

## **The Internal Security Forces (I.S.F) in Lebanon** **Their creation – History- Development**

### **First : The creation of the I.S.F.**

Lebanon did not know a police organization, in the modern and legal meaning, before the creation of a lebanese gendarmerie by virtue of protocol 1861. Before this year, the Lebanese Emirs, with the help of their armed men, were in charge of policing, law enforcement and tax-collect. We will present hereunder a summary concerning the creation of the I.S.F.

#### **1- The mandate of Emir Fakhreddine II (He came to power in 1589):**

The Emir Fakhreddine II is considered to be the founder of the modern Lebanese state. After a perturbed childhood, he came to power in 1589 and started instantly working for the unification of the country, by destroying some independent ephemeral Lebanese families, who were dissenters.

In order to control policing and for the execution of ordinary police missions, the Emir has created a group of armed men, named “Zelems” i.e. direct servants.

There were also another little groups of “Zelems” for feudal lords.

If internal disorders became alarming and threatening the total security of the country, the Emir did not hesitate to ask help from his professional elements “The Sikmans”, who were foreign mercenaries.

Nevertheless, he avoided the participation of “Bedouins”, used to theft and murders, instead of military actions.

#### **2- The mandate of Emir Bechir II (He came to power in 1788)**

There were two kinds of military elements for policing: the first are “Cavaliers” of Emir Bechir the great and “Tax Collector” or “Hawalie” whose functions were as gendarmes, threatening evildoers.

These elements were not the real gendarmerie, well- organized and have definite missions, because rules and law were not specified for security agents, till the creation of the 2 caimacamats (Administrative districts) in 1842.

#### **3- The regime of caimacamats (Administrative Districts)**

Following the bloody incidents taken place in the Lebanese mountain in 1840, great countries asked the Automans for the creation of 2 caimacamats in Mount-Lebanon: the first under the control of the Maronites, the other under the Druzes control, and that was done in 1842.

In that historical period, Lebanon has known for the first time the appearance of regular security forces, designated for some determined police missions.

There were in the center of each administrative district (Sarba and Choueifat) a semi-gendarmerie group of 300 elements (Infantry) and cavaliers, under the commandment of an officer in the rank of "Blouk bachi"- equal to the rank of Major nowadays.

With the execution of Protocol 1861, these two groups were replaced by a group of officers "zabaties", by virtue of article 14 of the said protocol. So, the Lebanese gendarmerie has been created.

#### **4- The lebanese gendarmerie in the regime of Moutassarifat (started in 1860)**

After the arrival of the french expedition in 1860, under the commandment of General Beaufort d'Hautpoul, and Lebanon has obtained international political guarantees from great countries, the ottoman military groups left their barracks and were replaced by some security units. Article 14 of the protocol determined the creation of the lebanese gendarmerie at the rate of 7 elements for 1000 habitants. The gendarmerie unit was then to be composed of 3500 elements, because the number of population in Lebanon was about 500.000 persons, in 1860.

Nevertheless, the limited financial means were not enough for more than 1500 elements. A brigade of 1500 elements has been equipped and divided to 3 battalions, then to 2, composed of 3 or 4 companies, supported by a turkish battalions named "Darakouns". These forces were divided between Baabda, Beiteddine and Tripoli. The nature of service of these 2 battalions was different :

- The first battalion : under the commandment of a druze officer, its mission was to control the security of the principal roads in the country (at the Moutassarifat) and the long of the lebanese coast. Its commander was directly dependant to his hierarchical chiefs and to the Moutassarief in case of insurrection.
- The second battalion : (named Zabaties): under the commandment of a maronite officer, widspreaded over the lebanese territories, along with the administrative authority, and dependant to the Moutassarifat.

Each caza has its territorial gendarmerie under the commandment of an officer, and there was for each region within the caza a territorial gendarmerie, under the commandment of a non-commissioned officer or a corporal.

The gendarmerie was completely dependant to the administrative authority, and the officers and NCOs were generally under the commandment of the Moutassarif, the caimancam, then the director (of the region).

