



INDEPENDENCE DAY

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WHEN IS LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE DAY?

- On this day in 1943, Lebanon's constitutionally elected leaders were released from detention by French occupation forces after their commanders backed down and accepted the independence of Lebanon.
- Hence **November 22nd** came to be Independence Day and Lebanon's National Day - a day when the Lebanese people remember their freedom with speeches, parades and flags.



PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

- After signing the Acre Armistice, General Charles de Gaulle visited Lebanon, officially ending Vichy control. Lebanese national leaders took the opportunity to ask de Gaulle to end the French Mandate and unconditionally recognize Lebanon's independence. As a result of national and international pressure, on November 26th 1941, General Georges Catroux, delegate general under de Gaulle, proclaimed the independence of Lebanon in the name of his government.

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THE INDEPENDENCE

- The United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, the Arab states, and certain Asian countries recognized this independence, and some of them exchanged ambassadors with Beirut. However, even though the French technically recognized Lebanon's independence, they continued to exercise authority.
- General elections were held and on September 21st 1943. On November 8th 1943, the Chamber of Deputies amended the Constitution, abolishing the articles that referred to the Mandate and modifying those that specified the powers of the high commissioner, thus unilaterally ending the Mandate.

The French authorities responded by arresting a number of prominent Lebanese politicians, including the president, the prime minister, and other cabinet members, and exiling them to the Castle of Rashayya . This action united the Christian and Muslim leaders in their determination to get rid of the French.

- France, finally yielding to mounting internal pressure and to the influence of Britain, the United States, and the Arab countries, released the prisoners at Rashayya on November 22nd 1943; since then, this day has been celebrated as Independence Day.
- The country's independence became effective on January 1st 1944 and it wasn't until 1946 that the last French and British troops left Lebanon.

POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

- After the independence, the modern Lebanese political system was founded in 1943 by an unwritten agreement between the two most prominent Christian and Muslim leaders, Khouri and al-Solh and which was later called the National Pact
- The National Pact had 4 principles:
- Lebanon was to be a completely politically independent state. Lebanon would not enter into Western led alignments; in return, Lebanon would not compromise its sovereignty with ARAB states.
- Lebanon would have an Arab face and another for the West, as it could not cut off its spiritual and intellectual ties with the West, which had helped it attain such a notable degree of progress.

- Lebanon, as a member of the family of Arab states, should cooperate with the other Arab states where possible, and in case of conflict among them, it should not side with one state against another.
- Public offices should be distributed proportionally among the recognized religious groups, but in technical positions preference should be given to competence without regard to confessional considerations. Moreover, the three top government positions should be distributed as follows: the president of the republic should be a MARONITE and the prime minister, a SUNNI Muslim. The speaker of the Chamber of Deputies was reserved for a SHI'I Muslim in 1947. The ratio of deputies was to be six Christians to five Muslims.
- In 1945, Lebanon became a founding member of the [Arab League](#) (22 March) and a founding member of the [United Nations](#) (UN San Francisco Conference of 1945). On 31 December 1946, French troops withdrew completely from Lebanon.

CONCLUSION

- Each year, the capital city of Beirut, which suffered particularly in the fight for independence, organises festivities, starting with the traditional speech to the nation the day before by the President. For several days, Lebanon comes alive with the colours and rhythm of the various cultural events.