



The Maronite Cause

Volume II

*Self-determination and the
Path to a Mountain State*

Tony Saghbiny

The Maronite Cause

*The Path of Freedom for
Christians in Lebanon*

Volume II

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and the Path to a Mountain State

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Mount Lebanon 2026

*To the stewards, the warriors, the
monks, and all the unknown heroes walking
the mountain path...*

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Introduction to Volume II

From diagnosis to roadmap

Volume I of this work traces the long arc of a community shaped by geography, endurance, and political realism. It also outlined how the self-determination mechanisms were eroded under a state structure that no longer protects it. The conclusion of Volume I is structural and decisive:

The Lebanese state, as it currently exists and functions, does not guarantee the future and dignity of its Christians because it cannot guarantee sovereignty, security, equality, or continuity of decision-making.

That sentence tends to trigger two reflexes.

The first is denial: the state is weak, but it can be fixed; we just need reforms, good governance, elections, international pressure, a better president, or a better deal. These are not foolish hopes. They are the default posture of people who still believe the Lebanese system is fundamentally recoverable. In the last chapter of Volume I, we discussed why reform in the Lebanese Republic is impossible. If you still believe in such an attempt, it is advisable to read that chapter before starting this book.

The second reaction to our conclusion is usually fatalism: Lebanon is finished; its Christians are done for; nothing can be done; we must adapt as individuals, emigrate, lower our expectations, accept the reality of power, and

resign from public life. This posture is not cowardice, but despair. It is the predictable psychology of living inside chronic instability, where institutions do not provide nor protect.

This volume is written for readers who reject both reflexes, not because they are naïve or romantic, but because they take the facts seriously enough to seek a third posture: **strategic continuity**.

The question we pose here is no longer whether the state “should” protect us. The question is what we should do when the state cannot. The cost of waiting is existential.

If Volume I answers how we arrived here, Volume II asks a narrower, harder, and more practical question:

What must be built to thrive again? What must we do to reclaim our right of self-determination and preserve our freedom and ensure a future for our children in their homeland?

This is not a call for reaction, nor for nostalgia, nor for hatred. It is a framework for action under constraints.

What this Volume is

Before outlining the path forward, it is necessary to define the perimeter of this book, because in Lebanon every serious proposal is immediately dragged into one of two traps: moral panic or sectarian caricature.

This volume is **not** a manifesto for aggression. It is not a call for civil conflict. It is not a fantasy of instant separation achieved by a single dramatic move. It is not

a politics of resentment, and it is not a theology of supremacy. It is not an invitation to outsource responsibility to foreign patrons.

This volume is a program for institutional survival: a sober attempt to define realistic options for autonomy and independence in a volatile country.

We study what small nations have done under pressure; we examine ways to translate principles into institutions; and we confront, without romance or illusions, the resistance, risks, and obstacles that will emerge.

The moral line is simple and non-negotiable:

The strategy we propose is lawful and defensive, not violent and expansionist. It aims at self-government, not domination. It insists on competence and building, not slogans and grievances. Our doctrine treats survival as an engineering problem, not a destiny.

Key terms: autonomy, independence, and the “mountain state”

Lebanese debates often collapse under vague language. This volume uses several terms that require precision.

Autonomy refers to a spectrum of arrangements in which a region governs substantial aspects of its internal life: security, administration, education, finance, local infrastructure, while remaining legally inside a larger state framework. Autonomy can be negotiated, imposed by circumstances, protected by law, or sustained by facts on the ground. Autonomy is not inherently separatist; it is a mechanism for continuity of governance. In a few

cases, we might use the word “autonomy” to mean independence to avoid repetitions, but the context for each should be clear.

Independence refers to the establishment of a sovereign political entity: a state with authority to legislate, administer, secure territory, and manage external relations. Independence is not merely a “flag.” It is an institutional claim: a people with a government and defined borders.

The mountain state in this book is not a romantic metaphor and is not geographic confinement to a single place. It is an operating concept: a model of governance anchored in Mount Lebanon as a strategic fortress, historical sanctuary, and workable perimeter. The Mountain state might include areas well beyond the borders of the current administrative Mount Lebanon in the Lebanese Republic. The word “Mountain” in this context is used to signify our historical heritage of endurance and center of gravity, and not necessarily the borders of the state itself. The ultimate purpose of our thesis is to create a defensible, administrable space that can function as the wider state fails.

Some readers will object to the language immediately: is this federalism? decentralization? partition? These labels can become distractions. What matters is the function:

- Can a political community secure itself?
- Can it administer law predictably?
- Can it keep economic life running?
- Can it preserve identity without extinction?

- Can it endure pressure without collapsing into militia chaos?

This volume argues that survival requires governance; governance requires jurisdiction; jurisdiction requires enforceable authority; and enforceable authority cannot be rented from a state in a permanent collapse.

What to expect in the chapters to come

A plan is only serious if it is designed around pressures that do not care about our moral intentions. That's why Volume II begins with a mapping of threats.

The condition of Lebanese Christians today is not defined by one enemy or one event; it is defined by a system of pressures: demographic erosion, political marginalization, institutional capture, security vulnerability, economic fragility, cultural fragmentation, and the slow psychological normalization of decline.

The purpose of naming threats is not to frighten. It is to anchor the reader in an action map: you cannot design a strategy if you cannot describe the battlefield.

After the map, we move briefly into a unique chapter about the Maronite Spirit. Some readers will find this chapter an unusual inclusion inside a political roadmap. It is included because small historical communities like ours only survive by maintaining a moral compass strong enough to outlast fear and fatigue. Strategy is discipline across time. Discipline requires a spirit that can endure setbacks without collapsing into despair or rage.

A political project without spirit becomes opportunism. Spirit without a political project becomes nostalgia. This volume insists on both: the internal truth and the external design.

Chapter 10 delves comparative examples that extract useful lessons to our situation. Many small nations and pressured communities have faced dilemmas that rhyme with ours: hostile environments, demographic vulnerability, contested legitimacy, dependency risks, great-power games, and internal fragmentation. Some survived by building institutions early. Some failed by confusing rhetoric with capacity. Some traded long-term autonomy for short-term protection and paid the price later.

From their experience, we extract design principles on what tends to work, what tends to fail, and what costs are non-negotiable.

The next chapters delve into political and legal questions: how can we achieve autonomy or independence?

What precedents exist, and what arrangements from our history were durable? We analyze the legal architectures that could plausibly carry a future arrangement.

This is where readers who fear “chaos” should pay attention, because the central danger in Lebanese separatist dreams has always been the same: a project that produces fragmentation and militia rule rather than state capacity.

This chapter is designed to separate serious autonomy from fantasy by demanding legal and institutional coherence.

Chapter 12 is where our self-determination proposal becomes decisive. Here, we outline a state that is:

- administrable rather than poetic,
- lawful rather than personal,
- stable rather than performative,
- and capable of resisting capture.

A mountain state, if it is to mean anything, must be designed for modern pressures: finance, information warfare, diaspora flows, cross-border logistics, and the reality of living under constant political contestation.

This chapter sketches the institutional bones while Chapters 13 and 14 address the walk from theory to reality.

The roadmap presented in Chapter 13 is built around a sequence that is both historical and practical: culture, then organization, then institutions, then legitimacy.

The aim is to present a roadmap that is neither reckless nor passive: something that can be pursued under constraint, can be built without permission, and can be defended intellectually and morally.

This chapter will disappoint readers looking for a single magic lever. That is intentional. Survival is not achieved by one dramatic day. It is achieved by building the machinery of continuity over the years.

Finally, Chapter 14 faces the inevitable: any serious move toward autonomy or independence will generate resistance.

Resistance will not be only military. It will be legal, political, economic, diplomatic, and psychological. It will include attempts to split the community internally, delegitimize the idea internationally, exhaust supporters, punish financiers, and manufacture chaos to prove that self-rule is impossible.

This chapter treats opposition as a predictable system, not as a surprise event. It asks what a movement must do to remain lawful, disciplined, and competent while being attacked from multiple angles.

An Invitation to the Future

This book does not ask the reader to adopt a slogan. It asks the reader to accept a basic truth: survival requires governable reality; governable reality requires institutions; institutions require discipline; discipline requires spirit; and spirit must be translated into law, design, and action.

That is our framework.

In the end, the question is not whether independence is emotionally attractive or morally valid. The question is whether a people can remain itself and keep its dignity and freedom, inside a system that steadily dissolves the conditions of survival.

This book argues that the time for vague hope has passed.

The remainder of this volume is an attempt to replace paralysis and decline with a lawful strategy, a design, and a sequence. Our survival will not be on prayer alone; it will not be petitioned or permissioned; it will be an executable project and a destiny forged by our own hands.

Part III
Broken Dreams, Old
Threats and New
Hopes

Chapter 8

Existential Threats to Maronites & Christians

Historically and politically speaking, the Maronite Cause is simple: ensure that our nation lives free and dignified in our mountain homeland.

Every political idea or project that Maronites engage in must be measured and evaluated based on whether it contributes to that cause or compromises it. Before we move on to proposing solutions, we must first map the risks. Are the Maronites facing a normal crisis that can be resolved by conventional politics? Or are they facing an existential dilemma that puts their very survival on the line?

Any solution we propose must be able to meet geopolitical and cultural challenges facing Christians in the East. If the problems we are facing are normal, then they require normal solutions like reform, elections, and activism. If these problems are not conventional and present an unprecedented level of scale and risk, then we must look for radical answers.

We outlined previously the mutation of the Lebanese Republic into a state that does not care about its Christians. The republic is actively aligned against their interests. We also demonstrated that the degree of failure is deep and structural, resistant to reform. The Christians of Lebanon are living today with a state that cannot

protect them even if it wants to. They are left exposed to regional shocks, immigration, and cultural erosion.

This total collapse of the republic is the most dangerous existential threat to Maronites, but it is far from the only one.

In this book, a threat is considered existential only if it can plausibly end or obstruct the community's continuity in its ancestral homeland – whether by conquest, by demographic vanishing, or by cultural and institutional corrosion. An existential threat can also terminate the community's ability to self-govern, transforming it into a dhimmi sect under majority rule.

This criterion we use here is rigorous. It excludes mere discomfort and includes only those forces that can end the line.

In the words of philosopher Will Kymlicka, an existential threat to communal survival" can be defined as anything that jeopardizes a minority group's ability to maintain its 'societal culture, ' its shared language, history, and institutions. In the words of Iyad Boustany, a nation ends by exiting the political sphere, even if its individuals persist.

More concisely, this approach takes into consideration that an existential threat entails the possibility of being "outvoted or outbid on matters that are fundamental to the survival and flourishing of its [the minority group] culture and community".

While Kymlicka focuses on the core cultural and social survival, the political dimension of it is clear. An existential threat to a community is a condition or action,

such as cultural erasure, forced assimilation, political exclusion, or violence, which puts its existence, distinct identity, and long-term viability at risk of irreversible loss or extinction.

We also adopt a time-scale lens to evaluate what is existential from what's not. Some threats strike quickly (war, violent repression). Others work through decades (declining fertility, emigration). Some are subtle, operating through schools, media, or the quiet reshaping of cultural norms.

A community that understands time properly sees that the slowest forces often decide the outcome. As the previous chapter established, once the state collapse hollows the center, any actor with enough resources, discipline, and foreign backing can impose a new order. Under such circumstances, the Cross of the mountain survives by counting its friends, its children, and its schools as carefully as it counts its rifles.

With this in mind, we see several regional and national factors converging to create an unprecedented pressure that threatens Maronite and Christian continuity in Mount Lebanon:

- Political Islam.
- Christian demographic decline.
- Cultural erosion and diaspora drain.
- Structural majoritarianism in the republic.
- And finally, State failure.

Each factor operates on a different timeline and through distinct mechanisms of pressure, yet together they

amount to an existential convergence: a community can be outgunned, outnumbered, or outlasted.

These forces do not merely inconvenience the community; they set the conditions under which it can fade from its homeland.

We aim to describe these threats with sobriety, show how they interact, and specify what survival would require in practical terms.

I. Political Islam: Ideology, Instruments, and Pressure on Mount Lebanon

Every community in the Levant faces forces larger than itself. For Christians and many native populations in the Near East, one such force is the long arc of political Islam: a permanent ideological project that seeks to fuse religious authority, law, and political power into a single order.

Political Islam is not one thing. It is a spectrum of movements made of Sunni Islamist parties that participate in elections, Shiite Islamist organizations rooted in a revolutionary theology of guardianship, Salafi-jihadist networks that reject state borders altogether and use violence to achieve their goals, and secular politicians with neckties who push the envelope of Islamization just a little bit further here and there, with small laws, regulations and actions.

While not monolithic, its dominant modus operandi in the region is pushing for majoritarian rule and

permanent Islamization. What unifies the political project of Islam are two things:

- Total Islamization of society and politics, in which Christians are dhimmis without a place in government or any considerable influence on the larger society.
- Establish an Islamic Sharia rule.

Political Islam is not a political party in the traditional sense, as it does not just seek to seize power. Its purpose is the complete reordering of public and private life according to the Islamic worldview.

They use demography and cultural war tactics to establish control over the personal lives of their communities first. They build de facto authorities to start accomplishing their goals long before they get into public politics.

In weak states, these movements often fill the gap where governments fail. They deliver services, enforce order, arbitrate disputes, and establish a parallel Sharia governance that they control.

In strong democratic states, they demand political and cultural concessions under the guise of pluralism and tolerance. Then they try to regulate public spaces to reach Sharia law in covert ways.

In Lebanon, the threat from political Islam is not just from inside the border, but also regional. Borders do not exist for Islamists. In Political Islam, “the state is never considered in terms of a territorialized nation-state: the ideal is to have a power that would rule over the entirety of the umma”¹.

For Islamists across the world, but especially in the Levant, this Umma includes Lebanon. Anyone who spent a few minutes on Islamist political literature in the region realizes that the Christians of Lebanon have always been considered a problem for Political Islam. They see the historic independence of Christians and their defiance of Islamic rule as an affront to Islam.

In Lebanese politics, this translates in two ways:

- A permanent presence of Political Islam in Lebanon, in its different forms. There are political parties, social institutions, and militias that are always backed externally with:
- Continuous interference from regional Islamist actors in Lebanese affairs. This cross-border support comes from state and non-state actors alike, such as Iran, the Islamic Brotherhood, and other international Islamic institutions.

For a small, religiously plural republic that suffers from dispersed sovereignty and negotiated power-sharing, the ideational pull of an *extra-territorial* project has been a permanent factor of destabilization.

1. The Faqih and the Caliphate: Does this Distinction Matter?

In recent years, much has been said about the difference between Sunni Islamism and Shiite Islamism. Some consider the Shiite version more tolerant. For Christians in the Near East, this distinction is useless. The end result for both types of Islamism is the same, with one of the

two possibly eradicating minorities more slowly than the other.

The political wing of Sunni Islamism uses political lobbying and elections to reshape society into one governed by Sharia. They also pursue a larger Islamization project through social mobilization via charities, unions, and schools. The jihadist wing of the same ideology seeks a supra-state caliphate through armed struggle and rejects plural politics as apostasy. The ultimate goal for both wings is the same.

Shiite Islamism, as articulated in Iran's revolutionary school, grounds authority in clerical guardianship (*wilāyat al-faqīh*), fusing theology, military discipline, and statecraft. Like Sunni Islamism, Shiite Islamism also asserts a superior right to order the public square according to its own image. They both hold an unshakeable conviction that governance and power belong exclusively to their sect. Both ideologies treat non-Muslims in the same way: they must either bend the knee, convert, or stop existing.

For Christians, what matters is not theological hair-splitting between two versions of the same ideology; what matters is the political bottom line. All these currents, when in power, reject having any Christian authority or Christians in authority. They constrain rights, pluralism, and freedoms by subordinating law and conscience to a religiously defined project.

In some contexts, that project tolerates minorities. In harsher moments, it suppresses, expels, or eradicates them. Even where coexistence is declared, and the narrow margin of cultural freedom is accepted, the

practical freedoms of schooling, press, and assembly shrink. In both systems, all non-majority communities become subject to a permanent social and cultural siege.

One of the gravest mistakes that Levantine Christians made and still do, is aligning with one Islamist flavor or another. Some Christian elites have the illusion that such alignment can protect them instead of focusing on their own community and cause.

2. Instruments of Power: Services, Militias, and Demographics

The strength of political Islam increases several-fold in a failing-state environment. The institutional density of Islamist movements quickly becomes a parallel authority.

These movements embed themselves in neighborhoods, hospitals, schools, unions, and courts of arbitration. They run clinics and distribute food. They mediate disputes faster than state judges. They provide protection. They attach material survival to political loyalty. In doing so, they convert social capital into disciplined political power.

We see this pattern clearly reflected in Hezbollah's rise to power. What is dangerous about this issue is that, as long as Islam exists, Political Islam will exist. And as long as political Islam exists, the pattern of an Islamic organization rising to dominance will repeat. Today, Hezbollah is the biggest Islamic party inside the republic, but in twenty years from now, it might be another new organization.

As Political Islam is a permanent force, it is only a matter of time before another Hezbollah rises or another ISIS state is established along our borders. This is the harsh truth of Muslim culture and politics in our day and age.

In Lebanon, the instrument toolbox of Hezbollah includes parliamentary blocs, cabinet seats, municipal councils, welfare networks, media, and – most decisively – military capability. The militias are not an accessory; they are the guarantor of the rest. Once the gun decides, ballots and bureaucrats accommodate.

Demographics were also used as a weapon of political Islam against Christians in Lebanese politics, but we will talk about that in a later section.

3. The Shrinking Public Square: Political Islam in Action

From 2008 to 2025, Lebanon was effectively a state governed by an Islamic Caliphate, Hassan Nasrallah. Politics were self-censored, policies were negotiated under the shadow of vetoes and guns, and freedom became conditional on not crossing the red lines of the fanatical militia.

Over time, this produced a public space that internalized limits and became void of action. Lebanese politics today are all just talk. Local politicians got used to having one side holding the keys to power: Assad from 1990 to 2005, and Hezbollah from 2008 to 2025.

The economy priced risk into investment and the political culture learned to lower its voice. The entire

country moved slowly into embracing Islamic culture, Islamic causes, and Islamic worldviews.

The result is an everyday calculation: schools must decide what to teach to avoid offending the majority. TV stations and newspapers must decide what not to say and how to say it. When Christian politicians talk and move, they do so within the framework defined by Islamist causes and logic. Within such a framework, policies that would be helpful to Christians were forbidden from conversation. Issues such as the theft of Christian lands, the disarmament of Hezbollah, and peace with Israel were all taboo before 2025.

Freedom has become something individuals practice on social media or behind closed doors, rather than a principle that the law protects and amplifies. For a people whose spiritual and cultural life depends on open institutions that are organically linked to liberty, this shift in Lebanese culture is harmful for Christians in the long term.

In addition to direct Islamization and militancy, this is one of the most dangerous results of political Islam because it is largely an invisible effect: it shrinks the public sphere and confines it within an Islamic framework at the expense of everyone else.

4. A Long-term Struggle

Political Islam, in its various regional manifestations, from Islamist parties in Lebanon to the broader waves of fundamentalism across the Middle East, represents a

profound existential threat to Maronite and Christian continuity.

Such danger is not manifested only through overt conquest, but through the slow corrosion of pluralism and the imposition of majoritarian norms. As we have examined, its mechanisms include political exclusion (e.g., Taif's shifts favoring Sunni-Shiite alliances), cultural pressures (e.g., media and education promoting Islamized narratives), and security risks (e.g., Hezbollah's armed doctrine dragging Christians into regional conflicts).

Regional precedents, such as the Coptic plight in Egypt or Assyrian displacement in Iraq, underscore how unchecked Islamism can reduce minorities to dhimmi status or force mass emigration.

For Maronites, this threat operates on a medium to long-term timeline, amplifying state weaknesses and demographic vulnerabilities.

Yet, recognition breeds resolve: the best long-term strategy against this peril lies in establishing an independent Mount Lebanon, where Christians can self-govern. This will allow our nation to insulate our culture and communal institutions from ideological encroachment. It also opens the door to forging beneficial alliances with other native Near Eastern nations and open up to the Mediterranean world.

Such autonomy would enable Christians to control education, media, and security policies in their homeland, preventing assimilation while building resilience against majoritarian dominance.

This ideological challenge intersects with the demographic decline, which we will explore next, where numbers become the ultimate bulwark against assimilation.

II. Christian Demographic Decline: Numbers, Institutions, and Political Destiny

Building on Political Islam's medium to long-term peril, demographic decline poses a slower but equally existential risk.

Long before the destiny of a community makes it to the news, it becomes a decision in a kitchen conversation and a thought on sleepless beds: do we stay or do we leave?

Maronite and Christian families have faced this dilemma in Lebanon for more than a century. Each wave of immigration leaves absences that institutions cannot fully replace: a student who never comes back after study, a missing cantor in the parish, an engineer who cannot find a good job back home anymore, an entrepreneur who closes shop, and, in some cases, an entire village that loses its youth.

Low fertility rates and emigration are both contributing to the demographic drain of Lebanese Christians. Despite being two distinct factors in type, they both share the same root in the socio-economic reality of the Lebanese Republic. Both emigration and low birth-rates are the result of decades of economic, cultural, and political pressure on Christian communities.

Taken together, demographic decline is not merely a statistic of loss; it is also a reconfiguration of Maronite and Christian identity across space. As Christian community life stretches between villages and foreign cities, the local face of Lebanon changes and becomes, in no easy terms, less Christian.

1. A Nation in Flight

“Persistent economic contraction and governance failures have accelerated emigration and reduced fertility, with long-term implications for the viability of local institutions, schools, clinics, and municipalities,”² reads a report about Lebanon from The World Bank.

Emigration accelerated intensely in the last decade. Between 2018 and 2021, more than 195,000 Lebanese left the country. These numbers increased after the collapse of 2019. In 2021 alone, more than 77,000 people left. It is estimated that approximately 640,000 Lebanese emigrated between 2016 and 2024, 70% of whom were university graduates.³

This trend is expected to continue as “nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of youth ages 18–29 want to emigrate.”⁴

For Mount Lebanon, the thinning is uneven: Christians have left the country in larger numbers than their Muslim counterparts, in a crisis fueled by the economy but originating in the dysfunctional politics of the republic. While all sects face economic pressures, Christians' higher emigration rates stem from targeted political marginalization and loss of faith in the future of the country.

There is a paradox here: the very diaspora that drains the homeland can also be its lifeline. Remittances are indispensable shock absorbers, but the remittances literature is blunt about trade-offs. Large inflows can fuel inflation and reduce labor market participation, even as they relieve poverty⁵.

In political terms, large private transfers can also soften pressure for structural solutions to the Maronite dilemma. Households survive while systems stand still. For a small community that depends on rules, not rulers, the risk of intense immigration is clear. Remittances are lifelines, but they are also substitutes for functioning systems.

The demographic decline is not only fueled by emigration but also by different birth rates between Muslims and Christians. Historically, Shiite and Sunni Muslims had the highest fertility rate in Lebanon, while Christian sects had the lowest⁶.

The Muslim fertility rate was 5.44 children per woman in 1971, compared to the much lower Christian birth rate of 3.56. By 2004, the Lebanese Information Centre estimates that the Muslim fertility rate had dropped to 2.82, compared to the still lower Christian fertility rate of 1.53.⁷ We couldn't find reliable recent statistics about fertility rates, but we expect that the same trend that was present in the past 60 years continues today. Muslim fertility rates are almost double that of Christians.

The Lebanese Republic also used demographics as a weapon to curb Christian influence with a skewed naturalization policy over the years. When things in Lebanon settled under the Syrian occupation in 1994,

President Elias El-Hrawi, along with Prime Minister Rafik Harriri, issued Decree No.5247. They naturalized more than 150,000 Muslims, adding tens of thousands of new voters to the Sunni sect, and erasing Christian influence in several areas in one fell swoop⁸. The descendants of those newly naturalized are estimated to be close to 800,000 people in 2025.

In 2014, 2018, and 2022, Christian presidents Michel Suleiman and Michel Aoun took the same steps on a smaller scale, naturalizing a few thousand Syrian Alawites, Palestinian Sunnis, and Iraqi and Iranian Shiites.⁹

The influx of Syrian refugees that started in 2011 put even more pressure on the dwindling Christian percentage in Lebanon. At the time of writing this chapter, the country was still hosting more than 1.5 million Syrians, almost all Muslims. The native Lebanese population is around four million, meaning more than 30% of the population of Lebanon is Syrian¹⁰. Despite having these refugees in the country for more than 15 years, and despite the fall of the Assad regime in Damascus, Lebanese authorities showed no real interest in addressing this crisis. They amassed fortunes from it in the form of foreign aid and cheap labor.

As we were finalizing this chapter in March 2026, another demographic element has started to put pressure on Christians with the internal displacement of over 1 million Shiite refugees, many of whom ended up in significant numbers Christian-majority areas. Several Christian authorities have warned against turning this wave of displacement into permanent settlement and

change the very fabric of our geography. Shiite parties such as Hezbollah and Amal are actively facilitating the resettlement of their population in Mount Lebanon through money and intimidation, using the central state as a tool, and humanitarian causes as a front.

This demographic decline not only drains numbers but reshapes influence, as detailed next.

2. The Diminishing of Christian Influence

Over the past century, the Christian share of Lebanon's population has declined relative to other communities, though precise figures are contested and politically sensitive.

What is clear is the direction: waves of emigration, differential fertility rates, uneven naturalization processes, and economic shocks have thinned the Christian presence in many districts. Age structures skew older. Marriage is delayed. Births shrink. And Political influence recedes.

Some towns in Mount Lebanon are now below the "critical number" that keeps parishes vibrant, schools viable, and culture alive. The result is a patchwork of resilience and fragility, a map that should inform any serious planning for Christian autonomy.

The most normal result of the demographic decline of a nation is the shrinkage of its influence in politics as well as in culture. "Lebanon's human capital flight is not merely the loss of individuals; it is the draining of

institutional memory and leadership, which weakens community resilience.”¹¹

For Maronites and Christians, already compressed by low fertility rates and historic migration, demographic drain means a shrinking cadre for institutions (schools, municipalities, professional orders, armed forces) and an eroded political voice in national bargains.

This erosion is not merely a statistic, but a felt reality for those of us who are still in the country.

Families and friend groups are broken up; political parties lose numbers and members; local initiatives dry up. The remaining community, without its youth, becomes more exposed to crime and pressure from outsiders without proper self-defense tools.

The cracks also appear in Christian private schools. As family numbers fall and incomes stagnate, tuition rises to cover costs. Curricula adjust to accommodate Islamic education and attract more Muslim students. Identity becomes threatened at its source. In 2020, about 80% of Catholic schools were under threat of closure due to a lack of government aid and the inability to keep up in a devalued currency¹².

The Catholic education sector historically served hundreds of thousands of pupils across confessions. They formed not only Maronite elites but also the cross-communal “middle” that learned to coexist and believe in core Christian values such as rights and freedoms. The economic collapse has pushed that system to the brink. It is being morphed culturally today by outsiders and seculars from within.

Emigration also affects parishes that will feel a double hit: fewer families, fewer youth, and reduced giving. Choirs lose voices; cultural associations cycle through the same aging volunteers; municipal lists struggle to recruit competent candidates.

What follows is the institutional collapse of the foundations that preserve life, freedom, identity, and culture. Once below some thresholds, institutions like schools, political parties, and parishes must either merge, shrink to formality, or close.

The Maronites' historic role as a founding pillar of Lebanon's plural order depended not on majority status, but on *critical mass*. They had enough numbers to link talk with action, and enough embedded institutions to sustain schools, media, monasteries, hospitals, and civic associations that anchor our community's life.

In a sectarian political system where key offices, seats, and informal vetoes are bargained among major sects, *numbers are leverage*. As leverage erodes, so does the Christian community's capacity to maintain and insist on its core protective norms like freedom of conscience and expression, regional neutrality, and peace.

The demographic drain reshapes the political landscape. When Christians lose their influence in the system, their core value of freedom will be eroded in the entire country, not just for them but also for everyone else.

3. Is Demography Destiny?

This demographic reality pushes many Christian elites into despair and bargaining. However, demography is not destiny; it is the budget of history.

In past points of history, the Maronites were confined to a few valleys, barely making up a small one-digit percentage of modern-day Lebanon. They endured and survived and then thrived. The numbers do not spell doom, but they do define the parameters of possible action and the direction a community must take.

It would have been unimaginable to the Maronites surviving in the Kadisha valley in the 14th century against an entire empire, to think that they should keep up a pluralistic multi-sect republic that spans from Akkar to Jabal Amel. Similarly, it is unwise, no, actually suicidal, to try to keep this Republic alive today under the current circumstances.

Lebanon's political system is consociational: power is distributed among communities, and bargaining is incessant. Bargaining power has many ingredients – organization, resources, allies – but numbers matter. Seats in parliament, weight in the civil service, and the perceived legitimacy of claims all correlate with demographic reality.

When a community's numbers fall, and its institutions weaken, its ability to veto threats or to demand guarantees erodes. The logic is cold but true: in a system of armed pluralism and fragile law, demography shapes who must compromise and who can impose.

Table 7. Demographic Mechanisms in Lebanon

Factor	Key Data/Trends	Impacts on Christians
Emigration	640,000 left 2016-2024; 63% of youth intend on leaving	Brain drain (70% graduates); weakened institutions (schools, parishes)
Fertility Rates	Christians: 1.53 (2004); Muslims: 2.82	Shrinking "critical mass"; older demographics
Naturalization/Refugees	150,000+ Muslims naturalized (1994); 300,000 Palestinian refugees, 1.5M Million Syrians (2025)	Eroded electoral weight; demographic engineering

Even during the height of Maronite power in this Republic, when the Christian population was more than 50% of the country, the Maronites were never able to accomplish their own vision of Lebanon as a neutral, western-aligned, rights-based country. How would they be able to accomplish that now, then, when they constitute 30% or maybe even 20% of it?

Counting on the goodwill of Muslim political parties, who all have their own agendas and foreign associations,

is so foolish that it is equivalent to treason. We cannot bet the future of Christians in this region on goodwill alone.

In 2023, following the political crisis about electing a President of the Republic, Prime Minister Najib Miqati went on television to say that Christians represented only 19.4% of Lebanon's population. He was implying that they should not have a decisive say in the country's politics or even choose their own president¹³. Miqati is a businessman who is considered to be the epitome of moderate politics, yet if this is how a secular politician behaves at the top of the political pyramid, then what can we expect from more hardliner Islamists a few decades down the line?

For Maronites and Christians, the demographic stakes are existential. In addition to the political lesson that needs to be learned, there is also an important cultural conclusion: the Maronite family must return to its original Christian core.

A people that wants to exist must make choices that enable continuity. We are talking about affordable Christian schooling, viable housing, dignified jobs for the young, public safety, and a culture that should encourage marriage and childbirth.

This reality should be an alarm: revive your culture or face oblivion. For Christians in Mount Lebanon, this means one thing: we should treat family formation and institutional rebuilding as existential files.

Reviving family culture within an autonomous Mount Lebanon framework, insulating it from republic-wide

pressures, offers the path to defy this demographic destiny.

Self-governance can empower policies tailored to Christian retention: subsidized family incentives (e.g., child allowances, housing for young couples), vocational programs in mountain villages to curb emigration, and streamlined diaspora return pathways (e.g., dual citizenship perks). By controlling borders and resources independently, Christians can mitigate skewed naturalization and refugee influxes that dilute influence. Community initiatives, like church-led fertility awareness and youth mentorship, can revive a "culture of family," echoing historical resilience. This strategy not only halts the thinning but also provides a strong push to cultural revival, where stronger numbers would create stronger Christian institutions.

III. Cultural Erosion and Diaspora Drain: Identity Under Siege

The third threat is something that can only be measured over decades: the cultural erosion of Maronite and Christian identity.

The erosion of native identities in the era of globalization is not something new or exclusive to the Christians of Lebanon. However, it accelerated in the Mountain because regional identitarian waves like Arabism fused with globalism to erode local culture at a faster rate.