The gendarme was assigned different tasks and missions like: Prison guard, investigations, Barracks guard, escorting VIPs.

- As for joining the agency (volunteering), it was enough to be a lebanese national and healthy, without any other condition, that means gendarmes might be illiterate.

- After attending a training of 48 hours, the volunteer was posted to one of the gendarmerie centers.
- The promotion regulation for NCOs and privates was of the prerogatives of the staff of the brigade. As for promoting assistant officers, it was of the prerogatives of the Moutassarif, after the opinion of brigade staff.
- As for nominating senior officers, it was done by the issuing of a decree from the Sultan, based on the Moutassarif proposal.

**In 1865 a French gendarmerie mission arrived to Lebanon, under the commandment of Lieutenant Eltelie, for organizing lebanese gendarmerie**

Unfortunately, this mission suddenly stopped its action because war broke out between Russian and France in 1870, and french officers were called back to their country. This mission did not bring any organizational result to the lebanese gendarmerie, except the adoption of the “souaves” uniform which was an imitation of the french uniform, worn in North Africa, especially Algeria.

The gendarmerie remained unorganized, lacking for military training, as for monthly payment, it did not exceed for a gendarme 28 piasters per month, and 90 p. for an officer in the rank of lieutenant and 515p. for a colonel.

In spite of living simplicity of those days, the gendarme was not able to satisfy all his personal needs, joining this agency has decreased in that period, except for some known families, who had the certainty of being promoted shortly.

- In 1912, the economical situation has worsened, which incited some gendarmes to revolt. The Moutassarif was forced to give them a payment raise of 110 percent for the privates and 50% for the officers.

**5- Lebanese gendarmerie in the period of ottoman Regime during the first world war (1914 – 1918):**

In October 1914, Turkey allied with the axis forces against the allied forces. Lebanon was accused of co-operation with the allied forces, especially France.

All establishments were accused without exception, especially the Lebanese gendarmerie. Therefore, turkish officers were nominated for its commandment, and an educational institute had been created in Baabda.

The second group (second brigade) which was under the commandment of the administrative authority and the governors, was incorporated with the first group, the lebanese civil authority could not have a change with the gendarmerie.

The uniform of “Souave” has been replaced by another one, looking like the turkish uniform of that period. Orders became in turkish language.

Many officers, suspected of sympathy with the French, were dismissed and many others tender their resignation because of self-respect.

Starting from the end of 1915, the situation has worsened in the region, because Lebanon was charged with high treason and collaboration with the French and then subjected to a tough starving siege.

The military turkish council, based in “Aley” threatened the Lebanese population so the gendarmes suffered like the others because of low payment and rarely financial assistance, and they started seeking for to earn their lives by indirect and dishonest ways.

Noting that the system of Moutassarifat was not applied except in the region of the Lebanese mountain.

The lebanese coastal cities like Beirut, Tripoli and Saida, as well as the internal ones like Baalbeck in the Bekaa, were under the ottoman reign.

### The Lebanese Gendarmerie during the French Mandate (1920 – 1943)

At the arrival of the French and British troops, in 1918, the Lebanese Gendarmerie was similar to an unorganized armed gang unable of carrying out any security mission. One of the first steps taken by the French was to reorganize these forces. By the end of November of the same year, a specialized commission was created for this end. On one hand, it decided to discharge the non-productive officers and to retire on pension the very old ones. On the other hand, it began to accept many applications, the vacancies becoming numerons, and to call for some of the officers who had served in the Turkish army. But the deterioration of the political and security situations because of the war had its bad effect on the said mission and the number of the affiliates was very little. With those few officers, the high French command tried to resume the said two missions that were interrupted by the war, the first one in 1865 and the second one in 1914.

Thus, in 1919, it appointed an officer from the French Gendarmerie and his assistant to pave the way for the Lebanese gendarmerie. Because the knowledge of the laws and regulations is essential for creating a new security Institution like the Lebanese Gendarmerie, a specialized school (Institute) was created at Beit Eddine to form and train the officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs), and privates who were obliged to attend one main course of formation and another complementary one. It should be said in this context that all the unqualified elements were rejected from the school.

