporting indicates that some elements of Tripoli’s Sunni community have come out to join the anti-Syrian demonstrations. Indeed, the most significant backlash to have occurred in Tripoli appears to have been vented,

not against the anti-Syrian movement, but against Syrian workers living within Tripoli's Lebanese community. Nonetheless, reports of a general decline in security across Lebanon are endemic and increasingly grave in their assessments of the situation: suggesting that the prospect of a sustained backlash against supporters of the anti-Syrian push could still be on the horizon. In what follows, information pertaining to these matters is presented under two rubrics of discussion: *Tripoli, Lebanon and the anti-Syrian Push: March–April 2005* (which provides a chronological overview of the reportage of recent events) and *Tripoli, Lebanon and the anti-Syrian Push: Related Matters* (for information on the Tripoli opposition MPs known as the “Tripoli Gathering”, see: Raad, K. 2005, ‘Loyalists and opposition unite in denouncing deadly Kaslik explosion’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 24 March – Attachment 1 (FACTIVA); also: Bakri, N. 2005, ‘Opposition sees vindication in UN report’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 26 March

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=13766](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=13766) – Accessed 26 March 2005 – Attachment 2; and: Raad, N. 2005, ‘Lebanon’s leadership fails to end political stalemate’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 16 March

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=13469](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=13469) – Accessed 26 March 2005 – Attachment 3; for a report on the recent appearance of Tripoli Sunni’s at anti-Syrian protests, see: El-Ghoul, A. 2005, ‘Sea of anti-Syrian demonstrators floods streets of Downtown Beirut’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 15 March

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=13429](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=13429) – Accessed 26 March 2005 – Attachment 4; For information on all other matters, see below).

### **Tripoli, Lebanon and the anti-Syrian Push: March–April 2005**

News reports indicate that Tripoli was host to significant displays of political violence during the first days of March 2005. The violence appears to have been instigated by the conjuncture of a number of events, most notably: the resignation of Tripoli’s pro-Syrian Omar Karami from the office of Prime Minister of Lebanon; the attendant belief that Syria would soon withdraw its forces from Lebanon as a result of mounting domestic and international opposition; and the fatal shooting of a Karami supporter in Tripoli. Later reports would cast doubt as to whether the shooting was politically motivated but, at the time, the killing was linked to the residence of a nearby opposition MP and the implications of this seem to have triggered the violent political backlash which followed. An *Agence France-Presse* report of 2 March 2005 states that “[t]he killing coincided with a street protest by about 2,000 Karameh supporters, some of whom fired shots in the air, burned tyres to block roads and attacked opposition offices”. The same report notes that the backlash “led to a shutdown”; with “[p]arents...rush[ing] to pull their children out of schools, which closed along with banks, other businesses and universities after leaflets were distributed calling for a general strike”; “gunmen drove through the tense streets firing into the air”. By the following day, 3 March 2005, *The Daily Star* reported that “[c]alm [had] been restored to the port city of Tripoli”; although “some public schools remained closed, while others reported a high number of students being absent”. For further information on the events surrounding these disturbances see the news reports supplied as Attachments 5 to 9; extracts from which appear below in chronological order:

#### **1 March 2005 – *The Daily Star***

Lebanon’s government was swept from power Monday night in the face of a mass protest and increased political pressure sparked by the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri two weeks ago. In the middle of a dramatic parliamentary session, Prime Minister Omar Karami shocked the House by suddenly announcing his government’s resignation as it was defending itself against a vote of no confidence.

...Speculation is rife that Syria is planning a withdrawal of the 15,000 troops it has stationed in Lebanon in the next few days as pressure on all sides intensifies in the wake of Friday's bomb attack in Tel Aviv which Israel has blamed Syria for.

...Banks, schools and businesses had closed after an opposition call for an anti-Syrian general strike.

But in Karami's hometown of Tripoli one of his supporters was understood to have died from gunshot wounds after supporters of the former prime minister took the streets in protests (Glackin, M., Raad, N. & Assaf, N. 2005, 'People power brings down Karami's Cabinet', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 1 March [http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=13066](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=13066) – Accessed 4 April 2005 – Attachment 5).

### **1 March 2005 – *The Daily Star***

...in the resulting melee following Prime Minister Omar Karami's resignation, one man was reported killed near opposition MP Ahmed Fatfat's residence in Tripoli.

Karami supporter Fadi Ahmed, 22, was shot by an unidentified assailant from the rooftop of a building overlooking the residence.

Physicians from the Islamic Hospital said that the victim received a bullet to the heart.

Following the shooting, Ahmed's friends smashed Fatfat's car. Assailants also attacked the home of Tripoli MP Samir Jisr and tried to break into Tripoli MP Mosbah Ahdab's home.

...in Tripoli, Karami's hometown, hundreds of the resigned premier's supporters rallied in the streets to express their anger after receiving the stunning news.

Protestors fired weapons into the air and blocked roads with burning tires in many areas of the northern city.

They also destroyed several commercial institutions and removed Hariri's portrait and posters hung by the Hariri-backed Future Movement following the killing bid on Feb. 14.

Several pictures of Hariri supporter former Justice Minister Samir Jisr were also reported torn to shreds, while protestors shouted slogans against the opposition, accusing its leading members of collaboration (Raad, Karine 2005, 'Jumblatt joins nation in celebrating Cabinet's resignation', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 1 March – Attachment 6).

### **2 March 2005 – *Agence France-Presse***

The murder of a supporter of outgoing Prime Minister Omar Karami that led to a shutdown Tuesday in the premier's hometown of Tripoli in northern Lebanon was the work of his brother, police said.

Fadi al-Ahmad, 22, was killed late Monday near Karami's home in Tripoli by a gunshot fired by a brother who then fled and remains at large, according to police.

The reasons behind the shooting, which took place shortly after Karami resigned following a wave of mass protests against his pro-Syrian government, were still unknown.

The killing coincided with a street protest by about 2,000 Karami supporters, some of whom fired shots in the air, burned tires to block roads and attacked opposition offices.