It is inaccurate to think these currents are coming from the outside: Maronite and wider Christian identity in the homeland is eroding from within first.

The cultural substrates that once distinguished the mountain, like language, rites, and historical self-awareness, thinned out and are being reinterpreted through newer ideological frames.

1. The Factors of Cultural Drift

The first attrition is linguistic and largely invisible for today's Maronites. While the Maronite Church's spirituality and liturgy belong to the Syriac-Antiochian tradition, parish life in Lebanon has long migrated toward Arabic. Syriac is increasingly confined to liturgical fragments, clergy training, and heritage circles. Syriac in its modern form was once spoken across the entire mountain, and is the Maronites' ancestral liturgical matrix, but post-Vatican II reforms accelerated Arabization for pastoral accessibility¹⁴.

Historical scholarship traces a progressive language shift: Mount Lebanon's Maronites moved from everyday Aramean-Syriac toward Arabic over centuries. First through diglossic coexistence, then with Arabic predominating in education and print, leaving Syriac largely liturgical or scholarly. Garshuni (Arabic in Syriac script) was a transitional technology in this passage¹⁵.

Despite the disappearance of Syriac, there is a revivalist counter-current today. Church inscriptions, choirs, and classes that are seeking to reclaim Syriac letters and chant are emerging. Unfortunately, such efforts remain boutique compared to the scale of loss.

The starkest cautionary tale sits nearby: Cypriot Maronite tongue (Sanna), a Maronite heritage language,

has dwindled to roughly 900 speakers, despite EU-backed revitalization programs. This illustrates how swiftly a community idiom can slip beneath demographic and economic tides¹⁶.

The second attrition is ideational. Across the twentieth century, Christians shaped influential Arab nationalist projects as discussed in a previous chapter. This cross-confessional authorship carried both promise (a civic secular horizon) and risk (a reframing of Christian communal narratives inside a homogenizing Arabist/Islamic story).

Up to 1990, Christians were active members and leaders of Arabist and Leftist movements. The extent of their commitment to their causes brought many of them to carry arms against their own community, as we have seen in the civil war chapters.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, most leftist movements crumbled while Arabism took a back seat before an emerging Islamization.

In the twenty-first century, a different accommodation emerged: segments of the Christian political class entered alliances with Islamist movements as a strategy of protection or leverage within the consociational bargain. The 2006 Mar Mikhael Memorandum between the Free Patriotic Movement and Hezbollah was the most notable of this kind¹⁷. Whatever the short-term calculus may be, such alignments helped normalize sectarian projects and armed vetoes inside the national equation. It recalibrated Christian discourse toward an Islamist vocabulary that contradicts the Maronite older grammar of freedom.

These engagements linked Christians to causes that are not their own. It displaced the awareness of their main cause with Arabist and leftist issues that do not relate to their destiny or interests.

The Mar Mikhael Memorandum ended up squandering the biggest Christian momentum after Taif and establishing a Hezbollah base in the Christian community. It had a significant long-term Islamization effect on FPM supporters.

Meanwhile, a broad secular turn took place among younger Christians. Some of that was positive with its focus on the rule of law and universal rights. But most was corrosive with its focus on rejecting rooted Maronite identity and embracing universalism and gender ideology. This ideological realignment has the same result of obstructing Maronite consciousness and preventing the youth from aligning with the political awareness of their historic cause. The most visible effect of this ideology is a kind of quasi-religious "Lebanonism" that attaches itself to coexistence and the Republic above everything else.

Lebanonism is mostly a Christian subculture, despite the insistence of its proponents on its appeal to all sects. It is a kind of nationalism that romanticizes an image of a Lebanon that only exists on posters and in fleeting moments of history. The ultimate message of Lebanon in this view is coexistence, not freedom. Lebanonism espouses a kind of heightened political naivety, thinking that the entire problem of Lebanon is just a corrupt class of politicians. Lebanonists are oblivious to the mechanics that create such a class. They deny the existence or are

ignorant of the conflicting narratives and leanings that each Lebanese community has. They assume that everyone is on board with their vision of a united, peaceful Lebanon, except for a few corrupt heads at the top. Being Christian at its core, Lebanonism is generally blind to the ideological developments in other sects but hyper-aware of trends within the Christian community. This makes it one of the first opponents of restoring proper Maronite and Christian political consciousness.

Linguistic loss plus ideological drift yield a measurable outcome: fewer transmission belts and a community that is not aware of its main cause. A nation that is not aware of itself does not try to preserve itself.

In such an environment, schools and choirs stop giving cultural meaning and become memorization machines, and festivals become entertainment rather than an expression of core values. The practices that once made the culture reproducible, like Syriac hymns, parish associations, Christian pilgrimages, social and political habits, and mountain-anchored rites of passage, are thinned. Eventually, the Maronites lose the common language and political consciousness that unifies them. They become a fragmented mess of eccentric individuals without a community. Consequently, the Maronite spirit of freedom and defiance becomes compromised.

2. The Impact of Identity Erosion

When the core community at home loses its identity, the effect will sooner or later reach the diaspora. The

community abroad is already subject to cultural drain by factors of geographical distance and cultural integration.

Second-generation children in the diaspora usually lose Lebanese dialect first, liturgical familiarity next, and communal discipline last. Without weekend schools, accessible parishes, and organized travel to the homeland, the gradient is steep. Faith can persist, but ethnic identity thins or vice versa. In either case, the transmission belt between the mountain and diaspora weakens. The result is a community whose global energy enriches individuals but fails to sustain institutions at home and the long-term survival of the community.

Even with close links to the homeland, every diaspora is subject to the natural current of assimilation into its host countries. Most studies on second and third generation immigrants show the same pattern: the second generation often grows up speaking the mother tongue at home and the host country language at school. By the third generation, the home language and culture are mostly that of the host country¹⁸.

None of that is an indictment of diaspora life. It is a reminder that diaspora identity is not a substitute for the thick, everyday culture that only institutions at home can sustain. We are talking about parishes full on ordinary Sundays, choirs that rehearse in Syriac, youth groups that hike the same ridges their grandparents did, and localized media that argue about school budgets, curricula, and zoning, not only geopolitics.

David Brooks once defined *thick* institutions as those that “seek to change the person’s whole identity ... head, hands, heart, and soul.”¹⁹

Maronite communities at their best are precisely that: thick. But thick institutions require proximity, time, and commitments that cannot be offshored indefinitely.

The covenant required to revitalize and revive Maronite identity is straightforward: those who leave must fund the institutions that keep the homeland alive. Those who remain must maintain continuity and standards that honor such support with integrity and competence.

Above all, the diaspora must be invited back, not only as tourists but as seasonal citizens who teach, volunteer, serve on parish and municipal advisory boards, and root their children in their ancestral mountains.

To think clearly about the stakes for a small nation, it helps to borrow Albert O. Hirschman's famous framework: when institutions decline, people choose exit (leave), voice (stay and fight), or some blend constrained by loyalty. Hirschman's caution is surgical: "The presence of the exit alternative can ... atrophy the development of the art of voice."²⁰ When the most capable fixers quietly leave first, those left behind are precisely the ones more likely to be less organized, less connected, and less able to protect institutions. Applied to a vulnerable community, this "atrophy of voice" is double: a weaker hand inside the national bargain, and a thinner bench inside the community's own institutions, schools, press, clinics, and charities.

This internal erosion compounds with external political structures, as seen in the Republic's majoritarian tilt.

3. Rediscovering our Maronite Spirit

This atrophy of the Maronite's own voice must be addressed as an existential threat. It is true that when a Christian emigrates, the community loses a voice at home and gains support abroad. But when immigration is coupled with cultural erasure, the loss is magnified: we lose those who emigrate to distance, and we lose those who stay to despair or the hubris of foreign causes.

In the past few years, the Christian community reacted to the loss of its culture in different ways. Some groups are reviving Syriac while others want to bash homosexuals in the streets. However, the remedy for such an existential issue, such as communal identity, cannot be reactionary. It must be a long-term process of re-rooting: fund Syriac and education parallel streams in parish schools; establish libraries, think tanks, cultural centers, and digital repositories, and open-source education about our history and cause. Make the culture and heritage of Christians in this Mountain an essential curriculum in our schools. Establish remembrance and cultural days that celebrate our heroes, saints, faith, and survival. Articulate civic Christian politics that understands its own voice.

All Christians of Lebanon should learn and be proud of their long, colorful history in the East and embrace their identities that are rooted in thousands of years of love, bravery, and faith. Maronites should rediscover their own spirit and adopt it again without apology, which we discuss in the next chapter.

Without such work, Maronite identity and Christian culture are at risk of becoming a logo, exported to the

diaspora for nostalgia and used by residents as decoration, rather than being a living culture that still sings, teaches, litigates, and governs in its own name.

IV. Structural Majoritarianism in The Lebanese Republic

The Christian problem with the Lebanese Republic is not limited to the state's failure. Even if this Republic were economically stable and financially successful, the political system itself is against Christian interests.

The political system of the Lebanese Republic is neither a democracy nor a dictatorship of elites. It's what's known in political science as Consociationalism: it's a system of power-sharing in deeply divided societies, such as those fractured along ethnic, religious, or linguistic lines, that relies on cooperation among the elites of distinct groups to ensure political stability and a functioning state. While effective in stable contexts like Switzerland, Lebanon's armed imbalances render it untenable."

While consociationalism aims for balance in principle, the demographic and political tilt in Lebanon post-1990 transformed the system into majoritarian rule. The problem today is that, despite a formal power-sharing in name, Christians have little say in this Republic, in text and in practice.

1. The Promise vs. The Practice

Consociationalism promises that segmental elites will bargain rather than fight; that minorities will receive institutional guarantees; and that mutual vetoes will prevent domination.

In practice, Lebanon's arrangement has drifted after 1990 from consociationalism toward soft majoritarianism. Whoever can assemble the most numerous and cohesive bloc at a given moment often sets the menu for everyone else. Guarantees that should be non-derogable (speech, conscience, academic freedom, equal protection, administrative appointments) slide into tradeables.

Comparative scholars of divided societies warn that if power-sharing is not coupled with strong rule-of-law constraints, it can "slip" toward outcomes of majoritarian dominance. This happens even if the text maintains the old forms²¹. This is the case of Lebanon.

Four mechanics drive the slide.

First, constitutional changes. The power moved from Maronite positions in the Presidency and First-degree administrative positions, to being more distributed and concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as a whole. The Shiite Head of Parliament and Finance Minister both hold unprecedented power that enables them to block laws, sessions, and signatures whenever they want. In principle, a power-sharing system means everyone can veto policies, but in the Lebanese context, only Muslim executive and legislative positions, such as the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, and the Head of Parliament, have veto power.

Second, a demographic tilt. Relative shifts in community size and mobilization capacity quietly changed the bargaining power of each sect.

The third mechanic is coalition math. The system's informal hacks, like quorum games in parliament, the "blocking third" in cabinet, rhythms of vacancy and obstruction, and the alliance of major Christian parties with Islamic ones, all turned constitutional text into negotiable practice.

The fourth and last mechanism setting up a majoritarian political system is the armed exception that enabled using violence to dictate political conditions.

The result is a majoritarian system in a diverse society where nothing is guaranteed: protections and rights survive only when they suit the dominant coalition and fade when they do not.

2. Constitutional Rules vs. Workarounds

In practice, the workarounds that the Islamo-leftist majority uses to dominate Lebanese politics are not all unlawful. As we see from the next table, most of the political tactics used to establish majoritarianism are enabled by the Lebanese constitution.

The real problem here is that the majority replaced a rule-bound center with a deal-bound center. For minorities, deal-bound means precarious: today's ally can be tomorrow's broker; today's protection can be tomorrow's concession.

Table 8. Constitutional Rules vs. Practice

Constitutional/ Statutory rule	Common workaround in practice	Effect on Christians
Presidential election requires quorum and majority	Quorum withheld for leverage; prolonged vacancy	Vacancy by veto; rights folded into side-deals, Christians have to accept the majority candidate or risk vacuum
Cabinet collective responsibility	"Blocking third" used to paralyze or pre-negotiate agenda	Rights as bargaining chips in cabinet trades, Christians cannot veto policies but get their suggestions vetoed
Judicial independence	Rotations/recusals; selective immunities; "phone justice"	Majority has impunity in political and sectarian files
Equality before the law	Selective enforcement via patronage networks	Predictability lost; self-censorship rises, appointments are tilted for the majority

Withholding Quorum, using vetoes in the cabinet, and postponing parliament sessions are all tactics that are used to bend the system to their will. When politics fail, Islamic powers always threaten to abolish "Political Confessionalism." In summary, they either want to

dominate through the current system or are willing to deprive the Christians of whatever political positions they have left. When that threat also fails, they resort to guns and bombs.

3. Militarization of Rival Sects: Armed Majoritarianism

The existence of armed exceptions within a state changes the dynamics of political freedoms, of policy making, of coalition building, and the entire socio-economic ecosystem of a country.

The existence of Hezbollah as an armed sectarian militia has far-reaching consequences beyond using violence to impose political will. The problem, however, is not exclusive to Hezbollah. The fractured nature of the Lebanese Republic means that the state will never have a full monopoly of force. As we have seen in history, the Republic generally avoids making any decisive moves towards any militant phenomenon to avoid sectarian overtones. This means that, as the monopoly of force will always be lacking, the rise of armed factions is a permanent risk.

Non-state armed actors embed service delivery and dispute resolution in territories they control. They displace core state prerogatives even when those actors also hold seats in formal institutions²². This is called “hybrid governance,” in which two parallel states exist in practice.

Arms change political discourse and freedom of speech: journalists, academics, and citizens internalize red lines. Arms change policy making: proposals are pre-screened

for how armed patrons will react. Arms also change policing: municipalities, neighborhoods, and entire towns and cities will allow party ecosystems to function as regulators and de facto rulers. Arms change coalitions: blocs with coercive leverage extract disproportionate concessions; blocs without them price confrontation as existential and self-censor accordingly.

All these mechanisms are not theoretical. They are the reality of Lebanese politics. Since 2008, Hezbollah has used violence several times to impose its policies and mold the system in its image.

In the past couple of years, the Lebanese government, even under massive international and regional pressure to disarm Hezbollah, was still unable to utter the word “disarmament” for fear of retaliation. It chose words like “monopoly of arms” and “containment” instead. This is just an example of how the militia voids politics and renders government ineffective.

The result is that majoritarianism is backed up by military force. If this majoritarianism is threatened, and if constitutional and political maneuvers fail to keep it up, a militia is ready to impose it by violence.

Majoritarianism, therefore, is not a small passing flaw in the Lebanese Republic that can be reformed, but one of its defining features.

4. From Balance to Tilt

Soft majoritarianism has emerged from the accumulation of informal leverage, and not through legitimate ways like referendums and elections. Consociation, without a robust rule-of-law, and under the presence of armed exceptions, drifted easily into a majoritarian outcome.

This means that in practice, the Lebanese Republic currently is and will always be a majoritarian political system dominated by non-Christians.

Majority rule in a pluralist society is almost always a disaster in the making: "In the most deeply divided societies [...] majority rule spells majority dictatorship and civil strife rather than democracy."²³

Indeed, equality in public positions and the parliament is currently still followed, but it is being emptied of its meaning through political appointments and intimidation. If we reach a point where the political system fails to sustain the domination of the majority, expect Islamic forces to start pursuing non-confessionalism aggressively to impose and legitimize majoritarianism in other ways.

After decades of institutional majoritarianism, the Lebanese Republic will never go back to equal political participation between Muslims and Christians. In the best-case scenario, the Christians will be given the option of having a third of the State, drifting further into dhimmitude. In the worst-case scenario, their participation will become completely symbolic, with the role of providing the illusion of pluralism to the outer world while Lebanon becomes basically an Islamic state.

If the Christians decide to stay in the Lebanese Republic, they have to be aware that they are signing up to stay in a majoritarian state where they won't make any decisions or policies that affect their own lives.

Structural majoritarianism, embedded in the Republic's consociational drifts and armed imbalances, systematically silences Christian voices, but dismantling it requires transcending the entire system.

V. A Failed State Cannot Guarantee Rights and Freedom

In a previous chapter, we mapped the effects of state collapse: security breakdown, administrative impotence, infrastructure failure, and demographic stress. We then identified the factors fueling this collapse at the center: structural majoritarianism and the militarization of rival sects, which convert politics into armed domination.

The majoritarianism problem is exacerbated by a deeper state failure: the center of the Republic negotiates law instead of applying it, and it cannot guarantee the protection of minorities, free speech, or borders. It cannot provide a stable economy. In other words, the Lebanese state can neither guarantee the safety and future of Lebanese Christians, nor can it provide them with a decent life in exchange for the freedoms they are losing under majoritarian domination.

Central Lebanon fails because a bargain-driven system, enforced by non-state arms, produces a government that treats constitutional guarantees as variables. Under the

republic, our rights are subject to the whims of the strongest party. They are chips to be bought and sold.

The failure of the Lebanese Republic is not an isolated episode in an otherwise successful state. The failure is innate. It is systematic, structural, and permanent.

We reject the claim that Lebanon merely suffers from a string of unfortunate crises. Such a view is comforting because it avoids the bitter truth of the total failure of the republic. Standards for a successful state are minimal but non-negotiable:

- (a) Monopoly of legitimate force,
- (b) Impartial adjudication capable of binding the strong,
- (c) Predictable service delivery, and
- (d) Protected civil freedoms for individuals, communities, and institutions.

If the center cannot meet these tests under ordinary stress, it fails by design, not by accident. Consociational sectarian power-sharing is supposed to prevent domination by distributing power across communities. Such a system, however, only works when rights are fixed, and coercion is singular. That is something that the confessional nature of Lebanon prevents from ever happening.

As we discussed earlier, when armed parties have vetoes and where courts are pliable, consociation degrades into majoritarianism: the largest armed-political bloc dictates the parameters; others negotiate within them²⁴.

Even if Hezbollah declines and loses its army, it is only a matter of a few more years before another armed faction rises in its place to play the same role and bend the same system for the same ends. Hezbollah only showed how far the system can be bent when all the stars align.

When only one sect is armed and holds most of the power, then the state is effectively an extension of that sect. Universal freedoms and rights for others shrink. The price of sectarian domination is paid by all: truth becomes partisan, laws become relative, dissent becomes dangerous. Sects belonging to the non-majority communities become second-class. No country thrives where freedom, political power, and economic support are allocated by bargains and force.

When the center is deal-bound and sectarian arms control the political pace, freedom shrinks. The signals are cumulative but clear:

- Press & speech: Prosecutions or investigations start targeting critics selectively. This has a chilling effect that moves debate off the record and into whispers. Some topics will become taboo. The national discourse will revolve around the words and parameters defined by the armed actor.
- Academia: In such an environment, universities will start by self-censoring research topics. Naming names will be avoided, especially in certain areas. The educational system will start producing masses that are prepared to fall in line without question.

- Assembly: Protests are tolerated when convenient, dispersed by force when not. Differential policing will be applied across districts and issues.

Table 9. Lebanese Constitutional Ideal V/S Reality

Standard	Ideal	Lebanese Reality	Impact on Christians
(a) Monopoly of Force	State holds sole coercion	Hezbollah's arms, numerous militias	Dragged into wars; no protection of rights or sectarian balance
(b) Impartial Adjudication	Binding justice for all	Political interference (e.g., port blast)	Impunity for attacks on Christians
(c) Predictable Services	Reliable delivery	Blackouts, debt crisis	Emigration, institutional decay
(d) Protected Freedoms	Fixed rights	Bargained away	Cultural erosion, minority silencing

The freedom of expression and assembly has been steadily deteriorating in the Lebanese Republic for the past decade. This decline was documented by local and international watchdogs like Reporters without Borders²⁵, where Lebanon ranked in the 140th place in the world in its index of freedom of expression in 2024.

The most corrosive effect is invisible: anticipatory compliance. Citizens and institutions update their priors about what can be said or done. They internalize the red lines of the majority. In politics, this manifests, for example, through the absolute taboo of discussing peace with Israel.

The loss of expression and journalistic freedoms is always followed by a loss of political rights and freedom of thought and belief.

Even if the Lebanese State somehow still guaranteed our freedoms on paper, the rise of non-state actors and the way they control institutions – as shown by 16 years of Hezbollah rule – means that the republic is unable to guarantee or defend those freedoms in practice.

State failure, with its permanent erosion of force monopoly, justice, services, and freedoms, amplifies all threats to Christian survival, yet it underscores the Republic's unsuitability.

VI. Convergence: The Perfect Storm of Existential Threats

The pressures we discussed in this chapter interact. They reinforce one another in a feedback loop:

- When political Islam projects power regionally and locally into the reality of a failed state, Christians emigrate at higher rates or disengage from what's now dangerous politics, reducing the local base.
- As numbers and engagement fall, and parish and political networks thin, communities become less

resilient and less able to organize for their rights. This facilitates the drift of the Lebanese Republic into deeper majoritarianism.

- Weaker institutions and majoritarian tactics reduce the bargaining power of Christians, inviting further encroachment by armed actors and more departures.
- Diaspora remittances keep families afloat but can mask institutional decay and communal emergencies. Cultural erosion leads to more disengagement from politics or to counter-engagement against Christian interests by partisan bases that become aligned with anti-Christian ideologies.

Political Islam already showed its potential in the republic. Its most potent form in Lebanon is an armed party whose social institutions compete with and sometimes overshadow the state.

The state, in turn, has proven unwilling or unable to guarantee freedoms and rights uniformly, letting Christians lose positions and properties across the Republic. Such a climate accelerates exit among precisely those professionals and families who could keep Christian institutions healthy. And exit erodes voice, as Hirschman warned²⁶.

Meanwhile, demographic decline reduces the Christian bargaining power inside a consociational order that became tilted with unbalanced blocs. Schools, the great equalizer and identity-transmitters, teeter under fiscal collapse and ideological pressure. The larger Christian

culture is being eroded gradually with waves of Arabism, Lebanonism, and Leftism.

This is the existential knot for the Christians of Lebanon. If it feels too tight to untie, that is because solutions at one layer can worsen another.

The convergence of these factors, however, is not fate, but an intertwined system that we can disrupt and counteract. The point of naming threats with a sober assessment is not to despair but to plan.

What is needed is a more radical, more complete solution than limited and reversible reforms. What is needed is nothing less than complete self-governance.

A minority's survival hinges on whether it can self-organize: to set boundaries, write rules, monitor commitments, and resolve disputes without waiting on distant authorities who may be indifferent or hostile.

Proposing an independent state might seem like a far-fetched idea right now, but we must think in terms of self-governance on a local level first, which is easily within reach in all Christian areas of Lebanon.

Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom's comparative work on local governance is instructive. She distilled durable patterns from communities that successfully manage shared resources, emphasizing "clear boundaries, explicit rules, effective monitoring, graduated sanctions ... and broad participation."²⁷

Table 10. The Convergence of Existential Threats

Threat	Timeline Mechanism	Key Impacts on Christians	Examples / Data
Political Islam	Medium and long-term (ideological and political pressure)	Forced assimilation, loss of rights, dhimmi status	Rise of Islamist parties; regional precedents (e.g., Copts in Egypt)
Demographic Decline	Long-term (fertility/emigration)	Population thinning below viability	Fertility at 1.3 (Pew); 200,000+ emigrants post-2019 (UN)
Cultural Erosion & Diaspora Drain	Slow (normative shifts)	Loss of societal culture (language, institutions)	Cultural assimilation; brain drain
Structural Majoritarianism	Ongoing (political exclusion)	Outvoted on core issues	Taif shifts; veto imbalances
State Failure	Immediate (systemic collapse)	Exposure to shocks without protection	2019 default; 2023-24 war damages

Her core finding was that local users can devise effective rules tuned to their circumstances that can help them survive and thrive²⁸. While Ostrom focused on forests and irrigation systems, the analogy travels: small communities with robust, participatory institutions are better at surviving shocks than those that outsource their fate to distant patrons.

For the Maronites and Christians of Lebanon, that means they must stop waiting for the Lebanese Republic to magically reform itself and defend our interests. We should start building and defending our own web of life. We are talking about municipalities, energy grids, education systems, health networks, media and legal aid, mountaineering clubs, choirs, neighborhood watches, endowments, and credit unions, and more. Each of these bodies should have governance that is transparent enough to keep trust high and capture low.

There is a path, realistic, local, stubborn, for all the Christians in Lebanon. We will discuss it in more detail in the following chapters, but for now, let us outline some projects that can be started immediately under the current political landscape:

1. **Establish a rule-credible self-governance.** The Maronites and Christians should start by establishing the administration that the state cannot. It can start with functional and effective social and economic services that strengthen their presence in their homeland.
2. **Rebuild the thick middle.** We mean the Maronite cultural infrastructure: the school-parish-community network, together with civic

institutions. This is the community's circulatory system. Where institutions are *participatory* and *well-governed*, they endure shocks better.

3. **Demography as a strategic file.** Encourage marriage and children by reducing the frictions that delay them: security, housing, and school affordability. Pair this with leadership pipelines: catechists, teachers, municipal managers, and local clubs, so that institutions will be staffed by people who can stay and who can transmit their core culture.
4. **A Diaspora covenant** that turns exit into leverage. Diaspora is not lost if it is organized. Such a covenant should treat emigrants as a *political resource*; as a constituency able to fund institutions at home and to advocate internationally in their countries.
Design mechanisms that bind exit to voice: alumni obligations, matched-giving tied to governance reforms, preferential hiring, time-bound service fellowships that bring young professionals back for a year to teach, build clinics, and digitize archives. Let the diaspora grow roots in their homeland and let these roots bloom into trees that all the community can benefit from.
5. **Freedom and self-determination as the highest Maronite politics.** A paradigm shift is needed in the Maronite and Christian political consciousness: we should start focusing on self-determination and preserving the freedom and identity of our community above everything else.

The bridge forward is clear: in the next Chapter, we will show why the Maronite identity, resilience, spirituality, and disciplined will, are not nostalgia but fuel for lawful autonomy. This fuel can be converted into structures that guarantee the future: civil-protection doctrines, effective governance, decentralized and ethical ridge defense strategies, school and monastery endowments, municipal cooperatives, and diaspora covenants. Above all, it can be turned into a public ethic that keeps Christians free.

When the center cannot (or will not) guarantee liberty, the mountains must harden their institutions, lawfully, transparently, in ways that lower fear and build a viable future.

The definitive long-term strategy against this convergence of threats is an independent Mount Lebanon. Such a solution would use self-governance to rebuild standards on Christian terms: a localized monopoly of force via community defenses, impartial tribunals free from interference, reliable infrastructure funded by diaspora networks, and enshrined rights without bargains.

Autonomy would also enable targeted reforms that bypass the central gridlock of the republic and insulate against crises like the 2024-26 wars. By forging alliances with regional minorities and international bodies, Christians can secure borders and resources, transforming vulnerability into resilience. This radical approach not only counters failure but also integrates prior threats, where self-rule sustains demographics, culture, and pluralism.

What the center cannot protect in practice, the community must not abandon in principle. The republic has abandoned its mountain, but the mountain should not abandon itself.

Chapter 9

The Maronite Spirit: Why We Fight

We have demonstrated how the Lebanese Republic fails the Christians of Lebanon. We have also outlined the existential threats that loom over our nation. The natural question at this point is this: why just not let the Christians of Lebanon fade? Why not let the Maronites dissolve into Arabized or Islamized identities that are currently on display? Is our nation worth saving?

Since you are reading this book, your answer is probably a resounding yes. Unfortunately, given how Christian elites and masses are spectating their community being erased without raising a finger, it is worth dedicating a chapter to this question. We live in an era of cultural nihilism after all, where local identities are considered outdated relics of the past, even by their own people. It is worth it to outline the value of such an identity in the face of erasure.

The Maronite spirit was molded through 2,000 years of peace and struggle, of prayer and song, of pain and joy, of expansion and contraction, of existential crises and universal recognition, of life and death. It was drawn with a deep, unshakeable faith in Divine providence.

The Maronite Nation produced countless leaders, saints, inventors, pioneers, and artists. All these greats did not come to be by coincidence, but by the virtue of their

community's spirit. But what is the essence of this culture?

The core elements of Maronite identity are resilience, spirituality, and disciplined will. It also revolves around an ethos of freedom and an unbreakable bond with the land. And finally, it is imbued with a sincere faith in the salvation of the Cross.

This unique spirit of defiance, of infinite love to life, of deep connection with the Divine, is not mere nostalgia, but fuel and mechanisms for the path of lawful self-determination in Mount Lebanon. We will trace later how the spirit becomes practice, how practice becomes institutions, and how institutions become freedom under law.

At the time of writing this book, preserving a native culture was often seen as backward in an era of globalism and consumerism. This is even more controversial if the culture in question is Christian or does not belong to the short list of "approved persecuted people" in the Leftist/Liberal dictionary. However, we argue that preserving our native Maronite culture is morally warranted, politically prudent, and essential to our long-term survival as individuals and as a nation.

Our thesis is that the Maronite spirit, anchored in Syriac-Antiochian Christianity, a mountain way of life, and disciplined communal habits, produces the social energy and institutional reliability a free mountain requires. Preserving it is not a backward-looking sentiment but a forward-looking strategy that sustains freedom and the rule of law.

I. What is a Nation's Spirit, and Why Preserve it

By “spirit,” we do not mean a mist of memories. We mean a bundle of beliefs and practices that make up the foundation of collective identity and shape long-term behavior. This is made of a creed (faith and rite), of social values (virtues trained into the mind and body that govern behavior), of a habitat (a physical anchor of the community), and institutions (monasteries, parishes, councils, guilds) that transmit ways of living.

Identity is not just heritage. Heritage is what we inherit, but living tradition is what we practice. Culture is both.

“A tradition,” wrote Alasdair MacIntyre, “is an argument extended through time” that applies itself to social and individual practices²⁹. A tradition survives only when it is lived and performed; sung in choir, summoned in court, inscribed in calendars, specified in bylaws, and budgeted for.

This chapter, then, is not about sentiment. Identity is not an individual's sentiment towards their nation; it is the active competence of a group. It is the mechanisms that allow a people to endure shocks without breaking, to organize without tyranny, and to remain themselves without hating their neighbors. The Maronite spirit matters for us, not just because it is ours, and not just because it is beautiful, but because it can be translated into structures and habits that keep our community alive, healthy, and free.

Every Maronite and Christian in this region needs to know that their culture is worth preserving and transmitting, because it is not just customs and festivals and heritage sites. Those things are merely the outer expressions of it. A culture defines how individuals relate and interact with one another, and how a community connects with its land and environment, how it leads its spiritual life, and how it reacts to the actions and behaviors of its individuals and other communities.

The case for preserving a native culture is threefold:

- **Moral.** Human beings flourish in communities of meaning that recognize them and acknowledge their presence and contribution. “Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need,” Charles Taylor argued in his classic essay³⁰. In a nihilist age that only sees individuals as consumers and numbers, a community that gives meaning to people’s presence and contributions is extremely important.
- **Political.** This is expressed by thick institutions that form character, deliver services, stabilize states, and root democracies. Such institutions require cultural depth. Liberal theorist Will Kymlicka’s minority-rights work expresses the basic point: safeguarding the cultures of small nations is a justice claim, not a discretionary favor, because cultural membership underwrites real autonomy.³¹ The highest expression of a nation’s culture is in the political institutions it produces.
- **Practical.** In decaying systems, people choose exit or voice. We repeat Hirschman’s warning here: “The

presence of the exit alternative can... atrophy the development of the art of voice."³² Where identity is under threat and institutions wobble, it becomes more important than ever to keep the culture alive, so the community will still have a voice.

UNESCO's baseline definition of a native culture stresses living practices, knowledge, and skills that communities recognize as theirs, that sustain identity and provide a sense of continuity. In international law, this is known as intangible cultural heritage (ICH)³³. In other words, a culture deserves protection and renewal because it is a set of practices, skills, and relationships that enable a community to live a meaningful life and thrive.

The conclusion is straightforward. Preserving the Maronite culture is not an ethnic hobby. We are not preserving it because we want it to be exhibited in a museum of an extinct nation. We preserve it because it is the operating system that allows our nation to remain vibrant and free.

