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The Religious Media in Lebanon

The study was prepared at Maharat Foundation by:
Mr. Tony Mikhael
Journalist Hussein Shareef
Dr. Georges Sadaka

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the policies contained in this report do not necessarily
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Introduction

1. What is the purpose of this study?

"The Journalists' Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon", which was issued by the UNDP in 2013 under the patronage of the Minister of Information, sought to engage media outlets in Lebanon in the peace building process. Thirty-four heads of various media organizations, including audiovisual, print and electronic media of various political affiliations took part in drafting the Pact; they signed it and expressed their commitment to abide by its articles in their work.

At its initial stage, the Pact included the political media, given that they are directly involved in covering daily news, directly communicating with the Lebanese, and dealing with issues relating to public affairs.

However, many other media outlets were not engaged in this project, including media outlets owned by religious institutions. These religious media include different platforms: television, radio, print and electronic.

Therefore, this study seeks, in the first instance, to survey these organizations and answer the following questions:

- What is the reality of the media outlets owned by religious organizations, i.e. their number, reach, platforms, disseminated content, and goals set for their roles?

In the second instance, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What role does the media owned by religious institutions play?
- What types of messages does this media broadcast and how diverse are they in terms of political, religious, social and other content?
- What is the content of the messages broadcast and how are stories relating to public affairs handled?
- Are the messages broadcast by this media consistent with the requirements of civil peace?

Based on the answers to these questions, it is possible to understand the role played by the religious media, and consequently learn whether engaging them in the Pact is necessary.

Maharat Foundation has, in cooperation with UNDP's "Peace building in Lebanon" project, published eight studies about the extent to which Lebanese media organizations are being committed to the Pact. The studies by chronological order are:

1. Monitoring Racism in the Lebanese Media
2. Religious Incitement and Hate Speech
3. Monitoring Study: News Coverage of Positive Initiatives by Lebanese Media
4. Images of Violence in the Lebanese Media News Coverage
5. TV Talk Shows
6. News bulletins Introductions
7. Media Coverage of Municipal Elections 2017
8. Source of Media Coverage and the Right of Access to Information

The reality of the religious media in the Arab world

1. The significance of the topic

The religious media have established a strong presence in the Arab world in general, including Lebanon, and there are now hundreds of satellite television stations, terrestrial television stations, radio outlets and websites, in addition to a large number of magazines and publications. This media has gained a wide audience, especially with the rising wave of religious discourse, which now competes with the secular media for audiences and contributes alongside political discourse to shaping public opinion.

There has been growing interest in studying the content of religious discourse with the rise of the role of this discourse and its targeting of large swaths of the audience. In addition, this interest is also driven by the use by extremist and fundamentalist movements of multiple media platforms to spread their ideas and attract adherents, part of a phenomenon that has gripped the world and revealed the danger of the misuse of religious discourse that these movements resort to. Given the strong growth, pervasiveness and reach of religious media beyond borders, and the difficulty of monitoring it and preventing its negative effects in some cases, some have begun to handle this media as a “crisis” in society¹.

Moreover, religious discourse is no longer limited to spiritual matters. It now deals with various political and social issues. “The big problem is exploiting religion for political projects or racist conflicts, which requires misrepresenting religious texts to justify certain positions or to override opposing views,” says Mohammad Sammak, Secretary-General of the Christian-Muslim Committee for Dialogue.

“When such exploitation is provided with a media platform, the risk resulting from misuse and misrepresentation becomes a public danger going beyond material borders, and even intellectual and ethical principles,” adds Sammak².

The significance and gravity of the topic increase with the increase in the size of the religious media organizations in the Arab world, which are now a source of serious competition for the diverse secular media, both in terms of the number of satellite channels and viewership. This is also the case in Lebanon, where religious audiovisual organizations have flourished in the total absence of the role of the State in their work. Abdel-Hadi Mahfouz, the head of the National Audiovisual Media Council, has referred to this in a presentation of the reality of the media sector in Lebanon under the audiovisual law number 382/94, noting “the continued operation of the religious media outside any specific legal framework to regulate it”³.

1. Ali Abbas, The Crisis of the Religious Media “Satellite Mosques and Hussiania”, Al-Akhbar, February 24, 2015.

2. Mohammad Sammak, The Role of the Religious Media in a Pluralistic Society, Al-Mustaqbal Newspaper, December 28, 2015, Issue 5593, page 17, available online at the following link: <http://bit.ly/2puCDU7>

3. Abdel-Hadi Mahfouz, Seminar titled “The Responsibility of the Media in Protecting Homelands”, December 18, 2014, <http://www.nna-leb.gov.lb/ar/show-news/132714/>

2. The flourishing of religious media outlets in the Arab countries

The Annual Report on Arab Satellite Broadcasting for 2014, issued by the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), showed that there are roughly 1,300 satellite television channels targeting the Arab regions, of which 165 channels are broadcast by 29 public sector bodies, and 1,129 are broadcast by 729 private-sector organizations. The report also noted that there were 1,026 free-to-air channels, accounting for 80% of the channels, and 268 encrypted channels.

In terms of specialized channels, sports channels ranked first with 170 channels, followed by drama channels showing series and films in second place at 152, and music channels broadcasting video clips and music entertainment programs in third place at 124. Religious channels came fourth among the Arab satellite channels with 95 outlets⁴. They have remained in fourth place according to the 2015 report despite dropping to 55 channels⁵. This confirms the place these outlets hold with Arab audiences in general and the big role they now play.

3. Religious media is an academic subject

This multi-faceted interaction between the religious media and social activities has led universities and academic platforms to accord considerable attention to the religious media given the big place they occupy and in anticipation of any negative role they may play. The religious media have also become a subject taught at universities and are explored in many research papers to account for their growing role⁹.

The study "Features of the Arab Religious Communication Landscape"⁶ shows that the number of religious satellite channels has increased as follows: In 2009, there were 43 channels, with 28 in 2010, 91 in 2011, and 104 in 2012⁷.

According to Basem Tweissi, Dean of the Jordan Media Institute, Arab countries invest more than others in religious satellite channels. "It is not an economic but rather a political and ideological investment," he says, "The size of the economic investment in this sector is USD 6 billion, whereas revenues from Arab advertising do not exceed the 2-billion mark."⁸ These religious outlets include public religious channels financed by the state and a large part of them is funded by the private sector.

During a seminar on the subject held at the Lebanese University, Dr. Adnan Sayyed Hussein, the President of the Lebanese University, put that view in words: "It is possible to say that there is no oversight today of religious discourse, and no control over it, as religious discourse is left open to personal interpretations and sometimes improvisation. And we stand against galvanizing, rallying rhetoric.

4. The Report on Arab Satellite Broadcasting for 2014, issued by the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), http://www.asbu.net/medias/NewMedia_2015/text/ASBU_annual_report_2014.pdf

5. The Report on Arab Satellite Broadcasting for 2014, issued by the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), http://www.asbu.net/medias/NewMedia_2016/text/asbu_report_2015.pdf

6. Dr. Thouraya Snoussi, "Arab Radio Magazine", Issue 3, 2012. The issue includes a supplement with a full list of religious channels.

7. There may be disparity between the number of religious television channels given the difficulty of monitoring the launch of some new ones and the closing of others.

8. A conversation with Dr. Basem Tweissi, the Dean of the Jordan Media Institute, with Raseef 22, <http://raseef22.com/politics/2015/03/24/religious-tv-channels-in-the-arab-world/>

9. These studies include:

- Mohammad Ghayyath Maktab, The Islamic Media: Nature, Features, Tools, Reality, Current Problematics, <http://stclements.edu/grad/gradmhd.pdf>
- Cynthia Badran, Transformations of the Message of the Religious Media when Covering Non-Religious Events: Noursat and Al-Manara News Bulletins (A case study of the coverage of the "ISIL" war in Iraq in August 2014), Faculty of Information, Lebanese University, 2016.

The Christian and Muslim faith alike, and even other monotheistic and pagan religions, arise from man and the reality of human existence. And when religious discourse arise from agitation and incitement to hatred and division, the penal or criminal law in Lebanon would expressly combat – before 1975, through article number 318 – sectarian sedition, stipulating that anyone who stirs up sectarian and religious strife shall be punished. And where this agitation leads to real sedition in the country, the punishment can be a life sentence. But has the law been applied? Unfortunately, the law has not been applied, because the sectarian system has been pressuring the judiciary and judges so they don't hand down sentences based on these articles [...].¹⁰

4. Outlining the religious media

It is no doubt that religious institutions of different affiliations show great interest in the media in view of the great role the media play at all levels of society, especially at the self-evident level of calling to religion and proselytism¹².

“The religious media play a major role in the process of guiding the thinking of a large swath of Arab societies [...] whereas the political media play a role in misrepresenting the truth and reconstructing it in accordance with a specific editorial line, the religious media discourse, for every new event, try to create new content,” says Ibrahim Winzar, a Moroccan researcher.