Tripoli was thrown into panic again Tuesday as gunmen drove through the tense streets firing into the air, before police issued the report on Ahmad's killing, an AFP correspondent reported.

Parents in the port city of Tripoli rushed to pull their children out of schools, which closed along with banks, other businesses and universities after leaflets were distributed calling for a general strike ('Brother killed supporter of Lebanon's outgoing PM: police' 2005, *Agence France-Presse*, 2 March – Attachment 7).

### **2 March 2005 – *The Daily Star***

The hometown of outgoing Prime Minister Omar Karami was thrown into a panic Tuesday, one day after his resignation, as gunmen drove through the streets firing weapons into the air. Parents in the port city of Tripoli rushed to pull their children out of schools, which closed along with banks, other businesses and universities after leaflets calling for a general strike were distributed.

The leaflets said: "We are calling for a general strike in Tripoli ... in order to confront the plot of the opposition ... which is seeking to burn all of Lebanon."

The main squares and internal roads of the northern city were swarming with Internal Security Forces personnel Tuesday, while the army set up several checkpoints, including one at the northern entrance of Tripoli, in the Bab al-Tabbaneh area.

Karami supporters toured the city with loudspeakers to call for massive participation in Fadi Ahmed's funeral, the Karami supporter killed after the premier announced his resignation late Monday.

A first report said Ahmed, 22, was killed when gunshots were fired across the city as hundreds of angry Karami followers vandalized the offices of opposition parties, including that of slain former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

...However, disputing the original description of events, the Tal-based ISF station reported Tuesday that Ahmed was killed by his own brother over personal differences.

A source at the station denied the previous statement that an unidentified party had shot him from the rooftop of a building facing Karami's residence.

Ahmed's brother managed to escape, the ISF said, adding that a statement will soon be released confirming the latest version of the murder, according to investigations and eyewitnesses.

...Secretary General of the Arab Liberation Youth Khaldoun Sharif accused "collaborators" of killing Ahmed, stressing that Tripoli is not a city of terrorism and murder.

Sharif was displeased with Karami's resignation, and hinting at the opposition, he highlighted the mistake of those who believe that the resignation of the government means the victory of the battle.

...The Permanent Peace Movement also expressed its fear that gunshots in Tripoli may ignite a civil war, and cautioned residents against the dangers of resorting to weapons (Tohme, Nicolas 2005, 'Tripoli hit with turmoil', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 2 March [http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=13090](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=13090) – Accessed 22 March 2005 – Attachment 8).

### **3 March 2005 – *The Daily Star***

Calm has been restored to the port city of Tripoli after an outbreak of violence earlier in the week following the resignation of Prime Minister Omar Karami. The outgoing premier's hometown returned to normal Wednesday, with the banking sector, public and private institutions and most small businesses once again open for business.

However, some public schools remained closed, while others reported a high number of students being absent.

Meanwhile, the Internal Security Forces set up checkpoints throughout the northern city.

...The ministers had called for an army presence to help maintain calm but had their request turned down due to an "unavailable" political decision (Tohme, Nicolas 2005, 'Calm is restored to Tripoli after two days of violence', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 3 March [http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=13122](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=13122) – Accessed 23 March 2005 – Attachment 9).

A *Daily Star* article of 12 March 2005 reports that "[s]treet-rallies, according to some politicians, have turned from a means to express views into a place to show force on the part of the opposition and the loyalists". The article notes this developing view in the context of reporting on Omar Karami's postponement of a rally in Tripoli intended to "denounce UN Resolution 1559". The report notes that, in spite of the "heavy rain" that led to the postponement, there was much speculation in Tripoli as to whether Karami's decision was in fact determined by political interests. Relevant extracts follow in detail:

Following a meeting with pro-Syrian Lebanese forces and parties in the North, Premier-elect Omar Karami postponed Friday's rally planned for his hometown of Tripoli until next Friday "for bad weather reasons."

Tripoli was preparing for Friday's rally in Abdul Nasser Square to denounce UN Resolution 1559 when heavy rain started to flood the streets before noon. Around 11 a.m., Karami called a meeting for the rally's organizers and announced the postponement during a press conference.

Organizers had hoped for a turnout of 15,000 people the day after President Emile Lahoud nominated Karami to form a new government 10 days after his resignation.

Hundreds of young participants arrived at noon from nearby neighborhoods with their banners and Lebanese flags and gathered in the Square only to watch workers dismantling the stage prepared for speakers.

By then, the rain had stopped and the gloomy sky turned sunny. Some protesters were puzzled when they heard the reason for cancelling the rally.

"The weather is not a good excuse," a demonstrator, Fadi Salim, said. "The rain did not stop me from meeting the call."

People coming out from Friday's prayers at the Mansouri Mosque, the rally's departing point, learned the news during their prayer. "I am not surprised," a heavily bearded young man, who wished to remain anonymous, said.

"Karami wants to give the opposition a chance to consider his offer; the rally could go against the call for unity," he added.

Other participants speculated that the rally could have obstructed the Syrian Troops withdrawal from their positions in Akkar just to the north of Tripoli.

...Street-rallies, according to some politicians, have turned from a means to express views into a place to show force on the part of the opposition and the loyalists.

“Each side is trying to demonstrate who could mobilize bigger masses,” said Khaled Hedadeh, the Secretary-General of the Lebanese Communist Party that has also called “all leftist groups” to rally Sunday in Sahat al-Barbeer near Corniche Mazraa in Beirut (El-Ghoul, Adnan 2005, ‘Karami postpones rally due to heavy rain; Opposing protests to continue next week’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 12 March – Attachment 10).

On 10 March 2005, Associated Press reported that Omar Karami had reprised the office of Prime Minister of Lebanon at the invitation of President Emile Lahoud. This report, supplied as Attachment 11, provides background on both the context of Karami’s re-instatement; and the political history and interests of Syria’s most prolific pro-Syrian politician (‘Lebanon’s Karameh: a conservative with close ties to Syria’ 2005, Associated Press, 10 March – Attachment 11).