II. Maronite Resilience

Resilience is not just individual stoicism; it is a complete system for a community.

The mountain taught the Maronites the grammar of survival: ascetism, hard work, fasting, and community. Such practices synchronize bodies to seasonal time, teach guilds and confraternities to pool risk, and enable parish networks to distribute aid before outsiders arrive. Maronite monasteries are centers that turn discipline into logistics. In Maronite history, when the harvest

failed, granaries spoke; when a storm cut the road or a wall collapsed, the village already knew who had a mule, who had rope, who could mend, and who could nurse. The community was anti-fragile.

In social-science terms, resilience is the capacity to reorganize after shock while retaining identity and function. This is something the Maronites excelled at throughout history, even when they had to hide in caves and inaccessible ravines.

Robert Putnam's classic formulation is crisp: resilience is the "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, which can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions."³⁴

Where social capital is thick with dense networks of trust and reciprocity, recovery is faster and less violent. Decades of comparative work keep finding the same link between social trust and endurance³⁵. The mountain created such social capital by necessity. Paths were narrow; neighbors were few but near; reputations mattered. Work songs and prayer hours were also time-keeping devices for shared labor. Even today, when generators hum and phones glow, the old calendar of Lent and harvest still offers a discipline of spirit that keeps the community aligned.

Resilience is also the continuity of discipline through time. It manifests *daily* through morning prayer, a little fasting, a check on elders, and tools put away, sharp and clean. It manifests *weekly* with choir rehearsal, work brigades, market days, and council meetings that start on time. And it manifests *seasonally* with terracing days, pruning days, spring clearing, autumn storage, and

winter repairs. None of this is performative and all of it is disciplined. It is the practical muscle memory of a people that expects to be tested and intends to pass.

We will discuss discipline in more detail in the next section, but two cautions are worthy of mentioning here:

First, resilience is not the idol of self-reliance. Maronites are indeed self-reliant as individuals, but their personal strength thrives when nestled in the community.

Second, resilience is not resentment. It is not a lamentation of hard life or a pessimistic outlook towards the future. Maronite resilience is cheerful endurance; it is the joy of doing one's work while chanting a prayer, it is the satisfaction of the farmer after a long season of planting, and it is the stubborn refusal to outsource dignity to patrons. And it is the decision to do one's part, and to believe in the future, no matter the odds.

To many Maronites and Lebanese Christians reading these words, there will be a feeling of familiarity with these virtues, or a consideration that resilience is normal and effortless. This is a testament to how deeply our resilience is ingrained in the DNA of the Mountain Nation.

III. Disciplined Will and the Ethos of Freedom

The mountain did not only teach endurance; it taught discipline.

The Maronite ethos of independence was never anarchic. It paired stubbornness with rule-keeping: councils, levies, musters, adjudication, guarded passes,

provisioned monasteries. Historians of Mount Lebanon's autonomy underline precisely this pattern of local consent and organization sustaining freedom and order across different regimes and eras³⁶. The will that endures is not the will that rages, but the one that creates rules and follows a purposeful way of life.

This is where social science meets monastic common sense. Communities endure when they write clear boundaries, set congruent rules, monitor fairly, sanction proportionally, and involve users in governance. In the words of Elinor Ostrom's design principles for long-enduring commons, "the 'tragedy of the commons' isn't inevitable... when we get the institutional design right."³⁷ The Maronite habit of local rule, councils and confraternities, of guilds and parish committees, maps cleanly onto principles of self-governance.

Disciplined will is therefore the hinge between spirit and law. It is the bridge between the Maronite worldview and their strong inclination for independence.

It takes the warmth of identity and cools it into systems. In the future of the Mountain, this discipline would translate into standard operating procedures for cultural institutions, volunteer corps, early-warning networks for fires and storms, transparent bursary rules for schools, conflict-of-interest policies for parish boards, and safety drills for festivals and pilgrimages. Will becomes institution, and institution becomes freedom.

In other words, our tendency towards self-governance and our love for freedom cannot be separated from our Maronite identity. Discipline is valued by the Maronites

because of the freedom it provides. The ethos of freedom is unmistakable and indivisible.

Freedom is not an accessory in the Maronite story; it is the nexus where creed, land, and law meet.

From the mountain's earliest councils to modern petitions for sovereignty, the Maronite imagination has treated freedom not as license but as a vocation. For many, it is the very reason for Maronite existence in these rugged mountains.

Hence, the language of patriarchs across centuries: independence as the normal condition of a people who answer only to God and conscience, and not to distant patrons or passing coalitions.

During the most challenging times in 1993, during the height of Syrian occupation, late Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir was asked about coexistence and freedom, and what he would choose. His response embodied this ethos of freedom:

"From the time we have been in this land, we have made this choice. Why, if not to preserve freedom, did the Maronites, in particular, settle in these mountains? Like fish in the sea, they cannot live without freedom. Thus, we declared long ago that if faced with a choice between coexistence and freedom, the decision had already been made. We seek peace, we seek freedom, and we seek coexistence. Yet, if coexistence were to encroach upon or limit freedom, then the choice is unmistakable"³⁸.

This is extremely important for Maronites who want to understand themselves and their cause: the priority of a

Maronite is never coexistence, even though we welcome it. Our priority is our own freedom.

The broader Catholic Church echoes the same sentiment: Saint John Paul II's famous line has become a refrain precisely because it names what the Maronite nation has labored to protect. He said: "Lebanon is more than a country: it is a message of freedom and an example of pluralism for the East as well as for the West"³⁹. It is important to emphasize here that the message of Lebanon for the Pope was freedom, not coexistence.

Yet freedom, when misread, has its paradox: the very openness that safeguards conscience also facilitates erosion.

In the 20th century, many Christians, sometimes nobly, sometimes naively, embraced universalist or secular projects that treated our communal identity as an obstacle to progress. Others allied with armed ideological movements that narrowed civic space in the name of protection.

In both cases, "freedom" slipped from a disciplined way of living into a solvent. The result of such deviation was the dissolution of the practices and bonds that make a people reproducible (language, rite, guilds, monasteries, councils).

The Maronite answer to identity erosion is not retrenchment but re-anchoring freedom as steadfast resolve, as lawful self-governance, as obedience to the good in public, as stewardship of land and memory, and as neutrality that protects speech and worship for all. Most importantly, it would understand that freedom is

not a slogan, but institutions (schools, parishes, defense corps) that outlast moods and political storms.

In this sense, the ethos of freedom is both gift and craft: received from faith, perfected in the mountain, and defended in law. Only then can a small church keep singing the Lord's name under the mighty cedars till eternity, without fear.

IV. An Unbreakable Bond with the Mountain

In the 17th century, Patriarch Estephanos Douaihy bequeathed a motto so often quoted that it reads like a charter of belonging: "After our faith, our doctrine is the land of Lebanon."⁴⁰

The point is not nationalist romance; it is that place-keeping and freedom-keeping rise together as native communities root themselves in their land to endure.

The Maronite bond with the mountain is much deeper than a connection with a piece of land. The Mountains of Lebanon have protected and provided for the Maronites across millennia, and the Maronites have protected and tended the land in return.

Maronite identity is soil-bound; it is rooted in the valleys and ravines and distant churches scattered across the white peaks of this holy mountain. It is also ecocivilizational. The bond with altitude, terrace, spring, and cedar is not scenery; it is covenant.

Even small things that we take for granted in the mountain are expressions of a deep bond of mutual care

with the land. Stone terracing is such an example that you can see in every mountain village.

Stone terracing is a technology of permanence: it holds water, saves soil, restores ecological functions, and makes a hillside habitable for centuries⁴¹. It provides food and sustenance for a community entrenched in the inaccessible valleys of the mountain. It is also the testament of Maronite resilience, and an expression of an active and willful culture.

Spring committees, often led by parish elders or monastic brothers, have long maintained channels and schedules for shared water. Olive groves and orchards, tended by families and confraternities, anchor inheritance in living trees rather than ledger lines. Maronite Monastic landholdings have often been de facto conservation zones, a fact that the UNESCO encodes in world heritage language. It says that "The Kadisha valley is one of the most important early Christian monastic settlements in the world... [beside] the great forest of cedars of Lebanon."⁴²

The Maronite relationship with the Mountain is not just material or romantic, but also spiritual. In addition to the Maronites' deep faith in Christ and their call to witness, the Maronite tradition contains what is known today as the "Theology of the Land."

It is an understanding that sees the land not merely as geography or an economic asset, but as a divine gift, a space of communion, of freedom and dignity, and a field for Christian witness. In this view, the land is received with gratitude and safeguarded responsibly. It is bequeathed as a double inheritance: a material

inheritance (soil, water, forest, terrace, home, village) and a spiritual inheritance handed down through generations as memory, prayer, customs, language, and chant.

Attachment to the land is therefore neither idolatry nor nationalism. It is a moral covenant: “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.” (لِلرَّبِّ الأَرْضُ وَمَلُؤُهَا).

We are custodians of the land, not absolute owners, entrusted to keep it fit for human life, the worship of God, and the service of community.

This theology begins from the mystery of the Incarnation: The God who became flesh and dwelt among us sanctified place, time, and matter. Hence, in the Maronite conscience, the land is where grace becomes concrete. This is expressed in a liturgical calendar that breathes with the seasons, in an orchard cared for with heart, in a home that opens its door to guests, in a terrace whose stones are restored one by one, and in a spring protected from pollution, providing clean water for generations.

The land is a school of virtues: it teaches moderation (limits to consumption), cooperation (shared water, irrigation channels, woodlands), patience (the rhythm of sowing and harvest), and humble caution (walking a slope that will not tolerate excess).

Maronite theology joins gratitude for the gift of the land with reverence for its limits. The Mountain is a place that cannot endure constant violence or blind exploitation; it educates its people toward an economy of force and the rule of law.

This outlook also has a clear identity dimension: the land is part of Maronite identity, not because it shuts the community in on itself, but because it provides what it needs to remain free and responsible. The land for Maronites is a viable village, a school leaning on a church, a liturgy expressing its local language and textures, and a social fabric that translates covenant into custom. It is a place of endless beauty and awe that facilitates communion with and appreciation of the Divine. It is a bond that enables the conditions of a living nation.

In this sense, “the Mountain land” is not decorative geography but the framework of freedom. This attachment to the land nurtures self-governance and prevents the community from becoming a client of distant wills. It also makes it easier to convert faith into daily work. In this theology, tending to the land is in itself an act of faith.

The Theology of the Land is inseparable from the Maronite spiritual mission. The Church’s presence in the East is neither a historical accident nor a burden on its parish; it is a vocation. Her presence on this land is a mission she does not relinquish: to witness to Christ by serving the human person and the peace of the place; to carry God’s blessing to the peoples of the region without domination or rivalry.

The theology also has a socio-economic dimension: ownership is not a license to dominate but a responsibility for the common good. Hence, Maronite social thought encourages a local economy that prizes quality over volume, honest work over rent-seeking, and

hospitality that opens a village's livelihood instead of monopolizing it. Ecology here is integral to ethics: water is a shared right administered with science and justice. Forests are a covenant with life, to be protected against the fires of greed and neglect. In this understanding, guarding a spring is guarding creation, while extinguishing a blaze is a share in the spiritual mission of caring for the world.

Maronite theology also recognizes the pain of migration. Yet the effect of migration does not annul the covenant with the land. Maronites who depart to other lands do not exit the Theology but extend its borders. They carry the language of prayer, the ethic of service, and the Mountain's memory as they live their call to witness in their new homelands. As Maronites, they are raised to embody the spirit of their heritage in parish ministries, in Catholic schools, in companies run with conscience, and in solidarity that breathes life back into villages through fair investments and the revival of schools and homes. The land is not a pebble put in one's pocket but a way of life: every place inhabited with truth, justice, and mercy becomes an extension of the Mountain's covenant.

Finally, the Theology of the Land rejects both divinizing the place and reducing it to a political slogan. It is a theology of covenant between the Divine, the human person, and the place. It binds us to make the land a space of freedom and dignity. It invites us to translate faith into protected rights, clear laws, and just institutions. For this reason, the theology is at ease with a small, governable state where borders are the boundaries of responsibility, and resources are managed as entrusted gifts.

Although greed and corruption have found their way to destroy and pollute the Mountain, many districts historically associated with Maronite settlements remain among the greenest belts in the country. Green is not a color here; it is a disciplined relationship with the land: of pruning, of cleaning channels before the first rain, of saying no to a quick build that might cause a landslide.

Land stewardship is long-term security. Forest cover slows floods; terraces dampen soil erosion; maintained trails allow rescue in storms and fires; water governance prevents panic in droughts. Land stewardship is also economy: agritourism, honey, dairy, woodcraft, herbal remedies, stonework, and more. And it is morality: to inherit a hillside and pass it on in a better state is to honor the ancestors and bless the unborn.

One of the biggest challenges the Mountain faces today is the demographic incursion of groups and individuals – sometimes even Maronites – that do not relate to this environmental ethos. They destroy the Mountain wherever they settle with urban expansion, development projects, resource abuse, and deforestation. They have no regard for the environmental cost or the impact of such actions on future generations. In a proper autonomous mountain state, land protection laws inspired by this theology will be enforced and applied.

The Maronite “Theology of the Land” is not a marginal chapter in an old spirituality, but the ethical and political core of the Maronite mission today. It is to recognize the place as grace, to live it as duty, and to guard it as value, so that witness remains possible and the Mountain remains a home for freedom, holiness, and dignified life.

As the Maronites reclaim their roots, they must also reclaim their deep connection with their mountain. A people that keeps its spirit in order can keep its land and mind in order, and all three are prerequisites for freedom.

V. Maronite Witness and Spirituality

The Maronite spirit breathes through the Qurbono and the Syriac liturgy whose cadences formed our people long before modern politics.

As a concise official summary puts it: the Qurbono is “the primary official form of prayer of the Church and a fundamental source of Maronite identity.”⁴³

Syriac, being a late syncretic form rooted in the Aramean language that was spoken by Jesus, is more than just a language. Anyone who sang or heard Syriac hymns knows it: there is something deeply mystical about prayers written in the tongue of Christ.

Syriac hymnody, ancestral to Maronite rites, carries the grammar of the gospel in modes that teach rather than entertain. This is coupled with an ascetic temper that ultimately trains appetites to serve, not rule. That is why the language question matters: Syriac carries memory and doctrine in its very grammar. Maronite liturgical authorities stress faithfulness to the “authentic sources of the Antiochene Syriac Maronite liturgy” precisely to “preserve its identity intact.”⁴⁴

Where this language fades, the rite can still live, but something in the texture of identity thins. As we have

discussed earlier, when identity grows weaker, it becomes easier to fragment and subjugate its nation. For this reason, the Maronites must unearth and relearn their Syriac heritage as part of reclaiming their identity. Syriac will also help us recover a unique communal bond between us that cannot be broken.

The cure for the language problem is not romantic archaism but bilingual competence: Syriac and Lebanese streams in parish schools and hymnals and primers that a child can love; transliteration where needed, but never as a permanent crutch.

In addition to reclaiming Syriac, it is equally important to reconcile the Maronite masses with their churches and monasteries. The monastery in Maronite tradition is not only a house of prayer; it is a node: a school, a kitchen, a dispensary, a scriptorium, a granary, a publisher, a trail caretaker, and an archive. It is a focal center of culture and identity. Pope John Paul II captured the Eastern Christian experience bluntly: "Monasticism has always been the very soul of the Eastern Churches."⁴⁵

This practical spirituality allows it to be institution-making. A parish that can chant together can deliberate together. The point is not moral superiority, but reliability. Spiritual forms, when honored, generate predictable and moral behavior. Predictable behavior is the skeleton of trust, and trust is the circulatory system of freedom.

Maronite spirituality is not just about the Syriac-Antiochian roots of the tradition. The deepest current in the Maronite soul is a personal bond with Jesus Christ: immediate, intimate, and stubbornly concrete.

For Christians of Mount Lebanon, faith runs deep. It is not an idea admired from afar, but a Presence sought, spoken to, and followed.

In the Qurbono, the Lord is not a symbol of comfort; he is the Bread of Fire who burns away fear and gathers scattered lives into one Body.

In the mountains, this proximity is a habit expressed by short arrow prayers under the breath while walking terraces; by the lord's name spoken over infants and the dying; by countless shrines on every road, by drawing the sign of the cross before every action, and by candles lit at the icons of the saints, as if to say, "Stay always with us."

The result across centuries is visible: a people that measures days by liturgy and fast, whose ordinary piety had given extraordinary fruit. Saints multiplied where Christ has once walked. The Maronite canon is not an anthology of distant heroes but a family album of recognizable lives, of monks and nuns who lived in our villages and kept prayers in the coldest winters. Of saints who ate from the same fields and walked the same streets as we do.

Think of Charbel, where silence became light for all the nations; Rafka, where suffering transfigured into intercession; Nimatullah, where study and craftsmanship were married to holiness; Estephan Nehme, where obedience was as steady as cedar. Their miracles are not mere wonders; they are confirmations that Christ's life still courses through these lands and the people willing to stay close to him.

From this intimacy grows a conviction many Maronites hold quietly but firmly: that their very existence in the East is a spiritual mission. Not a privilege, not a tribal exception, but a sign that Christ will always stay in this East, that worship may always rise from cedar valleys, that forgiveness and steadfastness can be practiced where history is extremely heavy.

The Maronite mission is to remain true without bitterness, to serve without boasting, to intercede without despair. It is to embody a paradox: to be fully of this land; of its stones and waters and songs, and yet to live as citizens of another City whose peace is given by Divine will.

This is why Maronite spirituality is so practical: adoration chapels in villages that also run soup lines; monasteries that keep vigil and ledgers; pilgrimages that end with litter picked up, debts forgiven, and a quarrel mended. And this is why it is public: saints are not only for personal edification; they are living examples for a country that never forgot how to hope. Their relics gather enemies into the same nave; their feasts make neighbors out of strangers; and their intercession turns panic into petition.

To say the Maronites have a personal relationship with Christ is to say they have a public vocation: to keep a place in the East where his Name is sung with joy, where his poor are served without calculation, and where his peace is trained into habits that can survive storms.

The Maronites persist in this East because they were entrusted with the great burden and the even greater

mission of carrying the Cross in one of the hardest and most intolerant regions of the world.

If the Maronites endure, it must be because this faith endures, because they are being watched over from above, and because their spirit is handed down from generation to generation as carefully as a family icon and as boldly as a battle standard.

VI. The Maronite Mythos: Warrior • Steward • Monk

The Maronite story can be expressed as a trinity: Warrior • Steward • Monk.

These are the three faces of one disciplined spirit, with three axes of relation: to the land below, to the sky above, and to the community beside.

The Maronite Warrior is not a romantic glorification of violence, but a defender of the common goods: families, schools, monasteries, archives, springs, and forests. They express courage harnessed to rule, and not rage. The Maronite warrior is a fighter who endures all the armies that want to break their community. A volunteer who knows first aid, a scout who knows the ridge lines, a radio net operator who keeps calm, and a council that can mobilize without panic. The Maronite warrior's vow is learning the discipline that keeps their community safe and having the courage to do what they must in the hardest circumstances.

We have written a small book about *the Warrior Path* that embodies this philosophy and goes more in-depth about

it so we aren't going to elaborate too much on it here. Practical outputs of the warrior ethos in a future mountain state will be found in: civil-protection corps, mountain guards, search-and-rescue teams, wildfire brigades, festival safety marshals, all trained, insured, coordinated, and lawful.

The Maronite steward is a caretaker of the land. An expert on terraces, trees, and waters. They are as patient as seasons and conservative in the best sense: they conserve the land and its wealth. The Maronite steward vow is to leave the land better than they received it.

Practical outputs of the steward ethos will be found in cooperative forestry, spring committees, terrace-repair brigades, seed banks, orchard adoption programs, trail maintenance days, agritourism standards, and small-equipment lending libraries.

The Maronite Monk is the beacon of prayer, fasting, study, and hospitality, with the monastery as a node for education and mercy. The Maronite monk's vow is to seek God and serve the neighbor.

Practical outputs of the monk ethos can be found in choir and chant endowments, Syriac curriculum hours, monastery-parish programs for youth, catechesis for civic virtue, and kitchens that can feed a village in a storm.

The Maronite mythos is actionable. It is not a costume or a slogan; it is a curriculum to train the Maronite youth in the foundations of their nation. A parish can adopt it as a one-page covenant; a diocese can align grants to it; a municipal council can plan around it; diaspora

communities can fund it and send their children to participate in it.

We outlined and distilled our spirit into its practical essence so it can fit today's language of personal responsibility and growth, without diluting its core.

The point of establishing such a practical mythos is to remember that a nation cannot be saved by slogans but by actions and grounded behavior. Our nation can only thrive by disciplined love: love of God, of land, and of neighbor, taught and rehearsed until it becomes second nature.

VII. Why We Choose to Persist in the Mountain

We stay in Mount Lebanon because there are places in the world that ask something exacting of the human being and, by asking, make us more than we are.

Transcendence and meaning are rarely found where the slope is easy. If fate has decided that this is how we overcome ourselves, that this is how we carry our cross and find our place in Heavens, then *amor fati* (we love our fate).

Not all of us accept the calling; we are just human after all. Most of us want normal, comfortable lives. Why accept it and choose to stay when we can simply leave? Why fight when we can drift into a pleasant sleep and let our nation fade into eternal silence?

Because we simply want to live as who we are, and we want to be who we have become after thousands of years of trials and love.

We want to be more than just nameless faces in a faceless static world. We want to be more than consumers and spectators in some boring place. We want to see how far we can transcend and how high we can rise in the face of the most challenging human experience the world can give.

A people who have learned to build terraces out of cliffs and bread out of stone know that dignity is not delivered by fortune but crafted by fidelity. We stay because the mountain, with its short seasons and long memory, is a beautiful place.

We stay because this tired region of the world is a school for souls: it nurtures resilience and reliability, punishes shortcuts, rewards steady hands, and returns whatever we bring to it, care or neglect, with interest.

We stay because the world and the region need our community and the brightness of our individuals. Because the world needs custodians of difficult places who can show that freedom is possible in a place without abundance, that civility can be practiced without softness, that community and meaning can be chosen in a century that teaches us to drift into the devouring voids of nihilism.

We stay because the young must learn that identity is not a playlist but a craft. That belonging is not sentiment but discipline.

We stay because we know that the most reliable way to become larger on the inside is to attach oneself to something bigger than our personal worries and goals: to a work that will outlive us, to springs and forests and places that will provide goodness, joy, and shade for countless generations after us.

We stay because self-respect depends on the capacity to keep promises in one small place. Because a people that cannot keep promises at home will carry their unkept vows abroad as a quiet heartache.

We stay because the mountain trains the reflexes we most admire in others: economy of force, generosity without exhibition, the courage to hold our ground without hating our neighbor. We stay because we would rather be formed by a terrain that speaks honestly than soothed by a comfort that slowly unties us.

We stay because each departure subtracts a voice from the choir and a pair of hands from the harvest. Because there is a threshold beyond which even the most beautiful liturgy sounds like an echo of what might have been.

We stay because our elders did not keep our nation alive through countless baptisms and marriages and wars across generations, so that their grandchildren could become a memory. We stay because they taught us when they lifted walls with their bare hands, when they sang in a language older than their sorrows, and when they trusted us to decide that continuity is a form of courage.

We stay because the task ahead of making a small, lawful, free country in the hardest neighborhood on

earth, no matter how difficult, is the sort of task that builds not only roads and courts, but souls.

We stay because excellence needs resistance to take shape. Because the gymnasium of character cannot be found on a level plain.

We stay because we do not accept a slow drift into irrelevance, and we do not mistake safety for life. Life for us has never been an arrangement of convenience, but a posture toward Truth.

We stay because our neighbors, even those who do not share our creed, need a companion who believes that decency can be institutionalized, that peace can be practiced without cowardice, that power can be chained to law. We stay because the very act of building such institutions gives our children a vocabulary for adulthood that no passport stamp can supply.

We stay because the mountain teaches transcendence that is not escape: when you climb, you breathe harder, but you see farther.

We stay because the work of turning fear into order and scarcity into cooperation is a human art worth mastering, and because it is a joy to watch a village become alive, as we choose to remain.

We can keep listing reasons, but at the edge of every secular cause stands the first principle that taught us to measure our days in good actions: because we were asked to witness his love and glory in this area of the world. Because we bear the Cross of the East by choice and by grace.

We do not preach survival as an idol, but we understand that a steadfast, lawful, merciful people in this place can keep a light that others in the East still need. We understand that our fidelity to the mountain becomes, without slogans, a testimony to the One who entered a small land and made ordinary life holy.

We stay, finally, because staying is how love becomes eternal: the love of parents for children not yet born, of the living for their ancestors, of citizens for a nation that must be earned to be kept.

To stay is to say: we will overcome because we are willing to be shaped by the Mountain; we will transcend because we accept the limits of our humanity; we will grow because we choose to walk on the hard, rugged edge; and we will be a community because we keep each other honest.

We stay because we have all the tools that enable us to survive and thrive in this place. Because our spirit is itself our operating system and a practical blueprint for a thriving future.

In the chapters that follow, we will show how to turn this spirit into institutions and processes, so that what we love is not only sung, but built.

But first, each of us must make our choice. And in that choice, in that daily modest heroism of every Maronite man, woman, and child, the Maronite spirit will again find its vocation: a warrior in restraint, a steward on their land, and a monk in mercy. A people at home... and a lamp that shines forever.

Table 11. A Timeless Maronite Mythos

Archetype	Ethos	Vow	Practical Expressions
Warrior	Disciplined will; defiance against tyranny; protection of the vulnerable.	"I vow to defend the faith, land, and kin with courage and justice."	Mountain defense, search-and-rescue teams; advocacy for rights; physical training tied to spiritual discipline; standing against corruption in politics.
Steward	Bond with the land; caretaking and abundance; resilience through labor.	"I vow to cultivate the earth and community, sowing seeds of prosperity and harmony."	Sustainable farming cooperatives; environmental initiatives in the Mountain; family enterprises rooted in heritage; educational programs on land theology; communal granaries or resource-

			sharing networks.
Monk	Deep spirituality; intimacy with the Divine; pursuit of wisdom and prayer.	"I vow to seek the Cross's salvation through prayer, study, and service."	Monastic retreats open to laity; Syriac chant choirs; daily Qurbono participation; scholarly circles on Maronite history; charitable works like orphanages or elder care, infused with liturgical rhythm.

Part IV

The Way Forward

Chapter 10

What small nations did (and did not do) to survive

We established the need for a novel approach to face the problems of the Lebanese Republic. We also established the why for preserving and protecting the Maronite Nation and Christian communities in Lebanon. Now it is time to talk about the how, about solutions.

Before we delve into that discussion, it is beneficial to look first into other small nations and learn from their history as well.

There are many examples from around the world of nations that survived through existential threats similar to what Lebanese Christians are facing today. Two of those experiences, however, are closely related to ours and share our geo-political reality: Jewish national revival (Zionism) and Armenian survival.

Anything related to Jewish history or the establishment and endurance of the Nation of Israel has been taboo in Lebanon and the Arab world for the past 80 years. There is a reason for that: the majoritarian powers that rule the East do not want Christians to learn what works. They want us to be lost and confused forever in Arabist and Islamic ideologies and causes.

Since our cause is the very survival of our people, we do not have such taboos. We are willing to take practical,

transferable lessons from any nation in the world to secure our space, build institutions, earn legitimacy, and protect our freedom.

The Maronite cause can borrow the mechanics and not necessarily the ideologies of these experiences. This chapter shows how to adapt and what to avoid. We finish with an adaptation map on what to build next.

I. How Small Nations Endure

It is tempting to use the examples of modern prosperous city-states and small nations to point out the possibility of establishing a thriving state on a small land. These examples would include places like Monaco, Liechtenstein, Singapore, the Maldives, and others.

These nations, however, do not share the geopolitical landscape of our nation and are not placed in a region where empires tried to exterminate them for centuries. Our rules of survival are not as simple as following regional neutrality and sound economic policies, although these two are key to long-term prosperity.

Our foundations lie elsewhere:

Small nations endure when they braid together five strands: thick identity, diaspora strategy, institutional discipline, legitimacy (law + narrative), and a single, lawful doctrine of force.

They fail when they gamble on patrons, fragment command, neglect demographic renewal and education, or dissolve their distinctiveness into fashions stronger than themselves.

We study other nations not to mimic their forms but to borrow their functions. Copying uniforms is easy; replicating *capabilities* is hard. The method we are using is comparative and unsentimental. We examine how the two small nations of Armenia and Israel turned identity into capacity, diaspora into capital and skill, suffering into documentation and leverage, and scattered militias into one disciplined chain.

These two nations built institutions long before achieving sovereignty. They mobilized outside their borders through diaspora finance, advocacy, and professional networks. They wrote guarantees into laws about land, policing, justice, and education. They achieved a state-like government before getting recognition.

We treat every “win” they accomplished as a bundle of trade-offs, not as a miracle. We keep a running audit of what would translate to Mount Lebanon and what would not.

The Jewish revival (Zionism) offers a template for institution-first statecraft under existential pressure. The Armenian story shows how a small homeland and a vast, capable diaspora can act in concert.

We will also use other examples from compact European cases like Switzerland, Finland, Estonia, and Slovenia, to demonstrate specific institutional technologies like federalism, full-society security, digital state, and export discipline.

None of these cases maps exactly onto Mount Lebanon. But each contains operational moves that a Mountain sanctuary can adapt.

Two guardrails here keep us honest here:

1. Analogy, not romance. Israel's landscape, demography, and wars are not Lebanon's. Armenia's genocide, Soviet period, and renewed wars are not ours. We know that we have our history, and they have theirs. We have our cause, and they have theirs. The point is not to import a script but to extract techniques, such as the principles of institution-first, archive-first, language-first, and unity-first, and adapt them to our terrain and circumstances.
2. Cost accounting. Every capability has a cost. The Hebrew revival demanded decades of schooling. Armenian memory required global archives and litigators. Defense unity demanded suppressing rival charisma for the sake of command. These two nations paid for every victory with blood and sweat. We name the costs, because the worst way to fail is to want the outputs without paying for the inputs.

II. Jewish Revival (Zionism): from Dispersion to Sovereignty

The Jewish revival is the modern world's most radical example of a dispersed people reconcentrating identity, land, language, institutions, and defense into one sovereign project. Agree or disagree with their policies

then or now, the capability build is unmistakable. For Lebanon's Christians, three mechanisms matter: institution-first, land-labor-language synergy, and unified defense under civil command.

1. From Idea to Infrastructure: Institutions Before Independence

Zionism began as an argument about peoplehood and political will. It succeeded when it became a logistics machine.

Decades before a flag flew, Jewish leaders founded proto-state institutions that managed immigration, health, education, finance, and diplomacy. The Jewish Agency brokered policy and money. The Histadrut built labor power, clinics, and housing. The Kupat Holim health fund treated people at scale. Schools taught the same textbooks to children scattered across villages and towns, who then grew up with a shared identity. Youth movements trained cadres in agriculture and civic discipline. The Haganah (founded 1920) organized territorial defense and logistics under central command; its very existence reflected the Yishuv's bias toward command unity and continuity of governance in wartime.⁴⁶

From the founding of the World Zionist Organization in 1897 to the 1930s, the Yishuv (pre-state community in the Holy Land) became able to mobilize budgets, teachers, doctors, guards, engineers, and clerks as if a state already existed. All it took was one generation of committed institutions.

The Zionist work before establishing the modern state of Israel was not built on hopes and dreams. “If you will it, it is no dream” was the slogan of the movement.

The lesson here is building solid foundations: institutions came before sovereignty. Schools, clinics, registries, agricultural stations, defense bodies, unions, women’s organizations, orchestras, publishing houses, land-purchase funds, and municipal cooperatives created a platform on which politics could later stand.

Before Lebanon’s Christians seek guarantees and recognition from others, they must guarantee bread, clinics, policing, and land titles to their own.