The Faculty of Religious Studies at the University of St. Joseph has launched an academic program as part of a university degree tilted “Religions and the Media”. It seeks to “address every person who wishes to use the means of communication in the service of his faith and of peace in order to open new horizons for intellectual and ethical jurisprudence, engage in dialogue, and overcome the many stumbling blocks in media work that make the exception the rule.”¹¹

The interest of universities in the religious media is confirmation of the place they occupy in the society and the resulting transformations, given that these media are a factor of social change.

reconstructing it in accordance with a specific editorial line, the religious media discourse, for every new event, try to create new content,”¹³ says Ibrahim Winzar, a Moroccan researcher.

10. A speech given by Dr. Adnan Sayyed Hussein at the opening of the seminar held on November 30, 2015 at the Central Administration of the Lebanese University. The proceedings of this seminar appeared in a book titled “Religious Discourse in the Lebanese Media: Reality, Impact and Opportunities for Strengthening Peace”, Maharat Foundation, 2015.

11. Degree program: Religions and the media: Towards a Common and Civilized Religious Culture, May 15, 2014, <http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/713780>

12. “From the very beginning, the Church understood the role of the multifaceted mass media. Inter mirifica, the decree issued by the council at Vatican II in 1963, expressed the importance of what it called the “means of social communication”, i.e. the press, cinema, radio, television, and considered it one of the “discoveries which men of talent...” and “can be of great service to mankind, since they greatly contribute to men’s entertainment and instruction as well as to the spread and support of the Kingdom of God”. The decree also stated that the “public authority... has... the duty of protecting and safeguarding true and just freedom of information”. It also ordered that “priests, religious and laymen” be equipped “with the proper skills for adapting these media to the objectives of the apostolate” and to increase faculties and institutes where newsmen, and writers for the screen, radio and television would obtain sound training imbued with the Christian spirit and establish national Catholic offices for social communication [...]. From the text “The Maronite Church and the Media” issued by the Maronite Patriarchal Synod 2006. <http://www.maronite-evangelization.com/> This synodal text also suggests an “ethical media charter” for media professionals working in Maronite media.

13. Ibrahim Winzar, Religious and Political Media and the Shaping of Opinions in Light of Arab Mobility, November 2013, <http://www.mominoun.com>

“Every satellite channel has its own background, goals and objectives that go beyond the religious ones to the political, cultural, ethnic and economic... It is no secret that many religious channels are facades for political parties that pursue power and influence [...] and then the viewership and high ratings of these religious channels have also made them a front for marketing and advertising, and they now allocate a considerable share of broadcasting slots for advertising, as it brings in considerable revenues, and this reflects the implicit thinking of the advertiser of exploiting the religious nature of the channel to make their product “trustworthy” [...]”¹⁴

Deviant religious discourse undoubtedly raises many concerns with both the political authorities, which fear its use against them or to stir up unrest, and the religious authorities, which fear its exploitation to distort and misrepresent religion, “because the circle of the sacred is a field planted with mines that threaten to explode at any moment, and the discourse that uses the sacred as its weapon is the most dangerous discourse of all, for its power over the minds and souls and its ability to sedate and control.”

Therefore, spiritual authorities seek to set the rhythm for this kind of media. A conference held at the Dar al-Fatwa (Lebanon’s Sunni authority) in Beirut titled “The Role of the Religious Media in Promoting Tolerance and Moderation” sought to define the framework and functions of the religious media, and put forward the following recommendations:¹⁵

- Regard the religious media as a message that requires two things: the idea that the message wants to express and the use of advanced methods to convey it. Therefore, the religious media have to address people’s social, cultural and living concerns, and aim for the message to be appealing by resorting to specialized media professionals.

- Introduce the media subject or credit in religious institutes and faculties that train imams, teachers, preachers, those working in fatwa, justice and religious guidance for the dissemination of knowledge about the contemporary media and means of communication.

- Develop the media used in Dar al-Fatwa institutions to target different audience categories.

- Adopt common religious media strategies by Arab Dar al-Fatwa institutions that focus on the unity of Islam, solidarity between adherents of different denominations, the unity of nations and the ummah, peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians, and acceptance of the other who is different.

- Devise a media strategy to combat extremism and terrorism in cooperation between Arab Dar al-Fatwa institutions that does not only condemn extremists but also offers alternatives and options to attract young people and opens up horizons for peaceful coexistence.”

The religious media is supposed to be in principle honorable and infallible, especially as it pursues values and principles. However, the perception of this media does not always live up to this. In addition to the positive aspect, others see many negatives.

14. Arab Religious Media: Wadih Carried a Rifle, <http://thewhatnews.net>

15. The speakers of the sessions were: Mufti of Tripoli Sheikh Malek Shaar, Mufti of Mount Lebanon Sheikh Mohammed Ali Al Jouzou, Mufti of Zahle Sheikh Khalil Mays, Mufti of Saida Sheikh Salim Soussan, former minister Khaled Kabbani, Director of the General Directorate of Islamic Endowments Sheikh Mohammed Anis Al-Arwadi, counsellor Mohammad Assaf, Judge Sheikh Mohammad Abu Zeid, Dr. Radwan al-Sayyed, Dr. Nader Sraj, Sheikh Wafik Hijazi, Sheikh Fadi Jaroudi, Dr. Mohammad Nasr Dasouqi Labban, Sheikh Omar Kayed, and Hanadi Sheikh Najeeb, Annahar, December 22, 2015.

In the study “Religious Programs on Arab Television and Radio Outlets: An Approach to Content”, Dr. Fathi Bou Oujailah explored the pros and cons of these programs as summarized by the titles in the study:

Pros:

- Preserve cultural identity
- Provide a spiritual atmosphere and facilitate religious education
- Ensure positive competition and offer an alternative
- Disseminate a culture of moderation and best thought
- Consolidate cultural features

Cons:

- Improvised and bigoted fatwas
- Sectarian intolerance
- Charlatanry and witchery¹⁶

Some go further than these cons in analyzing some of the religious discourse.¹⁷

16. Arab Radio Magazine, Issue 3, 2012.

17. Issa Jabli, *ibid.*

Part II

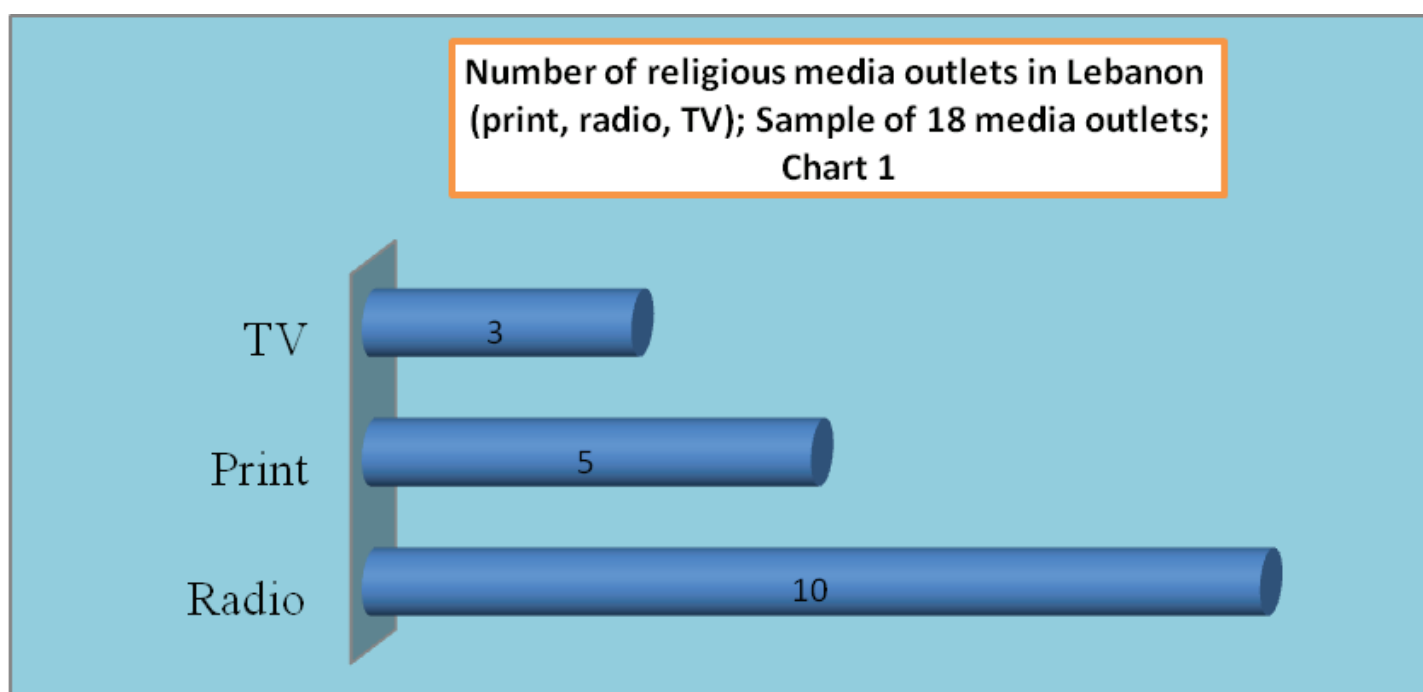
The religious media in Lebanon

This study focuses on the religious media broadcast from Lebanon and operated by Lebanese organizations, in spite of the fact that the Lebanese landscape is full of cross-border religious media that include television, radio and the internet and that are difficult to enumerate. It is also difficult to determine the viewership of these media and its distribution among local and foreign media in the absence of accurate studies.