In late March 2005, the BBC News (World Edition) service reported on two bombings. The first of these is reported to have detonated, on the evening of 18 March 2005, at approximately midnight, in the “predominantly Christian suburb...of New Jdeideh, a part-residential, part-commercial area”, in northern Beirut. The blast “wounded at least 11 people”, and while “[n]o-one...admitted planting the bomb” and “[i]t is not clear who the target was or whether [the bombing] was politically-motivated”, “the anti-Syrian opposition...blamed Damascus supporters saying they are keen to stir unrest to justify the presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon”. The latter bombing, is reported to have occurred on the morning of 23 March 2005, “at about 0130 local time”, “in Lebanon’s anti-Syrian Christian heartland...in Kaslik, near the port of Jounieh, about 15km (10 miles) north of Beirut”. The blast killed three people, two of which were “foreign workers”, and injured a fourth person. According to the BBC News (World Edition) service, the “opposition lawmaker Faris Bouez told reporters at the scene” that the bombing was “a political message to the [anti-Syrian] independence uprising”. According to a Reuters report of 23 March 2005, “Christian opposition leaders blamed Lebanon’s Syrian-backed security agencies for the blasts”. Lebanon’s *The Daily Star* also reported on the opposition’s linking of the Syrian “security services” to the bombings. According to *The Daily Star*, “the spate of recent explosions...have spread panic throughout the country”. The BBC News (World Edition) report of 23 March 2005 observes that “[d]emonstrations and counter-demonstrations, although largely peaceful, have kept tension high between Lebanon’s pro-and anti-Syrian camps” (for information on the blast in New Jdeideh, see: ‘Car bomb hits Lebanon’s capital’ 2005, BBC News (World Edition) website, 19 March

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_depth/4363325.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/4363325.stm) – Accessed 19 March 2005 – Attachment 12; for information on the blast in Kaslik, see: ‘Fresh Lebanon bombing kills three’ 2005, BBC News (World Edition) website, 23 March

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4374111.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4374111.stm) – Accessed 1 April 2005 – Attachment 13; for information on the opposition’s linking of the Syrian security agencies to both blasts, see: Ladki, Nadim 2005, ‘Bomb kills two in Lebanon’, Reuters UK website, 23 March [http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=worldNews&storyID=2005-03-23T110502Z\\_01\\_JON312442\\_RTRUKOC\\_0\\_LEBANON.xml](http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=worldNews&storyID=2005-03-23T110502Z_01_JON312442_RTRUKOC_0_LEBANON.xml) – Accessed 1 April 2005 – Attachment 14; see also: Raad, K. 2005, ‘Loyalists and opposition unite in denouncing deadly Kaslik explosion’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 24 March – Attachment 15).

Another *Daily Star* article of 24 March 2005 provides further information on the “wave of panic [which] spread throughout the country...following [the] two explosions”. The report indicates that fear was widespread, throughout Lebanon’s many communities, and the article notes events specific to Tripoli in this regard. According to *The Daily Star*, the Tripoli offices of the Catholic relief agency, Caritas, were “broken into and robbed by unidentified people” at this time. This appears to have fuelled suspicions pertaining to general security owing to the fact that the offices were formerly the Tripoli home of the “Syrian intelligence bureau”. Relevant extracts from the report, addressing both the Tripoli Caritas incident and the bomb scares which occurred at this time, follow below.

SIDON/TRIPOLI: A wave of panic spread throughout the country on Wednesday following this week’s two explosions in New Jdeideh and Alta Vista commercial center in Kaslik, with people fearing a repeat at any moment. In Sidon, a false rumor about the existence of a bomb in the city’s Martyrs’ Square raised fears among the citizens, who started to suspect any strange object.

Some Sidon residents were also reportedly afraid of leaving their homes after they saw a bomb on the street. The bomb was examined by an Internal Security Forces (ISF) expert, who said it was a “very old disabled bomb,” which was randomly thrown on the street.

The Holy Spirit University (USEK) in Kaslik received a false bomb threat. An unidentified person called the university’s rector, father Antoine Ahmar, and told him there was a bomb about to explode on the university premises. USEK students and personnel were immediately evacuated in order to allow security forces personnel to inspect the premises.

Several cars were suspected of carrying bombs in several areas of Lebanon.

In the areas of Mansourieh, Achrafieh and Jamhour, cars left by their owners on the streets raised fear among the citizens, who asked the ISF personnel to check them.

An ambulance transporting a pregnant woman to a hospital in the area of Bourj Rizk, provoked tension and fear among the nearby residents, who thought that an explosion broke out in the region.

At the Lebanese University Literature department, a leather suitcase left in the hallway caused unease among the students. Security forces checked the suitcase, which contained books and money belonging to a student.

...In other developments, the Caritas bureau in Tripoli – a former Syrian intelligence bureau – was broken into and robbed by unidentified people on Tuesday night. The Interior Security Forces personnel immediately arrived at the location and started investigations.

...The Syrian Social Nationalist Party’s bureau in Shemlan was also broken into on Tuesday night by an armed group. The unidentified people rushed at the bureau, shooting and caused serious damages (Zaatari, M. & Tohme, N. 2005, ‘Wave of panic grips country after Kaslik bombing’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 24 March [http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=1&article\\_id=13685](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=13685) – Accessed 4 April 2005 – Attachment 16; for further information on the Caritas incident, see: Raad, K. 2005, ‘Loyalists and opposition unite in denouncing deadly Kaslik explosion’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 24 March – Attachment 15).

On 23 March 2005, Reuters reported that small arms sales are on the rise, in Tripoli and across Lebanon generally, due to the increasing level of concern about security: “Lebanese familiar with the legal weapons market in Tripoli said demand for small arms had climbed since the Feb. 14 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, which sparked huge

anti-Syrian street protests”. The report states that “Lebanese and Palestinian weapons sources in Tripoli [have] said [that] the fresh demand for guns was coming from Lebanese of all sects seeking light weapons for personal protection, not for armed groups”. Relevant extracts follow in detail:

Lebanese familiar with the legal weapons market in Tripoli said demand for small arms had climbed since the Feb. 14 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri, which sparked huge anti-Syrian street protests.