In the absence of sovereignty, such platforms produce order and confidence. They also build leaders who have administered something tangible: budgets, decisions, and institutions. The nation must be already self-governing itself efficiently before establishing a state and getting international recognition.

2. Land, Labor, Language: The Triad of Nationhood

The classic Zionist triad was land-labor-language:

- **Land.** Legal mechanisms like land trusts and funds pooled diaspora capital to purchase and hold property in perpetuity. This ensured that future generations would have access to the land and the nation would have tangible territory. The function: convert sentiment (diaspora connection to the homeland) into non-liquid assets that anchor settlement and agriculture.

- **Labor.** The ideology of productive labor (often controversial) turned urban professionals into farmers, roadbuilders, and mechanics. When public works were planned, all the community participated in making it happen. Work was not only a moral duty; it was collective security. Settlements that produced food, water systems, and roads could hold a line when there was no friendly hinterland.
- **Language.** Like Syriac, Hebrew was the language of rite and ritual only for many Jews in the 19th century, instead of a daily living language. The Zionist movement posited that “The Hebrew language will go from the synagogue ... to the school ... into the home and become a living language.”⁴⁷ This is exactly what happened. The revival of Hebrew was a nation-making act. Newspapers, schools, dictionaries, literary prizes, and radio created a single vernacular that turned immigrants who came from different languages and cultural backgrounds, into neighbors and kin. Language was not an ornament; it was interoperability, vital in education, medicine, logistics, and command.

The Diaspora contribution was also key, even after the state was established. In 1951, the Development Corporation for Israel (“Israel Bonds”) began issuing diaspora bonds, an instrument still used today with over \$55B in cumulative sales. This succeeds precisely because patriotic investors accept lower yields for mission-linked capital. It was paired with philanthropy

that obeyed budgets and, crucially, with professional diaspora institutions that could vet projects and people.

For Christians of Lebanon, this triad maps as land–craft–language/rite. We already possess the place (the mountain), the crafts (terracing, forestry, small industry), and a liturgical language (Syriac) that binds memory. The lesson is to retool each leg for modern needs: land held in community trusts; labor that upgrades agriculture, restores forest and springs, and creates industry; language and rite taught with joy and rigor so schools do not bleed culture even while they teach STEM.

It is also important to get the diaspora engagement right. Diaspora finance works when it is rule-bound. It must have clear use-of-proceeds, audited assets, and visible public goods (schools, clinics, grids). Bonds and endowments only succeed when political risk is fenced, and impact is measurable.

3. Defense: From Militias to a Single Army

Pre-state Jewish defense was plural, with several armed factions like Haganah, Irgun and Lehi. They had competing strategies and patrons. Statehood forced a decision: one chain of command or civil war.

The Altalena episode, when the new government asserted monopoly of force at a terrible political cost, was a confrontation between the newly created Israel Defense Forces and the Irgun. It brought Israel to the brink of civil war. It ended up fixing a principle that was foundational to the state: no rival guns. On the eve of the

crisis, the first prime minister of the state, David Ben-Gurion, emphasized that “There are not going to be two states. There are not going to be two armies!”⁴⁸

Army unity did not remove factional politics, but it ended military pluralism and protected the state from violent internal conflicts. This is a precondition for any state that wishes to enforce law rather than broker exceptions.

For any small nation, especially a minority among stronger neighbors, a single lawful doctrine of force is oxygen. Fragmented arms are brave for a day and fatal for generations. The Mountain translation of that principle is civil protection under law. In the state, the armed forces would be under a single chain of command with disciplined, trained, Mountain-bound doctrine.

Before establishing autonomy, the movement for self-determination should never become an army and should always coordinate with legitimate authorities to avoid the situation of militia multiplication.

4. Diplomacy and Legitimacy: The Outer Ring

The Zionist project relentlessly pursued legal charters and recognition from the world powers for decades. From Balfour’s Declaration to the halls of the League of Nations and the United Nations, they cultivated a moral narrative of return, refuge, and renaissance while applying clean and transparent governance.

Legitimacy did not eliminate conflict; it multiplied options. It provided access to capital markets,

established immigration frameworks, and helped sign treaties and alliances. Internally, legitimacy turned arguments about tactics into parliamentary disputes rather than existential schisms or armed conflict. The recognition of the state of Israel by most of the world in 1948 was not some grand conspiracy but the result of decades of relentless work. The geopolitical moment after World War II made such a state not only possible but desirable.

Transferables to our cause: build proto-state service capacity where the center fails. Turn diaspora emotion into endowed, audited institutions. Revive language and rite as the capacity of a unified identity. Commit to one doctrine of lawful civil protection and do not allow militia multiplication.

There are some cautions also from the same experience. The biggest of them is avoiding translating institutional discipline into permanent militarization or open-ended territorial maximalism.

III. Armenian Survival: Nationhood Across Catastrophe

If Jewish revival is a story of reconcentration into sovereignty, Armenian survival is a story of diasporic nationhood welded by church, school, archive, and memory, and followed by a fragile state in a tough neighborhood.

The Armenian case teaches how a people can remain themselves across continents and centuries, even against one of the most extreme genocides in history. It also

shows what happens when patron-dependence and fragmented command meet renewed war.

1. Church & School as Federated Spine

After the genocide of 1915 and the mass displacement of Armenians from modern-day Turkey, the Armenian Apostolic Church became a federated spine that linked communities in the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas. The Armenian Apostolic Church came to be seen by many “as the custodian of Armenian national identity.”⁴⁹

Parish schools, cultural centers, choirs, newspapers, and charities created dense local webs with global coordination. The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), founded in 1906, became the backbone of orphanages, schools, relief logistics, and vocational centers across the Levant and beyond. Its work included the classic case of Port Said, where it serviced refugees from Musa Dagh⁵⁰. When Musa Dagh’s Armenians reached Egypt, AGBU’s model of orphanages, schools, and trade skills turned uprooted families into a community again.

The ultimate function of this vast network is elegant: the church supplied cultural continuity and ritual time; the schools taught curriculum and language; the cultural houses became a public square for political work; and the media offered memory and debate. In the absence of a strong state, the matrix held, and the Armenian people endured. Youth learned Armenian letters and history in Beirut, Tehran, Paris, Los Angeles, and Buenos Aires.

Choirs sang the same hymns and newspapers argued in the same discourse.

Moreso, the Armenians organized politically in the countries that hosted them with their own right-wing and left-wing parties that represented them in parliaments and defended their interests as a collective community abroad.

Up until the disintegration of the USSR in 1990, the Armenian homeland was a small Republic absorbed by soviet policies. Communist policies of the Soviet Union tried to erase and displace ethnic culture and religion. But even as the Armenians were scattered in the four corners of the earth and their homeland silenced, the combination of Church and civil associations preserved a national life under dispersion and kept the culture alive. This survival became instrumental in supporting the small, newly independent Armenian state from 1991 onwards, with scholarships, cultural funds, and emergency relief⁵¹.

The Mount Lebanon analog is obvious: we need our parish, school, and monastery matrix back. The Armenian lesson teaches that diaspora can be decisive: global coordination that reinforces local resilience and keeps a shared identity while providing its homeland with a lifeline.

2. Diaspora Governance, Endowments, and the Politics of Memory

Armenians turned memory into an institution. Archives and collective identity were upheld by the church,

family, and school, with documented names, lands, and testimonies.

After facing a genocide, the Armenians faced a state propaganda machine that pretended the genocide never happened. While Turkey employed its diplomatic and media weight to bury the Armenian identity and story, the Armenians fought back with cultural defiance and disciplined work.

Genocide studies emerged as a field; legal and diplomatic campaigns pushed for recognition. In the words of one historian, "The only weapon against bad history ... is scrupulous investigation that results in evidence-based narration,"⁵² and that is what they focused on.

Diaspora organizations built endowments that funded schools, chairs, museums, choirs, and relief. Newspapers created global arguments that never slept. The function here is twofold: identity reproduction (children know who they are) and political leverage (states, parliaments, and universities face a documented, persistent case).

For Lebanese Christians who face erosion rather than eradication, the lesson is still sharp: build a Documentation & Rights Center that guards our cultural history, land titles, parish registers, oral traditions, school and monastery archives, judicial-monitoring files, and language, and train young scholars in brief-writing, media, and law.

3. Post-Soviet Statehood & Renewed Wars: Unity and its Costs

Armenia's post-Soviet state was born into a blockade and unresolved war. For a time, morale and cohesion compensated for material deficits. Over decades, however, the system suffered familiar stresses: patron dependence, corruption, emigration, and fragmented command between formal forces and veterans' networks.

When wars returned at scale in 2020 with the Second Artsakh war, weaknesses in unity of command, air defense, diplomacy, and economic depth exacted their price on Armenia.

One analyst notes the post-2020 landscape and laments that "Armenia will not be able to free itself of a dangerous over-dependence on Russia" without a strategic reset⁵³.

Unfortunately, what Armenians succeeded in doing so well in their diaspora did not translate with the same efficiency and success inside the country itself. Armenia's overdependence on Russia left it exposed to territory loss and a second genocide in Artsakh, as Moscow was unwilling or unable to show up for its ally.

The Armenians fought heroically during the war, and the whole diaspora mobilized to protect the motherland. However, with the absence of a strong state, the plurality of armed forces, and the absence of support from international allies, Armenia lost the war.

The transferable lesson here is important: unity of command and logistics come before heroism. This

episode of Armenian history also serves as a caution: external patrons are like the weather and cannot be pillars of protection for small nations. Strategies that assume permanent foreign support often leave a small nation exposed when international winds change.

Another important lesson here is to be mindful of strategy divergence between the diaspora and the homeland. In the Armenian case, this mismatch translated into a failure at home. In addition to sound institutions and transparent funding, clear geopolitical goals are essential to ensure such alignment.

AGBU-type bodies succeeded because they are boring in the best way: budgets and programs that deliver. But such success cannot bear fruit if the homeland and the diaspora do not see each other as co-sovereign stakeholders in the future of their nation.

IV. Compact European Case Studies

The following section does not intend to be a comprehensive overview of all the potential mechanisms that our nation can adopt, but we highlight notable ones that can inspire the Mountain.

1. Switzerland: Federalism and Subsidiarity Mechanics

Swiss federalism divides power between the Confederation, 26 cantons, and ~2,100 communes. Subsidiarity is the rule of the road.

Subsidiarity in political thought is the idea that decisions should always be taken at the lowest possible level or closest to where they will have their effect. In practice, this means empowering local institutions in the decision-making process wherever possible. In other words, the central state would not try to rule where smaller, intermediate institutions can adequately govern.

Historically, Mount Lebanon followed this principle, with villages and geographic regions handling most of their affairs on their own. It is time to come back to it once more.

In Switzerland, Cantons have their own constitutions, parliaments, governments, courts, and primary competence in education, utilities, policing, and health⁵⁴. These are exactly the domains small communities care about most. Switzerland is also known for its international neutrality, which allowed it to avoid most conflicts of the 20th century.

Some Lebanese thinkers call for a Swiss-style federalism as a solution for the Lebanese problem, presented in detail, for example, by Iyad Boustany⁵⁵.

The Swiss model has some useful mechanics that can work well for the Mountain like a Sanctuary Charter that enumerates local competences and unifies foreign policy/defense with arbitration hooks. It also forces open budgets at the canton/commune level.

However, the federal model in general cannot solve the biggest Lebanese dysfunction: the absence of a center in a multi-confessional republic. As foreign policy and budgets remain in the center, the most important aspects

of a state will stay immobilized by conflict and indecision; all the problems of the Republic will stay the same. We will discuss the merits of a federal solution in more detail the next chapter.

2. Finland: Comprehensive Security and Whole-of-Society Defense

Finland's "whole-of-society" defense is a usable template for small nations that live next to larger pressures.

Instead of treating security as a specialist function, Finland distributes it: universal conscription and large reserves, civil defense shelters and stockpiles, and redundant communications and local command. It is all unified under a doctrine of "comprehensive security" that assigns clear roles to ministries, municipalities, businesses, NGOs, and citizens. All these bodies are organized under a Security Strategy for Society that can mobilize together or independently in crises⁵⁶. The Defense of Finland, then, is distributed across the entirety of the society and its civil and military institutions, providing it with extra layers of resilience and anti-fragility in any conflict or natural disaster.

The point isn't militarization; it is preparedness. Finland conducts regular refresher training, annual drills, has neighborhood alert systems in place, and nurtures a culture of self-help that enhances societal immunity while buying time for official institutions to act.

That logic can be transferred cleanly to Mount Lebanon through a lawful civil-protection doctrine. For civilians,

this means training in basic military skills, first aid, wildfire control, search-and-rescue, traffic management, radio comms, shelter operations, cyber hygiene, and continuity-of-operations for schools, monasteries, and clinics.

It would also translate into parish-municipal hubs that host equipment caches, water tanks, generators, and first-response kits. It includes maintaining skill registries (nurses, drivers, electricians, drone pilots...etc.); running seasonal musters and tabletop exercises using a simple Incident Command System; and publishing standard operating procedures so every volunteer can plug into a known playbook.

Municipalities would be tied together with mutual-aid pacts, and every household would hold a 72-hour checklist. Drill evacuation routes and firebreak maintenance, along with redundant comms (VHF/UHF nets, SMS trees), keep preparedness high in all seasons.

Most of all, it must be funded like Finland funds resilience: predictable budgets, audited endowments, and private sector participation.

Finally, the diaspora would also be included in seasonal service rather than photo-op donations. Teachers, medics, IT security, and forestry teams will be present in the mountain on fixed rotations.

The result is a community that can absorb shock without panic, protect the vulnerable without bravado, and keep schools, utilities, and livelihoods running under stress. In autonomous Mount Lebanon, security is a civic habit, not a factional uniform.

The most important role of a security doctrine, other than ensuring the survival of the nation, is ensuring the continuity of the Mountain State. This includes protected governance sites with continuity of government protocols, redundant power/water networks, and civilian gendarmerie bodies at the municipal level.

This is the best defense strategy for a small nation that wants to avoid permanent militarization and its pitfalls.

3. Estonia: The digital State

Estonia proved that a tiny nation could punch far above its weight by turning identity into infrastructure. With e-Residency, non-citizens get a state-issued digital ID, can found an EU company online, e-sign contracts, file taxes, and run an entire business remotely.

Core rails like digital ID, public-key signatures, interoperable registries, and e-invoicing are standardized. Trust is baked into the code. It is an architecture built to export services and attract capital without big territory⁵⁷.

This is a perfect mechanism to link the diaspora to their homeland. It opens investments without risking demographic and cultural changes. It is a kind of private-civic “e-commons” that lets the diaspora legally establish, fund, and operate ventures serving Mount Lebanon cleanly and at scale.

With such a system, a diaspora entrepreneur in Montréal or Dubai can spin up a Mountain startup, sign suppliers, pay craftspeople, ship samples, and report impact

without flying home. This system lowers friction, raises trust, and turns affection into operating businesses that employ youth back home and strengthen the economy.

4. Slovenia: Export Discipline for Small Countries

Post-independence Slovenia scaled fast by finding niches in bigger value chains like auto parts, appliances, and pharma, and professionalizing SMEs, making exports the organizing economic principle of the country.

Like Lebanon, Slovenia is a small mountainous state with no oil and few natural resources. They made their economy work: their exports constitute today more than 80% of their GDP.⁵⁸

Three levers make it work:

- (1) High-quality products and formal certification systems were their ticket to acquiring global buyers.
- (2) Clusters & supplier development at home tied to EU manufacturers.
- (3) A legal and economic infrastructure that facilitates exports & logistics (port of Koper, trade-credit tools).

The Mount Lebanon translation of the Slovenian example is a niche-export economy tuned to the mountain. Think tech hubs, robotics, agro-foods (honey, cheeses, herbs), wood & stone crafts, specialty textiles and leather, natural cosmetics, and musical/woodwind makers. This can also complement service exports like

coding, finance ops, design, SaaS localization, engineering, and consultation.

A sanctuary economy anchored in two or three exportable niches, with port access, can achieve a first-world economy in a couple of decades. Again, the diaspora can transform such an endeavor from good to great.

V. A Mount Lebanon Adaptation Matrix

We mentioned the previous examples to showcase that it is possible to build a governable small nation with a sound economy and stable security in a way that fits our geographic and demographic realities and geopolitical circumstances.

It is useful at this point to provide a summary of successful mechanics and strategies that can broaden the horizon of Mount Lebanon.

Across cases and beyond the special examples of Jewish and Armenian nations, the pattern repeats. Small nations that endure and thrive do eight things well:

1. Identity preservation and cultural revival. Language, rite, calendar, culture, and craft are not folk ornaments; they are operating systems for a nation. The Parish network is key here, with education, scholarships, and culture scaled by modern procurement and data.
2. Institutions before recognition. We must build schools, clinics, unions, land registries, cooperatives, diaspora covenants, archives, and

defense councils *before* achieving political victories. Parallel but lawful service and governance capacities create legitimacy and cadres that are essential in state-building.

3. Single chain of coercion. Whatever a nation's security posture, unity of command under civilian rule is non-negotiable. Militias win days; armies win generations. It is imperative to emphasize the rule of law in policing and security. A sanctuary's security must be rights-bound without militias or partisan brigades, and without permanent militarization that glorifies violence.

A security strategy doctrine of Whole-of-society resilience, like the Finnish model, can be key for the Mountain.

4. Diaspora as covenant, not ATM. Diaspora resources must flow through audited endowments with term-limited governance, matching requirements, rigorous audits, e-residency mechanics, and deliverables.
5. Lawfare & legitimacy. Laws must be constitutional and written. The Mountain must have a clear governance structure before it becomes a state. Every oral pact in the Lebanese Republic failed. The Mountain State must litigate where possible. It must cultivate recognition, write charters and codes, and maintain archives so that laws become tangible and memory becomes evidence.
6. Demography as strategy. Incentivize marriage, child-rearing, and teacher vocations. Provide

housing and security to keep the young. Build an environment suitable for establishing families.

7. Terrain-tuned economy. Build what fits the land: e-residency to invite diaspora contribution, in addition to agro-forestry, water systems, crafts, digital guilds, and service hubs. Such an economy does not require megacities and natural resources. Pick narrow export niches and measure success in GDP and value-added.
8. Narrative discipline. Make concise moral claims and avoid maximalist rhetoric. Speak the language of rights and responsibilities to friends and critics alike. If a nation cannot explain what it is for in a sentence or two, it hemorrhages allies and confuses its children. Moral claims must be intelligible and modest. For Christians of Mount Lebanon, the cause is simple: They want the right to live free on their land as they have for millennia. They want the right to educate their children, worship God, and steward their land under law. It is that simple.

These eight factors work in tandem; the Mountain cannot survive and prosper if one of them is missing. In the words of Hannah Arendt, "Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert."⁵⁹ These principles allow us to achieve exactly that.

Negative lessons: what not to do

It is just as important to know what to avoid. We might be repeating ourselves here, but it is important to stress the following cautions:

- Militia pluralism. Divided command is romantic in literature but ruinous in practice. It invites governance dysfunction, factional blackmail, deters investment, and turns every disagreement into a standoff or a violent clash.
- Patron politics. Outsourcing survival to foreign sponsors buys time at the cost of strategic capture. The bill arrives when patrons reprioritize or bargain our interests away.
- Institutional neglect. Movements that win spectacular battles while starving schools, clinics, unions, and archives awake to hollow sovereignty, and become a flag without capacity. Cultural revival means nothing without strong social, economic, and political institutions at home.
- Diaspora disconnection: Diaspora support collapses into corruption without independent boards, audits, and procurement laws. There is also the risk of diaspora-homeland drift if the diaspora is not connected enough to its homeland or treated like an ATM. Remittances can conceal structural decline if institutions are not properly built.
- Demographic drift. If marriage, births, teacher pipelines, and apprenticeships are not rising, you are losing even when GDP stabilizes. Demography is as important as every other aspect, but it is also misguided to treat demography as a cultural

problem only. Big families need stable countries to thrive and prosper, and we must build the foundations that encourage demographic renewal.

VI. Creating the Capacity of a Free Mountain

The story for this chapter is not just that “others did it, so we can too.” The Maronites and Christians of Mount Lebanon have already proven in history that they can do the impossible. The lesson for this chapter is about which choices we can make to create the capacity for a free Mountain.

The fate of the Mountain will stand on whether it codifies mechanics that work: institutions first, a rule-bound monopoly of force and clear defense doctrine, diaspora covenants and guarantees in law.

These mechanics, infused with the Maronite spirit, form the roadmap for independence that we’ll discuss in the next chapters.

If we do these things, quietly, stubbornly, and together, Mount Lebanon can be what it has been at its best: a small, lawful, green, and generous free country where a people keep their faith, freedom, and stewardship alive for themselves and useful to their neighbors.

Table 12. Mount Lebanon Adaptation Matrix

Factor	Description	Mount Lebanon Adaptation
Identity Preservation	Language, rite, culture as an Operating System	Cultural revival and schools with Syriac/rite focus
Institutions First	Build before sovereignty	Proto-state services in education, health, and utilities
Single Coercion Chain	Unified defense, no armed exceptions	Lawful civil-protection doctrine, a whole-of-society defense
Diaspora Covenant	Audited endowments, co-ownership	e-Residency and seasonal service
Lawfare & Legitimacy	Written laws, charters, and archives	Legislative bodies, independent courts, documentation Center for Rights
Demography Strategy	Incentives for renewal	Family housing/vocations, stability, security
Terrain-Tuned Economy	Niche exports	Agro-forestry, crafts, digital hubs

Narrative Discipline	Concise claims	moral	"The Right to live free on ancestral land."
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Chapter 11

Self-Determination in Mount Lebanon: Models, law, and the case for independence

The failure of the Lebanese Republic and its regime is barely contested among the Lebanese, but the solutions for our problems do not have the same consensus.

The majority of people who want to fix the Republic believe in easy fixes: reform, fighting corruption, and decentralization. A few voices, generally considered extreme, call for federalism. Even fewer than those call for more radical solutions like confederalism or partition.

We previously discussed in Volume I that the structural level of failure in the Lebanese Republic makes it immune to reform. Every attempt to fix something will be met with resistance from one center of sectarian power or the other. If a law passes, it will be co-opted to achieve the opposite results and neutered before implementation.

The local rule known as 6x6 (ستة وستة مكرر), means that every appointment and action must apply to all the big sects equally. It implies that true reform will never see

the light.
Some people think that ending corruption and applying administrative decentralization is enough to solve Lebanon's issues. In practice, corruption is a symptom of the bargain-based political system and not a cause for its failures. Ending corruption still would not solve the absence of the monopoly of force or the dilemma of having multiple communities with contradicting agendas. Each sect will always have its own centers of power that would veto different kinds of reforms and actions in its areas of interest, even when one sect holds more cards than the others.

After the central state had normalized armed exceptions and deal-bound rights, minor adjustments to its shape will not cure the disease. That is also why federalism and cantonism, as they would actually operate in Lebanon, would probably replicate the same central bottlenecks and coercive asymmetries that have already failed us.

The Muslim populations will almost always be attached to, or influenced by, an Islamic center of power. The Christian population, on the other hand, will never submit to an Islamized vision of Lebanon, even if such a vision comes from within its own ranks. In turn, the Druze will always be under pressure to conform to Islamic and Arabic agendas at the expense of their own independent voice. These contradictions are the infrastructure for a country ruled by paralysis.

As the Republic falls further under armed majoritarianism, and as demography and power continue shifting, the Christians of Lebanon must start

thinking outside the box and figure out comprehensive long-term solutions.

Their choice today is to either continue living in a failed state that keeps on shifting against their culture and interests, or establish a solution that aligns with their values, protects their freedoms, and enables their kids and descendants to thrive and prosper.

In our opinion, a small, disciplined, rights-first republic in Mount Lebanon, lean at the center, strong in municipalities, and committed to one chain of coercion under law, is the only political architecture that can shield a thriving, free society.

In this chapter, we discuss all the potential solutions and argue why an autonomous Mount Lebanon is the best way forward.

I. How to Evaluate Models & Solutions

This is not a debate about sentiment; it is a systems test. Any solution for the Lebanese Republic or Mount Lebanon, must pass five criteria of viability:

1. **Monopoly of Force:** Would it be able to impose a *single* chain of legitimate coercion (legitimate use of violence) on everyone? Max Weber's old benchmark survives because reality keeps confirming it: a state is the human community that "claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." That claim must be successful in practice, not merely asserted on paper.

2. **Rule of Law and Independent Judiciary:** The uncontested presence of credible adjudication and the rule of law. Would the courts be able to bind the strong and protect the weak without political or sectarian interference? In a true state, prosecutors should be insulated from “phone justice,” and due process cannot be bargained away.
3. **Fixed Rights:** Are the basic rights of individuals and communities guaranteed with no vetoes or constant bargaining? Would the state be able to guarantee, in text and practice, the rights of speech, worship, schooling, academic freedom, property, and association, all treated as constitutional rights instead of coalition chips or “gifts” from the “majority” to the “minority”?
4. **Reliable services:** The state should provide predictable delivery of core services and standards with transparent budgets. Would it be able to deliver the basic services needed for modern life? This includes administration, elections, registries, emergencies, health licensing, curriculum baselines, safety, electricity, telecoms, transport, and infrastructure.
5. **International legibility:** Would the proposed political entity be able to provide a unified foreign policy and follow one clear agenda in the region and internationally? And if we are proposing partition, would the Montevideo criteria of what defines a state apply?

Recognition, treaties, and trade corridors are oxygen for small nations. If our proposal cannot meet those conditions, then it is only a pipe dream and not a serious solution.

As already shown, the Lebanese Republic itself does not meet most of these conditions and is unlikely to do so in the future.

In evaluating proposals scientifically, we apply these rails to three candidate solutions: 1) the Mutasarrifate, being the peak expression of the Mountain Emirate and a model of autonomy without full sovereignty, 2) federal/canton models being the most discussed solution currently in alternative circles for the Lebanese problem, and 3) full independence.

Once the models are discussed, we move on to analyze the most common objections to independence. We explore the tough questions of economic viability, security threats, international recognition, and the destiny of both Christians and non-Christians in the Lebanese Republic when a Mountain State becomes reality.

II. The Mutasarrifate Precedent: Autonomy without Sovereignty

The *Règlement organique* of 1861 created the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate after the 1860 civil war. It separated the Mountain from the Damascus administration and provided a special regime approved by the European powers, with a confessionally composed Administrative and consultative Council.⁶⁰

The Mutasarrifiya had many elements of an independent state: defined district borders, a governor (mutasarrif) chosen from outside the local confessions, a consultative council, taxation, a gendarmerie, and, crucially, international guarantees.

However, the Mutasarrifiya was still under Ottoman sovereignty and could not have its own foreign relations or army. This is important because the Mutasarrifiya could not for example open trade routes with a nation of its choosing, or use its funds to establish a world-class port that might compete with the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Despite its shortcomings, it is an important model because it provides an unconventional – though unlikely – solution: an autonomous mountain within the framework of the Lebanese Republic.

Under the Mutasarrifiya arrangement, Mount Lebanon experienced decades of relative stability and growth: silk exports expanded, terracing and orchards flourished, municipalities matured, and a modest bureaucracy established rudimentary standards.

The system produced what historian Engin Akarlı called the “long peace” (1861–1914) and only ended abruptly with the start of the First World War.

What the Mutassarifiya experience proves is the following:

- Feasibility of a mountain state. A compact highland territory can be governed effectively and thrive economically with a small central superstructure and robust municipal life.

- Peace via clear rules. With simple, enforced rules and external backing, communities that had fought each other found ways to bargain without slaughter.
- Economic adequacy. When administration is competent, and predation is limited, a mountain economy can prosper modestly with exports based on agriculture, crafts, and proto-services, even without ports and megacities.

What didn't work:

- No coast, no corridors. The Mutasarrifate was landlocked, with limited revenue, trade, and relief routes.
- Sovereignty. The Mutasarrifate's success rested on external guarantees and Ottoman suzerainty. It did not control borders, treaties, and did not have the full toolbox of sovereignty. This fault proved deadly when the Ottomans besieged the Mountain, triggering famine and collapse.
- Crisis resilience. When the First World War and blockade arrived, half-sovereignty proved brittle, and the confined space of the Mountain, with the absence of ports, caused the worst disaster in the Mountain's history. Autonomy buffered ordinary times, but it could not deter or absorb systemic shock without food corridors and independent diplomacy.
- External fragility. Guarantees depended on the goodwill of the great powers and the Ottoman center. There was no rights-bound internal shield

for minorities in modern terms. In the case of Mount Lebanon, such an autonomous model would additionally require the goodwill of the Lebanese State and its main communities, which is an impossible condition.

- Modern rights regime. The Mutasarrifate predated contemporary minority rights and constitutional jurisprudence, but the Mountain was still largely a feudal or semi-feudal system ruled by notable families. Its social and political model cannot be used as an off-the-shelf rights charter for today.

The Mutasarrifate stands as a testament to mountain autonomy's feasibility in routine times, delivering stability through clear rules and external guarantees while fostering economic growth. Yet, its vulnerabilities, such as landlocked fragility, sovereign deficits, and crisis brittleness, highlight the limits of partial self-rule.

Many people today use the example of the Mutasarrifiya to extract the wrong lessons: they think it was an example of why a Mountain State doesn't work. In reality, it is a testament to exactly the opposite: a mountain state can work, but it needs full sovereignty instead of partial autonomy.

The Mutasarrifiya was also a time when agricultural self-sufficiency made or broke nations, but this is not the case today. It was also a time when airports didn't exist, and the Mountain had no other port except Beirut, which was under Ottoman control.

For Christians today, this precedent inspires municipal strength but warns that true resilience demands full

sovereignty, including ports, diplomacy, and unyielding rights.

As we turn to federal models, we bring with us the following lesson: autonomy without independence risks repeating history's shocks.

III. Federalism & Canton Models

Federalism often charms reformers because it promises local control within a shared state. It is an attractive solution because, in theory, it can be implemented under the current circumstances if the Lebanese players choose so. It is also the least problematic solution, and it allows everything and everyone to remain in place while the administration of the country transforms.

While theoretically elegant, federalism's trust assumptions clash with Lebanon's realities. The federal solution still leaves currency, borders, defense, and key revenues in a central core that is already structurally compromised.

Even confederal and cantonist sketches inherit the same toxins: debt drag, armed pluralism outside state command, and rights contingent on coalition math.

Let us define the terms briefly:

- Federalism (e.g., U.S., Germany): sovereignty is divided by the constitution between the central government and the local states. States own substantial taxation, policing, and legislation powers while the center manages external affairs, currency, peace and war, and public standards.

- Confederation: sub-states retain more sovereignty and sometimes have their own armies and foreign policies. There is still a center, but it is thin, often requiring consensus and coalitions. Due to its highly unstable nature, there are no confederate countries that exist today.
- Cantonism (Swiss family): a more pronounced local state autonomy, with shared federal instruments at the center, tightly constrained by referendum culture. It is sometimes referred to as “Expanded federalism”, and is the model that most Lebanese federal proposals are based on.

In Lebanon, the most advanced federal proposal is the one sketched by author Iyad Boustany⁶¹, who calls it “ethno-geographic federalism.” Boustany’s project is, on its own terms, advanced and impressive. It is a diligently worked-through constitutional architecture that clarifies competences, imagines bicameral safeguards, and tries to balance local autonomy with shared rails. In a perfect world, Boustany’s proposal is the most practical and humane solution for the Lebanese problem.

The issue with it, however, is not the blueprint’s internal logic; it is the trust it presupposes. His design requires a high and presently nonexistent degree of inter-sect trust that enables routine compliance and rule-credible arbitration. It requires the existence, or actually the dominance, of mature rational political powers in the four major Lebanese communities.

In today's Lebanon, where non-state arms and factional vetoes structure politics, a federal center would still need Beirut to monopolize financial and foreign policy, and armed coercion. Boustany's project concedes that these competencies stay at the federal level but downplays the effect that will be generated from central paralysis in these key areas. The project imagines the federal entity to be governed by a committee made up of representatives of each of the four major communities (Druze, Shi'ite, Sunni, Christians, Maronites). It also posits that major decisions should be made by consensus through voting, and assumes that this would be enough to ensure neutrality in foreign matters and impartiality in internal affairs. This is far from what would actually happen, however, as old vetoes and paralysis will quickly become the rule of the day in such a system.