Therefore, the elements were distributed on a basis of equity and each one according to his specialization, on the different posts of the country. As for the right to promotion which was exclusively granted to the officers chiefs of units, and which was arbitrary, it was canceled and the promotions and nominations started to be issued by an order emanating from the French Military Director General, Chief of the Territory. Besides, laws and regulations were distributed to all elements, patrols began to circulate in the country, and check points were centered on the main international roads.

A provisional book where missions were registered was created awaiting for the organized Service Book, after the pattern of the French one. As for the uniform of the Gendarmerie elements, it was identical with the khaki French uniform. As for the

cavaliers, they were granted additions to their salaries. The municipalities had the task to insure places for the groups, each one in its territory. The barracks in the cities were the exemplary place for the Gendarmerie to settle down. On June 1920, the number of Gendarmerie elements in Lebanon reached 760 men.

On the beginning of September 1920, the French high Commissioner General Gorou declared the creation of the Great Lebanon with Beirut as its capital.

On September 20, 1920, a regulatory order was issued organizing the Gendarmerie of the Great Lebanon which englobed the Gendarmerie of Lebanon and some parts of that of Syria, for the Syrian Gendarmerie was responsible for some of the laws which were annexed to Great Lebanon. Thus, all were dependent of the Gendarmerie of the Great Lebanon, presided by a Lieutenant-Colonel and divided into 5 territorial companies, one for each Mohafazat and a reserve one centered in the capital Beirut. Each of these companies was presided by a commander officer and was divided into a specific number of regional platoons, each one presided by an officer whose rank depended on the importance of the platoon. Thus, the captain was commanding the important platoon, the lieutenant the less important one, and the second-lieutenant the ordinary one.

It must be noted that the platoon was responsible for a *caza*, as for the large and important *cazas*, they englobed two regional platoons each one divided into regional police stations centered in the critical points.

In 1920 the number of the Gendarmerie elements reached 1200 among whom 37 were officers. Although the Lebanese Gendarmerie was identical to the French Regional Gendarmerie in the same period of time, it had some special characteristics to fit the Lebanese society. But, because of the events of 1922 that took a religious character in some regions, the disorder attacked once again the Gendarmerie ruining all the big efforts carried out to develop it. But the Lebanese government that insisted on reorganizing the gendarmerie asked the French Ministry of Defense to assist it with a number of French officers and NCOs from the French gendarmerie. France immediately sent a mission composed of one chief of batallion, six officers and seven NCOs. They came in June 1923 on board of a French ship that anchored at the port of Beirut.

The said mission immediately took over the Command of the Lebanese gendarmerie and its commander became the General Commander of the lebanese gendarmerie.

As for the other French officers and NCOs, they were nominated as follows :

- 5 officers took over the command of the 5 regional companies.
- 1 officer took over the responsibility of the administrative affairs of the command.
- The NCOs assisted the commandors of the 5 companies and their mission was limited to education.

As for the Lebanese Officers and NCOs, they were considered as assistants to the French ones and remained in their posts of service.

On the other hand two officers and two NCOs from what was called the Army of Orient started to train some of the mobile platoons on the techniques of the military combat. In the same time, the French officers reviewed all the existing laws and regulations and after amending them, they became effective as of January 1924. Some of the most important amendments affected: the Service book, the monthly service, and the plan for tracing criminals.

Those proceedings were similar to the ones effective in France.

The most important event in this period of time was that the administrative and judiciary authorities were forbidden from issuing orders and interfering directly in the affairs of the gendarmerie. They were thus unable to use the gendarmerie without a written commissioning or an oral one, if need be.

In July 1925, the command of the companies and platoons was taken back by the Lebanese commander officers except for the responsible for the funds and balance who remained a French officer and accomplished his missions till January 1926. As for the Chief of the mission, he became a General Inspector seconded by the other French officers in the inspection affairs of the companies.

As for the French NCOs, only three of them remained in Lebanon.