...A standoff between pro-Syrian loyalists and the opposition has fuelled Lebanese fears about renewed conflict in a sectarian society in which experts say most households are armed.

...At one Tripoli gun shop where rows of rifles sit in glass cases, a dealer said demand had jumped by 60 to 70 percent for licensed weapons like pistols and pump action rifles.

Many of his customers are first-time buyers, men in their 20s and 30s seeking to protect their families.

...NO MAJOR THREAT

The weapons trade flourished during Lebanon’s 1975-90 civil war, although Christian and Muslim militias that had sliced the country into feuding fiefdoms later gave up their heavy weapons.

Light weapons such as pistols and assault rifles were not collected and remain in domestic arsenals that are a legacy of years of bloodletting.

“We are dealing with a country where the national state was not so powerful... It was a matter of survival,” said Timor Goksel, a retired spokesman for UN peacekeepers in Lebanon.

“It is not seen as a very major threat to society that people have personal weapons, so long as they are in the hands of individuals. The main fear is weapons in the hands of Palestinian militias or organised groups,” he said.

The Lebanese and Palestinian weapons sources in Tripoli said the fresh demand for guns was coming from Lebanese of all sects seeking light weapons for personal protection, not for armed groups. Heavy weapons were not on the market. “There is a consensus not to resort to force to resolve the conflict,” a senior Lebanese army source said of the country’s political crisis. “We have no information about people re-arming... Up to now there is no great danger.”

Among Lebanese groups, only Hizbollah is openly armed. The Shi’ite guerrillas kept their weapons after the civil war to fight Israeli occupation of south Lebanon, which ended in 2000.

...Goksel said he was impressed that street protests had been peaceful and believed more violence could be avoided despite the scattered bombs, shootings and grenade blasts of recent weeks.

“But another major incident or upheaval can turn the tables around,” he added (Johnston, C. 2005, ‘Lebanese shop for guns as political tension rises’, Reuters, 24 March – Attachment 17).

*The Daily Star* has recently reported, on 1 April 2005, that “[t]he Islamic Unification Movement (*Harakat at-Tawhid al-Islami*) is expected to make a political comeback next month, 10 years after the Syrian Army entered Tripoli and crushed it”. The report provides an



overview of the history of this Sunni organisation and its erstwhile militancy in the Tripoli area (Tohme, T. 2005, 'Sunni fundamentalist group eyes comeback in April', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 1 April

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=13907](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=13907) – Accessed 1 April 2005 – Attachment 18).

In another 1 April 2005 *Daily Star* article, it is reported that the spate of recent bombings “have brought the [Beirut’s] normally bustling nightlife to a virtual standstill”. The article provides an extensive impression of the degree to which the upsurge in violence has affected perceptions of security amongst the Lebanese community (‘Spate of bombings snuff out Beirut nightlife’ 2005, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 1 April

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=1&article\\_id=13894](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=13894) – Accessed 7 April 2005 – Attachment 19).

A *Daily Star* report, of 2 April 2005, provides information on a bombing which occurred “on Friday [1 April 2005], in Broumana, a mountain resort overlooking Beirut and the Mediterranean coastline, which injured seven people”. “The explosion was the fourth in almost two weeks to hit a Christian area, where support for the anti-Syrian opposition is high.” The report notes the expressions of alarm voiced by the foreign ministers of both France and Iran with regard to the deteriorating security situation. The report also notes that there has been condemnation of the blasts from across the entire spectrum of Lebanese domestic politics, though a great difference of opinion exists between these groups as to who is responsible for what is, generally understood, as a campaign intent on undermining faith in local security forces. As has been noted above, the anti-Syrian movement has blamed Damascus and its supporters for the blasts. While a *Daily Star* article, of 5 April 2005, reports that “Hizbullah” is reported to “[hold] Israel responsible for these bombings” (Chahine, J. 2005, ‘Lebanese grow fearful as bombings persist’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 5 April

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=1&article\\_id=14003](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=14003) – Accessed 7 April 2005 – Attachment 20; Sfeir, T. 2005, ‘France condemns spate of bombings as “intolerable”’, *Daily Star* website, 4 April

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=13987](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=13987) – Accessed 4 April 2005 – Attachment 21).

The *Daily Star* article of 5 April 2005 also reports that “[t]he Broumana blast – the most recent of four blasts targeting Christian areas over the past two weeks – was for many the strongest evidence of the real threat of an escalation in violence as it was the first attack to target a residential area”. The report notes that individuals and institutions of all kinds have begun to take extreme precautionary measures in order to safeguard their vehicles, offices and residences: “[o]utside the United Nations offices, workers continue to fill sandbags and erect barriers. At a Beirut mall, newly hired private security guards check vehicles’ trunks and engines and slide a mirror beneath the chassis to look for explosives. Restaurants put up roadblocks to keep cars from parking too close.” The article also provides further reports of the manner in which the Lebanese community continues to be plagued by bomb scares: “[t]he fear of continued attacks is not only restricted to public areas, such as movie theaters, restaurants, shopping centers or educational institutions, but has also spread to some private companies which have chosen to halt activities and suffer the financial consequences of the decline in business” (Sfeir, T. 2005, ‘France condemns spate of bombings as “intolerable”’, *Daily Star* website, 4 April

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=13987](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=13987) – Accessed 4 April 2005 – Attachment 21).

In another 4 April 2005 *Daily Star* article, it is reported that the “recent string of bomb attacks directed against the country’s Christian heartland has resulted in a weary population taking security matters into its own hands”. According to this report, “[f]rom Achrafieh to Ain al-Roumaneh, Bourj Hammoud to Hadath, groups of young men can be seen patrolling the streets and alerting the army of any suspicious activity”. The report also notes that, although these self-directed groups “tend to coordinate their efforts with the army”, “relations between the authorities and the groups remain fickle, with the authorities occasionally clamping down on residents’ self-initiated security measures”. The entire article is supplied as Attachment 22 (Stigset, M & Haddad, R. 2005, ‘Local communities take security matters into their own hands’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 4 April [http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=1&article\\_id=13969](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=13969) – Accessed 7 April 2005 – Attachment 22).