That returns us to the old impasse: the clash of foreign and local ambitions under one flag and the paralysis of vetoes in things that matter the most.

Federal units would inherit the costs of central paralysis (currency, debt, sanctions risk) while lacking the sovereignty to hedge or negotiate independently. In crises, competing narratives of "federal rights" versus "central prerogatives" would produce dual legitimacy and standoffs, not stability.

Federalist solutions also assume that all the four communities of Lebanon are entering this new compact willingly and on equal grounds and expectations, which is far from the truth on the ground. The reality on the ground is that some communities have entire armies and arsenals at their back, and the federalist proposal does

not offer an answer to this dilemma except a vague hope that everything will settle and be clean and neat before the system changes.

Even the best equalization formulas and court designs cannot function when security is plural, and recognition is contingent. Boustany's scheme is a serious intellectual contribution, but is unworkable in current conditions. That doesn't mean that it is without merit: its municipal and rights-entrenchment ideas could inform a mountain charter, and the ethno-geographic mechanisms for joining or leaving Cantons can be used to ensure a more peaceful and streamlined partition process.

When evaluating federalism through the realities of the Lebanese Republic, we should mind the following problems:

1. **Central capture loop.** In Lebanon's present politics, the largest bloc with an armed veto sets national ceilings, regardless of constitutional finesse, and ends up capturing the center through cabinet veto or sheer intimidation. A "federal" shell that keeps security centralized simply re-packages the same capture. The federal center will still hardly be able to move and enact costly policies (like imposing the monopoly of force) without a proper consensus between its sub-units. This renders it immobile or makes it vulnerable to bargains and concessions.
2. **Debt & currency drag.** Any federal unit will inherit the central state's insolvency, capital controls history, and monetary instability. You cannot federate your way out of a broken

currency or a default legacy, especially when external credit lines remain hostage to national coalitions. A unified currency and the entire economy will still be weighed down by cantons that suffer from deficits or that choose to pursue costly militarization. Centralized services like telecom, electricity, and road network will still be subject to sectarian bargaining and therefore will remain corrupt and dysfunctional.

3. **Security incoherence.** Federalism presumes a single federal chain of coercion. Lebanon presently hosts non-state arsenals not subordinated to central command. If the Republic stays central but becomes federal, it still must deal with the reality of having a foreign-funded religious army within its borders. A federal shell with rival guns is just a new form of legalized paralysis.
4. **Rights contingency.** If media law, higher-education standards, and key civil liberties remain subject to coalition bargains at the center, minorities still live under deal-bound rights.
5. **Administrative load.** Federal transitions require trustworthy courts, apolitical fiscal equalization, and independent regulators. Lebanon's center lacks these. Every step of federalization will be tweaked and disrupted at every level of administration. Pushing more complexity into a failing core increases failure points and does not allocate competence.

Table 13. Federal Pitch vs. Lebanese Reality

Federal promise	Required mechanism	Lebanese reality	Failure mode
Local self-rule	Sub-unit power + federal guardrails	Central veto players + armed veto	Permanent bargaining; no rule credibility
Fiscal autonomy	Sub-unit taxation + equalization	Insolvent core; politicized transfers	Starved local units; rentier games
Security coherence	Federal monopoly of force	Non-state arms outside command	Dual sovereignty; deterrence failure
Rights protection	Federal courts & entrenched rights	Politicized bench; phone justice	Rights as chips; chill & impunity
Stability	Rules + trust	Crisis politics + factional finance	Shock amplifies; exit over voice

In summary, federalism promises local control but inherits the Republic's poisons: armed pluralism, veto paralysis, and contingent rights.

Even sophisticated proposals like Boustany's falter in Lebanon's trust vacuum, failing force monopoly and justice criteria. Eventually, federalism and cantonism collapse into the same paralysis when crisis hits, except with more paperwork.

Ultimately, these rebrandings of centralism cannot cure a bargain-based core; they perpetuate decline.

Moving to other alternatives, we realize that only hard sovereignty breaks the cycle, empowering Christians to govern without endless concessions.

IV. Other Alternative Solutions

An international protectorate or mandate is sometimes thrown around as a half-joke to solve Lebanon's problems.

Tempting in moments of despair, a foreign protectorate never worked for a small nation. Every foreign intervention in history is subject to the same rule: it decays over time. Legitimacy slides, accountability moves offshore, and locals become clients rather than citizens. It often ends with a rushed exit and weak institutions. It fails the justice and rights criteria because responsibility is blurred and results are short-term.

Decentralization is another one of those magic words that are treated as a solution. We are not going to discuss it at length because it is a weaker quasi-federalist solution. In theory, serious administrative decentralization could improve services. In practice, central veto players and non-state arms will ensure that decentralization is permission-based and revocable. Without control of security and a credible judiciary, local autonomy is at the mercy of central bargains. It fails the force and rights criteria miserably.

Foreign protection and decentralization seduce with simplicity but deliver dependency and revocable gains, failing our criteria of coercion, justice, and legibility. Foreign oversight decays legitimacy, while

decentralization masks central capture. These half-measures ignore Lebanon's asymmetries, offering illusions over shields. As objections arise, we affirm our conclusion: viable solutions demand uncompromised criteria, paving the way to make the case for full independence.

We realize that partition and independence are scary words for most Lebanese, but especially for Christians who have not uttered such ideas in more than a century. Traditional politicians and parties will treat such a proposal as some sort of delusion, but for us it is peak political realism – there is simply no other path left.

Independence is not secession for its own sake; it is the minimum structure that makes liberty, stewardship, and rule of law enforceable. However, the moment anyone proposes a fully sovereign and independent Mountain State, a multitude of objections are raised to shut it down. The core of these objections boils down to one idea: a Mountain State is not viable or possible.

Lebanese Christians are peaceful and deeply believe in coexistence, and such a proposal might seem a threat to these values. Some are truly worried about the economic and security viability of the Mountain.

As we are about to demonstrate, a Mountain State is both viable and possible. Many objections against this proposal often come from an unexpected belief: those who oppose an autonomous mountain do so because Christian self-determination, to them, is undesirable. That is the true reason behind most objections, but let us delve further into the discussion.

Table 14. State Criteria VS Lebanese Solution models

Criterion	Mutasarrifate	Federalism	Independence
Force Monopoly	Limited (Ottoman oversight)	Inherited pluralism	Single lawful chain
Rule of Law	Clear rules but fragile	Bargain-bound	Independent judiciary
Fixed Rights	Pre-modern	Contingent	Entrenched
Services	Modest prosperity	Central drag	Local agility
Legibility	External guarantees	National paralysis	Sovereign treaties

V. Myth: Lebanese Christians are too Weak and Fractured to Demand Anything Other than Decentralization or Federalism

This objection begins with facts that no honest Maronite denies: Christians today are politically weak, organizationally fragmented, and demographically thinning.

In the national arena, the Shiite bloc operates as a unified formation with a vertically integrated party-militia structure. The Druze act as a compact bargaining unit, and the Sunni field is fragmented but backed by regional vectors. In contrast, Christians are divided into multiple parties and rival leaderships with no unified vision and no coercive lever.

In cabinet arithmetic, in security appointments, in senior civil-service rotations, Christian influence has become transactional and symbolic more than decisive. The presidency, once a stabilizing instrument, has been reduced to a bargaining chip cross-traded among coalitions whose red lines lie outside Christian priorities.

Demography compounds the problem: below-replacement fertility rates, historical levels of migration of the skilled, and an aging base compress the horizon of collective action. This is the reality and not a hypothesis.

From that same reality, the advice to “lower your sights” to decentralization or decorative federalism misreads power and proposes a solution that does not solve the problem.

In a system where one camp monopolizes veto by force, and others bargain through coherent blocks, decentralization is whatever the veto-bearing center allows today and can retract tomorrow.

“Federalism” that leaves coercion, external alignment, and key rents at the center is not a shield; it is a trap. Under such partial solutions, Christians remain dispersed in a national game whose rules negate their leverage. Their densest assets, like territory,

municipalities, schools, hospitals, and parish networks, are prevented from coalescing into governance capacity.

In a republic already operating as a market of forces, partial fixes do not compensate for fragmentation; they institutionalize it. They do not stop the decline; they just mask it.

Such defeatism does not take into consideration that Lebanese Christians still hold real comparative advantages that do not depend on national majorities:

- **Territorial coherence:** Across Mount Lebanon (Keserwan-Ftouh, Jbeil, Metn heights, Bsharri-Zgharta-Batroun ridge, Jezzine, Zahle, parts of Chouf and Aley), Christians retain a concentrated presence where they are a majority. In these areas, demography and land ownership patterns are favorable to continuity and effective governance.
- **Institutional density:** A disproportionate share of hospitals, universities, schools, and social NGOs are Christian-founded and run. These institutions pay staff, train cadres, and standardize behavior while national institutions wobble. These institutions are the foundation for any long-term bid for autonomy.
- **Administrative muscle** at the local level: Christian-led municipalities and municipal unions tend to collect waste, keep streets lit, run registries, and broker local order more consistently than the center, because they are closer to taxpayers and reputationally exposed.

- The Christians are still a **million strong**: our partners in this republic wage a never-ending psychological warfare that convinced many Christians that they are powerless. Despite all the demographic drain, we are still a vibrant and energetic community, with brains and muscle, with older thinkers and younger hotheads, with a significant wealth of material and human capital, with a higher than normal ratio of cadres and expertise, and a significant presence in the Armed forces.
- **Diaspora power**: The Christian diaspora is a vast network able to translate familial ties into economic and political power at scale. The diaspora has gotten bigger and stronger in the past decade and remains an unmatched switchboard for skills and credibility.

Set against rivals' strengths, these are not romantic assets; they are governance assets. The Shiite bloc's advantage lies in coercive veto and regional depth. The Druze advantage lies in coherence and agility. The Sunni advantage lies in concentrated nodes and external support. The Christian advantage, at present, lies in territorial coherence, institutional density, local administrative competence, human and financial capital, and diaspora reach. These factors of power are underutilized and neutralized in today's Republic.

Even in pure demographic terms, the Christians under the republic are intentionally kept as a minority through naturalization and social engineering. This won't be the case if they had a decisive say in their affairs. For

example, the republic constantly puts roadblocks against the diaspora's participation in national politics. It makes it extremely difficult for diaspora descendants to acquire citizenship, simply because Christians are the majority of our expat population. The Maronites alone are estimated to be between 4.2⁶² and 12⁶³ million people around the world, with millions of descendants just in the Americas. The numbers become significantly higher if we include other Christian denominations.

Other points of pressure on Christians through the central state are the continuous attempts by the government to steal their lands. There are already dozens of municipal-level conflicts from south to north, in which sectarian parties like Hezbollah and Amal use all available means, including forged paperwork and intimidation, to take over lands that belong to the church or Christian individuals. The government itself has tried twice so far to move the ownership of public land in Mount Lebanon governorate from municipalities to the state, first in 2015, then again in 2026, through a ministerial decree from the Ministry of Finance that's led by an Amal minister. Such attempts would continue under decentralization or even federalism, but they would be extremely hard to implement under partition.

Under today's rules, Christian capacity is neutralized and does not convert into national leverage. The bid for a Mountain State changes that. An autonomous mountain, even in its initial stages, can convert these elements into leverage under a lawful jurisdiction, where dispersed strength becomes a single operating system.

Realpolitik also counts opportunity cost and saturation. The national game is saturated: ministries are patronage silos, security portfolios are bargaining terrain, and law is a procedure without teeth. Under such circumstances, a fragmented Christian field cannot outbid better-armed or more coherent players on that board. Remaining there by default ensures the community continues to spend its dwindling capital defensively or to preserve symbols whose substance is already gone.

By contrast, consolidating into a coherent, governable space shifts the contest from arenas where Christians are permanently vetoed to arenas where they still possess decisive, non-substitutable inputs: land, schools, hospitals, municipalities, parish networks, SMEs, and diaspora circuits — all clustered in the Mountain.

“But you are too few.” Fewer people do not prevent sovereignty where density and governability exist. Yes, Christians may be few in the Lebanese Republic, rendering them powerless on the national scale, but they are not few nor powerless in their mountains, where their institutions and voters are concentrated.

Politics does not run on the logic of numbers; it runs on the logic of capacity. A smaller, organized group can always outperform a larger, disorganized one, or it can make the cost of resistance too high even when it is up against larger foes.

The basis of autonomous governance is not numbers, either. Small nations endure when they run one lawful chain of coercion, guarantee equal rights, and make neighbors prefer predictable corridors to coercive

experiments. Even today's wars are not decided or fought with numbers.

"But you lack arms." In the current republic, arms determine veto, not good government. Veto without responsibility is the very structure that dissolves Christian leverage in the Lebanese state.

Proposing Mountain autonomy does not mean the Christians have to arm themselves and face the other players in war. That's a losing proposition. Autonomy, even if it is just a de-facto self-governance, will render the arms of others useless in the Mountain. No matter how strong Hezbollah or other militias are, they can subjugate or veto the center of the republic through their violence, but they cannot occupy and rule the mountain through their militia.

The path we propose for the mountain is tactical and achievable with what exists: a non-violent strategy that transforms every aggression into credit for independence. Christian communities already have civil instruments that operate effectively to start such a path from today. We will discuss strategies in more detail in the coming chapters but for now let us continue dismantling this myth.

"But demography is against you." Precisely. Under "business as usual," the most capable of us are departing first. Staying in the republic will not solve the demographic bleed. In contrast, under a Mountain that is measurably better governed, the flow slows or reverses among professions that anchor a country. As we build stable institutions in the mountain, staying here will become rational.

You cannot win a demographic contest nationally, but we can win retention locally. A movement based on where Christians still align institutions, land, and authority can transform the mountain into a place where safety, life, and work become dependable and predictable. This would decisively change demographic dynamics.

"But foreign powers won't accept it." We will address international recognition in detail later, but for now, let us point out that today's foreign powers already ignore Lebanon except as a risk. What they do not ignore is competence: hospitals that meet standards, schools that place graduates, utilities with dashboards, and police that file and follow proper rules of engagement. A Christian bid for independence that presents clean ledgers and enforceable guarantees is not a plea for love; it is an offer of stability to actors who have lost patience with Beirut's theater.

In the current balance, the world will not hand Christians leverage at the center, but it will contract with a Mountain that can be audited.

In the past few decades, foreign powers had relations and recognition with an armed entity inside the Lebanese state that was considered a terrorist organization, just because its effectiveness and power could not be ignored. If we build an effective, lawful nation, we will not be ignored either.

The argument that Christians are politically and demographically weak is accurate in the national frame – but independence in Mount Lebanon changes the board and reframes Christian presence as an asset.

Instead of playing a rigged game, it is time to make our own path. The Christians are not decision makers in the Republic anymore, but their strengths can be reorganized into a governable reality under one legal roof.

Measured against today's balance of power, this is not bravado; it is the only route by which a fragmented, thinning community stops dissolving and starts governing.

As we address other objections next, we should recognize that the current Christian weakness stems from the rigged Republic and is not an inherent fate. Instead of staying captured in a decaying state, autonomy unlocks our potential and removes the pressure that this republic is exerting on our communities.

VI. Myth: Mount Lebanon is too small to be economically viable and cannot be secure in a volatile region

This is usually the second most common objection against partition and is rooted in yesterday's fears. Let us take a closer look at this myth.

1. Economic Feasibility

The famine of World War I is always thrown like a veto on the economic viability of a Mountain State, but it proves less than critics think. The mountain then had no ports under its control, no modern logistics, no surplus

electricity or cold chain, no diaspora air bridge, no legal instruments to contract corridors. On top of it all, it suffered from a land and sea blockade under wartime conditions on top of locusts, disease, and Ottoman mandatory military service and material requisitions.

A contemporary mountain state operates in a different world: contractible access to Beirut and Tripoli ports through binding transit treaties, and ideally, a Jounieh port and another airport under its direct control. This would complement diversified gateways via sea-air consolidation (Larnaca, Mersin, Haifa, or alternative nodes subject to neutrality agreements). Local utilities would be backed up by micro-hydro and solar on public roofs to cushion energy shocks; district reservoirs and spring committees to stabilize water; cold-chain co-ops for perishables; and a diaspora logistics spine able to finance purchase-order factoring, pre-position medicines, and spin up 72-hour air bridges in disruption.

Economically, the model of a Mountain state is niche export and services rather than bulk industry. This includes things like honey, cheeses, herbs, wood and stone craft, natural cosmetics, instrument-making, and digital services along with a strong tech sector (coding, accounting ops, design, localization, artificial intelligence, etc.) run from well-funded hubs. The economy would be boosted by a type of e-residency as discussed in previous chapters, which allows the country to attract investments while enabling the diaspora to co-own their homeland's success.

Historically, the bulk of Lebanon's GDP was centered in Christian districts, so the economic feasibility of a

Mountain state is a veiled political and ideological objection. A small Mountain state can be more agile and prosperous than a dysfunctional large republic.

Anyone who tried to establish a business in Lebanon in the past decades knows the following truth: the economy in Lebanon is obstructed mainly by the state itself through corrupt processes and instability. Removing the corruption mechanisms of the central state and offering better infrastructure and political stability would make the mountain economy boom almost instantly.

Even infrastructure scale is an advantage: infrastructure repair brigades and economic co-ops can produce visible wins in months, not decades. Micro-electric grids and water leakage control can make significant gains in weeks under proper administration.

The Mountain state can be solvent if it is predictable: property and excise taxes, a light VAT, and ring-fenced diaspora endowments in education, health, civil-protection equipment, and other fields.

Critics say, “The Mountain is too small to trade,” but reality says small is agile when contracts are clean, product specs are tight, and export desks do the unglamorous work impeccably.

2. Security Viability

The second objection after economy is usually the security viability. This objection goes something like this: any Christian state will be crushed by its Islamic entourage in a matter of days or weeks.

Notably, this argument acknowledges the Islamic instinct to oppose any non-Islamic rule in the region and use violence to neutralize it. This validates our entire argument on the need to protect ourselves and ensure the future of Christians in the East, but let us discuss the actual objection.

First, the Christian history in the Mountain is made of 1,500 years of defiant survival. It is not like the different empires that arose and fell in the region did not try to eradicate us already; it is just that they failed to do so. This objection is the same type of delusion that Islamic nations could wipe Israel in minutes if they wanted to, despite history proving that Arabs lost almost every war against it.

The Christian canton during the civil war from 1975 to 1990, with all its flaws, fragmentations, and the moral hazards of wartime patronage, survived multiple regional invasions and pressures. It did all that while it had a smaller militia, inferior material support, and less foreign backup than its enemies. It survived by exploiting defense-in-depth, local knowledge of terrain, logistical frugality, and social cohesion.

That canton survived despite lacking the three things a lawful mountain state would insist on having: (1) a single chain of coercion under civilian law (no rival militias), (2) a neutrality doctrine (no proxy entanglements, no foreign bases, cooperation limited to defense compacts and training/standards), and (3) a universal civil-protection corps that makes every household a part of continuity-of-operations.

Today we know better, and we know that small communities can survive bigger security threats and larger armies with the right preparations and doctrines, even when they are outgunned, outnumbered, and alone.

Most importantly, today's politics are not 1975's. Christians are neither alone nor geographically sealed. The region has moved toward recognizing layered autonomies and minority self-administration. From the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq to de facto arrangements in northern and southern Syria, international and regional actors are more practiced at treaty-based corridors, observer missions, and technical cooperation than they were in the 1980s.

The world today is not trying to solve the Palestinian cause by resettling an entire population in Lebanon, nor does it want to hand over the country to foreign armies like it did in the past century.

The security objection has more roots in irrational fear than in reality. First, a semi-independent state with Christian governance already existed for hundreds of years in the mountains, and this did not cause the mobilization of the Islamic world to destroy it. Second, Palestine is right next to us and has a much higher significance in the Islamic world, yet we don't see global mobilization despite the elevated rhetoric. The two real security risks to an independent mountain state come from inside Lebanon and Syria, and we will discuss those in detail in a coming chapter. What's important here is that these are political threats that can be navigated rather than an insurmountable global jihadi

army that some people imagine would show up instantly at our doorstep.

Add a diaspora factor that did not exist during previous conflicts: unlike the 1910s or 1980s, a million-plus capable professionals can be easily mobilized for the economy as well as in emergencies to contribute to their homeland. The diaspora can make an enormous difference for a Mountain state with seasonal service and professionalized settings, turning affection into capacity rather than clientelism.

None of this denies risk; it prices it. A mountain state is viable if it is boringly competent: small constitutional core, municipal strength, transparent budgets, credible courts, one lawful coercive chain, and an economy that sells quality while training citizens as guardians instead of spectators.

The famine happened in 1915 because food and law were taken away; our design is to make food, water, energy, and law hard to take and easy to restore.

Contemporary models like Finland's whole-of-society defense doctrine, previously highlighted in Chapter 10, offer transferable mechanics for a sovereign Mount Lebanon. Finland, with a population and terrain comparable to the Mountain, maintains deterrence through universal conscription, citizen reserves, and hybrid tactics that blend conventional forces with guerrilla readiness and cyber defenses. This approach, rooted in "total defense," leverages societal cohesion and landscape advantages without relying on patrons or overwhelming arms. Finland even achieved NATO integration in 2023 while preserving its neutrality ethos.

For Lebanon's Christians, adapting this doctrine means lawful civil-protection units, community training, and alliances with like-minded minorities, turning perceived smallness into asymmetric strength against regional threats.

Our doctrine is to bind cohesion to lawful neutrality and civil protection, so endurance is not a wager on heroics but the outcome of habits, strong institutions, rails, and rules.

In a region that is more open to self-determination within legal frameworks, a disciplined mountain state can be economically modest, fiscally honest, and security-credible, and that is exactly what survival requires.

3. A Secure and Viable Mountain

Economic and security fears echo past famines but overlook modern tools: diversified trade, diaspora bridges, and lawful defense doctrines render a mountain state agile and resilient.

Niche exports, micro-grids, a whole-of-society defense, and neutrality pacts hedge risks, turning smallness into strength. History shows endurance through cohesion, not size, and our design ensures it.

Yet, viability extends beyond borders and resources. We will address further objections ahead, including Lebanon's intertwined fabric that resists clean splits. We will answer the question about the fate of Christians outside the mountain and non-Christians within it (all

secured through rights-bound frameworks). We will then move to the international community's potential objection to independence.

VII. Myth: Lebanon is too intertwined to be split into smaller states

Any radical proposal that affects the lives of people for generations will face tough questions that need to be answered, and some answers will not be perfect.

We cannot draw a map or predict the borders of the Mountain State before it happens, because that is subject to the will of the people and the circumstances on the ground. What we must do here is be honest with the following facts: there are many Christian villages outside the geographic and political borders of the Mountain. On the other hand, not all the villages and cities within the Mountain are Christian. A significant segment in the Christian-majority areas is Druze, and there are large blocks of Sunni and Shiite populations. There is also the question of whether Lebanon is too intertwined and too small to be divided. Many families are dispersed across several regions, and most businesses and institutions cover the entire Republic instead of just one small area.

We will address these dilemmas here in two ways: first, we establish a legal and political framework to solve such questions in a just way. We set the ideal for which we should aim. Second, we answer bravely with the scenarios that could happen if such guarantees were not followed.

Before we go into detail, we have to point out a common fear currently embedded in Christian consciousness:

some think that the moment Christians establish a Mountain State, the other sects will move on all Christian villages outside the Mountain and displace, subjugate, or strip Christians of their possessions and their lives.

This fear, while legitimate in some respects, ignores the fact that this did not happen when the Christians had their own state in the mountains from the seventh century onwards. In contrast, it did happen more than once after Christians built a joint republic with Muslims, as shown by the events of the South in 1920, and then again in 1958 and 1975 to 1990. Such a fear ignores an important fact: the mountain also has communities from all sects, and as long as those are respected and treated equally, there is no reason why Christians outside the mountain will not be given the same treatment.

Now, let us discuss these issues in detail.

1. What happens to Lebanese Christians who live outside the Mountain?

Lebanese Christians have deep roots beyond the Mountain's core, from southern villages to coastal enclaves, raising valid concerns about their security and livelihoods in independence. There are Christian-majority villages in Akkar, Bekaa, and the South that are not currently counted in the administrative borders of the mountain, nor were part of the Mutasarifiya of 1862.

We repeat here what we previously said about borders: when we say Mount Lebanon, we don't mean the current administrative borders in the Lebanese Republic, nor the borders of 1862. We mean a state centered in Mount

Lebanon, which historically extended beyond its geographic borders, or contracted to a small part of it, depending on local and international politics.

Let's also establish another important principle: as a project that upholds freedom as the highest value and aims to protect the Christians of the East as its ultimate function, the policy is simple: no one will be abandoned, and no one will be forced to join.

Such a project has a moral obligation to defend and ensure the interests of all Christians in Lebanon. In fact, I personally think that all Christian villages outside the mountain would benefit more from having a strong state for Christians in Mount Lebanon than staying with a weak state governed by other sects in Beirut.

As we were finalizing this chapter on 31 March 2026, the Lebanese Army was withdrawing from the Christian-majority border villages of Debel, Ain Ebel, Rmeish, and others, while the ongoing war with Israel escalated further. This withdrawal left these villages exposed to incursions from Hezbollah and Israeli occupation at the same time, putting them in the crossfire. Such a betrayal by the state towards the population in that area isn't new; it happened before in the seventies, when the government left the south on its own to deal with the Palestinian terror army and local militias.

Before discussing how to resolve this delicate issue, let us note that the current central state is not taking care of the interests of those villages in the first place. The problem is not new either: historically, the central state in Lebanon barely did any development or had any significant presence at the extremities. Christians from

villages in the Bekaa, north and south, including my own village in Zahle district, are forced to either immigrate from the country or move to Beirut for education, work, and services. They are often pressured into a life of economic struggle as their own villages become a weekend visit and a distant memory. Working on establishing a strong state for Christians in the mountain means that all these Christians would first have a rule that truly cares about them, and would mean second that even their distant villages are not a footnote in governmental plans but a strategic asset to be protected and developed.

A lot of people think geographic continuity is crucial to achieve what we are talking about, and it is indeed important, but many ways and tools enable us to work around it in the modern world.

A lot of people also think that the moment a mountain state is established, then all the Christian villages outside the mountain will come under violent attack. This scenario is unrealistic and based on fears programmed into Christian consciousness through years of conditioning. However, we should point out two things that pre-empt such a scenario:

- 1) Establishing an independent state is a decades-long process where institutions are built before announcements. Any mature independence movement would not make risky moves without institutional anti-fragility in place first, which enables our community to manage and counter any shocks where needed.

- 2) Some frameworks can be put in place to enable the resolution of such issues without violence. The mountain

also has many villages from other sects, and it is in the interest of everyone to resolve any tension in a peaceful way suitable for all communities.

Let us outline a rights-first framework that can protect them in place, offer relocation options when needed, and ensure institutional continuity. The following framework is based on offering voluntary choices instead of coercion.

The Mountain State would establish a layered framework that protects people where they are, gives them options if they wish to move, and keeps their churches, schools, and land legally secure if they wish to stay.

The ideal scenario prioritizes "rights in place", where villages and entire regions can be under our state sovereignty even if they are geographically detached from the main core. This would enable Christians to remain where they are and be connected to the Mountain State under binding treaties between the successor entities of the Republic.

These accords would guarantee equal citizenship, property rights, and freedom from discrimination, enforced through joint monitoring bodies with arbitration for disputes.

Villages with Christian majorities could opt to join the Mountain State through referendums: fair, internationally overseen votes allowing communities to align by choice, with protections for minorities and mechanisms to resolve disputes peacefully. This border adjustment process will defuse conflicts and make it

possible to join or leave the mountain without violence. This would also allow other cantons or states to rule over villages that might fall within the mountain borders, ensuring a peaceful path to resolution for all communities.

This would come with a consular-protection regime that includes legal aid lines and relocation if requested. If safety demands it, "relocation options" provide dignified pathways: voluntary swaps of properties, subsidized by state funds or diaspora endowments, or temporary residencies leading to full Mountain citizenship.

No one would be forced, but incentives like job placements and housing grants ease transitions.

Freedom of movement is enshrined, allowing unrestricted travel within Lebanon and to the Mountain for work, family, or worship, supported by reciprocal agreements to prevent barriers.

Finally, "institutional lifelines" will sustain connections and will offer cultural, social, and economic support for Christians outside the mountain. This would include initiatives like teacher bursaries, medicine supply chains, solarization of clinics, scholarships for students, small business support, and so on. Christians all over Lebanon will have the same access to the e-commons infrastructure and state services. Think of it as a covenant of care rather than jurisdictional control. This ensures no community is isolated, turning separation into a network of solidarity.

Christians are ours by responsibility, even if not by map. We will protect their freedom and livelihood where they

stand, support their institutions, guarantee their freedom of movement, and honor any community's democratic choice about future alignment. In contrast with the current republic, which treats Christians as second-class citizens, the Christians of Lebanon, who are far from the center, will have a state supporting them and caring for their interests when the Mountain state becomes a reality.

By prioritizing treaty guarantees, citizenship access, and supportive lifelines, this framework transforms vulnerability into empowered choice, ensuring no Christian is abandoned. This covenant of care extends naturally to our Druze allies, whose shared destiny in the Mountain we explore next.

2. A Partnership with the Druze

The Druze are a founding community of Mount Lebanon, and they are the natural allies of Christians. Their future depends on whether their leadership and masses realign themselves with the self-determination of the Mountain, instead of Arabist and Islamic causes.

Even with the heavy history between Christians and Druze, the Druze are strategically, culturally, and economically aligned with an independent mountain. Their strict no-preaching policy, coupled with the absence of Islamic socio-cultural practices, facilitated peaceful coexistence side by side with Christians for centuries.

More so, Christians and Druze are natural allies, not because of their past, but because their future in Mount

Lebanon obeys the same logic: these small communities will only survive by self-governance, rule of law, restraint, and neighborly covenants.

Both are non-Islamic minorities in a turbulent region. Both have learned, over centuries, that freedom is secured by altitude, discipline, and tight communal institutions rather than by the protection of grand empires. Despite episodes of tragic conflict, Christian-Druze coexistence has repeatedly rebuilt itself around village pacts, shared harvests, and local arbitration. The same geography that once enabled collision also teaches interdependence.

In an autonomous Mountain, these shared interests will become constitutional: equal citizenship under one chain of civil policing, explicit protections for worship and property, subsidiarity that leaves parishes and khalwas to govern what they know best. And most importantly, a neutrality that keeps outside quarrels from drafting the Mountain's sons.

For the Druze, aligning with a mountain state means they will not be subject to demographic intimidation by a central state beholden to distant balances. It means that they will be protected from proxy militarization marching through their towns. It means the end of the administrative neglect that starves Chouf, Aley, Hasbaya, and Rashaya of infrastructure and investments. It means the end of feudal patronage that left the entire southern mountain without one proper hospital, university, or factory. It means the Druze will stop being spectators in a republic that treats them as

non-existent and will get a significant say in their future and Mountain affairs.

It means enforceable local rights, predictable budgets, joint stewardship of springs and forests, and a civil protection doctrine that treats every village as essential terrain to be safeguarded together.

Economically, Christians and Druze both benefit from a rules-based environment: transparent land registries that can shield orchards and olive groves from speculative grabs and falling into strangers' hands. It would thrive with standards and proper tourism, and an economy that values dairies and craft, all while mountain corridors stay open for produce, pilgrims, and hikers.

Culturally, an independent Mountain promises what history often denied the Druze: the right to keep distinct paths to God without fear and without the need for hiding one's truth. Politically, it offers Druze a guarantee of non-encirclement and a formal say in a compact state whose survival depends on balance, not domination.