On 4-12-1920, a regulation for organizing the police departments active in Beirut, Tripoli, and Saida was issued, and on 10-12-1930, detective squads were created in Beirut, Tripoli, and Zahlé. Their obligations were well defined and the gendarmerie was responsible for advising them of all the felonies that were committed.

On 1-3-1943, the legislative decree NR 341 was issued. It organized the police departments and made them dependent of the Ministry of Interior. The Directorate of Police was composed of :

- The General Secretariat
- The General Information
- The Judiciary Police
- The Administrative Police.

They accomplished the missions for which are actually responsible the Forces of Internal Security and the General Security.

## 6- The Lebanese Gendarmerie at the early independence

### 1- From 1943 till 1952

At independence, the Lebanese gendarmerie was widely known for its organization, effectiveness and discipline, thanks to the efforts of the French delegation who carried out its mission during 23 years. Although it faced many obstacles, the Lebanese gendarmerie succeeded in winning the extern and respect of all the Lebanese people in the cities and villages. Nothing is as nice as independence, but the responsibilities insuing from it are huge at the political, economic, and social levels.

Such responsibilities required to take prompt decision and to solve the emanating problems very quickly.

- Until 1945, the gendarmerie was considered as the sole armed and effective force at the disposition of the young government. After 1945, the gendarmerie wasn't alone any more. Its eldest brother, the Lebanese Army was created and assisted in establishing the order in many occasions.

On 27/8/1945, a directorate for General Security related to the Ministry of Interior was created. Its missions were :

- supervising the General Politics
- Controlling the borders posts
- Checking off the passports for the entry to Lebanon
- Surveiling foreigners
- Surveiling artists
- Controlling the foreign manpower
- Censuring the movies.

2- Directorate General of the ISF created by virtue of Law-decree NR 138 dated 12/6/1959

Before 1959, forces charged of security, laws and regulations execution and of providing assistance to authorities, were formed of three main elements:

The Gendarmerie, the police (administratif and civil employees) and the General Inspection, by virtue of Law-decree NR 59 of 24/3/1953. The commandement of those units was independent and their rules were different, so their activities were confused. This confusion increased after the movement of 1958 and they appeared to be weak, disunited and in need of a radical reform. With the advent of General Fouad CHEHAB, as president of the republic in September 1958, the reform of the public institutions, especially those in charge of security, became a priority for his government. He set up comities of national and international specialists, in order to study the situation of those institutions and to propose the adequate regulations. Their work led to the promulgation of Law-decree NR 138 of 12/6/1959 and its appendixes. This Law-decree ordered the establishment of the first directorate for the ISF in Lebanon.

3- From 1952 to 1958

The number of gendarmery elements raised, in 1952 to 2400 officers, non-commissioned officers and privates. In this period, the Country witnessed development and evolution, so the gendarmery wished to join this trend by creating a Staff like the Lebanese army staff. The first step was to separate commandement from administration.

A staff board was created and headed by the first assistant of the Gendarmery commander. Three bureaus were submitted to this board :

- **The First Bureau: is charged of recruitment, promotion, transfer and detachment, as well as all matters related to personnel (personnel department nowadays).**
- **The Second Bureau: is charged of archives and records. It provides link with other public authorities and circulates instructions among elements (Operations and Services department nowadays).**
- **The Third Bureau: is charged of education and adoption of new technologies as well as inspection (Training department nowadays) and submitted to the Ministry of Interior. By virtue of the new regulation, four units are attached to the directorate those units are :**
  - **The Gendarmerie**
  - **The Police of Beirut**
  - **The Judicial Police**
  - **The Institute**

**So the Commandement of the ISF was assured by those four units as well as the directorate General and the general inspection.**

- **The municipal police of Beirut and some other towns merged with the ISF and the adequate regulations were promulgated in order to administer all the units. The rules related to the situation and the status of the elements were unified.**

**The divisions of those units and their equipments were distributed according to the situation in the country. The cadre and the materials have been set on mathematical basis, so duplication in functions has disappeared, communications were organized and efforts were coordinated. Telecommunications have been improved and a new communication service was set at the Directorate General in order to provide a nonstop contact with the other compagnies. The number of vehicules raised, in 1958, from 100 to 420, and were distributed to important posts, according to their needs.**