On 12 April 2005, the International Crisis Group (ICG) released a major report on the current events affecting Lebanon, ‘Syria After Lebanon, Lebanon After Syria’. Section 4 of this report provides an assessment of the degree to which ongoing outbreaks of violence constitute a threat to security of the kind that led to civil war in the 1980s. The ICG balances recent disturbances against the professional and competent manner with which the Lebanese security forces have responded to these provocations. Nonetheless, the ICG also observes that “although the army has proved more capable than feared, at the end of the day it is recruited from and reflects Lebanese society. Should the latter erupt into sectarian conflict, so too might its military”. The ICG has speculated that, should this happen, “a so-called East Timor scenario” could develop “in which militias and gunmen” might “unleash a campaign of violence and intimidation”; alternatively, “rogue elements of [Syria’s] security or intelligence apparatus might act on their own – either exporting domestic battles to Lebanese soil or retaliating for their lost status and income”. Pertinent extracts from this report follow in detail.

Many of the threats that previously had been much spoken of appear to have been exaggerated as a means of perpetuating the status quo, and there are indeed reasons for relative confidence in the situation. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume away all hazards. The attack on Hamadeh, the killing of Hariri and the car bombs targeting Christian neighbourhoods on 18, 22, 26 March, and 1 April demonstrate persistent dangers; various parties – both Syrian and Lebanese – have no interest in seeing things go smoothly; the presence of armed Lebanese and Palestinians and still extant confessional tensions, as well as the unresolved question of sectarian power allocation present a volatile mix. In the words of a Lebanese official, “rationally, no one may want a descent in to civil war. But too many parties have conflicting interests, and too many see some advantage to instability – Syrians to take the pressure off their backs; Israelis to press the issue of Hizbollah’s disarmament; not to mention those Lebanese who fear a loss of power and resources”. And although the army has proved more capable than feared, at the end of the day it is recruited from and reflects Lebanese society. Should the latter erupt into sectarian conflict, so too might its military.

...Although most Lebanese interviewed by Crisis Group questioned whether Syria retained the necessary support from major armed Lebanese groups or Syrian-Lebanese security agencies to carry out violence against them, they did not rule out the possibility of a so-called East Timor scenario in which militias and gunmen, either angered by their loss of status and power or manipulated by Damascus to stir up sectarian strife – or both – unleash a campaign of violence and intimidation.

...An alternative scenario builds on the supposed fragmentation of the Syrian regime and the possibility that rogue elements of its security or intelligence apparatus might act on their own – either exporting domestic battles to Lebanese soil or retaliating for their lost status and

income (International Crisis Group, 'Syria After Lebanon, Lebanon After Syria', 12 April, pp.31-32  
[http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/arab\\_israeli\\_conflict/lebanon/39\\_syria\\_after\\_lebanon\\_lebanon\\_after\\_syria.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle_east_north_africa/arab_israeli_conflict/lebanon/39_syria_after_lebanon_lebanon_after_syria.pdf) – Accessed 12 April 2005 – Attachment 23).

On 13 April 2005, an Associated Press article reported that, according to “a senior Lebanese military officer [who spoke to] AP on condition of anonymity”, Syrian forces in Lebanon, which “stood at 14,000 troops in February”, have been reduced to the point where they are now estimated to number only “4,000”; “Syria also has withdrawn many intelligence officials”. The article also reports that, according to “Lebanese officials”, “the remaining 4,000 soldiers are likely to be out within 10 days”. The report presents this information in the context of the “deepening political crisis and renewed tensions along the border with Israel”. This latter development is reported to have developed as a consequence of “a spy drone” which ““Hezbollah sent...over northern Israel” (Ghattas, S.F. 2005, ‘Syrian troops in Lebanon down to 4,000, to leave in 10 days as Beirut marks war anniversary’, Associated Press Newswires, 13 April – Attachment 24).

On 14 April 2005, an article by journalist, and noted authority on Lebanese politics, Robert Fisk, announced his concern for the deteriorating situation in Lebanon. Fisk’s article begins by reporting that “pro-Syrian members of the country’s government [have] failed to form a new cabinet, meaning that the national elections scheduled for May will have to be postponed”. “This”, writes Fisk, “is far more serious than it might appear”; arguing that “[w]hile the country remains leaderless, the possibility of further provocations to restart the 1975- 90 civil war [grow]”. Fisk’s article suggests that the degenerating security situation – which is now complemented by “[a] 30kg bomb [which] was found on a truck in the Bekaa Valley at the weekend; [and] a rocket-propelled grenade [which] was fired at a bank in the suburban town of Dour Cheir” – combined with the possibility that Hizbollah “may be trying to provoke another conflict with Israel”, presents the world with a potentially explosive political conjuncture. Noting that “[o]nly 4,000 Syrian troops remain in the Bekaa Valley, Fisk observes that “anger that the retreat was taking so long has now been replaced with concern about its speed” (Fisk, R. 2005, ‘Lebanon delays its election despite US demands’, *The Independent* (UK), 14 April – Attachment 25).

Fisk’s comments, as to the seriousness of Lebanon’s fractured state of governance and its connection with a potential deterioration in the security climate, are forewarned in the ICG’s report of 12 April 2005:

The potential for violence should not be viewed in isolation from the current institutional crisis, resolution of which requires the rapid formation of a new government, adoption of a new electoral law by 30 April 2005, and the holding of elections before the current Parliament’s term expires on 31 May. ...Such a comprehensive institutional vacuum would provide fertile ground for instability, allow Damascus and its allies to blame the opposition for the crisis, and open the way for continued Syrian interference (International Crisis Group, ‘Syria After Lebanon, Lebanon After Syria’, 12 April, pp.34  
[http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/arab\\_israeli\\_conflict/lebanon/39\\_syria\\_after\\_lebanon\\_lebanon\\_after\\_syria.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/middle_east_north_africa/arab_israeli_conflict/lebanon/39_syria_after_lebanon_lebanon_after_syria.pdf) – Accessed 12 April 2005 – Attachment 23).