The alliance, then, is not nostalgia or convenience; it is a strategy of dignity. Christians bring institutions that prize textual law; Druze bring a tradition that prizes oath and honor; the Mountain requires both. Together, they can make a small, successful republic where differences are guarded as assets, and where children learn that neighbors are not a temporary truce, but the reason the Mountain endures.

In practice, the destiny of Southern Mount Lebanon will be decided by what the Druze choose. In the best-case

scenario, the independent Mountain will extend from Rashaya and Hasbaya, through Jezzine and Marje'youn in the south, across Shouf and Alley and all of Maten, passing through Zahle in the center, up to Bcharre, Jbeil, Kesserwan, Zgharta, Ehden, Batroun, and Koura in the north.

In the worst-case scenario, the Southern Mountain will be hung up in a grey area that does not join Mount Lebanon, with its Druze and Christian villages slowly losing people and influence in whatever form the Lebanese Republic takes at the time.

We are hopeful that the Druze will make the right historical choice, just as the Christians did during the reign of Fakhreddin II. A Druze-Christian alliance is not nostalgia but a pragmatic bond of dignity, leveraging shared geography for equal citizenship and mutual prosperity.

With these foundations, we turn to other non-Christian communities within the Mountain, ensuring the state's ethic of inclusion benefits all residents.

3. The Rights of all minorities inside the mountain

The Mountain's diverse fabric includes Sunni, Shiite, and other non-Christian communities alongside the Druze majority in some areas. Independence must uphold justice for all to succeed.

The only workable ethic for the Mountain State is equal citizenship under a rights-first constitution, plus practical arrangements that let each community thrive.

The guiding principle is equal treatment, from citizenship to cultural rights, fostering a rules-based society where differences strengthen rather than divide.

First, "equal law for all" forms the foundation: every resident receives citizenship upon independence, with full civil rights regardless of faith. This includes voting in local elections, property ownership, and access to services. The Mountain will have one law, one army, and one police. Some army and government positions, or the safeguard Senate Chamber, might be designated as majority Christian and Druze to ensure the long-term viability and identity of the State with its founding communities.

Freedom of movement is enshrined, allowing unrestricted travel within the state and across borders under reciprocal agreements, so families and businesses maintain connections without barriers.

Cultural and religious freedoms follow as "protected spaces" include mosques, cemeteries, and community centers.

Villages have the right to self-determine their affiliation through referendums: communities can vote to join or leave the Mountain State, with safeguards for minorities and international oversight to ensure fair processes and prevent coercion.

In crises, "equity under stress" applies: security protocols protect all equally, with no preferential treatment. Resource allocation (e.g., water, aid) follows needs-based formulas, audited transparently to build trust.

The standard is simple and strict: equal law, equal dignity, and shared stewardship.

The mountain serves everyone who abides by its rules, and it expects everyone, whatever their creed, to help guard its terraces, springs, forests, schools, and peace.

The Mountain will have no bargains in the shadows, no favoritism in the daylight, and the same doors will open to all.

Through equal law, shared stewardship, and crisis equity, everyone becomes integral to the Mountain's success. This inclusive vision sets the stage for defining borders, where understanding ideally prevails over conflict.

4. Borders Drawn by Understanding or Blood

Borders are not etched in stone but shaped by people and realities. Independence requires flexible mechanisms for villages to align by choice, even if non-contiguous. While aiming for peaceful resolutions, we must confront potential hardships, including relocations, with honesty and frameworks that prioritize safety.

Even as we build solid foundations for self-determination and transparent governance, this does not guarantee that the borders of the Mountain State will be agreed upon easily.

Our duty is to establish a framework capable of resolving this situation peacefully. However, even when such mechanisms exist, other political and sectarian powers

might seek to alter the borders or gain advantages by other means, including violence and war.

We will discuss the potential reactions against the mountain's independence in a later chapter, but what we want to point out now is this: the Lebanese problem does not have easy solutions. Protecting the Christians of Lebanon will probably require some extremely tough decisions at times.

In some cases, it might be strategically best for Lebanese Christians to reconcentrate around the Mountain in an independent state than to stay scattered in areas that are being systematically bought and altered by others. This is the hard truth.

The Mountain State might have to oversee land and people swaps at some point. This is a factual statement of what might happen, not a suggestion that it should. I know it is deeply unsettling to imply that people might be displaced or lose their homes, but the truth is, Christians are already being driven out of their homes and villages and are selling their lands to survive. Most of them are saying their final goodbyes to their emigrating kids and loved ones, all because of the policies and realities of the Lebanese Republic. The displacement is already underway in a permanent way, without any reconcentration or resettlement.

It is wise for a serious movement that wants to protect Lebanese Christians to establish the frameworks that enable Christians to survive. This can be accomplished by helping them stay rooted in their areas if it is geopolitically stable, or by helping them relocate early and conveniently to the Christian heart of the Mountain.

Such measures, though painful, prioritize long-term safety over status quo erosion.

By enabling referendums and preparing for tough scenarios, this approach honors self-determination while acknowledging ongoing displacement under the Republic. As we shift to economic continuity, these borders ensure businesses and institutions thrive across divides.

5. What will happen to businesses and institutions serving all of Lebanon?

Independence will not shatter Lebanon's economy. History shows that trade endured even during civil war. Businesses and institutions spanning the Republic will adapt under a "continuity by contract" principle, maintaining markets while gaining clearer rules from the Mountain State. Key Principles for seamless transition include:

- **Legal Continuity:** Existing contracts, debts, licenses, and accreditations remain valid until renewed under Mountain law with no sudden disruptions.
- **Inter-Zone Compacts:** Practical agreements ensure open flows, with published protocols for transit, payments, and disputes.
- **Neutral Services:** Sectors like banking, telecom, and healthcare operate regionally, with mutual recognition of standards and credentials.

In Practice, this can easily work through:

- Transport and Logistics: Corridor agreements create "green lanes" for trucks/couriers with timed checks and hotlines, keeping supply chains moving.
- Utilities and Infrastructure: Interconnects for power, water, and internet use metered exchanges with outage guarantees, ensuring reliability.
- Finance and Payments: A central clearing house manages cross-border invoices, taxes, and payroll, with escrow for disputes—banks keep national portfolios.
- Education and Health: Universities and hospitals serve all via portable vouchers; emergencies cross borders freely, with reciprocal billing.
- Media and E-Commerce: Platforms remain national but licensed for conduct; content flows while consumer protections apply locally.

The objection that Lebanon's economy or geography is too small to allow partition is moot. There are simple legal, political, and economic ways that not just allow the resolution of any potential issues, but help all individuals and institutions thrive under a state built on the rule of law.

The Mountain's promise to businesses: transparent procurement, fast courts, lower costs, and no expropriation. Predictable policing reduces losses, and clean customs cut informal fees. Far from captive markets, this stabilizes trade, and firms will find that a lawful jurisdiction boosts efficiency for all.

The point is not to cut the country into captive markets; it is to stabilize one market so that all can keep trading while politics learns to behave.

Addressing Lebanon's intertwined realities demands honesty, justice, and foresight.

With such a framework, we established that Christians outside the Mountain can be protected through rights, options, and support. We showed that an alliance with Druze as co-stewards can be forged, and that all minorities inside the mountain can thrive under equal law. Borders are drawn by choice where possible, and businesses are sustained through continuity and compacts.

While not flawless, this approach transforms fears into empowered covenants, prioritizing voluntary dignity over coerced unity.

Yet, domestic solutions alone will not suffice; as we turn to international and diplomatic legitimacy next, these principles gain global resonance, securing recognition for a rights-bound State.

VIII. Myth: The International Community will never acknowledge a separate Mountain State

The absence of international support for Mountain independence is another common objection to the viability of this project. Detractors will often point out that the international community does not currently support a separate Mountain State. That is true; how can

the international community support what does not exist yet?

This objection is backwards: we must build the mountain state first, then support will come. In modern international affairs, foreign support and recognition follow the local desire for independence, not the other way around.

The days of two superpowers drawing lines on a map are long gone. The great powers of today follow the lines drawn by political and ethnic realities on the ground.

In other words, we must establish the conditions of a Mountain State before expecting the world to notice and support it.

Independence is not a poem nor something politically impossible; it is a legal and diplomatic sequence.

For a nation to achieve independence, it must be governing its territory effectively and be able to show that to the world through assemblies, referendums, and independent observers. Internal legitimacy in the Mountain comes first, then the world follows.

Two frameworks matter here: internal legality (how we constitute authority among ourselves) and international legibility (how we appear to others).

Once we meet the conditions for these two frameworks, the rest is about finding the right opening in international politics to convince the world that this state solves a problem instead of creating one.

1. Internal Legality: Constituent Power and Consent

Internal legality begins with translating collective will into binding authority. Here is the sequence.

Once institutions are established and the network of Mountain governance is well greased with proper services, legitimate representation, and transparent accountability mechanics, the plea of the Mountain must be expressed and bound by a written document, usually labeled as a *White Paper* (pre-constitution).

The White Paper lays out the facts, maps, institutions, rights, finances, and the civil-protection doctrine of the upcoming state.

Then it must convene a *Constituent Convention* representing municipalities, ecclesial and civic institutions, professional orders, and diaspora observers in advisory roles. The convention would ratify and legitimize the demands of the white paper.

The next step will be to hold *district assemblies* to assess and showcase support and integrate objections into a revised text. This process builds internal legitimacy before reaching a public referendum.

Once that is sorted, comes the time for calling a *public referendum* with clean rolls, international observers, and high thresholds (e.g., *two-thirds in favor with ≥60% turnout* in each participating district). Maybe the referenda are non-binding at this point, but it is an expression of intent and legitimacy. Like Estonia's 1991 assemblies amid Soviet collapse, district referenda build legitimacy from the ground up.

The Provisional Basic Law enters force in the designated territory only upon a pre-declared recognition threshold of a binding referendum (e.g., recognition by a set number of districts or a public referendum), and the White Paper is developed into a *constitution*.

Of course, the path from the current political affairs of Christians to what we envisioned here seems almost impossible right now - and we'll get to that discussion soon - but we're outlining the standard internal processes in international law in which a people can translate their internal desire for self-governance with international legitimacy, which will then pave the way for recognition.

2. International Legibility: Montevideo, Recognition, and Treaties

The classic Montevideo test lists four attributes of statehood:

Permanent population, defined territory, government, and the capacity to enter into relations.

The first three criteria are facts of administration; the fourth is a program. To achieve the fourth element, the Mount Lebanon project would have a small foreign service that does exactly that. It would negotiate non-aggression declarations, trade and transit, telecoms and grid interconnects, customs posts, mutual legal assistance, and education/health cooperation.

Table 15. Montevideo State Criteria

Attribute	Description	Mountain Application
Permanent Population	Stable residents	Christian/Druze core with inclusive citizenship
Defined Territory	Clear borders	Referendum-based districts
Government	Effective administration	Provisional Basic Law, services
Relations Capacity	Diplomatic engagement	Foreign service for treaties/neutrality

This body, acting as our pre-state foreign ministry of affairs, will seek observer status in relevant international organizations. It would draft status-of-forces templates for training exercises and publish a lawful neutrality doctrine that commits to no proxy entanglements.

It will be our delegation to the world before being recognized as a state. The effectiveness of our policies will be measured directly by the status and participation of our delegation in international and regional bodies such as the UN, EU, and others.

3. The Remedial & Legal Argument for international law: Minority rights & self-determination

Once there is some form of international acknowledgement of a separate administration of Mount Lebanon, the next step is to build the legal case internationally for Statehood.

International practice is political; international law does not force recognition whenever someone announces a new state.

To get recognition, several elements must come together: internal legitimacy, a proven ability of governance, being an element of regional stability, solid international relations, and an acceptable legal argument for independence.

The remedial secession argument can be used to fulfill the last condition: persistent failure of a state to secure basic rights and equality may justify a people's separation and cement the moral dimension of the project.

The legal foundation for this argument starts with building a record: documenting selective coercion, rights contingency, judicial dysfunction, and the center's incapacity to protect freedoms. Show exhaustion of remedies. The goal is not courtroom victory; it is legitimacy for friendly states to act upon.

While not automatic, precedents like Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence show how remedial arguments sway recognition when grounded in rights violations.

The legal argument for minority rights and self-determination is another angle of international law in favor of the Mountain's independence.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Article 27 protects the rights of religious and linguistic minorities to practice faith, use language, and pursue culture. The UN Human Rights Committee's General Comment 23 clarifies that these rights apply to minorities who "exist" in the state, not just citizens, and cannot be limited to gestures⁶⁴. The 1992 UN Declaration on the Rights of Minorities further calls on states to protect the existence and identity of minorities and to adopt legislative measures to do so.

A Mount Lebanon sanctuary that seeks self-determination with rights, services, and lawful policing amidst the prolonged and complete collapse of the Lebanese Republic is squarely within accepted international practice.

In international relations, the easiest way to statehood is to establish a new state in an official consensual agreement with the old state. This was the case for example of South Sudan. We do not expect this to be a possibility for Mount Lebanon because those who control the Lebanese Republic want to keep all the power for themselves, and they will never accept separation willingly.

In international law, it does not make a difference if the state is established through a consensual agreement or through a unilateral declaration; both constitutive (statehood through recognition) and declarative (statehood through self-declaration) are legitimate paths.

What matters the most is the existence of political support and recognition from existing major powers and the wider international community.

Let us emphasize again here that recognition is not a condition for self-governance. Self-governance is an internal condition, not external. A nation can rule itself for years or decades before getting full sovereignty and international recognition. Recognition is primarily a political, not a legal act.

That is why the Mountain State must be legible in acceptable ways, with the rule of law, equality, human rights protection, good neighbor policies, and adherence to international laws. Once that happens, the rest of the process is only a matter of time.

It might be a few years, even decades, before complete statehood is recognized, but the path towards it is not some insurmountable task as depicted by the opponents of self-determination. With legal arguments in place, independence becomes a solvable puzzle, and not an impasse.

IX. Conclusion: Chained in a Grand Republic or Free in a Small State?

The comparative evidence from the previous chapter shows that small nations survive when they discipline identity into institutions, unify defense under law, and speak the language of legitimacy to the world.

With objections on weakness, viability, intertwining, and recognition countered in this chapter, independence

stands as the only structure passing our five criteria: monopoly of force, rule of law, fixed rights, services, and legibility.

The independent mountain state proposed here is not a megaphone for pride. It does not come out of hate nor out of illusions about the self-importance of Maronites or Christians. The Mountain state we want is simply an operating system that allows Christians to decide their affairs and live like normal people in their homeland.

This is not an ethnic separation project – even with Christians being at its core. The Mountain State is a compact legal machine built to protect worship, schools, and land. It will exist to keep archives and courts honest, to train citizens as guardians, and to make local life the engine of prosperity and peace.

The center stays small so that freedom can stay big. In such a state, rights are fixed, non-negotiable guarantees, so that fear does not set the timetable. Coercion is singular so that law can be a promise, not a plea.

This is not a dream of isolation. It is a plan for useful presence: a neutral mountain country that minds its own business, sings in Syriac, teaches science without erasing the soul, exports quality, not volume, drills volunteers instead of slogans, and signs fair treaties and upholds peace.

The alternatives either cannot or will not nail the foundations that freedom requires. Independence can. It is the right structure that can keep us honest, lawful, and free.

At this point, we need to address a final question that a lot of people might be wondering: why are we confining the proposed independence to the mountain?

As we discussed, when we say Mount Lebanon, we do not mean the current administrative borders of the mountain in the Lebanese Republic. The state of the Mount in the days of Yuhanna Maroun stretched from Latakia in the North to Galilea in the south. It contracted to the northern range during Mamluk persecution around Qannoubine valley, then expanded again under Fakherdin II before contracting once more to the borders of the Mutasarifiya of 1862.

When we say a Mount Lebanon State in this book, we don't mean the Mutasarifiya borders either, although those borders provide a good foundational model.

Borders are a reflection of geopolitical, cultural, and demographic realities, and these realities are historically in flux. At present, the biggest concentration of Christians is in Mount Lebanon, in the area spanning from Marj'youn and Jezzine in the south, passing through Shouf, Alley, Baabda, Metn, Western Bekaa and Zahle in the middle, up to Jbeil, Kissirwan, Bsharre, Batroun, Zgharta, and Koura in the north.

The Druze are also based in this geography, notably in Shouf, Alley, and Maten, in addition to Rashaya and Hasbaya, making the mountain range the most suitable place for a shared self-governing state.

It makes sense, then, demographically and politically, that the solution we propose will also be concentrated in this area. That said, the actual circumstances on the

ground might dictate a smaller or bigger area than what we outlined here, especially in the beginning.

As we move on to mapping governance models, the economy, and security in the next chapter, this vision will be transformed from a blueprint to an actionable reality.

Chapter 12

Envisioning a Mountain State for the 21st Century

Before we discuss the roadmap for establishing a Mountain State and the chances of its success, we must define the destination. We must set a vision worth pursuing. We have to envision a dream worth the sacrifices of our people and the blood and sweat needed to achieve it.

The vision should also be grounded in reality. It must be achievable and workable, and not a utopian impossibility. It is time to turn the lessons of previous chapters into a workable blueprint.

When we say vision, we don't mean a detailed constitution for an imagined republic. The Constitution of the Mountain State must be written and agreed upon by its people when the time and circumstances are right. It cannot be defined ahead of time by one person. What we aim to do here is outline what the Mountain state can be and inspire what could be built by the sons and daughters of Mount Lebanon.

In our vision, the Mountain is best suited for a lean republic with a *disciplined center* and strong municipalities. Localism and direct democracy with thick institutions and deep parish networks have always been the core of the mountain. We do not propose a maximal state; we propose a rule-credible one. We do

not propose a militarized state, but one in which all of society contributes to its prosperity and survival.

In this chapter, we will define the mountain state's founding principles, political order, security doctrine, economic model, and education-culture engine.

A small, lawful, and competent mountain state that upholds rights, that is internationally and regionally neutral, and disciplined under one chain of coercion, can keep the Christians and Druze of this Mountain free, while serving the region through stability, trade, and stewardship.

I. The Founding Principles of a Mountain State

What we believe must become what we build. The founding principles are brief enough to memorize, concrete enough to govern, and strict enough to restrain power.

Here is what we believe are the non-negotiable foundations that need to be at the core of the new state. Let us call them the 12 Founding Principles of Independent Mount Lebanon:

1. **Freedom under law.** Freedom of speech, thought, worship, association, schooling, academic freedoms, due process, and habeas corpus are all non-derogable and entrenched in the heart of the Constitution. These freedoms are beyond ordinary amendment; any limit on them must face strict scrutiny.

2. **A Safe Haven for Christians of the East.** Protecting the freedom and safety of Christians in Lebanon is at the core of the Mountain State, with safeguards that preserve the mission through a bicameral system.
3. **No rival arms - a single chain of coercion.** No private arsenals, no party militias, no “special zones,” no armed exceptions. No camps outside of the State’s control. Civil protection is robust, strictly law-compliant, and subordinated to a professional gendarmerie.
4. **Neutrality doctrine.** No proxy wars, no foreign bases, and peace with all neighbors who seek peace. Security cooperation means training, standards, and defensive compacts, and a non-aggression policy is a constitutional article.
5. **Localism.** Push power down and trust your people with managing their affairs. Municipalities and districts execute the largest share of public spending and taxes. The center stays lean: it oversees external affairs, currency/clearing, standards/metrology, national courts, border control, defense, and security.
6. **Stewardship of the Mountain.** Terraces, rivers, forests, heritage sites, archives, and natural resources are strategic assets. The state protects land and memory with the same seriousness it protects borders.
7. **Covenant with diaspora.** The Mountain State is a Phoenix with two wings: the residents in the

homeland and the diaspora. Convert love into legal residencies, audited endowments, seasonal service, grants, and investments. Make the connection lawful, real, and tangible.

8. **Transparency by default.** This includes an entire ecosystem of accountability. Corruption in a state with limited resources will be treated as treason.
9. **Language & culture.** Syriac and Lebanese Dialect as official (with English/French for commerce); archives constitutionalized; heritage fund with independent trustees.
10. **Independent justice courts.** Independent, efficient, and potent courts with a narrow, textual remit that binds the strong and is not afraid of the corrupt, with high bars for emergency law.
11. **Clean transfer of power** with proper elections. Institutions over personalities. We do not need eternal leaders; we need robust institutions that can pass the test of time.
12. **An ideal of independence** and international legibility. Hard-code the capacity for international relations with a foreign service statute, treaty procedure, and ratification rules.

With principles set, we turn to structuring political power, defense doctrine, and economic policy.

II. Political Vision: A Lawful Democratic Guardian of Freedoms

Choosing the political system of the Mountain will be up to the desires of its people, but we share our own personal vision for it here.

The best way, in our opinion, is a presidential system with strong parliamentary checks. Such a system will not be paralyzed by coalition bargains and can make accountability more straightforward. We do not forget that Christians today are fragmented, but we cannot let this fragmentation render them ineffective in governance. Hence, a strong presidential system can refocus politics into action and responsibility.

The President holds the executive power and is Christian, but does not have to be Maronite. Druze, if they decided to be a founding group of the Mountain State, must always be represented in the Cabinet and in the policy-making process.

1. Safeguards and Policy Making

A bicameral ballast is recommended to keep the system aligned with its original intention and safeguard against power abuse. This can be translated into:

- Citizens' Chamber (Parliament): district representatives through public elections. It takes care of budgets, ordinary law, oversight, and investiture.
- Safeguard Chamber (Senate): Elected via cultural and municipal colleges on staggered terms. The

Safeguard Senate wields a suspensive veto and functions with a supermajority lock on the rights, land/water regimes, heritage, and the civil-protection charter. Its remit is narrow but non-negotiable: it protects the Mountain's Charter and keeps the pillars nailed down.

2. Courts that Bind the Strong

The mountain should have a transparent and independent justice system able to implement the rule of law and protect the citizens of the state without exceptions. It can be made of:

- Constitutional Court with a narrow, textual remit, short deadlines, access for an ombuds, parliamentary appeal, and citizens in rights cases.
- Administrative Courts with fast-track review and real remedies for abuse of power.
- Unified Prosecution with secure tenure; no exceptional jurisdictions for civilians. Military courts are confined to military offenses.

3. Clean Elections and Periodic Transfer of Power

The Mountain State cannot repeat the mistake of attaching its dreams and politics to a single personality.

Periodic elections should take place, facilitated by an independent elections management body, with open-list PR and district thresholds, diaspora vote, and transparent and public party finances. The goal is to

minimize conflicts and ensure a democratic process and peaceful transfer of power.

4. Anti-Corruption & Transparency

This would include codified standards in all sectors. This means regulators with sunset clauses, freedom of information and the right of appeal, open contracting, and conflict-of-interest rules with public registries. Data is open and transparent by default with public budgets, KPIs, and deadlines.

Accountability tools will also be potent with an integrity spine: Ombudsman and Inspector-General, with budget protection, public case trackers, and statutory timelines for responses are at the core of the administration.

On the political side, the system implies public declarations of assets and interests by public officials, audient cadence for ministries, municipalities, and endowments, and a protected anonymous whistleblower channel to ensure the state stays clean.

Siphoning public funds and corruption are treated as serious crimes.

5. A Beacon for Christians in the East

Being the only Christian state in the East, many Christians in the region will look up to the Mountain State as a spiritual beacon of hope.

The Mountain State cannot make the mistake of trying to establish itself as a regional power or attempt to play a

political role beyond its borders, but it will provide a safe refuge for every Christian who needs it.

Every Christian who has a Lebanese passport would be eligible to be a citizen of the Mountain State, even if their native village is outside the first iteration of political borders. Moreso, every Maronite in the world would have the same right, along with all the Christian descendants of Lebanese origin wherever they are, even if they do not currently hold the passport of the Lebanese Republic.

Christians in the Middle East from any country should be able to acquire a type of e-residency similar to that of the diaspora, with a clear and concrete path towards citizenship.

This might not be politically correct to propose, but it is a sound policy for a state to restore demographic balance and provide itself with citizens and workforce consistent with its identity and culture.

6. A Pragmatic Vision that Matters

The mountain cannot survive on emotions and intentions. It survives on predictable law and equal rights. It survives on institutions that are able to absorb shocks and continue serving.

This is why we are outlining these principles. The state can thrive with a political system where a president can act, where the parliament plays its legislative role, and where the senate can guard rights and land with full capacity.

It can prosper with courts that close cases with just and lawful judgments, and an accountability system that publishes the contracts and punishes the corrupt.

These processes turn distrust into procedures under which people can live and flourish. The Mountain State would be a highly functional, tightly governed nation, or it won't be at all.

III. Economic Vision of the Mountain State

We previously discussed the economic objection to a Mount Lebanon State, and we want to expand on economic feasibility in this section.

It is important to note first that the current Lebanese Republic is economically paralyzed and financially bankrupt, with barely any GDP growth. Any economic objection to a Mountain State should take into consideration that the Republic has already failed economically and financially. The Republic itself is not economically viable because it is deeply paralyzed by its dysfunction. However, let us look at the numbers and see how a Mountain State would fare.

In 2022, the services sector accounted for almost 90% of the GDP in Lebanon. The industrial sector contributes to 2.4% only (down from around 13% in pre-crisis years), and agriculture hovers around 1%. Notably, more than 75% of Lebanese GDP is centered in Beirut and Mount Lebanon⁶⁵.

In other words, Mount Lebanon is the most economically productive region of Lebanon, apart from the Capital.

Even as the country is dysfunctional as a whole, the Mountain is active and viable economically. In the independence scenario, The Mountain will have the chance to prosper without the chains and corruption of the republic.

The mountain state's economy is already viable today. The conditions needed for economic success are not hypothetical. They are present, but underused, mismanaged, and syphoned by a paralyzed center.

We can start with agri-food: orchards (apples, cherries, olives), vineyards and arak houses, pine-nuts, and wild herb harvests (za'atar, sage, oregano), beekeeping, dairy, and small preserves/pickles lines. Many of these businesses already sell across Lebanon and to the diaspora. What stalls them is not demand but corruption, broken inspections, a dysfunctional bureaucratic system, and cold-chain gaps. With clean permits, fast lab testing, barcode/label law support, and shared cold storage, these firms can scale exports without reinventing themselves in a matter of months.

In wood & stone craft, the skills are alive with hundreds of furniture shops, craft factories, icon carvers, instrument makers, and stone cutters. The bottleneck is certification and design, not talent. A light standards unit and shared CNC/CAD labs can unlock higher-margin contracts while enforcing environmental rules for quarries and forestry in a brief time frame.

Tourism is not a future plan; it is already happening. The mountain is filled with guesthouses, restaurants, and monasteries that already host retreats along established mountain trails, landmarks, and shrines. What holds

them back now is an unstable country, high crime rates, failing infrastructure, unsafe roads, arbitrary fees, and zero marketing coherence.

Political stability, along with some technical enhancements like a single booking hub with guide certification, micro-grants for trail/heritage maintenance, and a conservation fee that actually fixes paths, will lengthen stays and stabilize cash flow in this sector.

Education and health are present-tense assets. We have countless schools, technical institutes, clinics, and several world-class hospitals that survive despite the collapse. They need predictable bursaries, solarization, and medicine supply contracts, not new buildings. They can become anchors for local employment and for seasonal diaspora service.

On the services/tech side, thousands of mountain youth already freelance in coding, development, design, accounting ops, and content creation. They are all pulled back by intermittent electricity, slow internet, and an inadequate banking and legal infrastructure. There are already thousands of tech startups in Mountain schools, at homes, and in the dreams of young men and women just waiting for the right infrastructure to support them.

Water and energy are not blank slates. When the corruption of the electricity sectors stops being a factor, a competent Mountain State will only need a couple of years to establish 24/7 electricity and water supply. The Mountain needs one modern electric power factory to provide electricity and water around the hour.

Add to it river committees, wind turbines and solar farms, and widespread rooftop gensets, and we will have a full hydro/wind/solar power sector that's resistant to regional oil shocks.

Logistics are workable from now: existing lanes to Beirut/Tripoli ports and cross-border couriers function when paperwork is clean and when road and transport infrastructure is functional.

In short, the mountain's economy does not need some impossible magic to be viable. It already is. What it needs is good governance, clean permits, standards, electricity, fast internet, cold chain, fintech infrastructure, and honest ledgers. In other words, what it needs is a functional state.

We haven't even talked yet about what can be done under such effective administration: The mountain state can be export-minded, service-capable, terrain-tuned, diaspora-linked, and financially successful.

It is easy to see how a Mountain State can have double or triple the current GDP of the entire Lebanese Republic in just a few years of good governance. Let us discuss this more in depth so we can lay the economic objection to its eternal rest.

1. An Export-minded Economy

For decades, Lebanese politicians talked about developing industrial and agricultural sectors to rid Lebanon of relying entirely on the volatile service industry. The Mountain State can actually achieve that.

An export desk modeled after the experience of Slovenia would be instrumental in setting up the foundation for an export economy: A standing unit that does the unglamorous work: buyer calendars, standards coaching, Incoterms training, price decks, sample logistics, a diaspora distributor map, and quarterly deal rooms. Favorable legislative and taxing policies would remove the last artificial frictions.

A niche export strategy can easily take off without major restructuring of the economy: honey, cheese, herbs, wood & stone craft, natural cosmetics, furniture, instruments, in addition to the usual tech services exports (coding, accounting ops, design, localization).

2. A Service-capable Economy

Imagine how the service sector in the Mountain would look if it were supported by an entire infrastructure suitable for economic activity. Imagine our restaurants, ski resorts, beach hotels, and environmental tourist services, with clear and streamlined certifications and permit policy, a perfect transport infrastructure, a fully functional energy and water grid, and affordable and reliable internet.

There would be a complete logistics readiness with proper roads and bridge networks, maintenance and public transportation, corridor agreements for port access, cold-chain co-ops, shared fulfillment centers, and modular e-commerce.

Digitized governance would link everything together with an additional digital commons that issues verifiable

digital IDs, enabling e-signing, company formation, e-invoicing, and payments. The e-residency would also complement public grant and endowment portals that can invest and revitalize small local businesses.

Parishes, schools, startups, and individuals can plug in, pay their taxes, receive investments, and become economic players with transparency without complications.

Add to it land stewardship policies with terrace repair brigades, forest co-ops, trail maintenance, and “Mountain Goods” quality mark, which would all go into preserving and developing the natural wonders and wealth we have in the Mountain.

3. A Terrain-tuned Economy

There is no need to reinvent the wheel for the Mountain to prosper. Agro-foods are already in the Mountain along with wood and stone crafts, and some industrial capabilities.

What a state can do to further develop these sectors is to boost them with specialized academies, cold-chain facilities, label law, and barcodes that become a synonym of excellent quality. Shared research labs and design fellowships for schools and universities can link diaspora designers to students and village workshops.

Eco-tourism & pilgrimage networks are also already in place and just need some attention. They can be enhanced by refined trail systems and pilgrimage routes, certified guides, conservation fees that fund trail

maintenance, and heritage guesthouses. A unified digital booking hub for the entire Mountain would take this ecosystem of tourism to the next level.

Tech services and remote development will flourish naturally in such an environment. Individuals and companies that provide coding and development, accounting ops, content creation, design and localization, medical research, and more, will thrive. The state can sponsor “digital guilds” with paid apprenticeships while monasteries and schools host cowork hubs with reliable power and fiber.

Energy & water can also be stabilized and adapted to our terrain, as we already mentioned, boosting all the economic sectors and contributing significantly to raising the standards of living.

4. A Diaspora-linked Economy

The diaspora becomes an engine of growth and a partner in success instead of a tip jar, through *e-residency*, ring-fenced *endowments*, and more.

E-residency issues a verifiable digital ID that lets Christians and Druze abroad e-sign, found companies, invest, employ workers, and own stakes in “Mountain Goods” exporters and suppliers – all from Dubai, Montréal, Paris, or Sydney.

A diaspora-backed financing body can be established with clear risk tiers, shared revenue, transparent defaults, and no political discretion.

Ring-fenced endowments can be used for education, health, startups, and civil-protection equipment; audited by independent boards; and published in quarterly dashboards.