**On the 22th of July 1961, the Judicial police opened the bureaus of the forensic police, equiped with modern means and the first bureau for achives and records. The ISF posts were equiped with arms, equipments and means necessary to achieve their goals. A typewriter was assigned to every important post in order to use it in transcribing the records. The number of ISF elements, from different ranks, reached 4600.**

## **9- The ISF (under laws and decrees)**

### **1- Law- decree NR /54/ of 5 August 1967**

**On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 1967, the Law-decree NR /54/ issued the new regulation of the ISF, which cancelled the old regulation in force by virtue of Law-decree**

**NR 138 of 12/6/1959. The new regulation did not cancel or modify the structure of the Directorate General and the principal functions of the I.S.F. This law-decree remained in force until the promulgation of Law-decree NR /103/ on 16/9/1983 which preserved the functions and the duties of the ISF in general, but introduced changes in the structure of the Directorate General and in the competence of the Units commanders. It had created a “decentralization in security issues” within the 6 mouhafazats, cancelling thereby the appellation of “Gendarmery” and replacing “Gendarmes” by “policemen”. The appellation “judicial police” has been replaced by the “criminal investigation department”, “units” by “services” and their numbers reached 11. Five services were created :**

- **Mount Lebanon police – North Lebanon police- Bekaa police- South Lebanon police- Nabatieh police.**  
**And three others were added :**  
**Central administration- Social services- Emergency Forces.**

**The police of Beirut, the criminal investigation department, the ISF institut as well as the Staff and the General Investigation were maintained.**

**The Law-decree NR /103/ did not live long, it was amended on the 22th of March 1985, and replaced by the Law-decree NR /54/ of the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 1967 which remained in force until the promulgation of Law NR /17/ in 1990. This law is still in force nowadays.**

## **2- Law NR /17/ of the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1990**

**On the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1990, the Law NR /17/, in force nowadays, was promulgated. It has created new units within the directorate General of the ISF, which comprises :**

**The Staff- The Central administration- The Territorial Gendarmery- The Mobile Police- The Police of Beirut- The Judiciary Police- The Embassies Security- The Institute of the ISF- The Social Services Administration.**

**The main mission of the ISF did not change a lot since its creation and is still based on order and Security maintain over the Lebanese territory.**  
**The number of ISF elements raised from /6400/ in 1974 to /7532/ in 1978, to /9000/ in 1991 and almost /15000/ in 1998.**

### **Third: Rights of the ISF within the Execution of their Missions :**

- **To request identification papers**
- **To search people**
- **To arrest people (In execution of a judicial judgement, a judicial warrant, or spontaneously in a red-handed case).**
- **To enter houses :**
  - At night :** - **In case of any danger such as fire or flood.**
    - **When hearing calls for help coming from a house.**
    - **In order to search the houses, in case of emergency.**
  - In daylight :** - **In the cases where it is permitted to enter at night.**
    - **To inquire a red-handed act that has occurred in the house**
    - **To search the house of the suspect**
    - **To execute judgments and judicial warrants.**
    - **To seize illicit material**
    - **To set checkpoints**
    - **To use arms : After exhausting all the other ways, in the following cases :**
      - **In execution of an assignment from the administrative authority while establishing security.**
      - **In case of legitimate self-defense**
      - **To prevent their dispossession from their arms or the seizure of their equipment.**
      - **To defend their stations, and the places they are assigned to guard.**
      - **To preserve the persons of whom they are in charge or to insure their safety.**
      - **To arrest suspects who try to escape and do not comply with a warning.**
      - **In stopping the vehicles that cross the checkpoints despite the warnings.**

### **Fourth: Responsibilities of the ISF elements**

- **They shall be subject to the general obligations of the civil servants, and liable to the sanctions stipulate in the laws for to crimes, committed by state servants while fulfilling their duties.**
- **They shall report crimes they witness or get informed of :**
  - **They shall rescue persons in danger**
  - **They shall protect public properties especially in disasters and serious incidents.**

- They shall respect freedom except for the cases stipulated by laws
- They shall avoid the use of unnecessary violence
- They shall respect professional secrecy.