A report published in *The Daily Star* articulates similarly grave prospects for Lebanon in its reportage of the events discussed by Fisk: “Lebanon moved a step closer to political meltdown”, writes Nayla Assaf on 14 April 2005, “as Prime Minister-designate Omar Karami

resigned for the second time in two months and the country's opposition vowed to organise street demonstrations if next month's elections are delayed". The article provides extensive information on the context of Karami's most recent resignation from the office of Prime Minister of Lebanon (Assaf, N 2005, 'Karami bows out saying he couldn't care less about polls', *Daily Star* website, 14 April

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=14274](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=14274) – Accessed 14 April 2005 – Attachment 26).

In another *Daily Star* article, of 15 April 2005, it is reported that further fragmentation may result within the opposition alliance itself as a consequence of the success of their demands for the withdrawal of Syrian troops and the near capitulation of the loyalist administration: "[w]ith the Syrian troops' withdrawal, the loyalists lost ground. But the opposition, whose main platform was a Syrian withdrawal will soon cease to be united over this goal and may fight over narrow electoral interests" (Assaf, N 2005, 'Karami bows out saying he couldn't care less about polls', *Daily Star* website, 14 April

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=14274](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=14274) –

Accessed 14 April 2005 – Attachment 26; El-Ghoul, A. 2005, 'Way paved for new political alliances', *Daily Star*, 15 April

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=14299](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=14299) –

Accessed 15 April 2005 – Attachment 27).

### **Tripoli, Lebanon and the anti-Syrian Push: Related Matters**

The withdrawal, from Lebanon, of Syria's troops and military intelligence personnel has been widely reported in the media and Tripoli has received specific mention in this regard. On 16 March 2005 an Associated Press newswire announced that "[t]he symbols of Syrian power [have] crumbled in parts of Lebanon on Tuesday as Syrian military intelligence agents emptied their offices in Beirut and Tripoli"; that "[i]n the northern city of Tripoli, men were loading trucks outside the two main offices of Syrian intelligence"; and that "[w]ith the closure of the Tripoli offices and two others, Syria now has just three offices in northern Lebanon, in the remote Akkar district". Nonetheless, the ICG has recently reported, on 1 April 2005, that the Syrian withdrawal to date constitutes a withdrawal of *military* intelligence units *only*. The most recent issue of the *Crisis Watch* bulletin provides information which suggests that Syria's other Lebanon based intelligence agents will, at least for the time being, remain in place in Lebanon: "Syrian army and intelligence services continued redeployment to Bekaa valley; Damascus committed to pulling out remaining troops (though not intelligence agents) before May elections". Furthermore, the *Washington Post*'s Robin Wright has recently reported, on 31 March 2005, that "[a]lthough Syria [has] shut down its notorious intelligence headquarters in downtown Beirut, Damascus is establishing a new hidden presence in the capital's southern suburbs" (Wright's report provides no information as to whether any such operations are also under way in the suburbs of Tripoli) (Karam, Z. 2005, 'Syrian agents clearing out positions; protesters march on US Embassy in Beirut', Associated Press, 16 March 2005 – Attachment 28; International Crisis Group 2005, *Crisis Watch*, 1 April

[http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/crisiswatch/cw\\_2005/cw\\_20.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/crisiswatch/cw_2005/cw_20.pdf) – Accessed 4

April 2005 – Attachment 29; Wright, Robin 2005, 'Syria Moves to Keep Control of

Lebanon', *Washington Post* website, 31 March [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A57488-2005Mar22.html)

[dyn/articles/A57488-2005Mar22.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A57488-2005Mar22.html) – Accessed 1 April 2005 – Attachment 30).

The Member may also be interested to know that there have been reports in the media of a backlash against Syrians working in Tripoli, and other parts of the country, in recent weeks. According to an article published in *The Christian Science Monitor*, on 8 April 2005, “[t]he Lebanese media have reported that as many as 30 Syrians have been murdered in recent weeks”; “with enraged mobs beating and even killing some Syrians and tens of thousands of laborers fleeing the country”. The article goes on to note that, “[a]lthough Christians are at the forefront of the opposition to Syrian hegemony over Lebanon, most of the violent attacks [on Syrians] have occurred in Muslim areas, mainly the Sunni cities of Sidon in the south and Tripoli in the north”. The entire report is supplied as Attachment 31. A *Daily Star* report of 7 April 2005 also provides some information on this ongoing concern, and this is supplied as Attachment 32. Pertinent extracts from the *Christian Science Monitor* report follow below:

The plight of the estimated 1 million Syrian workers in Lebanon has gone largely unnoticed since the assassination of Rafik Hariri, a former prime minister, which sparked a surge in anti-Syrian sentiment. Most Lebanese blame Syria and its Lebanese allies for Mr. Hariri’s murder. But it has been the Syrian workers in Lebanon who have borne the brunt of the backlash, with enraged mobs beating and even killing some Syrians and tens of thousands of laborers fleeing the country.

...The Lebanese media have reported that as many as 30 Syrians have been murdered in recent weeks.

Although Christians are at the forefront of the opposition to Syrian hegemony over Lebanon, most of the violent attacks have occurred in Muslim areas, mainly the Sunni cities of Sidon in the south and Tripoli in the north. Dormitories and encampments housing Syrians have been burned down, cars set ablaze, and workers assaulted by mobs. In one instance, two Syrian workers were stabbed to death in the Shiite district of Ghobeiri in southern Beirut.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, dozens of leaflets warning Syrian workers to leave Lebanon within 10 days were scattered outside a dormitory for Syrian agricultural laborers in south Lebanon. The leaflets warned of “severe consequences” if the Syrians refuse to leave (Blanford, N. 2005, ‘Backlash yields tense times for Syrian workers in Lebanon’, *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 April – Attachment 31; Zaatari, M. 2005, ‘Flyers warn Syrian workers to leave Lebanon’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 7 April [http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=2&article\\_id=14080](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=2&article_id=14080) – Accessed 7 April 2005 – Attachment 32).