Seasonal service fellowships for the likes of teachers, medics, IT, forestry, and tradesmen and women can convert international expertise into local capacity. This would give every citizen in the diaspora the chance to visit their homeland and put down roots there with a tangible, lived experience.

The result? The diaspora shares equity, oversight, and outcomes, aligning love with governance and returns. For the Mountain to thrive, the diaspora should become a partner of success who helps run the machine.

5. A Financially Boring Economy

Illegal monetary “architectures” will not be tolerated in the Mountain State as they were in the Republic. Public Funds will not be treated as personal enrichment devices for the wealthy and powerful.

Taxes and budgets would be clear and predictable. This would include low VAT, property tax, excises, environmental fees, and dividends from public utilities under strict stewardship, with a modest corporate tax to encourage formalization.

The mountain state will be financially boring by design: rules over moods, ledgers over legends. Budgets are balanced on accrual, published in machine-readable detail, and audited annually by an independent

authority with statutory teeth. Open contracting for state tenders is paired with beneficial-ownership disclosure for every vendor.

The central bank (or currency board) has a narrow mandate: price stability and bank supervision; no industrial adventures and no political lending.

Transfers to municipalities are formula-based, not favor-based, and each municipality publishes a quarterly cash and commitments report.

All endowments are ring-fenced, board-governed, term-limited, and KPI-bound.

Contingencies are codified: a stabilization fund, procurement blacklists for violators, and automatic spending caps if revenue dips.

Officials file public asset and interest declarations, and a protected whistleblower channel triggers time-bound responses. Such a channel would track what investors and citizens actually care about: outage minutes, water uptime, court clearance rates, drill hours, and export receipts.

When money follows rules and data, firms can plan, families can save, and donors can trust. Predictability is the cheapest economic stimulus.

6. A Thriving Mountain

The mountain economy is viable because it is based on something tangible: the land and its people, who are already working despite a broken center.

With clean permits, steady power and water, standards, and honest ledgers, these same actors can scale into exports and stable jobs. Add the e-commons to connect the diaspora as owners and operators, and a civil-protection culture that keeps shocks short, and the small state will win by being reliable, lawful, neutral, and efficient.

That is the vision: quality over volume, rules over favors, stewardship over depletion. A modest, resilient economy that pays salaries now and endures storms later.

IV. Security and Defense Doctrine of The Mountain State

How would a small Mountain State survive and safeguard its security in a region full of armies and violence?

This is another common objection that we discussed earlier, but now we will expand with more specifics. We will show how the security viability of the Mountain State is sturdier than that of the current Lebanese Republic.

A small mountain nation can credibly protect its borders in the Middle East by embracing whole-of-society defense with a small, superbly trained force multiplied by technology. The security can be more comprehensive and robust when there is a single chain of coercion with no rival militias and non-state armed actors.

First, we must understand the threat model that a Mountain State would face:

- Border incidents or full-scale invasions (in extreme situations) from neighboring countries like Syria or the remnants of the Lebanese Republic.
- Proxy pressure through intimidation and limited armed incursions from local militias.
- Terrorism and sabotage aimed at infrastructure, forests, religious or national symbols, and civilian targets.
- Disinformation and cyber disruption.
- Economic strangulation and sieges aimed at ports, banking, or transit.
- Natural hazards like wildfire, flood, landslide, and drought.

To face these challenges, the Military Doctrine of the Mountain is naturally defensive. We are not expansionists, but we will make it impossible for any foreign or regional power to acquire an inch of our land.

Small mountain nations survive by defense-in-depth and civil resilience, not by fantasies of power projection and showmanship.

The doctrine is simple: deter, delay, harden, mitigate, and recover under a single lawful chain. While effective, hybrid defense requires societal buy-in, balancing readiness with peacetime civility.

That said, the Mountain Defense Doctrine has three pillars:

- Defense-in-depth.
- Whole-of-society engagement.
- Technological superiority.

1. Defense-in-depth and Technological Edge

The terrain is our first ally and the cornerstone of “defense-in-depth.” The mountain is all made of ridgelines, valleys, peaks, and chokepoints that let defenders trade space for time, channel movement, and raise the cost per kilometer of any incursion. Knowledge of the land and a guerrilla engagement strategy would make it impossible for a foreign power to hold territory indefinitely.

A compact professional gendarmerie/border guard holds fixed crossings and critical infrastructure. Behind it, a standing army along layered reserves and civil-protection units — medics, SAR, wildfire, engineers, comms — that keep society functioning under pressure. This layered architecture denies adversaries the quick chaos they seek.

In practice, the defense bodies of the Mountain polity would look like this:

- A standing professional army: highly trained, highly paid, and well-equipped fighting force with an in-depth knowledge of the land and guerrilla fighting tactics. It can have a small navy and air force for reconnaissance and limited missions. The

Mountain Army is a homogeneous force able to move and execute without any internal dilemmas that plague the current Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). It will be focused on its mission with no internal policing or security roles.

- Gendarmerie and Border Guard: compact, well-paid, trained with like-minded partners; high-tech with drones, sensors, optics; and real legal authority for border control and rural policing.
- Civil-Protection Corps (universal): the reserve backbone of the civilian front: first aid and EMT, SAR, wildfire, shelters, relief, logistics, and comms.
- Intelligence & Counter-sabotage: extremely efficient with strict legal remit; judicial warrants; oversight by parliamentary committee and inspectorate.
- Cyber & Information corps: CERT-like unit; FIDO keys for public systems; comms doctrine (SMS trees, VHF/UHF nets).

Defense-in-depth is tightened by a technological edge. A distributed ISR web (with fixed cameras, ground sensors, small drones, tethered aerostats) feeds an operations room that flags infiltration in minutes, not hours. Short-range air defense (MANPADS/SHORAD), counter-UAS & UAV, and electronic warfare protect key nodes. Loitering munitions and small precision teams deliver localized counterstrikes against breach points, supply vehicles, or indirect-fire launch sites. Obstacle belts at key geographic chokepoints (with smart mines and tank ditches for dragon's teeth type of operations),

would slow armor into mapped fire zones. Hardened, redundant C2 network (fiber + microwave + VHF/UHF) and pre-planned mutual-aid pacts between districts keep command alive even under attack. The aim is simple: turn every hour of aggression into attrition, exposure, and video evidence that is tactically costly and politically expensive.

2. Whole-of-society Strategy

A whole-of-society security doctrine is not permanent militarization, but a mandatory civil-protection service modeled after the Finnish experience. It would include men and women at 18–20 (or a later slot), with refresher training every two years. It covers training in first aid, wildfire control, search-and-rescue, shelter operations, radio communications, traffic management, and cyber hygiene.

This is complemented by a simple Incident Command System that maintains equipment caches and skill registries by municipal hubs, and mutual-aid pacts between districts, along with redundant comms networks.

Civil bodies would fall under a reserve muster doctrine run by the Interior & Civil Protection ministry, separate from the gendarmerie's professional policing, and separate from the official army.

This keeps the armed forces focused on their job and the gendarmerie focused on policing, while the community manages civilian challenges and emergencies.

3. A Sound Defense Doctrine

This threefold doctrine is backed by layered legitimacy on all levels of the state, with:

1. A single chain of coercion. All armed and security forces are under civilian government control. No party arms, no special zones, no “exceptions.”
2. Neutrality in practice. Regional neutrality and non-aggression are enforced to shield the country from volatility. Cooperation means training exchanges, standards, defense compacts, and exercises with status-of-forces agreements, no foreign bases or regional military roles.
3. Oversight as strength. Rules of engagement are codified and public; after-action reports are discussed and evaluated. The parliament can hold the government accountable for missteps. The independent inspector-general is potent. Ombuds are available for citizen complaints, and judicial review is always active. Any military or security emergency is time-boxed, with parliamentary supermajorities required for extensions and extraordinary powers.
4. Ceasefire mechanism & incident ladder. If cross-border fire or militia activity occurs, the sanctuary triggers a legal ladder with local de-escalation mechanisms, national crisis cells, and an international arbitration panel with foreign states' observer memberships.

5. Continuity-of-Government plan. Protected governance sites and a long chain of command would enable protecting the Mountain's political will under all circumstances.

As the Mountain economy is localized by nature and services decentralized (water, micro-grids, stocked clinics), coercion by blackout or blockade yields little. Something on the scale of Kafno is impossible to ever happen again. Ports, airports, and international highways that connect the Mountain to the outside world would be treated as strategic assets.

Adversaries in this region are casualty-averse when gains are uncertain. They seek quick wins and political domination, not slow grinders and political paralysis. A mountain republic that is hard to blind, hard to starve, and impossible to scare, because citizens are trained, caches are ready, and units are disciplined, can easily stand on its own.

We will not out-mass neighbors, but we will out-prepare them, making conquest unprofitable and unlikely.

V. Education & Culture: Preserving Language, Faith, and Arts

Education and culture form the soul of the Mountain State, renewing identity amid global pressures. Education builds character and skills, while culture sustains the social fabric. Together, they ensure the Maronite spirit endures through generations.

The Mountain State will reclaim its native cultural identity without any chauvinist leanings or illusions of superiority.

We will not make the same mistake of letting our culture fade again. Our prayers, history, and heritage will find their place in classrooms, universities, art, and literature, once more.

1. Education as Identity Engine

Schools in the Mountain State prioritize holistic formation, blending faith, heritage, and practical abilities to counter cultural erosion.

Curricula emphasize Syriac language and rites alongside STEM and vocational training, fostering "warrior-steward-monk" virtues: discipline in labs, stewardship in ecology classes, and daily rhythm.

The state will help publish open-source fonts, primers, and hymnals; fund choir/chant endowments, and hold inter-school festivals. In schools, calendar literacy (feasts, fasts, and history) will be part of the culture.

The state, in cooperation with the Diaspora, can provide small, steady grants for liturgical music, poetry, theater, and film. A translation fund would start making literature available in Syriac. Annual youth essay and craft prizes will reward clarity, skill, and service.

This engine not only equips youth for economic agility but instills a deep bond with the land, and our children will grow up aligned with the spirit of the mountain.

Graduates emerge as stewards, ready to innovate in agro-tech or crafts. Building on these curricular foundations, the state would support lifelong learning, where education intersects with culture to reinforce community ties.

Vocational centers offer adult courses in heritage trades, bridging generations and countering emigration by making mountain life fulfilling and sustainable.

2. Culture as Social Fabric

Culture weaves the state's social bonds, with parishes acting as hubs for welfare, arts, and dialogue.

These centers host choirs, festivals, and dispute resolution, blending Qurbono with community service to embody faith in action. Monasteries would anchor archives, heritage, rites, and social service. The state will help digitize parish registers and land books; run their iconography and woodcraft ateliers; record their chants; and keep their kitchens ready to scale for relief in storms.

Media policies promote a cohesive culture with digital platforms for Syriac podcasts, films on saints' lives, and more, countering global assimilation while fostering inclusivity for Druze traditions (e.g., joint heritage events).

To prevent jumps in cultural expression, the state invests in "living archives": museums and digital repositories that preserve Garshuni and Syriac texts and oral histories, accessible via apps for diaspora engagement.

Arts grants support creators blending traditional motifs with modern forms, ensuring culture evolves dynamically.

This fabric not only preserves identity but also strengthens resilience, turning parishes into engines of solidarity where education's lessons live daily.

Through this integrated engine, the Mountain State renews its people. Education will forge skills while culture binds hearts, creating a high-trust society where faith and freedom flourish.

VI. Conclusion: A Small System for Big Freedoms

The Mountain State we envision is not a distant utopia but a grounded republic: lean in the center, strong in municipalities, neutral in the world, and disciplined in defense.

The state should be built on solid foundations and structure a government able to keep such a promise. Its founding principles, such as fixed rights, subsidiarity, and unified coercion, form the bedrock, translating Maronite spirit into law.

The political order balances direct democracy with checks, ensuring power serves the people. Security through a whole-of-society doctrine turns citizens into guardians, while the economic model harnesses niches like agro-forestry and digital hubs for prosperity.

Education and culture, infused with faith and heritage, renew identity as the engine of resilience.

None of this hunts for grandeur. It hunts for reliability; the quiet dignity of a state that does the same thing well every day and provides all its citizens with what the Lebanese Republic could not.

Our proposed mountain state is intentionally small so that freedom can be large. It carries one baton of force so that law is a fact and not a bargain.

It worships and teaches without asking permission. It chants its Syriac hymns without apology. It sells its produce to the world with pride. It tends terraces, keeps springs clean, restores forests, and digitizes memory, so our ancestors are remembered, and our newborns are guaranteed a decent life. It speaks with a mature voice to neighbors, holds a clean ledger to donors, and offers a steady hand to its children.

This vision demands sacrifices, blood, sweat, and steadfast will, but promises a homeland where Christians thrive free, rights-bound, and rooted.

It solves the Republic's failures by prioritizing local life over grand illusions, making the Mountain a beacon of stability in a turbulent region.

As we move to the roadmap in the next chapter, this blueprint becomes our guide: from dream to reality, step by disciplined step.

This is not a fantasy. It is a design for a state that can build and protect. We have to build the institutions, safeguard the pillars, rehearse the drills, and defend the rights. It is not going to be easy, but when we do, the Maronites and all the Christians of the East will not merely survive the century, but will actively shape it.

Part V

***The Roadmap to a
Free Mount Lebanon***

Chapter 13

From Idea to Reality: The Path to Self-Determination

Self-determination can only become possible when a confident political culture, aware of its cause and purpose, expresses its will through disciplined organization, produces useful institutions, and speaks to the world in the language of law, service, and legitimacy.

Even if one does not agree with the end goal of establishing an independent state for Christians in Mount Lebanon, a dedicated movement focusing on self-determination for our community and the preservation of its identity and freedom is a net win for every Christian in Lebanon. Such a movement would push politics into realigning with the historical and actual cause of Christian presence in the East.

In the worst-case scenario, it would create institutions that serve our people and push other Christian centers of power in the Republic to adopt some or all of its demands and discourse, making them better defenders of our community's interests. In the best-case scenario, it would pave the way to true self-determination through a *de facto* parallel state, through federalism, or, ideally, by establishing a fully independent sovereign state.

The ultimate goal of establishing such a state should always be the political ceiling of any movement of this kind. Establishing our own state and governing

ourselves is in the end, the only sure way of deciding and ensuring our future and the future of our children.

However, the road is long and requires decades of work. There is no denying that. The Mountain State will not be built by promises and rhetoric, but the combination of inner clarity and outward usefulness can achieve what words cannot.

The Mountain State will not be built by engaging in traditional Lebanese politics. It will not see the light through endless talks and bargains that come with that. It might participate in the elections to make gains for our rights and legitimize the independence project, but this engagement is not based on the illusion of reforming the republic or saving it.

This chapter sets out a realistic political route for transforming the Mountain State from a conviction into a public fact.

The route is neither romantic nor bureaucratic. It does not pretend that we are a government. It does not mistake online likes for real-world support, or tweets for transformation. The path begins with Christian consciousness, with the inner work of self-understanding our cause and path. It then moves outward to grassroots organizations, then to parallel institutions that do useful things in the open. Finally, it gathers legitimacy layered at home and abroad, until the project becomes self-evidently viable.

The order matters: culture first, organization second, institutions third, legitimacy thereafter. The

independent Mountain State will be the crowning achievement of this unstoppable path.

I. Founding Principles of an Effective Self-Determination Movement

Before methods, there must be morals. Any movement for self-determination must be built on sound foundations that cannot be corrupted by politics, money, power, or external influence.

We know what Lebanon is and how its politics operate: they tempt the poor with money, corrupt the pure with fame, and lure the hungry with power. They funnel everything into bargains and violence, where they control the rules of the game.

Sliding into the corruption game or trying to clash with the current republic and its de facto militias is not a viable strategy for a movement that is still in its formation. Focusing on gaining parliamentary seats in a system designed to make politics inefficient is not the way, either.

The movement for Mount Lebanese State must safeguard itself from the vices of the Lebanese Republic from the beginning, which means it has to be:

- **Lawful and non-violent.** We win by credibility and by building institutions first. The Maronites and Christians of this Mountain are not pacifists, but we do not have illusions about the realities of violence either. We realize that a violent clash might be

inevitable at some point, but we do not seek it or push for it.

The Mount Lebanon independence movement must be non-violent by design, but we must understand non-violence as a strategy and not adopt it as an immutable philosophy. We understand that strategies sometimes have to change if circumstances become different.

Our speech, gatherings, actions, and projects must be auditable against existing law and common decency so we can gather support and keep the movement clean.

We expect the authorities to use force to silence the movement as it becomes bigger, but even then, the movement will still have to keep its non-violent strategy. Our play is to gradually become bigger than the state and more capable than any actor in it, because self-determination will not be a partisan movement but a historical moment of a nation becoming awake.

We envision that the independence movement will become big enough that many state institutions will come to adopt it or switch allegiance to it. It might even absorb significant sections of the official armed forces and security apparatus of the Lebanese Republic later.

- **Neutral and civil.** This is not a teenager rebellion. It does not lend support to proxy or regional wars, nor does confessional baiting. It takes no joy in our neighbors' misfortunes. It does not align itself with any of the current parties in the Lebanese Republic. It can build alliances only with those who explicitly support the Mountain's independence and are clean enough to mean it.

The movement is not just another party that aims to reach power. The aim is to get as many institutions and centers of power on board with our self-determination program. When the finish line is close, Mount Lebanon Movement will probably be just one among many organizations and institutions working towards the same goal.

Even being Christian at its core, the Mountain State we envision serves all who live within it from all sects; therefore, the movement that precedes it must behave as if that is already true, and be itself an expression of that ideal.

- **Service before slogans.** People support what helps them. A clean river, a solar power installation, a new startup, an efficient clinic, and a job board can all prove more than a hundred speeches. Material usefulness is moral language.
- **A state mindset.** We grow power from the bottom up. Parishes and municipalities are the constitutional habits we wish to enthrone. We establish transparent and effective protocols and procedures as if we are already governing the mountain. Every institution we establish, we build with the mindset that it will be an official state administration and run it on that basis.
- **Transparency on all levels.** Clean money, plain speech, and measurable outcomes. If we cannot show receipts, we should not ask for trust. If we cannot explain our plans in simple words, we should not pursue them.

These principles are not ornaments. They are rails that keep the path narrow and safe. They also define the kind of people who will walk with us. We want to filter out the opportunists, the authoritarians, the dishonest, and the corrupt from the beginning.

II. The Cultural War: Raising Christian Awareness

The first victory is inward. Political projects that skip consciousness become loud and brittle. They swing between enthusiasm and despair because they have no shared “why.” Our task is not to invent an identity, but to recover, clarify, and discipline ours. The aim is confidence without showmanship, and purpose without resentment.

We want to transform the collective political consciousness of Christians in Lebanon to become aligned with self-determination and the ultimate purpose of establishing our own sovereign state.

1. A Foundational Creed and Canon

The principles of independence must be clear and communicated simply to Christians from all social, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

The vision must always be at the forefront of the movement, and we should make a place for it in the heart of every Christian man, woman, and kid.

What we want is not complicated: we want a small, lawful, reliable state in our homeland in which we govern ourselves, decide our destiny, and freely choose our way of life. We want to ensure a good and free life for our children and their children's children.

This is not marketing, but a creed that binds us to promises we can keep and forbids shortcuts we may later regret.

To the creed we add a canon: the story of how a people came to regain their freedom after centuries of struggle.

Our cause and spirit are not secretive or complicated. They can find resonance through short, accessible readings that stitch history to law and law to governance.

The Maronites and Christians of Lebanon must know their true history to be able to know their cause.

We do not educate to hate; we educate to understand what must be built and why. Our historical canon does not flatter us. It includes our mistakes. It speaks of times when blood was spilled unjustly, when zeal was not disciplined, and when courage was not guided.

A people that can reflect on its failures is a people that can be trusted with power.

2. Envisioning Mythos, not lost in myth

No nation survives without a story. The Maronite story has an ideal of freedom and a trinity of vocation: warrior, steward, monk, that we have already traced. Each Christian, regardless of their ability, can contribute

to their nation. They can embody its spirit through establishing an honest relationship with the Heavens above, the land below, and our community beside us.

We insist that this is mythos, not myth: an ethical grammar with a practical path for self-development and communal solidarity, and not a fairy tale.

The warrior is not a cult of arms; it is the disciplined will to protect one's home under law. The steward is not nostalgia; it is taking care of land and craft as practical freedom. The monk is not isolation; it is prayer, study, and service to what is most holy.

The triad meets the modern world by producing the civic duties of preparedness, work, and worship. The Mountain State is not ethereal. It is a place where these duties are ordinary.

3. Holding a Counter-narrative of Political Realism

Three illusions must be dismantled calmly from Christian consciousness on the political level.

The first is that reform from within will fix a system whose architecture manufactures stalemate. We have shown why it cannot.

The second is that federalism-in-name, without sovereignty, will rescue minorities. We have shown how it re-centralizes failure while leaving the coercive asymmetry intact.

The third and final one is that Christians are better off staying in the Republic than separating and going back to self-governance in their mountain.

We repeat these arguments without heat, with dates and mechanisms. We resist the temptation to sneer. The point is not to humiliate doubters or to question those proposing alternatives, but to relieve them. We want to let them know that it is okay to stop believing in things that continually betray them. We do not want to win over them but to win them over. We want them to become courageous enough to adopt self-determination for our people, without fear and without apology.

4. Addressing Fears and Concerns

While building Christian autonomy awareness, most of the roadblocks we will encounter are emotional: fears, concerns, and values.

For example, many Christians will be worried about what will happen if their villages fall outside the borders of the Mountain. To this, we have to drill the foundation we established that every Lebanese Christian is a citizen of the new state, regardless of their area of residence. No one will be left behind.

Some will be concerned about the future treatment of non-Christian sects in the Mountain State. We have already established that it will be a rights-based republic with equality and rights for all, regardless of their sect.

Some will be attached to the Lebanese Republic and its flag and history. Some are also just too far gone in their

Arabist and Islamist programming and cannot imagine or accept their community governing itself.

The movement will have to address all kinds of fears and concerns, some honest and some ill-intentioned. Some concerns will not have easy answers, and the movement should not sugarcoat reality just to gain support. As a community, we are barreling towards extremely hard choices, and our people deserve the truth so they can make these choices on their own.

5. Finding a Common Tongue

Language is a gate. We speak Lebanese to root ourselves where we live. We speak in English or French to converse with partners and explain ourselves to the world. We honor Syriac as a heritage literacy that keeps memory alive and trains the ear to chant and the hand to script.

The Mountain State will be bilingual in law and multi-lingual in culture; so must be its movement. Reviving the Syriac language would be at the heart of our self-determination movement.

The importance of such reclamation goes beyond individual effort; it provides a common visual grammar grounded in history and rite. The process of language reclamation itself offers opportunities for a new type of communal bonding that teaches us much more than words and sentences.

6. Using all the Tools of Consciousness

Transforming the political consciousness of an entire community is a really big ask. We will need all the tools at our disposal for it.

This book is just a small stepping stone in that direction, but such a huge endeavor cannot be done by one person or even by one movement. We will need media centers, think tanks, publications, digital spaces, and research and policy centers. We need entire institutions dedicated to reviving our native identity, teaching our history, and generating the required political discourse to carve a path for the state.

7. Transforming Self-determination from a Taboo to a Serious Solution

Today, the task we outlined here might seem impossible, but we do not doubt our success for a simple reason: the Christians of this mountain will always find their way home.

Media and cultural work do not deliver votes or borders; it delivers permission to think in a different way and believe in a certain outcome. A disciplined creed, a shared lexicon, and a calm counter-narrative will move Christian statehood from the fringes of political life into the sayable center. It moves the idea from something considered embarrassing, unacceptable, or impossible to a moral duty.

In political consciousness, we win when three concrete shifts happen:

(1) The overtone window widens: journalists, priests, teachers, and municipal figures can discuss self-determination and establishing a state for Christians without social penalty.

(2) Conceptual clarity reduces fear: people understand that the project is *lawful, viable, service-oriented*, and desirable, not theocratic or isolationist. The discussion at this point moves from objections to options.

(3) Moral anchoring reframes the debate from grievance and apology to duty: to protect our freedom, ensure the future of our children, and steward our land. The discussion then starts shifting from the why to the how.

When public language changes, costs for defenders of the status quo rise: to argue against us, they must argue against freedom, rights, stewardship, and transparency. They must argue against logic itself.

Media work, done right, turns the “Mountain State” from a scary noun into a plain description of how to keep promises. That’s the first step from dream to decision.

The political function of consciousness is simple: it makes autonomy respectable and demanded. It puts it on the table. It normalizes the claim that a small, lawful polity is what justice requires in this Mountain.

Once the Christian mind in Lebanon adopts this awareness, it can stop being chained by illusions and despair and can begin to organize.

III. Grassroots Organizations: Giving the Idea a Body

Ideas do not walk by themselves. They acquire legs when ordinary people choose to spend their time working together. With cultural awareness ignited through media and education, the next step transforms conviction into collective power: organization at the grassroots level.

This is not about top-down parties but bottom-up networks that build discipline and scale. Drawing from Maronite historical assemblies and local grassroots culture, we outline a structure resilient to infiltration, starting with small cells, scaling to districts, coordinating provincially, and safeguarding against risks.

The goal of the organization is not to simulate a state; it is to demonstrate social breadth and discipline first. It would turn individuals into a unified force and pave the way for proto-institutions that prove our readiness for autonomy.

1. A Movement and Not Just an Organization

With a wide political goal such as self-determination, the movement would be layered and diverse, and made up of several organizations and institutions.

Many people mistake the unity of purpose with the unity of organization. Of course, if we are talking about the military, the principle of unity of command is sound. However, we are talking about politics and culture here,

so it is normal to have diversity of approaches and opinions.

The best-case scenario for self-determination is to have one major umbrella organization that can work competently as one political body. This umbrella will likely be made up of several groups and establishments.

As Christians and Maronites are just waking up after a century of political and cultural chaos, we expect they will produce a variety of movements that will reflect their current diversity. These movements would all share the same goal of establishing a state.

It is tactically dangerous to be pulled into a sort of “one-party” ideology. Such a mentality would only lead to permanent tension or clash between these movements, and would ensure they remain small and irrelevant.

Everyone who dreams of Christian self-determination should realize that we need everyone. We need all the approaches and all the groups. We need the ones focusing on Syriac courses, we need the youth protesting in the streets, we need the think tanks lobbying in the halls of power abroad, we need the memers and the militants, we need the fathers and the teachers, we need the retired soldiers and the working mothers, we need the young dreamers in schools and the diaspora in the four corners of the earth. We need the organizations that are far right, and we need those that are centrists. The movement will mature and filter itself with time, but what this variety creates is options and momentum.

The diversity of opinions and organizations is normal, but what is not normal is not being able to cooperate

when we have the same goal. The grassroots momentum will have to be translated into disciplined action. It has to become a power that pushes the Mountain towards its free destiny.

It is greatly beneficial for our purpose to know the difference between a movement and an organization: the desire for Christian self-determination is a movement beyond time and above partisan politics and personal opinions, and it will have many organizations and institutions. This plethora of groups will be moving the needle towards autonomy steadily, as more and more Christians become aware of their cause and engage to support it. These institutions will answer diverse needs and follow different tactics. The most successful among them will become long-term institutions nestled in the social fabric of the Mountain.

2. An Organizational Sketch

From our personal point of view, regardless of the diversity of organizations and approaches, there needs to be at least one that is fully political and uncompromising in its position. We offer our personal sketch for such an organization here to show what is possible.

Cells form the movement's foundation, but true strength emerges when they connect and scale, evolving into district networks that amplify impact without losing local intimacy.

Like the resilient village councils of past Maronite resistance, this level coordinates resources and actions

across neighborhoods, ensuring the movement grows organically while maintaining discipline. Here is how the mechanics for leadership, communication, and political influence work.

A. A Healthy Leadership Culture

We envision such an organization with a clear and transparent leadership structure that sets goals and strategies, approves budgets, guards ethics, and ensures that its own bylaws and tactics are respected and followed.

The leadership model of such an organization would have no personality cults, just clear processes and defined terms and authorizations.

Such an organization would prefer modest spokespeople who explain and listen rather than grandstand. It rotates chairs, trusts its members with responsibility, and trusts its community with transparency about its plans and visions. It publishes its ethics and actions, and treats the movement as a commons for all Christians, and not personal property. Leadership would be judged by three questions: Are you getting things done? Are projects clearer when you plan? Are ledgers cleaner when you sign?

B. The Body of the Organization

Leadership of the organization would be supported by a council that has specialists in management, media, financing, logistics, and policy making.

Another key component is a diaspora liaison desk that connects programs at the municipal level with volunteers, fellowships, scholarships, endowments, and localized investments. This desk would translate the diaspora's presence into a real physical connection with the homeland.

The body of such an organization would be made of action cells on a municipal level, with a lead, treasurer, and scribe, and more if needed. Municipal circles are the natural units; small enough to know faces, large enough to get something done.

The action circles will be made of everyone willing to put in the work: students, educators, plumbers, delivery drivers, nurses, entrepreneurs, engineers, veterans, housewives, lawyers, and youth. No sitting MPs, militia representatives, or people affiliated with any of the current Lebanese parties are allowed membership. If a former partisan wishes to support the independence movement, they have to leave their traditional parties behind.

The function of local circles is to spread awareness of our cause and implement actions that serve the community. This includes social and economic projects like utilities infrastructures and micro-grids, school/clinic support and education networks, legal aid, environmental and forestation work, community support for the elderly and sick, clinics and training in trades, Sundays of Service, and more. It would also include local political activities

like direct action, neighborhood watches, municipal elections, public lectures, gatherings, remembrance days, and more.

The action circles can also be based in universities and schools instead of geography. Such groups would focus on campus actions, debates, and a student activity club that introduces the youth to their land and heritage.

District forums gather these circles at the district level (Kada') to exchange methods and coordinate on a larger scale. The movement's center remains small: it acts as the leadership and strategy center, keeps calendars, curates materials, guards tone and legality, and refuses the temptation to become a personality cult or a populist platform.

The organization will be complemented by sector guilds for different fields, like teachers and engineers, who will devise and supervise real-life projects in the municipalities where the movement is active.

C. Rituals of Belonging

Such an organization must build a shared identity through culture and ritual. A movement survives the dull months between headlines by actions that generate and replenish meaning.

We tie our calendar to service, learning, and prayer: pilgrimage and hiking days, forestation and trail clearing; evenings of reading and rights instruction, and liturgical seasons that remind us we are more than just news. These rituals produce memory. They also produce

moments that cannot be weaponized against us: neighbors working together, elders teaching, children learning a song.

For its youth, the organization would actively help its members grow into warriors, stewards, and monks, and adults who carry their ancestors' skills and history with pride.

D. How Success is Measured

Many political groups today measure success with an irrelevant metric: media exposure and public news. The success of a serious self-determination movement does not focus on exposure.

In reality, the vast majority of the work we need to do in the first years is completely off the public radar and not newsworthy. It is the dull, hard, and consistent work of building a community in real life, face to face, and filtering it from the countless cultural and social plagues that ail our larger society.

When the movement becomes bigger, it should not lose focus by pivoting into elections and political games. Of course, it might be beneficial for the movement to deliver pro-self-determination representatives to the parliament, but success for the organization is not measured by parliamentary seats. Actually, given how corrupt Lebanese politics are, engaging in election politics might be more destructive for such a movement than constructive and might not be worth the cost.

Real success will be measured by what families can count: hours of power, deliveries of medicine, liters of

water, seats in classrooms, visits to clinics, jobs created, and cases moved in court. It will be measured in the general shift in the republic's discourse and policies to protect and defend Christian freedoms and rights.

The political mission of the organization moves forward with feet on the ground, and once enough influence is acquired, it will be time to make bigger moves towards autonomy and sovereignty.

3. From Audience to Agency

Organization turns cultural awakening into tangible power. This grassroots structure, while disciplined, inclusive, and adaptive, builds a movement that's infiltration-proof and purpose-driven.

