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Circular Issued by the Maronite Bishops of Eparchies Outside Patriarchal Territory
on defending the Voting Rights of Their Faithful and All Lebanese Expats to Elect Candidates of Their
Choice in Their Original Electoral Districts in Lebanon, While Residing Abroad
And the Demand to Abolish Article 112 of the Current Parliamentary Electoral Law.

Article 112: Regarding Non-Resident Candidates

Six seats in Parliament are designated for non-resident Lebanese citizens. These seats are equally divided between Christians and Muslims as follows: a Maronite, a Orthodox, a Melkite Catholic, a Sunni, a Shiite, Druze. Each seat is allocated to one of the six continents.

On June 17, 2025, the Maronite bishops in diaspora communities met with His Excellency President Joseph Aoun and conveyed their objections to Article 112 of the electoral law. They called for its amendment or repeal to affirm the right of every Lebanese citizen, including those living abroad, to vote in their original electoral district in Lebanon. This position was reiterated in a formal letter sent to the President on July 11, 2025. Key points of the message include:

I. In violation of the Constitution and applicable laws

- Article 3 of the electoral law guarantees every Lebanese citizen—resident or not—who enjoys civil and political rights, the right to vote.
- Paragraph (b) of Article 2 stipulates that voters shall cast their ballot in the electoral district to which their registration pertains, regardless of religious confessions.
- Existing laws specify voting based on registered domicile in Lebanon, not actual place of residence.
- Creating six electoral districts for non-residents undermines the principle of equality and requires a constitutional amendment, which cannot be achieved through a simple legal adjustment.
- This measure would lead to legal and procedural complications, notably:
 - Lack of clarity in the distribution criteria of the six seats by religious confession and geography.
 - Difficulty in calculating results under proportional representation for a single overseas district.

II. The Political Right to Vote in Domestic Electoral Districts

- Parliamentary elections are a democratic milestone in which all Lebanese, resident and expatriate, should participate.
- Voting by expatriates reflects their commitment to their homeland and their role in strengthening governance and restoring public trust.
- Expatriates should vote in their original Lebanese districts, not in a separate constituency that segregates them.
- Establishing a distinct expatriate district introduces unjustified discrimination between “residents” and “expatriates,” contradicting constitutional principles.

- Expatriates are a living extension of Lebanon, not detached from it; migration is a response to difficult conditions, not a denial of identity.
- Their representation in their native districts reinforces the unity of the Lebanese electorate and encourages, not restricts, their participation.

Conclusion

Thus, we stand with His Beatitude and Eminence Cardinal Mar Bechara Boutros RAI and the Synod of Bishops, including those serving the communities in the Expansion across Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, Venezuela, the United States, Canada, Australia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.

Under the guidance of His Excellency, Bishop (insert the bishop's name) _____, we affirm the following positions:

- Expatriates demand their right to vote in their original Lebanese districts, as was the case in the 2018 and 2022 elections.
- Previous electoral experiences demonstrated effectiveness and upheld the principle of a unified electoral body.
- Assigning expatriates to separate electoral districts weakens their political engagement and violates the constitution and the principle of equality.

We invite you to join this ecclesiastical initiative, so we do not lose the vital connection between Lebanese, local or abroad. Sign the petition available on all websites of Maronite eparchies and parishes around the world and share your personal views with your representatives in Lebanon as well as with Lebanese ambassadors and consuls in your country of residence.

F. Claude Nadra, L.M.O.
Secretary General