## **2. Is there further analysis of localised violence in Tripoli connected with the Hassoun case?**

As the Member has noted there have been reports, such as those appearing in the BBC News (World Edition) article referenced by the Member, that episodes of localised violence which occurred in Tripoli in mid-2004 were in some what connected to the alleged kidnapping of US Marine Wassef Hassoun. The BBC News (World Edition) article of 8 July 2004 reported that “as news came that Cpl Hassoun was safe there were reports of a gunbattle in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli between members of his family and another which apparently accused them of being US collaborators”; and that “[a]t least two people were killed in the clashes, according to local officials”. Similarly, on 9 July 2004, the US CBS News network reported that, on “Thursday [8 July 2004], a gunfight broke out between members of Hassoun’s clan in his home city of Tripoli and business rivals who called them American collaborators because Hassoun joined the Marines”; and that “two people were

killed”. Both reports also carried details of the circumstances of the alleged kidnapping along with counter allegations that the kidnapping was a hoax and that US Marine Wassef Hassoun was guilty of desertion (‘Missing US marine free in Beirut’ 2005, BBC News (World Edition), 8 July [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/3878249.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3878249.stm) – Accessed 14 April 2005 – Attachment 33; ‘Marine Out Of Danger, Not Trouble’ 2004, CBS News website, 9 July <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/07/09/iraq/main628655.shtml> – Accessed 14 April 2005 – Attachment 34).

A later report, published in *The Daily Star* on 10 July 2004, casts doubt on the possibility that the alleged kidnapping of US Marine Wassef Hassoun was somehow connected to the aforementioned incidents of violence in Tripoli; an incident in which Wassef Hassoun’s brother, Mohammad Hassoun, was reported to have “killed two people [on] Thursday [8 July 2004]”. The report, ‘Tensions simmer in Tripoli’, suggests that the alleged kidnapping had little to do with the escalating hostility which was developing between the clan networks of the Hassoun and the Haret al-Barranieh. The statements offered by the sources interviewed for this report claim that the violence resulted, not from the alleged kidnapping incident, but from tribal competition “in the market place”. Relevant extracts follow in detail:

Some of the Hassoun’s shops were set on fire and others destroyed following the shooting incident in which Mohammad Hassoun killed two people last Thursday.

The security forces continue to guard the site to prevent any break of violence while the crowds from the victim’s side gather around the place and refuse to leave.

“We refuse to let these murderers to come back to our quarter,” said Bilal Sabakji, who kept moving between the security personnel and the crowds in an effort to keep calm and disperse the crowds.

“The press reported a distorted story on what took place here on Thursday,” Sabakji said, adding, “the true story is that Hassoun fenced in to purposely kill Mustafa Bhalbouni, with whom he had a verbal quarrel the previous day.”

Sabakji said that Hassoun and his close relatives brought guns with them for the first time since they came to the quarter some 35 years ago.

“All the talk about accusing the family with collaborating with the Americans is nonsense,” the victim’s uncle, Mahmoud Bhalbouni said.

The Haret al-Barranieh, to which the victim belonged, is a poor slum with high rate of unemployment.

One local eyewitness said “Hassoun responded violently when he saw Bhalbouni wandering around his premises and shot him killing also an innocent street vendor called Ridwan Salim Ahmed.”

Wassef Hassoun’s family did not see any connection between the incidents in the market place and their son’s case. “The incident is triggered by hooligans and thieves who tried to take protection fees from our relatives,” the brother, Sami Hassoun said.

“How could anyone force the Hassouns to pay loyalties when they enjoy such tribal power and the authorities’ support?” Sabakji asked. “The Hassouns invented this rumour to cover their crime. We want the court of law decide the case; this is better than being trapped in the revenge and counter revenge cycle” (El-Ghoul, A. 2004, ‘Tensions simmer in Tripoli’, *Daily Star* (Lebanon) website, 10 July – Attachment 35).

On 10 August 2004, an article published in *The Guardian* considered, at length, the allegations surrounding the Hassoun kidnapping and the episode of violence in Tripoli in which the Hassoun family was involved. *The Guardian* report does not report any claims of an explicit link between the violence and the situation of US Marine Wassef Hassoun, nor does it claim, as in the aforementioned *Daily Star* report, that the events were entirely unrelated to the Hassoun family's connection to the US. What it does report is that "animosity to the US military's role in Iraq" has "made [the Tripoli Hassoun's] local pariahs". The report goes on to note that the Hassoun family is, however, somewhat protected from such animosity by the power, and numeric strength, of its clan network. Pertinent extracts follow in detail.

The same kind of community spirit has not been visited on his family in Lebanon, where animosity to the US military's role in Iraq made them local pariahs.

Fortunately for the Lebanese Hassouns, they appear to be able to look after themselves. Numbering around 4,000, in Tripoli they refer to themselves not so much as a family as a clan. They live on Hassoun Street, a long road in the Abu Samra neighbourhood just outside Tripoli which is inhabited entirely by members of the marine's family. Finding it is easy, as intrigued Tripolitans direct reporters to "the American's house". Children playing in the street are all cousins, while in a nearby shop, Hassoun's uncle, Hussein, is paying a visit to a relative.

...After the marine's release a relative reportedly shot and killed a man in Tripoli who had accused the family of being "US traitors". The shooting spree shook the area. Two people died, and two others were injured; several shops belonging to the Hassouns were also smashed up ('The soldier's story' 2004, *The Guardian*, 10 August – Attachment 36).