### **Fifth: The ISF and the Society**

#### **1- The traditional functions of the police forces**

Each state shall ensure the enforcement of its basic regulations, and compel its citizens to respect them, in order to restrict violations and infractions.

In order to reach this goal, special bodies shall be created; therefore, police function was an absolute necessity to defend the organizational structure of state, and prevent its infringement. Each state or community needs an executive force to protect regulations approved by the group, and organize the relation among its citizens, from one hand, and between those citizens and the authority from the other hand.

The traditional concept of the police depends on fulfilling these missions, considering that police is initially charged of enforcing, strictly and objectively laws and regulations, regardless the consequences suffered by citizens. Thus the police main goal, is to reinforce the state power, and maintain the public order, while citizens enjoy their rights, without prejudice to others' interests or to the general organization regulations, otherwise, the police shall take some measures to repair damages, restore order, and enable the competent judicial authority to penalize the offender, according to laws; the police has therefore a restraining and preventive role, considering that its main goal is to maintain public orders, and to carry out investigations, regarding crimes, and offenders.

#### **2- The Police new role**

Considering the fact that the development affected different aspects of social life, the police was obliged to adopt itself to these new changes, that took place in the life of individuals and groups.

Scientific research in the field of criminality, proved that repressive measures, taken by the police are henceforth, ineffective, and should be replaced by new scientific methods; moreover it attaches great importance to study the motives of criminality and delinquency, in order to treat them. Therefore, the police was assigned a new prohibitive role, which has two aspects :

##### **1- Ulterior prohibition of criminality :**

Related to criminals arrested and convicted, in order to prepare propitious conditions for preventing them from committing a second offence.

##### **2- Prior prohibition of criminality :**

In order to take the following measures to prevent crimes :

**a- to put individuals predisposed to hostility in new circumstances, to prevent them from committing offences.**

**B- To recognize hostile environment and consider groups originating from them, and cooperate with organisations and institutions in order to change humonitorion conditions in these environments, and rescue young people predisposed to delinquency.**

**C- To search for possible victims, give them advices, and warning them about negligence and carelessness. Which could lead to assaults against them or their properties.**

**As for robbery, for example,**

- 1- Circumstances of previous robberies, shall be examined, in order to find preventive methods, and create obstacles, to robberies.**
- 2- Possible victims shall be alerted to take appropriate precautions.**
- 3- Alarm systems shall be made accessible to all.**
- 4- Patrols shall be intensified in critical areas.**
- 5- Special Security Units shall be created in order to respond quickly to call for help.**
- 6- Cooperation with concerned organisms shall be intensified in order to alert the citizens and stimulate them to take precautions.**

**Some people ignore that the police, which get permanently in touch with the citizens, is fully aware of their needs and conditions, and can, therefore, inform competent authority of them. In this field, its role shall be more effective, if it can be trustworthy.**

### **3- Role of the ISF during the Lebanese war (1975 – 1991)**

**Although the Lebanese war lasted for a long period, and the majority of institutions were divided, the ISF remained tied up to the same command and to the Lebanese legality.**

**During this period, it has accomplish the following missions :**

- To separate between belligerent**
- To maintain order and peace**
- To help civilians**
- To evacuate casualties**
- To control ceasefire**
- To collaborate with committees and organisms.**

## **Sixth The ISF nowadays**

**After the Lebanese war, the ISF reimpose its authority upon the Lebanese territory, thus new elements were recruited, necessary equipments were put at their disposal and many barracks were built.**

**The ISF, were capable of arresting the perpetrators of most of crimes, committed recently, furthermore, they had been able to destroy drugs cultivation, with the cooperation, of both Lebanese and Syrian army, and they are doing their best to control drugs distribution and addiction.**

**A new bill, will be established to organise the ISF, in order to enhance their role, and make them similar to the most powerfull Police forces in the world.**