Therefore, at this stage, this study seeks to take note of the local religious media by surveying them to identify them, their legal status, those in charge of them and their goals. At a later stage, this will be followed by a study of the content of these media to understand to what extent their content is consistent with the requirements of civil peace.

The local religious media are divided into:

- Satellite television channels: Télé Lumière, Charity TV, Al-Iman TV.
- Radio stations: Radio Al Bassaer, Irtiqaa Way Radio, Nidaa Al Maarifa Radio, Albachaer Radio, Alsalam Radio, Sawt Al Haq Al Tawhid Radio, Holy Quran Radio, Fajr Radio in Lebanon, Voice of Charity, and Voice of Gospel.
- Magazines: Manarulhuda Magazine, Duha Magazine, Ora Magazine, Risalat Al-Kalima, and Taqwa Magazine.
- Websites are outside the scope of this study.

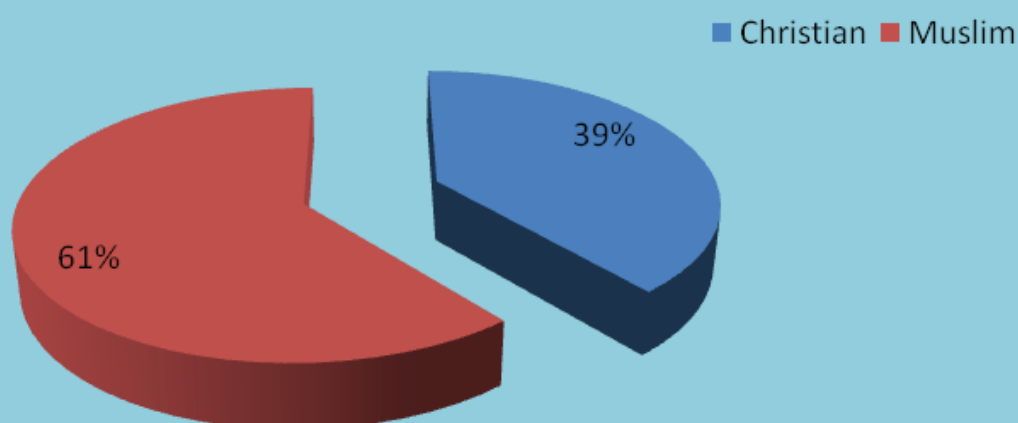


The study has sought to gather information about these organizations from those in charge of them. Therefore, the information reported in this report about these institutions reflects the way they present their role and mission, and thus express their declared goals. The study does not explore the content of the discourse of these media nor the goals of the institutions behind them. This aspect shall be the subject of future studies to analyze the extent to which their content is consistent with the requirements of civil peace.

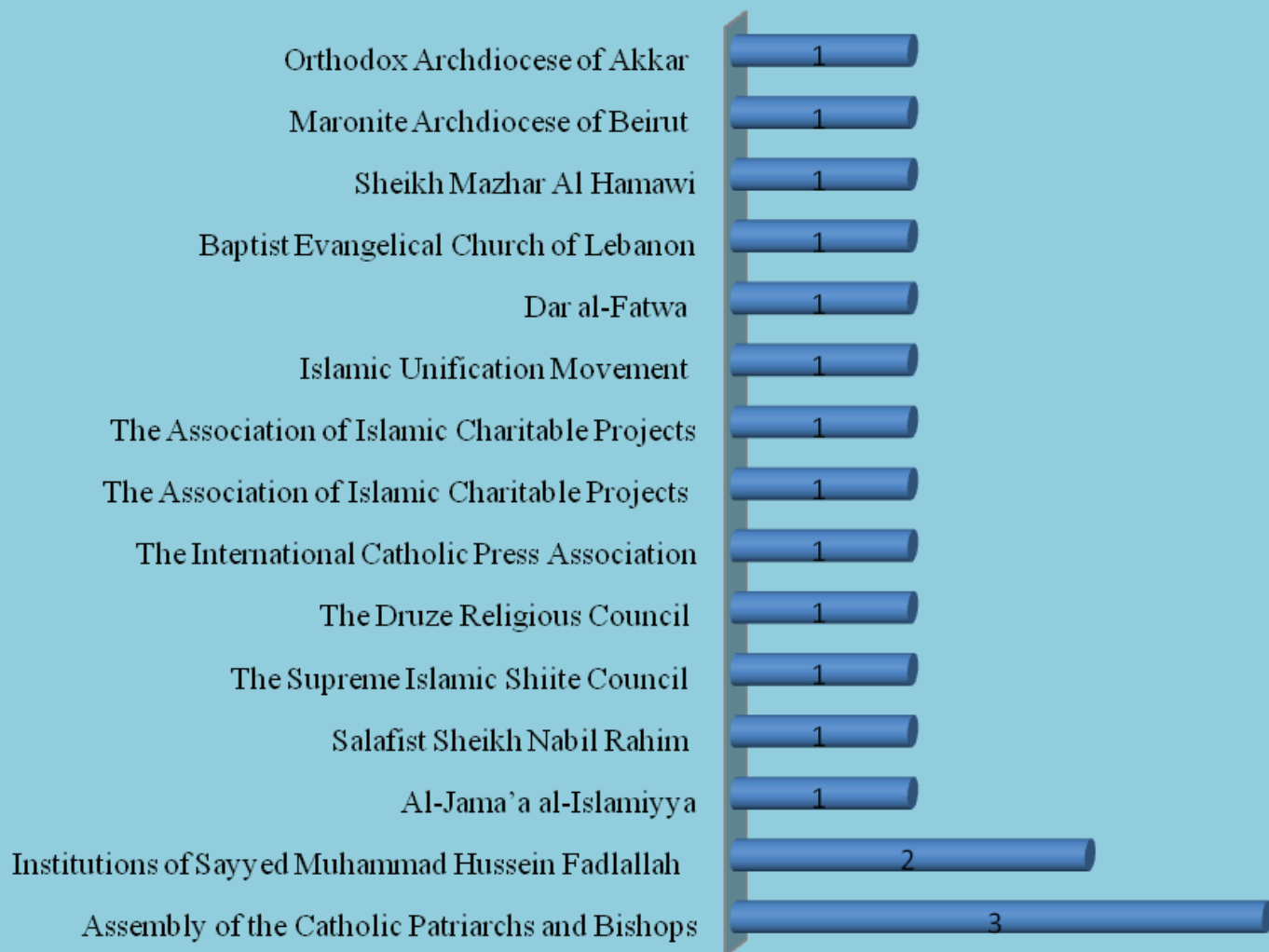
The study reached out to those in charge of the religious media organizations as follows:

- Télé Lumière: Marie-Therese Kreidy, Programming Director
- Voice of Charity & Charity TV: Fr. Charbel Geagea, Executive Director
- Al-Iman TV: Ikram Zarqat, PR Director
- Radio Al Bassaer: Mohamad Rizk, Media Officer of the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council
- Irtiqaa Way Radio: Sheikh Khaled Zaarour
- Nidaa Al Maarifa Radio: Sheikh Abdel Qader Al-Fukahany
- Albachaer Radio: Hussein Bashir, Director
- Alsalam Radio: Georges Rizk, Director
- Sawt Al Haq Al Tawhid Radio: Omar Ayoubi, Director
- Holy Quran Radio: Dr. Hind Ajouz, Director
- Fajr Radio in Lebanon: Ayman Masri, Director
- Voice of Gospel: Augustin Helou, Media Officer at the Maronite Archdiocese of Beirut
- Manarulhuda Magazine: Sheikh Abdel Qader Al-Fukahany
- Risalat Al-Kalima: Pastor Edgard Traboulsi
- Ora Magazine: Media Office of Ora Union
- Duha Magazine: Ziad Abu Ghannam, Executive Director
- Taqwa Magazine: Sheikh Mazhar Hamawi, Editor-in-Chief

**Distribution of the religious authorities of the media; Sample of 18 different media outlets;
Chart 2**



The religious institutions that the religious media outlets are affiliated with;
 Sample of 18 different media outlets;
 Chart 3



1. The goals of the religious media

The goals of the religious media organizations vary, albeit the religious mission remains the common denominator. Yet, the same religious message differs between authorities and between organizations. In addition, the religious message is not the only message broadcast by these institutions. They often address other areas of public affairs, whether social or political, from their angle. This study is limited to presenting the goals of religious institutions as expressed by these institutions and not based on what they broadcast. We were able to conclude from the interviews conducted for this study with those in charge of the media outlets the following goals:

Al-Iman TV: To present a human and civilized image of Islamic media that keeps up with the times; to enhance interaction with the Quran as a text and content by presenting it as a reference governing knowledge; to consolidate pan-Islamic thought between Islam's denominations and to reaffirm the Prophet and his family's (Ahl al-bayt) intellectual reference; to show unity and dialogue between Muslims in the face of the culture of excess, backwardness and superstition [...].

Télé Lumière: To build the bridges of peace between denominations and to accept the Other; to build the Christian person spiritually and to build a religious and social culture.

Charity TV: The outlet targets young people to build them culturally, spiritually and morally.

Voice of Gospel: A Lebanese Christian radio station dedicated to all the Lebanese in Lebanon and beyond, working to transmit the word of God to listeners and spreading love and peace.