The Member may be interested to know that successive reportage on the US Marine Wassef Hassoun has increasingly moved towards understanding the Marine's disappearance from Iraq, and his subsequent re-emergence in Lebanon, as a case of desertion rather than kidnapping. This widespread perception became particularly acute in January 2005 when Hassoun again went missing; this time in the US where he was awaiting trial by a military court on theft and desertion charges pertaining to the incident which took place in mid-2004. Examples of such reports are supplied as Attachment 37 and Attachment 38. Alternatively, it was also reported, at this time, that Wassef Hassoun's brother, "Mohamad Hassoun", had claimed that "[a]nti-Muslim bias prompted military officials to treat Cpl. Wassef Ali Hassoun, an AWOL Marine charged with desertion". An Associated Press article which reported the views of Wassef Hassoun's brother is supplied as Attachment 39 (Lillard, M. 2005, 'Missing Marine Returned From Prior Leaves', Associated Press Newswires, 7 January – Attachment 37; Jensen, D.P. 2005, 'Hassoun one of top wanted fugitives', *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 January – Attachment 38; Thiessen, M. 2005, 'AP Exclusive: Missing Marine's brother claims anti-Muslim bias', Associated Press Newswires, 5 February – Attachment 39).

The Member may also be interested to know that, on 14 January 2005, a report published in *The Salt Lake Tribune* listed Wassef Hassoun's brother, Mohamad Hassoun, as being "of West Jordan" (a suburb of Salt Lake City, Utah, USA). This would seem to throw some ambiguity upon the nature of Mohamad Hassoun's presence in Tripoli during the violent incident of mid-2004. It is unclear whether this Mohamad Hassoun, assuming, for the moment, that the reported persons are one and the same, has relocated since the time of the incident of violence in which he was involved in mid-2004, whether he was, perhaps, never a permanent resident in of Tripoli, or whether, alternatively, Wassef Ali Hassoun has more than one brother who is known as Mohamad Hassoun. According to the aforementioned *Guardian*

report, of 10 August 2004, Wassef Hassoun “moved to the US in 2000 and lived with his brothers near Salt Lake City for two years”; the report goes on to state that “[f]ew even among the Muslim community in West Jordan, the suburb of Salt Lake City where [Wassef Hassoun’s] family settled, appear to have known [Wassef Hassoun] well” and that “[n]eighbours say the family kept themselves to themselves” (Jensen, D.P. 2005, ‘Hassoun one of top wanted fugitives’, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 January – Attachment 38; ‘The soldier’s story’ 2004, *The Guardian*, 10 August – Attachment 36).

### **3. Are there public reports of any resentment/action against relatives of Lebanese-Australian members of the ADF?**

The sources consulted could provide no explicit reports of incidents in which persons in Lebanon have experienced resentment, or harassment, as a consequence of a relative’s service with the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Nonetheless, there have been more general reports, the nature of which could be read as suggesting, that such resentment, or harassment, could develop as a consequence of the ADF’s involvement in events in Iraq. The aforementioned *Guardian* report, of 10 August 2004, for example, notes that “animosity to the US military’s role in Iraq” has “made [the Tripoli Hassoun’s] local pariahs” ‘The soldier’s story’ 2004, *The Guardian*, 10 August – Attachment 36).

Travel advice, issued to Australians by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on the Smartraveller (DFAT) website, warns that “Australians in Lebanon should exercise extreme caution”. The advice notes that “[t]here are ongoing tensions in the Middle East and the risk of possible terrorist attacks against Western interests remains”. Further to this, DFAT advises that “[f]ollowing the assassination of ex-Prime Minister Hariri on 14 February 2005 there are ongoing demonstrations in Beirut and other cities”; and that “[s]ome demonstrators are armed and there is the possibility of violent clashes in public areas”. Finally, the report notes that “[a] series of bomb attacks occurred in March/April 2005 and violence is expected to continue in the lead up to the parliamentary elections in May 2005” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2005, ‘Travel Advice: Lebanon’, Smartraveller (DFAT) website, (‘current for Friday, 15 April 2005’), 8 April <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/Lebanon> – Accessed 1 April 2005 – Attachment 40).

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Smartraveller (DFAT) website <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au>

US Congressional Research Service website <http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/>

US Department of State website <http://www.state.gov>

#### **United Nations (UN)**

UN website <http://www.un.org>

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) website <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) website <http://www.unhchr.ch>

#### **Non-Government Organisations**

Amnesty International website <http://www.amnesty.org/>



Human Rights Watch (HRW) website <http://www.hrw.org/>

### **International News & Politics**

Aljazeera website <http://english.aljazeera.net/HomePage>

Al-Ahram Weekly Online website <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/>

BBC News (World Edition) website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

Global Security website <http://www.globalsecurity.org/>

*Le Monde Diplomatique* [English language edition] website <http://mondediplo.com/>

MERIA: Middle East Review of International Affairs website <http://meria.idc.ac.il>

Reuters UK website <http://www.reuters.co.uk/>

### **Region Specific Links**

*The Daily Star* (Lebanon) website <http://www.dailystar.com.lb>

*The Lebanon Times* website <http://www.lebanonpress.com/>

The United Australian Lebanese Movement website <http://www.ualm.org.au>

### **Search Engines**

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>

StaggerNation website's Google API Proximity search engine

<http://www.staggernation.com/cgi-bin/gaps.cgi>

Internet Archive WayBackMachine search engine <http://www.archive.org/>

### **Online Subscription Services**

*Jane's Intelligence Review* [http://jir.janes.com/public/login/jir\\_regLogin.html](http://jir.janes.com/public/login/jir_regLogin.html)

*Middle East International Online* <http://meionline.com/index.shtml>

<b>Databases:</b>		
Public	<i>FACTIVA</i>	Reuters Business Briefing
DIMIA	<i>BACIS</i>	Country Information
	<i>REFINFO</i>	IRBDC Research Responses (Canada)
RRT	<i>ISYS</i>	RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State <i>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices</i> .
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  6. Raad, Karine 2005, 'Jumblatt joins nation in celebrating Cabinet's resignation', *Daily Star* (Lebanon), 1 March. (FACTIVA)
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