Radio Al Bassaer: The outlet aims to promote the activities of the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council and to disseminate religious teachings and Islamic law fatwas.

Irtiqaa Way Radio: The outlet aims to open communication and dialogue channels with the other with professionalism, proficiency and transparency, and work to achieve the concepts of elevating society towards applying Islam and its original concepts away from heresies, superstitions and fanaticism.

Nidaa Al Maarifa Radio: The outlet identifies itself as a political, social and cultural radio station.

Albachaer Radio: It is concerned with spreading a conscientious humane missionary culture that is open to life and man with the aim of preserving the unity of Lebanon and peaceful coexistence between its people, establishing peaceful and purposeful dialogue between religions, and bringing denominations closer, in a unified position in the face of the dangers menacing Lebanon, and in particular in the face of the Zionist enemy.

Alsalam Radio: The outlet seeks to spread Orthodox hymns and the oriental heritage in particular while being open to the Western heritage and purposeful songs.

Sawt el Haq, Al Tawhid Radio: It was established to support the Islamic situation in Lebanon, the Islamic revolution in the world and the jihadist situation that restored the spirit of this Ummah.

Holy Quran Radio: The Holy Quran Radio aspires in Lebanon to foster listeners who adhere to the tolerant principles of the Islamic Sharia, to be able thus to transcend spiritually, accepting all heavenly religions, based on the principle of peaceful coexistence and tolerance, without renouncing the right doctrine.

Fajr Radio in Lebanon: Fajr Radio represents the project of the Islamic Group in Lebanon. Its general goals include endorsing the national and Islamic position on issues of the nation and the ummah, strengthening the culture of dialogue between the segments of the Lebanese society, and highlighting just causes in the Lebanese and Arab societies.

Voice of Charity: To consolidate Christians on their land, and protect their unity and coexistence with the other. In addition, it has a missionary and spiritual message.

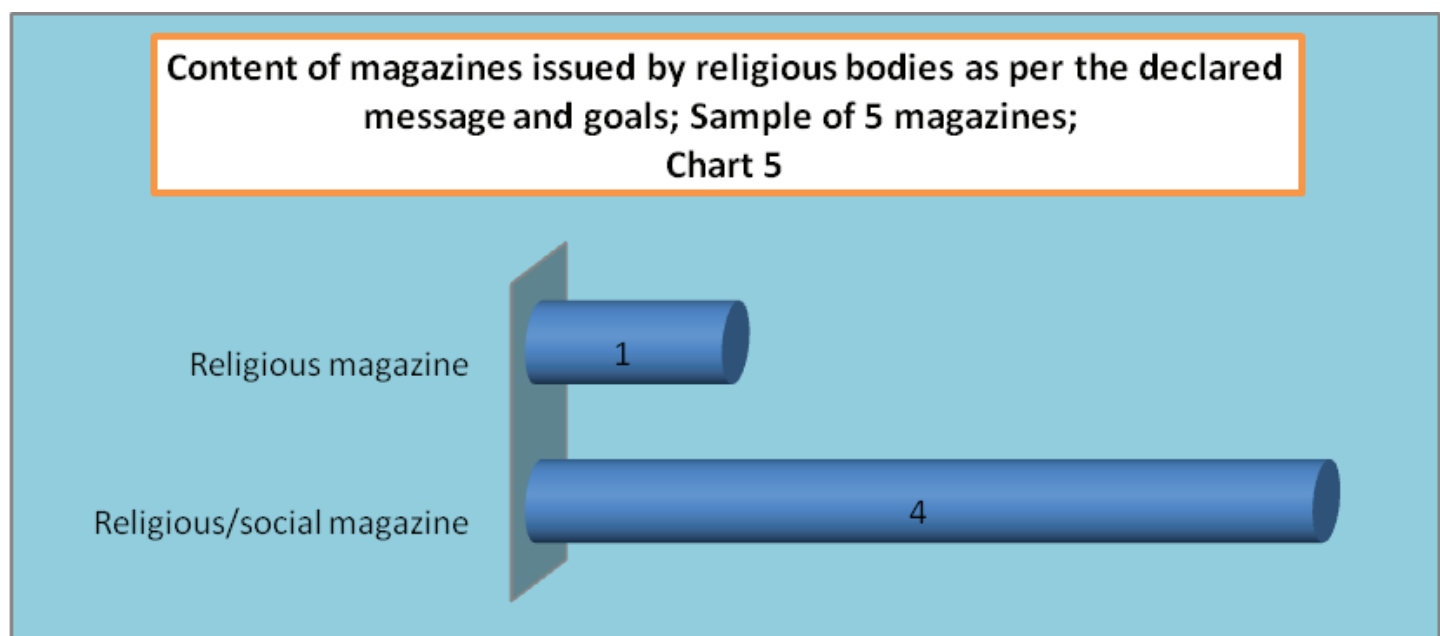
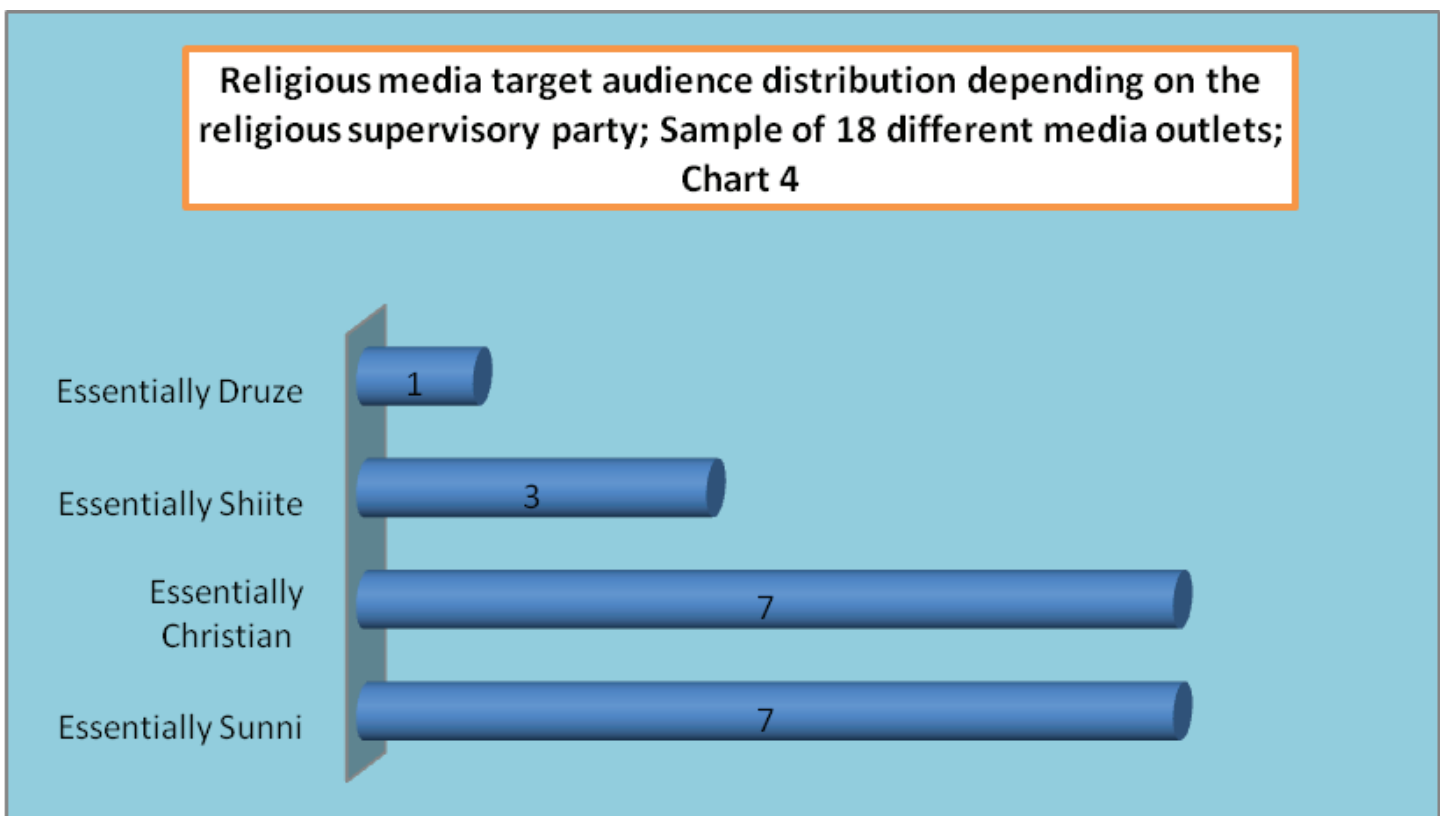
Risalat Al-Kalima magazine: It aims to reinforce the faith of believers and bring those who are away closer to God. The Risalat Al-Kalima adheres to the Evangelical faith.

Manarulhuda Magazine: To spread the religious knowledge through wisdom and fair preaching, combat extremism and excess in religion with science and facts, and purify society from blights, evil heresies and common falsehoods.

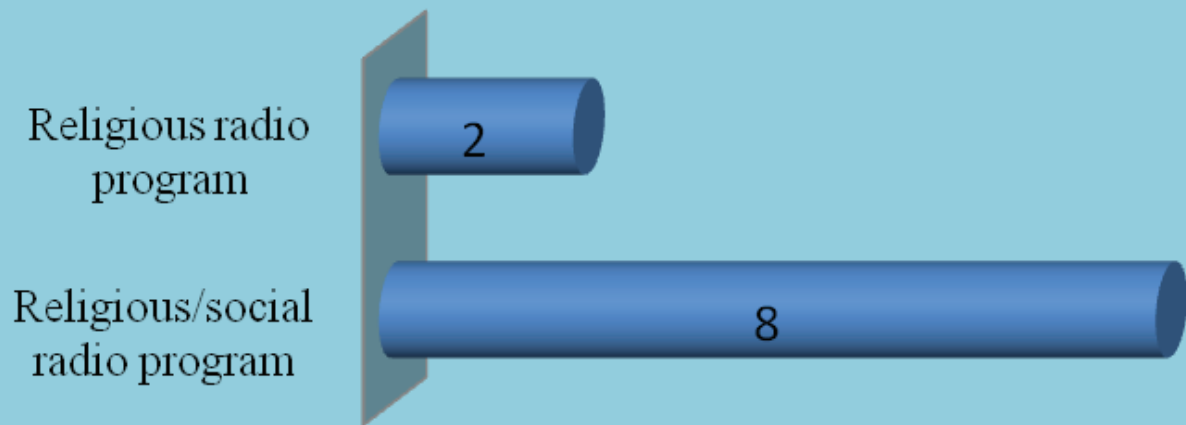
Ora Magazine: To create a link between the members of the Lebanese society and Ora Union, provide services to the Lebanese society within a civil framework away from sectarianism, dogmatism, and narrow partisan politics. The magazine presents itself as a service, social and cultural publication.

Duha Magazine: To reach all the Lebanese and consolidate attachment to the land, and introduce the clergy of the Unitarian Druze and other denominations.

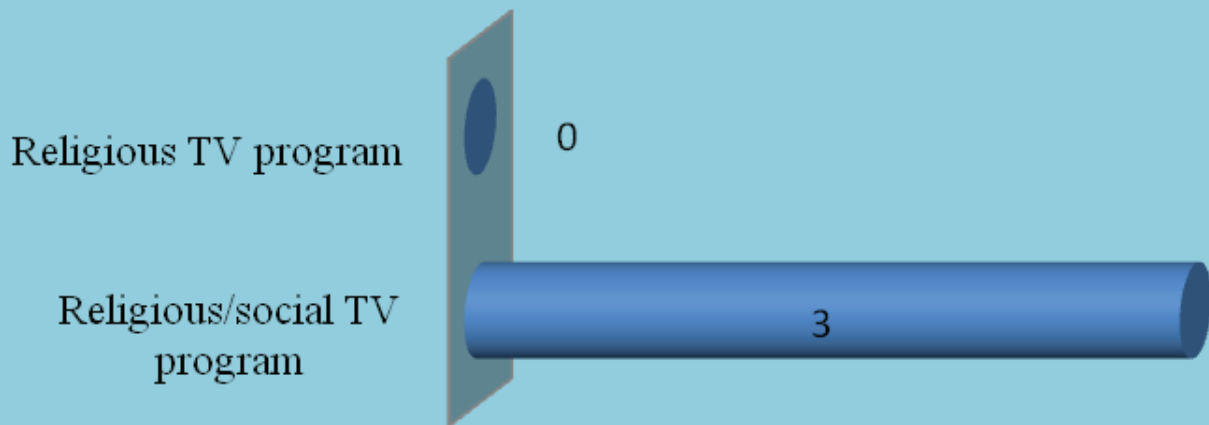
Taqwa magazine: Media for an enlightened Islamic future and an authentic bright culture. Work to spread the Islamic call (da'wah), and support the sciences, thought and knowledge.



Network of programs by religious radio outlets as per the declared message and goals; Sample of 10 radio outlets; Chart 6



Network of programs by religious TV outlets as per the declared message and goals; Sample of 3 TV outlets; Chart 7



2. The legal reality

The audiovisual religious media have remained outside the general regulatory framework of the Lebanese media. Print media, on the other hand, are subject to the Publications Law, as it is easy to obtain a license for a non-political second category publication (social/cultural). So, it appears that the legal challenge is in the audiovisual media.

The 1994 Audiovisual Law did not deal with the subject of religious media, although the television channel Télé Lumière had been broadcasting terrestrially since 1991, while other religious radios had been broadcasting for years, such as Charity Radio that was launched in 1984.

As a result of the negotiations of the religious authorities with the Lebanese authorities, the ministerial Decision No. 214, dated January 15, 1996, was issued, signed by the Minister of Information Farid Makari, and “with the approval of the Council of Ministers”, granting the religious authorities in Lebanon a license to broadcast religious programs by allocating television and radio frequencies to them.

The decree put at the disposal of the Assembly of the Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops of Lebanon a frequency in the FM band to be supervised by this Assembly, called “Voice of Charity from Radio Liban”, on the condition it started and ended its programming with the Lebanese national anthem, was dedicated to religious Christian media, its programming was ecumenical in nature, and it would not broadcast news or political programs, directly or indirectly.

The decree also allocated Dar al-Fatwa and the Supreme Shiite Council a similar radio frequency, for its programs to be spiritual in nature and not broadcast news or political programs, directly or indirectly, to be called “In the Expanses of Islam from Radio Liban”, on the condition that it started and ended its programming with the Lebanese national anthem.

The decree also allowed religious authorities to broadcast on television by allocating a special channel in Télé Liban for religious programs, “to be divided equally between the Christian and Muslim denominations”, where the Christian program in this channel would be supervised by the Assembly of the Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops, headed by the Maronite Patriarch, and the Muslim program by the Dar al-Fatwa of the Lebanese Republic and the Supreme Shiite Council. This channel was called Télé Liban – Religious Program, and it would start and end its programs with the Lebanese national anthem.

The decision stipulated that the programs of these two radio stations and television channels were limited to “covering religious celebrations and broadcasting prayers and programs that explain Christian and Muslim religious faith, spread the spirit of love and peace among the Lebanese, highlight moral values, and foster the culture and spirit of true citizenship and solidarity among the different groups of Lebanese in support of peaceful coexistence.”

However, this decree was not applied as to a special channel part of Télé Liban, while Voice of Charity chose to broadcast as an independent radio.

However, according to the survey conducted for this study with those in charge of the religious audiovisual media outlets, there are some organizations that were licensed at different times, while others operate as commercial companies, and others still without any license. The legal status of these media outlets is as follows:

Télé Lumière: The television station presents itself as follows: "The official authorities consider Télé Lumière, through the Assembly of the Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Lebanon, a Christian television that retains financial and administrative independence and the freedom to broadcast, and there is no control over it except from the ecclesiastical authorities."¹⁸ That is, the station is legally not licensed, but it is under the guardianship of the Church in Lebanon. In 2004, the Noursat satellite channel (it is part of the Télé Lumière group) obtained a satellite broadcasting authorization from the Ministry of Communications by virtue of Decision No. 447/1, dated October 11, 2004.

Charity TV: It was founded in 2009 through live broadcasts over the internet, and in late 2016, it started broadcasting by satellite via Nilesat.

Al-Iman TV: The Al-Iman satellite channel operates in Lebanon as a representative office of the main channel that has been licensed in London under permit no. 07143974, dated February 2, 2010, under the private channel category.

Nidaa Al Maarifa Radio: The radio obtained a first category license in 1998 during the government of Selim Hoss.

Albachaer Radio: The name Albachaer was given by virtue of an official license issued by the Council of Ministers, dated December 20, 1996, as a second category cultural radio for young people.

Sawt al Haq Al Tawhid radio: The Balagh Company Sal. (Unity Radio) submitted an official application to receive a legal license and it was granted during the government of Selim Hoss, which approved the license in its last session in the summer of 2000.

Fajr Radio in Lebanon: Fajr Radio obtained a first category license from the Lebanese Council of Ministers by virtue of Law No. 658, dated August 30, 2007, and it was officially launched on October 10, 2008. It is an independent company with a large portion of its shares owned by the Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya.

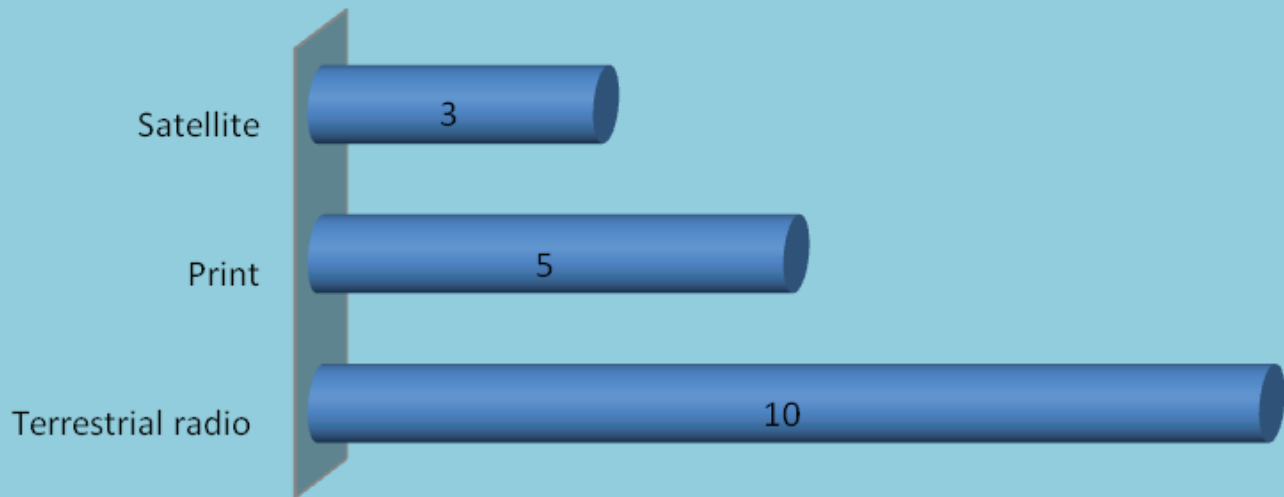
Voice of Charity: The Voice of Charity radio was founded in 1984. The radio station was registered under the name of Voice of Charity as a company in 1996. It obtained a registration certificate of a commercial company from the Ministry of Finance under the name of "Voice of Charity – Congregation of the Maronite Lebanese Missionaries", dated February 23, 2005. It also obtained in February 17, 2010 a certificate confirming its commercial record from the Ministry of Justice (President of the Court of First Instance).

Holy Quran Radio

It applied for a license in 1996 and launched its broadcast in mid 1997.

18. <http://noursat.tv/ar/live.php>

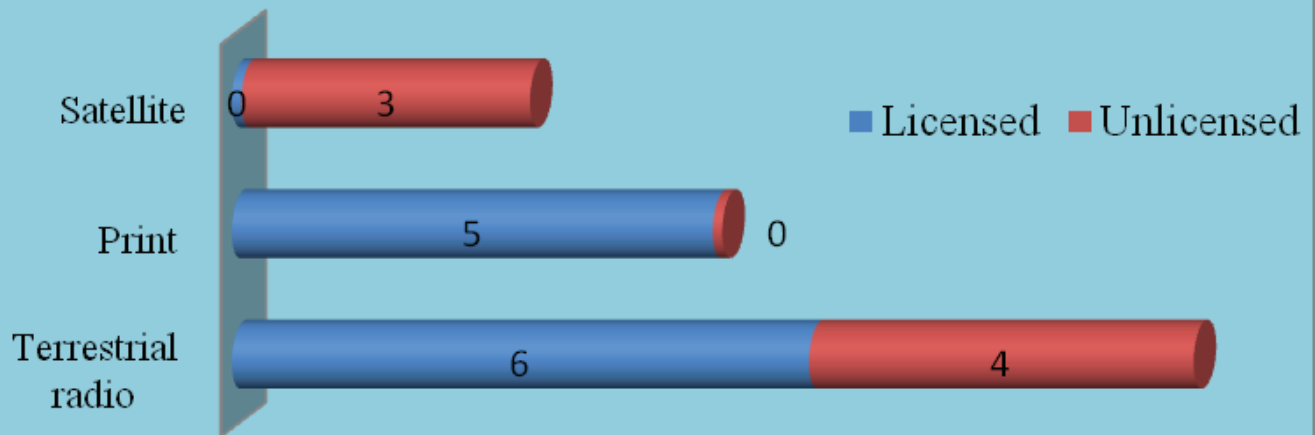
**Means of publishing or broadcasting by religious media; Sample of 18 different outlets;
Chart 8**



**Legal status of print, radio and TV religious media; Sample of 18 different outlets;
Chart 9**



Detailed chart of the legal status of religious media according to the provisions of TV, radio and satellite broadcasting; Sample of 18 different outlets;
Chart 10



3. Religious media organizations in Lebanon

Below we survey the most prominent religious media organizations in Lebanon and present information about them. The information provided is based on interviews conducted for the study with those in charge of the organizations.

3.1 Television stations

3.1.1 Télé Lumière

Télé Lumière presents itself as the first Christian television station in Lebanon and the Arab world. It was founded in 1991 and was led by Brother Nour. It operates under the supervision of the Assembly of the Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops. It is run by a council of religious officials from various Christian denominations as well as laymen. The relationship between the ecclesiastical authority and the television is governed by a “cooperation protocol”. It is based in Dora, Beirut.

The goal of the station when it was founded after the war was “to build the bridges of peace and to accept the other, in addition to building the Christian person spiritually and building a religious and social culture.” Since 2003, it has been broadcasting its satellite programs around the world as Noursat. It has transformed into a network of stations aiming to reach different social and age groups.

After moving to satellite broadcasting in place of terrestrial in 2004, Télé Lumière became part of the Noursat network that includes 14 different stations, such as Al Shabab, Mariam, Kids, Sahira (targeting people with special needs), News, Nour el Arab, etc. Some of the stations are broadcast via satellite and others over the internet.

As for the reach of the station, only social media figures are available with 500,000 followers on Facebook.¹⁹

19. The list of programs is available at: <http://www.noursat.tv/ar/programs.php>

3.1.2 Charity TV

Charity TV was founded in 2009 and it started broadcasting via the internet. It later moved to cable television. In 2016, it moved to satellite broadcasting via Nilesat. The station belongs to the Council of the Maronite Bishops, while it is managed by the Congregation of the Maronite Lebanese Missionaries (a monastic institution directly affiliated with the Maronite Patriarchate). It is based in Jounieh (Fouad Chehab Street, next to the Collège Central).

The station targets young people “to build them culturally, spiritually and morally”²⁰, so it can be noted that all its programs appeal to youth

3.1.3 Al-Iman TV

The station is affiliated with Sayyed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah and is based in Beirut.²¹ It was established to be a general religious, educational and cultural television channel that presents Islam in a modern and positive media image and in an exciting and effective language that combines tradition and modernity, away from stereotypical and traditional handling of religious matter. It is based on the values of truth, openness, dialogue, justice, dignity, freedom and unity.

Al-Iman satellite channel offers religious, educational, social and scientific culture and deals with political culture from various angles. It also works to intensify programs during major religious seasons (Ramadan, Muharram Al-Haram, the Hajj season, and Islamic Unity week, among others).

It aims to occupy a leading position in the field of television production offering original enlightened Islam in accordance with high quality standards and in conformity with the requirements of the ISO quality management system. Based on this, the channel’s primary focus is not on ratings, despite its importance in the media sector, as much as intensifying its efforts to provide religious and cultural media content that is constructive and objective.

3.2 Radio stations

3.2.1 Radio Al Bassaer

The radio station aims to provide information about the activities of the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council, and disseminate religious teachings and Islamic law fatwas accurately. The outlet’s programs are based on the sermons of Sheikh Abdul Amir Kabalan Kabalan, in addition to news about the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council’s activities and religious songs (nadbayat).

The outlet does not have a legal license, a matter which has led to a dispute between the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council and the Lebanese State, so the radio suffers from poor transmission in Beirut and South. The radio is officially affiliated with the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council. It covers Beirut and South on the frequency 89.3. It is based in Haret Hreik, Airport Road, Beirut, and it does not broadcast over the internet.

20. The list of programs is available at: http://www.kreimmediacenter.org/krmc_pages/schedule_tv.php

21. Information obtained from Ikram Zarqat, PR Director of the outlet.

3.2.2 Irtiqaa Way Radio

Irtiqaa Way Radio is a specialized talk radio station that was launched in Lebanon in April 2012. It was founded by Sheikh Khaled Zaarour. It is based in Tripoli and covers all of Lebanon. It broadcasts on the following frequencies: Bekaa and South on 96.5, Beirut on 87.5 and Tripoli on 96.5 and 98.5. It also broadcasts over the internet on the following link: www.irtiqaway.com.

The radio station is commercially affiliated with the real estate S1 company and it is not licensed.

“The radio’s nature is a call to Islam (da’wah) and its slogan Dialogue with the Other. It does not hold a license despite the fact that someone offered a franchise; in addition, the State doesn’t care about it,” explains Sheikh Zaarour. The radio is levied a tax for setting broadcast (transmitter) antennas, amounting to roughly LBP 25 million for each antenna according to Zaarour. The station has 12 transmitter antennas spread over the Lebanese territory. This is a high cost, in addition to the outlet’s monthly expenses that are just under USD 60,000, covering salaries, maintenance and broadcasting.

“The outlet aims to open communication and dialogue channels with the other with professionalism, proficiency and transparency, through qualified media staff and a distinctive manner that would ensure correcting mistaken traditional concepts. The goal was to establish a leading media organization nationally and internationally to contribute to consolidating the concepts of the call to Allah by the way of the Quran and the Sunnah, understanding the predecessors of the ummah, seeking to develop this institution to keep up with the times, enabling society to lay sound and solid foundations for human life based on dialogue, mutual understanding, dignity, full harmony, and working to achieve the concepts of elevating society towards applying Islam and its original concepts away from heresies, superstitions and fanaticism that have captured the hearts of Muslims and steered them away from Islam’s pure spring [...]”

3.2.3 Nidaa Al Maarifa Radio

The radio station presents itself as a political, social and cultural station, from Beirut to all the world, its broadcast covering Beirut, Bekaa, North and South.

Its programs are diverse and suitable for various age groups. In addition, it broadcasts competitions and awards that take place live on air. It presents brief news bulletins that highlight the main local, Arab and international news from nine am to six pm, in addition to a detailed news bulletin at noon.²²

The outlet was granted a first category license in 1998 during the government of Selim Hoss. The station has suffered during several periods wave interferences with illegal stations using its frequency.

22. It is possible to listen live to Nidaa al Maarifa at www.nidaa.fm, and it is possible to find the programming at: <http://www.nidaa.fm/index.php>

3.2.4 Albachaer Radio

The radio station was launched “out of a sense of legitimate responsibility and true citizenship, to preserve the unity of Lebanon and peaceful coexistence between its people, to establish peaceful and purposeful dialogue between religions, to bring denominations closer, and for the unity of the stance in the face of the dangers facing Lebanon, and in particular in the face of the Zionist enemy.” This was done in 1987 upon the initiative of Sayyed Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, who launched “Sawt Al-Iman”, and it was broadcasting the Friday sermon from the rostrum of the Imam Reza mosque in Bir Al Abed. Later, the station was renamed Albachaer Radio by virtue of an official license issued by the Council of Ministers, dated December 20, 1996, as a second category cultural station for young people. “They are the omens [bachaer] of faith, charity, guidance, brotherhood and self-cultivation.” Its mission is to “spread a conscientious humane missionary culture that is open to life and man, by producing and presenting purposeful radio programs that target all the segments of society, especially youth, in Lebanon on the FM wave, and the world via the internet.”

“Albachaer radio reflects everyone’s sentiments with purposeful cultural, religious, social and sports programs, always sheds light on the living, economic, health, and education problems and concerns of citizens, and tries hard to deal with them with its constant and responsible discussions to find solutions with the relevant and experienced people.”²³

Its broadcast covers all the Lebanese territory on the following frequencies: 95.3, 95.5 and 95.7 MHz (FM). It also covers the north of occupied Palestine, the south of Syria and the city of Damascus, Rif Dimashq Governorate and the Syrian coast. It broadcasts online at the following link: www.albachaer.com. It also broadcasts via satellite on Nilesat.

3.2.5 Sawt al Haq (Al Tawhid Radio)

The radio station is located in the Abou Smara area, Tripoli, Lebanon. “From the first day of its establishment, the station has played an active and effective role in the process of shaping religious and political awareness in the Islamic arena.”

“It was founded during the period of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 as a station of rejection and change to the reality of defeat and despair that prevailed among people, especially after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon [...] Al Tawhid Radio was a good accompaniment to the mobilization in the Islamic and Lebanese arenas on the basis of an Islamic movement, and it was undoubtedly the resounding voice of the Islamic resistance in Lebanon and the global Islamic movement, and liberation and jihad movements.”

“The station has gone through many stages during which programs developed, it expanded the scope of its broadcast and increased the number of hours of transmission to reach 24-hour continuous broadcasting, and for its transmission to reach the capital Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and South. The station applied for an official license in the name of Balagh company and it obtained it during the government of Selim Hoss, which had approved this license during its last session in the summer of 2000.”

23. The program is available at: <http://www.albachaer.com/ListingPrograms.aspx?id=137>

3.2.6 Holy Quran Radio

The radio station is affiliated with the Dar al-Fatwa of the Lebanese Republic. It operates under its umbrella and supervision, and is guided by the strategy set by the Grand Mufti of the Lebanese Republic Sheikh Abdel-Latif Derian. It is based in the Dar al-Fatwa building in Aisha Bakkar, Beirut.

"It was founded in mid 1997. It uses the method of indirect guidance, through wisdom and fair preaching, to meet the urgent needs of Muslims in learning about their religion, and listen to their Quran that is recited during the night and during the day."

"Its broadcast has gone beyond Lebanon to reach the north of the Syrian coast, north of Palestine, even the Egyptian Arish region, and some inner parts of Syria.

"The Holy Quran station has sought to provide the best programs it can to the different segments of listeners, and has expanded its reach via the internet to become available in every part of the world. It has also produced a variety of programs that focus on interpreting the Quran, on fiqh and its rules, on fatwas, other matters that educate on health, nutrition and the environment, news on the Arab and Islamic arenas, with emphasis on the rule of religion, in addition to programs focusing on women in particular and the family in general, and programs offered to the station from its peers and famous preachers, without overlooking purposeful radio entertainment, cultural, literary and drama series programs and competitions."²⁴

3.2.7 Fajr Radio in Lebanon

"Fajr Radio was granted a first category license by the Council of Ministers of Lebanon by virtue of Decision No. 658, dated August 30, 2007. It was officially launched on August 10, 2008. It is an independent company, with a majority of stakeholders belonging to Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya. It broadcasts from Beirut and covers all the Lebanese territory, in addition to a part of northern Palestine. It is based in Aisha Bakkar, Beirut".²⁵

"Fajr Radio represents the project of the Islamic Group in Lebanon. However, in its public discourse, it avoids partisan rhetoric, and translates this openness through its editorial line in its various programs, news and guests. It is also not religious (in the sense of the Azhar), as its programs are not limited to Quranic recitations, madih, and lectures. It is a diverse station that broadcasts various categories of political, religious, social, entertainment, sports, cultural and art programs... It operates within Islamic law principles."

"Fajr radio aims to be the pulse of people, shedding light on their problems and their social, living and educational demands, etc., and it strives to alleviate them and provide services to them."

"At Fajr Radio, we also feel great responsibility at this time where there is demonization of the Islamic project and distortion of the image of those working for it. This leads us to present Islam in its bright form, and we reaffirm that adhering to the teachings of Islam does not mean violence or terrorism, and that Islam is a tolerant religion that wants good for everyone, and calls for the love of the homeland and positive integration in it, and it stresses the value of the human being, freedoms and justice. And as devout Muslims, we are committed to the laws of the state in which we live and its institutions, whether military, political or social..."

"The target segment of Fajr Radio is primarily 'Sunni Muslims' in Lebanon, whether devout or not, and in the second place the various spectra and groups of the Islamic arena. However, we are keen through our programming plans to break these classifications, so we deal with general social, humanitarian, cultural and family issues that are of interest for different segments of society, with their different schools of thought and denominations."

24. Website: <http://www.quranradio.com.lb>

25. Website: www.fajrradio.com. It broadcasts online.

3.2.8 Voice of Charity

The Voice of Love Radio was founded in 1984 without authorization, and it broadcasts across all of Lebanon on 105.9, 106.1 and 106.3. It is affiliated with the Council of Maronite Bishops in Bkerki and it is managed by the Congregation of Lebanese Missionaries. It is based in Fouad Chehab Street in Jounieh, next to the Collège Central.

“As for the vision of the station, it is consolidating Christians on their land, and protecting their unity and coexistence with the other. It also has a missionary and spiritual message. The station targets Christians in general and its programs focus on different groups, from children, to young people, women and the elderly.”

“There are no data on ratings, but there is an application for the radio station that has been installed on smartphones by more than 100,000 people. The radio also broadcasts over the internet. In terms of the legal framework of Voice of Charity, it was registered as a company under the name Voice of Charity in 1996, after being licensed by the Council of Ministers with the Decision No. 33/96.”²⁶

3.2.9 Voice of Gospel

“Voice of Gospel is the voice of Jesus in Lebanon. It is a Lebanese, Christian radio station dedicated to all the Lebanese in Lebanon and abroad, broadcasting on the frequencies 94.5 and 911.0 and covering Beirut and Mount Lebanon.”

It is a non profit outlet, working to bring the word of God to listeners and to spread love and peace.

It started broadcasting in 2009-2010.

“It operates under the supervision of the media office at the Maronite Archdiocese of Beirut. The license has been applied for recently and it has not been granted yet as a public limited company. The company has a Facebook account with 2,262 followers on its page. The station is based in Beit Meri and has antennas in Beit Meri and Achrafieh.”

3.2.10 Alsalam Radio

A radio station belonging to the Orthodox Archdiocese of Akkar, launched by the Metropolitan Basilius Mansour on December 20, 2011. It is based in the Archdiocese.²⁷ The radio transmission can be received on two frequencies operating in North Lebanon (90.3 and 95.1 FM).

“The station seeks to spread Orthodox hymns and the oriental heritage in particular while being open to the Western heritage and purposeful songs. Its programs focus on Orthodox teachings and its identity that is open to all people, and accompanies cultural, social and development activities in Akkar.”

With regard to its legal status, the outlet has been operating without a license since its establishment. The station has a smartphone application that has been downloaded by 1,300 users.

26. The full programming is available at: http://www.kreimmediacenter.org/krmc_pages/schedule.php

27. It is available online on www.alsalamradio.com, and through a smartphone application “Alsalamradio”.

3.3 Publications

It is difficult to conduct an accurate survey of religious magazines and publications, as many of them are regional, even parochial, issued with a license and with limited distributed. The issuance of many of these publications is not periodic, and some stop being issued after a while. The study conducted by Father Tony Khadra on Christian publications counted 69 magazines issued by parishioners or religious institutions in Lebanon.²⁸

The following overview deals with some licensed magazines as examples of religious publications:

3.3.1 Manarulhuda Magazine

The Manarulhuda Magazine is an Islamic cultural and social magazine that has been in publication since 1992. It is based in Tariq Al Jadideh and is distributed through the Association of Projects in Lebanon and abroad.

The magazine presents itself as follows: "In the summer of 1992, the torch of Manarulhuda magazine was lit, and the light of this enlightened institution, that is issued by the information office of the Association of Islamic Charitable Projects, emerged at a time when "charitable project" institutions were being built one after the other, and they were built high and bright."

"From the start, we wanted it to be a beacon of truth, good, and public benefit, a landmark of sound religious guidance, a means for spreading enlightened culture, serving man, family, society, the homeland and the ummah."

Since Manarulhuda is the beacon [manar] "charitable projects", naturally its goals proceed from the goals of this organization. The main goal is spreading the religious knowledge through wisdom and fair preaching, combat extremism and excess in religion with science and facts, and purify society from blights, evil heresies and common falsehoods.

"We have also shown interest in modern beneficial academic sciences. The woman has a share in our magazine too, being part of society. We have also not missed to show interest in health, environmental issues and spreading the culture of prevention and knowledge in social milieus, and confronting various problems, such as drugs and marital and family disputes. Cultural, educational, social, sports, scouting, and entertainment activities, among others, have receive large space on our pages. We have also dedicated the supplement "Farahi" (my joy) to children and teens as joy for them, a spring of knowledge, and a platform accompanying their growth and thought."²⁹

3.3.2 Risalat al-Kalima

It is a Christian quarterly magazine that deals with spiritual, moral and social issues from a biblical point of view. "It aims to reinforce the faith of believers and bring those who are far from God closer to him, and it adheres to the 'Word of God' of the Evangelical faith."

"The magazine is licensed by the Lebanese Ministry of Information and it is issued by the Baptist Evangelical Church of Lebanon. Its director and editor-in-chief is pastor Dr. Edgard Traboulsi, who is assisted by a team of 40 volunteers, including writers, language teachers, directors, photographers, and a marketing team and administrators. The magazine dedicates 70% of its articles to national writers and leaves 30% for translations, with the aim of bringing readers Christian thought from around the world. The license is in the name of Pastor Dr. Edgard Traboulsi in person, as a pastor of the Evangelical Baptist Church.

"The magazine is committed to developing its service by training its writers and those working in it to offer the best to readers in the 285 villages and towns in Lebanon, and more than 20 countries around the world. The magazine currently has a print run of 7,000 for each issue and is funded by subscriptions, subscriber donations, friends and churches."³⁰

28. The Guide to Christian Magazines in Lebanon includes an overview of 69 magazines in addition to "a field study about the reality of Christian magazines and publications". International Catholic Press Association in Lebanon Publications, Antelias, Lebanon, 2002, pp. 106-113.

29. The magazine is available online at: <https://www.manarulhudamag.com>

30. <http://risalatalkalima.com/site/>

3.3.3 Ora Magazine

It obtained license No. 809/2013, dated September 10, 2013, from the Lebanese Ministry of Information to issue a non-political weekly publication in the Arabic, French and English languages, specializing in the work of the International Catholic Press Association of Lebanon titled Ora. It is published temporarily three times a year (every four months) and currently in the Arabic language only. To date, five issues have been published. The magazine is issued by UcipLiban, the International Catholic Press Association, and it represents Ora Union that includes the following organizations: UcipLiban supporting free press and culture, Labora providing jobs for the Lebanese youth in the private and public sectors, the youth pulse organization Gro Act to mobilize the young society and support clubs and scouts, organizations and cooperatives of all kinds, and Aulib, an organization for friends of the Lebanese University supporting issues relating to the Lebanese University.

"The magazine aims to create a link between the members of the Lebanese society and Ora Union, provide services to the Lebanese society within a civil framework away from sectarianism, dogmatism, and narrow partisan politics. (The magazine is a service, social and cultural publication). The magazine is member of the Press Syndicate (on the list of non-political non-periodic publications)."³¹

3.3.4 Duha Magazine

"It includes cultural, social, youth topics and various other topics, and most importantly earth, knowledge and nature."

It deals with religious topics relating to the Unitarian Druze clergy, in addition to the participation of clergy of other religions in pieces through interviews and contributions.

Its goals include reaching all the Lebanese, attachment to land, introducing clergy of the Unitarian Druze and other religions too. It is under the supervision of the Druze Religious Council. It has a print run of 4,000, 500 copies of which are sent to Syria.³²

3.3.5 Taqwa Magazine

It was granted a license on September 9, 1991. It belongs to Sheikh Mazhar Al Hamawi, member of the Supreme Islamic Shari'a Council. Its goals include media for a conscientious Islamic future and an authentic bright culture, working to spread the Islamic call (daawa), and support for the sciences, thought and knowledge.

31. <http://www.oraunion.org/%2523>

32. <http://doha.druzecouncil.com/>

Conclusions

1. Satellite broadcast

The Arab space is swarming with hundreds of religious audiovisual outlets, in different languages and religious affiliations. There are also those religious outlets of multiple identities and languages that can be picked up with a simple receiver and those that broadcast via the internet, allowing the audiences to choose what suits his interests and principles. Thus, these stations take back individuals to specific affiliations through the religious group they feel they belong to.

However, many of these outlets hide behind religious goals to play other roles, whether political, financial, promotional, or other. This has led to the majority of Arab countries to start monitoring such outlets and preparing self-defense tools, including technical and legal but mostly religious or informational opposition media.

These dangers coming from some of the religious media should not be a reason to reject all of it. The religious media may be an example of pluralistic media and of media of cultural and religious dialogue if they pursue consolidating peace and adopt the values of accepting the other, citizenship and human rights.

2. The Lebanese religious media

The religious media in Lebanon seem to have imposed itself assertively on the political authorities and the media landscape alike. The 1994 Audiovisual Law, which avoided legalizing religious media, was not able to prevent the flourishing religious media organizations, which have imposed themselves through religious and sectarian authorities and succeeded at times in obtaining licenses.

However, with cross-border media, is there a point today in preventing or restricting Lebanese religious media? Firstly, this drives the Lebanese faithful audiences to foreign outlets of unknown origin and unknown goals. In addition, it is undeniable that religious media responds to a need of the faithful audiences, with counterparts in most countries around the world that try to codify this media.

There are three religious television outlets in Lebanon today that can be singled out in terms of viewership and following. It seems very useful that these stations are successful and able to compete with foreign religious media, since the "Lebanize" religious discourse, given the various negative content that may be promoted by foreign religious outlets. It is important to note that production costs of television programs are very high and that good productions are usually sponsored by rich countries or international organizations, which makes local production poor and limited.

Radio outlets, on the other hand, appear to be more diverse given the large number of stations and that the cost of radio broadcasting is very small compared to that of television. In addition, radio production is easy and radio has the feature of being interactive and close to its audiences. This makes radio an effective and active communication means.

It seems clear from the goals set by the religious media institutions in Lebanon that they operate based on a specific vision of the general social reality, whether religious, political or national. Although they focus primarily on religious aspects, they often go beyond them to broader goals relating to building society and man. Each organization has its own audience, which is its first goal, and it addresses its audience guided by religious principles that it defends and that it represents.

These religious media are an unparalleled spiritual authority given that they are linked to the top of the religious pyramid, making its messages important for the faithful.

In addition, Lebanese religious media is diverse and rich in its pluralism, since it appeals to most of the faithful of different denominations and responds to their interactive and service needs. It also consolidates belonging to a group with its own positive and negative aspects.

The need for such media may have grown due to the sharp decline of secular media in Lebanon, as the role of printed media has diminished and the content of television programs has been impoverished, in addition to increasing complaints about sensational and silly programs that are rife on Lebanese television channels.

3. A positive window for the religious media

During the closing session of the conference “The Culture of Dialogue and Social Media”, Sayyed Ali Fadlallah said, “I express my sorrow when I see the other absent in our religious and civic education books. Our generations at Islamic schools know nothing about Christians, because Christianity is absent, and our generations in Christian schools know nothing about Muslims because Islam is absent. The same goes for our generations in denominations, whether Muslim or Christian. Ask our university students at our universities about what they know about the other religion or religious community. I believe that only a handful would be able to present real knowledge. Thus, our denominations and religious communities are rife with stereotypes about the other. And if this is the case in our religious and faith community, what would it be in the political sphere?”³³

The religious media, just like the secular media, can contribute to the consolidation of civil peace and reinforcing national unity. There is a great need for such media. However, if this media leads to increased strife between the different segments of one country, this poses a threat to civil peace and national unity.

What is the role of this media? This question can be answered with a study of the content of these media organizations to identify the line of its discourse, its impact on the audience and the course it's taking.

33. A conference organized by the Studies and Publications Directorate at the Ministry of Information, at the Conference Room at the American University of Beirut, March 4, 2017. <http://nna-leb.gov.lb/ar/show-news/272196/>



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For More Information:

Peace Building in Lebanon Project
Arab Bank Building - 6th Floor
Riad El Solh Street Nejmeh Beirut - Lebanon
Telephone: 01-980583 or 70-119160