The ultimate political function of an organization is to prove that the idea has a capable body that carries it beyond the individuals who believe in it: something that survives personal moods, adapts to geo-political realities, absorbs shock, accumulates experience, and can plan and take long-term action.

With organization, people in different towns with diverse backgrounds can hold the same discipline and push towards the same goal. Rhetoric and emotions alone cannot do that. Scattered individuals or loose, disorganized networks linked only through social media cannot achieve it. A simple political party cannot simulate it. Only a patient, public organization can.

Organization converts watchers into participants. Municipal circles and district forums create a repeatable political form that survives news cycles and intimidation. This matters in four ways.

First, breadth: cells in multiple districts prove that the idea is not a clique; it is the entire nation.

Second, discipline: codes of conduct, non-violence, and clean action, make repression costly and visibly unjust. It changes the political dynamics. Organizational growth will steadily move the needle on the political scale.

Third, resilience: accountable leadership, rituals of belonging, and the presence of a community prevent burnout and immunize the nation against personality cults and populist deviations. The road to independence is long, and people who undertake this mission will need all the support they can get from each other.

Fourth, political influence: it may sound silly to say that a political organization leads to political influence, but most of our younger generation has never experienced proper politics or engaged in a healthy political culture. Most of our younger generation confuses online and digital noise with political influence. To have political influence, you need people who can make things happen and influence the vote. Unlike digital noise, the impact of such an organization would be measured in years, not in minutes. One million status online cannot make up for having one hundred active voters or activists in a district.

There is an indirect effect here at play also: as the base support for self-determination grows, traditional Christian political parties will have to adapt their discourse. They will try to gain the support of such a growing base, and the only way to do that is to adopt some of our goals and terminology. We anticipate that they might take some inconsequential steps towards Christian autonomy to contain the new political

movement. Grassroots structure is the insurance policy of countering such developments and making sure the cause stays on track despite their games.

Most importantly, it is this grassroots energy that will transform into institutions: a proto-state infrastructure that proves our competence and legitimizes the path to independence.

When the time for consultation, referenda, or negotiations comes, a successful grassroots movement means there will already be a calm, reachable body that can mobilize turnout, host observers, and make things happen.

IV. Parallel Institutions: Converting Belief into Competence

Sovereignty cannot be conjured by declarations. It is earned by institutions that function visibly to enemies and friends alike. We do not claim ministries or waste time trying to take over or reform the institutions of the Lebanese Republic. Instead, we build useful, efficient structures that prefigure what a state would do. We let their usefulness speak. In other terms, if we want a state, we must build it.

It does not matter if our opponents call it a state within a state or a parallel state. What matters is that as the center is collapsing, we must do the work of a state, lawfully, transparently, at a scale we can maintain.

Parallel institutions are not slogans or NGOs that “raise awareness.” They are permanent institutions that deliver

real-life services that the republic no longer can. They create the operating core of Mount Lebanon that can be constitutionalized later. These institutions would echo the resilient enclaves of our ancestors, like the monastic networks that sustained communities during Mamluk and Ottoman times. These institutions prove our competence and earn legitimacy through action.

1. *A Full De Facto Proto-State*

We can build many institutions for this purpose, but let us cite the most important examples, each tied to our heritage and designed to scale from local needs to state-level impact:

1) Social Protection & Health Care

This institution would establish a rules-based safety net for the most marginalized segments of the Christian population. A Mountain *Social Fund* would precede it, set up as a ring-fenced trust with an independent board and quarterly audits. The fund would finance social security and health care, such as the following:

- (a) School bursaries, indexed to need and size.
- (b) Primary-care vouchers, redeemable at partner clinics and hospitals.
- (c) Emergency household stabilization grants (fuel, rent gaps, maintenance). It can be tied to parish verification or municipalities.

This replaces performative charity with a real impact. This institution would later become the Ministry of Social Affairs and its network of care.

2) Micro-infrastructure: Water, Electricity, and Connectivity

We build micro-Utilities where the state will not. This can be under one or several institutions. These projects can be done in coordination with municipalities or as privately funded initiatives.

- Water: leakage audits, pipe replacement and maintenance, chlorination processes. An advanced stage of institutional work in this sector would be establishing public meters, district reservoirs, river and spring committees, and public works that provide water to homes and neighborhoods.
- Power: Solarization of schools, churches, clinics, and homes. In an advanced stage, the institution would start setting up backup systems and micro-grids for better distribution of critical loads.
- Connectivity: offer co-work nodes with backup power and extra bandwidth for remote work and tele-health. Extend the fiber network where possible and look into alternatives that do not fall under the state monopoly, such as Starlink.

All projects would follow one procurement code and transparent documentation so they can be absorbed intact by a future ministry.

3) Jobs & Ventures: A Mountain Talent and Investment Platform

A Jobs & Ventures Platform would link the diaspora's skills and savings to firms at home, turning sentiment into paychecks and dividends.

On the jobs side, it can be a curated board for remote and local roles, apprenticeships tied to other institutions, and co-work hubs. It includes a referral pool where business owners and diaspora professionals can sponsor interviews and run short skills screens.

On the venture side, the institution would be a regulated, milestone-escrow investment fund that enables micro-equity and revenue shares. It would have basic due diligence, quarterly reporting, and open term sheets. Diaspora mentors can also commit to time blocks instead of investments and get matched by sector.

Governance for such an institution is boring by design: an independent investment committee with a conflict-of-interest registry, multi-quote procurement, and a public portfolio dashboard that lists hires, salaries, products, and default rates. The platform can focus on export-capable SMEs and import-substitution utilities.

This is key to establishing a logistics chain that fulfills the needs of the mountain long before it becomes a state.

The result is a lawful pipe that converts brain drain into skill return, and remittances into productive capital. It would be ready to be absorbed later by a Mountain

Development & Employment Authority with the same rules and data.

4) Trade Readiness and Economic Institutions

The investment body can be complemented by a Trade & Standards Authority. It would be a public-spirited utility that teaches and certifies labels, barcodes, ISO/HACCP, and runs buyer calendars and sample logistics.

Paired with the diaspora-backed working-capital facility, the institution can help Mountain businesses be export-ready and financially viable.

5) Education Institutions

The Education Compact can finance dual-stream Syriac-Lebanese courses, choir/chant endowments, and teacher stipends with service-year commitments. It would also establish a Content Commons that makes Syriac accessible to all. It would help digitize parish registers and land books and keep the archives organized and clear, so our voice would not be lost to history.

Coupled with scholarships and educational support, such an institution will be instrumental in cultural revival.

6) Civil Defense Corps: The Social Spine of Internal Security

With crime rates and violence on the rise, state-building efforts would be complemented by establishing a Civil Protection Service. It would train citizens in first aid, SAR, wildfire control, shelter ops, radio discipline, search and rescue, conflict resolution, and self-defense.

It would maintain regional equipment caches and run table-top and neighborhood drills with after-action reviews. It would have public and transparent response times, drill programs, and equipment inventories. This is the non-coercive half of security that keeps society coherent under pressure.

7) Environmental Stewardship Institutions

The Mountain State's wealth is not hidden in mines; it is layered in terraces, springs, and forests.

An institution would be established as a land care corps that plants trees, maintains slopes, repairs walls, and mitigates wildfires. This would also include a crew of agricultural engineers and experts who would provide guidance and support for local farmers and agribusinesses.

Such an institution would dedicate its mission to protecting the beauty and wealth of the Mountain, but it won't be working in isolation in a limited area. Over time, it would produce an environmental plan for the entirety of the Mountain and find ways to implement it. It a task that the Ministry of Environment should normally do.

It would organize stewardship days that restore small acres of forest or terrace, clean beaches and rivers, and repair trails. This is not vanity labor. It is a political sentence written with hands: we intend to inherit and improve.

8) Heritage and Land Buy-Back Fund

Land is memory, and memory is freedom. As the Republic strangled Christians in their lands, most of them had to sell or leave their lands behind. We must address this issue head-on.

A standing fund pre-commits capital for rapid preemption of strategic plots near holy sites and routes first, then starts reclaiming the lands Christians lost in Mount Lebanon, then it moves into all other areas as well.

Such a fund will also support legal documentation and rights by creating helpdesks that teach people how to clarify a deed, protect a boundary, retrieve a record, or file a complaint. Christians will be able to protect their heritage and property against predatory practices.

These proto-institutions, rooted in our spirit of service and resilience, demonstrate that independence is not distant but built daily through competence. As these initiatives grow, they pave the way for broader mobilization and legitimacy.

Table 16. A Full Network of Mountain Institutions

Institution	Core Function	Roots	Implementation
Social Protection & Health Care	Safety net for marginalized; bursaries, vouchers, grants.	Echoes monastic charity and community solidarity.	Mountain Social Fund with audits; grants for necessities; primary-care vouchers...etc.
Education & Vocational Training	Holistic schools blending faith, skills, heritage.	Builds on Chapter 9's "monk" ethos for character formation.	Academies with Syriac/STEM curricula; vocational centers for trades; diaspora scholarships.
Media & Cultural Production	Platforms amplifying Christian narrative and awareness.	Counters erosion discussed in Chapter 8; revives rites like choirs.	Independent outlets for podcasts/films; community radio networks; grants preserving Syriac heritage.

Finance & Economic Development	Micro-loans, investment for local enterprises.	Ties to the stewardship pillar for sustainable prosperity.	Endowment-backed funds, transparent lending, and investments linking diaspora to mountain startups.
Legal Aid & Rights Advocacy	Support for disputes, rights protection.	Aligns with the defense of justice and freedom.	Documentation centers for claims; advocacy teams for international rights petitions.
Micro-Infrastructure (Utilities)	Localized power, water, and connectivity.	Reflects historical self-reliance in the mountain.	Community micro-grids for solar/wind; water cooperatives; co-work hubs.
Jobs and Ventures Institutions	Employment matching, startup incubation.	Draws on our labor ethic for communal prosperity.	Venture funds for crafts/tech; job portals; training incubators.

Civil Defense Corps, Environmental Stewardship, and Land Buy-Back Fund	Emergency response, land protection, and reclamation.	Embodies guardianship and stewardship of ancestral soil.	Trained corps for disasters, and neighborhood watches; reforestation; buy-back fund to reclaim land.
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2. *A Competent Governance Model*

Each institution will be completely legal and formed under the current Lebanese laws for associations, co-ops, and trusts.

Every institution must be treated as an official state institution, so it has to be clean and efficient without a hitch in its records. It would have proper governance with independent boards, term limits, conflict-of-interest registries, open contracting, quarterly audits, and clear KPIs.

The principle across all parallel institutions is the same: start small, publish what you did, standardize the method, and invite replication. The milestone is not how many banners we hang; it is that neutral actors like municipalities, principals, abbots, and doctors will start referring citizens to these bodies because they work.

The grand vision is to have enough institutions that provide services in the primary areas of daily life, just as a state would do. This would include education, health,

transport, economy, environment, emergencies, and more.

Every charter of each institution would include a Transfer Clause: upon independence or lawful partition, assets, staff, SOPs, and data are all transferred to the Mountain State ministries. Thus, what we build now is already government-ready.

3. The Parallel State: Proof before Power

It is paradoxical that, as the Lebanese Republic fails because it suffers from a parallel state destroying it from the inside, we call for establishing another parallel state to break away from it. We should not be shy about our plans, though.

As the central state fails, and as the Hezbollah state refuses to dismantle itself, we cannot wait forever to start taking care of our own. This plan is also, objectively speaking, the most effective way towards statehood.

Parallel institutions shift the burden of proof. Instead of asking, "Trust us, we'll govern," we show that we already govern the essentials well. The mountain will offer social protection, export enablement, payments and procurement, schooling and language, water/power/connectivity, and civil protection, before it becomes independent.

Another effect of such institutions is to halt and reverse the demographic decline and the loss of political and economic power that Christians are suffering from under the Republic.

Neighbors, municipalities, churches, schools, SMEs, and outside partners will use what works, regardless of who offers it. This is why such a plan is constructive: when people who are not affiliated with the movement are part of its institutions, they legitimize the architecture that later becomes the state.

When the time comes, the constitutional act is a formalization of what already exists on the ground, not an experiment with the unknown and unproven.

Useful, lawful parallel bodies change the independence question from “should they govern?” to “they already do it effectively.” Once we do that, several political consequences become inevitable:

(1) Demonstration effect: neutral actors, principals, parish priests, mayors, engineers, lawyers, and doctors, start referring cases to us because our methods work. Competence creates cross-factional demand.

(2) Governance rehearsal: we learn to deal with budgets, procurement, standards, and complaint handling. The movement and the mountain will acquire the muscle memory of statehood before we claim any.

(3) Factual baseline: outputs become auditable indicators that later fill the White Paper and legitimacy dossiers with proof of viability.

4) Raising the price of opposition: to block us, critics must block clinics, jobs, archives, electricity, and food networks. Opposition to self-determination would be an opposition to lawful governance and would involve moves that look petty or predatory and thus grow our support.

By establishing these parallel institutions, from social nets echoing historical charity to legal aid defending rights, we convert belief into visible competence, prefiguring the state's core. This usefulness not only sustains our people but builds the credibility needed for legitimacy.

As diaspora plays a vital role in funding and expertise for such a project, we turn to mobilizing this global network in the next section.

V. The Diaspora Mobilization: Turning Reach into Guarantees

The future of Christians in Lebanon will be decided in Paris, Montreal, São Paulo, New York, Sydney, Abidjan, and Mexico City, as much as in Bkerke and Beirut.

The diaspora is not a distant family but a strategic extension of our nation: our global bridge for resources, skills, and advocacy.

A people with more citizens abroad than at home must treat the diaspora not as donors, but as co-builders. We should turn the global power of our diaspora into lawful, audited structures that move money, talent, and legitimacy back to our homeland.

The diaspora's role is not to "help" the Mountain; it is to co-govern the parts of life that can only be sustained by a people big enough to live everywhere, and faithful enough to keep one place holy.

Building on grassroots organization, mobilization turns expats into partners, channeling their energy into endowments, e-Residency mechanisms, and remittances that fuel institutions.

1. Co-ownership Abroad and Roots in the Homeland

- Governance seats with teeth. Every parallel institution would reserve diaspora trustee seats with voting rights on budgets, audits, and leadership renewal.
- Co-decision on program directions. Verified diaspora members would be able to vote on program priorities in the institutions they are members of, just like residents.
- Portfolio view. A quarterly Mountain Ledger shows endowments, program KPIs, and budgets in the revolving facility, hires created via the Jobs & Venture Platform, and export receipts unlocked, and so on, so co-owners see what they contribute.
- E-residency mechanisms. As we previously discussed, an e-residency program can make it easier for anyone abroad to co-own, invest, and create back home, even if they don't currently hold a Lebanese passport.
- Audit & ombuds. Transparency should be upheld in everything, and every dollar accounted for.

If the diaspora is helping fund our nation's revival back home, they must have a stake and a say in the success of those institutions.

2. Organize Abroad as a Lobby

Diaspora chapters should function as civic lobbies in each host country, with lawful, non-partisan, and transparent organizations.

They must organize pressure, anchored by Maronite and Christian voters, to push international policy makers towards protecting Christians back home and legitimize their plea for self-determination.

In each capital, our diaspora can cultivate a cross-party caucus of legislators, city leaders, and policy aides who engage because the project is rights-first, neutral, and service-proven.

This also means that diaspora organizations would produce a new generation of lobbyists, politicians, and think-tanks who can explain our cause with legitimate arguments and data.

An important part of this work would be establishing sister-city MoUs for Mountain towns, university exchanges, and joint labs on services and utilities like water security and rural health. Such international cooperation will oil the diplomacy machine, long before we achieve sovereignty.

The most important work would always be parliamentary caucuses with the friends of Lebanese Christians. The diaspora lobby would push policies in the EU, USA, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere towards supporting religious freedom, heritage aid, and self-determination at home.

3. The Diaspora Advocacy Ladder

Diaspora advocacy abroad would match our stage with technical, supportive steps, with each rung reachable and normalizing the next:

1. Documentation & heritage: funding and technical support for archive digitization, Syriac/Arabic curriculum pilots, and museum loans.
2. Civil protection cooperation: training slots, equipment donations, and observer participation in international bodies and institutions.
3. Health & education compacts: help establish scholarships, student exchanges, professional links, and MOUs with other countries.
4. Trade & standards: assistance for labs, certification, and customs green-lanes for “Mountain Goods” to meet international standards, along with trade facilitations with other countries.
5. Observation & reporting: encourage parliamentary/staff visits in their host countries to observe pilots and release method notes that cite our compliance with human rights and international law. This stage would also include documenting the failure of the Lebanese Republic to provide basic services and the infractions of the central government on the rights and freedoms of Christians.
6. Corridors & international legitimacy language: model treaties and clauses for regional and international transit guarantees, telecom/grid

interconnects, and high-level institutional cooperation. They would also support in spreading our neutrality note: peace with all neighbors, no foreign bases, regional neutrality, and transparency.

7. Recognition runway: support for district-level consent mechanisms, technical observer missions for referenda when announced, and post-vote technical agreements (transit, health, education, civil protection).

4. Cultural Revival in the Diaspora

Abroad, the diaspora must also keep its native culture alive and cultivate a duty-based consciousness: the Mountain is not an exile's romance but a public service to a free nation.

On a practical level, the diaspora can organize around:

- International pilgrimage routes that facilitate visiting the homeland for all Christians of Lebanese descent worldwide. This can become a Vatican-endorsed pilgrimage routes, which enables Christians to connect with their holy and historic places.
- An international Maronite Syriac institute that helps digitize, preserve, and publish Syriac culture, chants, and iconography. It would have scholarships & faculty chairs that co-fund Syriac/Maronite studies, joint research, historians, and archivists.
- The diaspora can become a moral authority about the plight of Eastern Christians. It can convene an annual

“Eastern Christian Solidarity Week” in Rome and regional cathedrals with panels on education, religious freedom, heritage, and humanitarian corridors.

5. How the Diaspora Can Move the Needle

Co-ownership converts remittances into governance, service hours into capacity, and friendships into advocacy. This plan converts attachment and awareness into political and economic capacity.

Lobbying built on audited facts makes partners willing to stake reputational capital on our methods.

Municipal twinning and technical MOUs generate a pre-recognition function: the world already treats mountain institutions as legitimate counterparts because they deliver.

When the consent moment comes, diaspora chapters deliver briefers, observers, and voices in their parliaments who can say, credibly, “This project is lawful, neutral, competent, and ready.”

The diaspora will be instrumental in presenting and pushing the case for an independent mountain through the White Paper first, then through appeal on remedial solutions and the right of self-determination and minority protections, and finally through proof of intention with our neutrality and civil-protection charter.

Independence then reads less like a rupture and more like administrative alignment with a reality the diaspora helped build.

The diaspora is not an audience to be flattered or a fund to be tapped. It is an institution in exile. It is a chamber of skills and standing that must sit at the table of our governance now and speak for our legitimacy later.

Co-ownership at home and civic lobbying abroad are not parallel tracks; they are the same rail, running through continents toward one lawful outcome.

Through covenants, endowments, e-Residency, and more, diaspora mobilization transforms separation into strength, building the institutions that prove our readiness.

This global-local synergy builds the legitimacy, as we will explore next, where domestic support meets international recognition.

VI. Gaining Legitimacy: From Social Consent to Political Weight

Legitimacy is not bestowed but layered through consistent action, from moral truth-telling to diplomatic engagement.

It begins with moral credibility: do these people tell the truth and obey the law? It grows into social consent: are ordinary people willing to stand with them in daylight? It matures into institutional respect: do local authorities and independent bodies invite cooperation?

Finally, it becomes diplomatic legibility: can outsiders engage with these institutions without embarrassment?

The path we have outlined so far covers all these aspects and more. As the movement matures, a self-governing Christian state will be a reality on the ground before the international community recognizes it.

1. Domestic Legitimacy

We seek three lights to turn green.

First, social consent: broad participation and visible benefits to people who are not “ours.” Second, institutional respect: invitations from municipalities, school heads, and monastic communities to cooperate on something practical. This shows that the movement grew from a risky political position into mainstream acceptance. A significant milestone in institutional respect would be the full or partial adoption of our program by our main religious institutions like Bkerke.

Third, political adoption: social support will grow organically from the success of our institutions, but an important political milestone is accomplished when people who are against us start adopting the cause of self-determination out of respect for our standards and transparency.

When legitimacy reaches critical mass, the majority of municipalities, parishes, and some state institutions in the Lebanese Republic will already be aligned with the project. When the time for writing and formalizing the White Paper comes, the political consciousness of the

mountain will already be aligned with its institutional reality.

Legitimacy at home is a habit of behavior. We do not buy it with slogans. We do not maintain it with irony. We keep it by being efficient and reliable and by delivering what we promise. Once we reach that stage, the sequence of White Paper, district conventions, constitution writing, and referendum, would be a formality.

With domestic consent secured, international legibility follows.

2. International Legitimacy

Abroad, we pursue three rings of recognition.

The first is ecclesial and cultural: the Vatican's education and heritage desks, religious orders with schools and archives, choir federations, and museums. Their language is service. They believe in institutions that can sing, teach, and conserve. Their support and collaboration with our institutions will be a major signal to internal and international authorities of a shift in legitimacy.

The second is technical: twin municipalities and partnerships with international institutions and university centers would provide precedents that facilitate later recognition by political bodies in the same countries.

The third is diplomatic listening: quiet briefings and observation status at friendly missions and think tanks, where we explain our plea for self-determination and the

civic nature of our work. The language here is restraint and international legibility. The language of people who did the work, not those who beg for headlines.

We do not chase signatures of recognition. We rely on competence. When a solar installation provides electricity to an entire village with the support of an international NGO, when a university offers training slots for conservation, when a hospital partners on emergency drills, or when a foreign municipality celebrates a service milestone with us, we are collecting the kind of legitimacy that money cannot buy and malice cannot easily break.

The political function of legitimacy is the conversion of competence into recognition. Such success will make opposition look unreasonable. It also creates a constituency beyond our borders that would support us if we were treated unfairly.

As legitimacy ripens, each new layer unlocks a concrete lever. Social consent yields turnout capacity for participation and referendums. Institutional respect yields cooperative footholds with the outside world and access to international platforms and tools. Legal standing yields a defense against administrative harassment and opens new doors of support. Diplomatic legibility yields third-party witnesses who have reputational skin in our success.

By the time we reach a White Paper and district referendums, we are not asking the world to believe promises; we are asking it to recognize patterns that are already visible.

Table 17. Legitimacy Ladder

Step	Description	Key Mechanics
1. White Paper	Formalize vision/principles.	Constituent convention, public consultations.
2. Referenda	Village/district votes on affiliation.	International observers, binding thresholds.
3. Provisional Authority	Interim governance.	Basic Law, service continuity.
4. International recognition	Openings in international politics.	Diplomatic outreach; neutrality pacts.

VII. The Plea for Independence

Final independence will not be a sudden declaration but a sequenced culmination of legitimacy, formalizing the will of our people through documents, votes, and timely openings.

Here, we detail the White Paper's role, referenda mechanics, provisional authority, and strategic timing, ensuring the bid is lawful and opportune.

When culture, organization, institutions, and legitimacy are all in place, a White Paper translates virtue into

architecture: it outlines our plea for independence and the state that we aim to build.

The paper is not a manifesto; it is a manual and a draft for the constitution. It records facts about people and territory; it describes the institutions we have built and the ones we propose; it lists budgets with conservative assumptions; it codifies rights and the single chain of coercion doctrine; it articulates a neutrality policy that a small polity can keep. It is written for citizens first, critics second, outsiders third.

This document does several jobs. Internally, it disciplines us into clarity: no hand-waving, just numbers, statutes, and procedures. Locally, it recenters the political discussion around independence and invites a Constituent Conversation. Internationally, it will be used as the main document to demand recognition.

The project at this point stops being a vibe and becomes a draft operating system that citizens and partners can run in their heads. It becomes something that the Lebanese Republic will have to deal with, either inside or outside the parliament.

In politics, there are several steps to build proper legitimacy after the White Paper.

At this point, politics in the country will revolve around a Constituent Conversation about the shape of the state and the destiny of the current republic. Other centers of power in the country will use this opportunity - if they have not done so yet - to propose and maybe even impose their own version of Lebanon on the rest of the population. It is going to be an intense time.

However, our community cannot allow itself to be intimidated or coerced into falling back into the old status quo. At this point in the movement, our institutions would be thick enough to handle any external pressure or shocks with ease.

The next stage here is making District Consultations that help us correct and expand the White Paper. This would be followed by a Civic Covenant in which municipalities, monastic communities, universities, and institutions, some of them perhaps used to belong to the Republic, can sign and endorse the plea of lawful independence.

Such a covenant would also bind them to the principles of the mountain state and its new constitution. It would also commit them to the continuity of service during transition under new legitimacy.

Signatures are not elections, but they are institutional endorsements in daylight. They generate policy continuity (so that programs survive personnel changes), legal cover (to act within existing law), and measurable delivery (to keep services running). As more neutral institutions sign, including some public offices and ministries, the cost of painting the project as extreme rises. The covenant becomes an intermediate social contract that can later be mirrored in constitutional text. It is also a tribal firewall: when crises come, signatories have skin in restraint and process, not escalation.

The covenant creates a network of trust across institutions that barely speak to each other today.

If consent is thick and methods trusted, a Constituent Convention with district delegations can take place, to

establish rules of procedure, and draft a Basic Law, or a constitution. The convention does not require unanimity or the presence of every single village. It requires seriousness and wide-scale support. It produces a text that is short, sharp, and enforceable.

This text will be used in stage four: a district referenda with high thresholds and neutral local and international observers, tethered to a transition code that protects minorities and ensures continuity of services.

Here, the previous phases pay out. Media clarity reduces panic; organization delivers turnout and observers; institutions guarantee day-one services; and legitimacy provides witnesses.

The Transition Code (continuity of institutions, neutrality note, single chain of coercion under published ROE...etc.) assures neighbors and international partners that independence means less drama and more order.

At this point, independence is not a rupture, but a formalization of a reality already lived: a small polity meeting Montevideo's criteria in practice and asking the world to acknowledge what its citizens have repeatedly chosen.

We do not vote unless we can obey the vote and protect its opposition. We do not announce a state unless we can administer justice, collect taxes without theft, defend boundaries without bravado, and speak abroad without confusion.

The last stage is international legibility. We negotiate narrow, decent things first: transit, education, and health cooperation, archives, civil-protection drills, mutual

legal assistance for serious crimes, and a neutrality note. Recognition follows utility. Utility follows reliability. Reliability follows the habits we have been rehearsing from the beginning.

Across phases, the needle moves because two variables change in our favor: fear declines (people see service, restraint, clarity) and predictability rises (methods, ledgers, procedures).

States are allowed to exist when neighbors, citizens, and partners believe three things: that the entity is law-governed, useful, and boring in the best way. Our sequencing from consciousness to organization to institutions to legitimacy and consent manufactures exactly this process, one public proof at a time.

VIII. Is A Mount Lebanon State Really Possible?

What we outlined here would be the result of years or decades of work. We cannot build a state in a day, but we can start reclaiming our self-determination today.

We haven't talked yet about the opposition and potential conflicts on this path. It is very possible, for example, that when a referendum shows an overwhelming Christian majority voting for secession from the rest of the country, other sects or parties might mobilize to prevent this new reality. This plan, however, accounts exactly for such scenarios, which we will discuss in detail in the next chapter.

To achieve self-determination, we must be cunning and uncompromising. The plan we outlined does not assume good intentions or peaceful coasting. It does not assume the absence of shock and opposition. If you read it closely, you will notice that every institution is designed to absorb shocks and build resilience. Every proposed step depends only on those doing it, regardless of opposition.

Do we need permission to start building our institutions, to chant in Syriac, to fund a solar installation, or to organize our youth abroad? Do we need permissions to reclaim our culture, reform our society, and build organized bodies that can support us and our children?

Every Maronite and Christian reading this book should embrace a paradigm shift: we are not asking permission. We are not begging for independence. We are not waiting for other sects in Lebanon to come around or for any foreign capital to be on board. We are not expecting any handovers or help. What we want to do is take our destiny into our own hands and build our future with our own blood and sweat.

Now, as you reached this point, let me ask you, dear reader, an honest question: let's suppose for a moment that 10 years from now, the Republic is still trending towards the same pattern of failure that we know today – but probably getting worse –, would the Christians of Lebanon fare better or worse if our proposed institutions and organizations exist?

If the answer is yes, then we should start building our proto-state today.

Let us also ask another question: if Hezbollah, which was classified as a terrorist organization in most Western capitals, still had recognition and international relations and support for decades, won't the world be even more welcoming and enthusiastic to collaborate with our own fair and just administration?

The lawful horizon towards an independent and free nation is not a cliff one jumps to from the ground, but a slow path upwards that we can walk until the only question left is administrative: When do we switch the logo on our ID cards from one to another?

If the future arrives, it will not be because we wrote beautiful prose or made nice slogans. It will be because we kept promises in public long enough so that people stopped being surprised.

The Mountain State is a structure designed to make ordinary good possible. It is built to provide freedom of worship without permission, schooling without censorship, land that improves with time, courts that can bind the strong, budgets that add up, diplomacy that is legible, and politics that are not a daily emergency. It is designed to provide a life so predictable that people will come to take it for granted.

The Mountain State is a necessity, so life for Christian men and women of this East can become more than a permanent fight for survival.

Before we outlined the roadmap, many people were naturally wondering if a state for Christians is possible. What we proved here is that it is not only possible but

probable when pursued with discipline, faith, and usefulness.

From cultural renewal to grassroots organization to institution building and diaspora mobilization, we chart a path to legitimacy and autonomy tested by many small nations before us.

Challenges remain, but our spirit already knows how to turn obstacles into opportunities. Yes, it is possible: not by miracles, but by hands building what our hearts envision. This call ends not in doubt, but in determination: our homeland awaits us.

Table 18. A Roadmap for Independence

Step	Description	Key Actions/Mechanics
I. Founding Principles	Establish moral and strategic foundations for the movement, ensuring incorruptibility and alignment with the Maronite spirit.	Create ethical codes, oaths, and accountability mechanisms.
II. Cultural and Media Work: Building Christian Autonomy Awareness	Renew cultural consciousness to foster self-determination mindset, countering assimilation and building inner clarity.	Media campaigns; education programs reviving Syriac and history; community events like choirs/festivals to amplify the narrative.
III. Organization and Grassroots Movement	Form bottom-up networks for collective action, scaling from small groups to provincial coordination while guarding against risks.	Build action groups (small, trust-based), districts (coordinated networks), provinces (strategic hubs); implement safeguards like audits and no personality cults.

<p>IV. Parallel Service Institutions (Proto-State Institutions)</p>	<p>Create useful, transparent structures delivering real services to demonstrate competence and prefigure state functions.</p>	<p>Establish funds/institutions for social protection, education, media, finance, legal aid, utilities, jobs, civil defense, environmental stewardship, and land buy-back.</p>
<p>V. Diaspora Mobilization</p>	<p>Engage global Christians as strategic partners for resources, skills, and advocacy, turning separation into strength.</p>	<p>Form covenants for commitment; set up endowments for funding; implement e-Residency for investments; channel remittances to institutions.</p>
<p>VI. Gaining Domestic and International Legitimacy</p>	<p>Layer credibility from moral/social levels to institutional/diplomatic, turning movement into a recognized fact.</p>	<p>Achieve social consent, institutional respect, and political adoption. Build international legitimacy via Montevideo attributes, foreign service, and remedial arguments.</p>

Chapter 14:

How to Navigate a Volatile Country: Risks, Opposition, and Obstacles

Wishes will not win self-determination for our people; it will be won by organization, service delivery, cunning, endurance, and a kind of power that cannot be opposed or ignored.

The movement for establishing self-governance for Christians in Mount Lebanon must be realistic from the start. We know this Republic is the graveyard of dreams and dreamers, and we always operate on the assumption that things will go wrong. We do not expect smooth sailing. We train, prepare, and build our movement, expecting to live a saga of struggle, defiance, and determination.

This is the only way to inoculate the movement against burnout, infiltration, smear, and coercion.

Even with a disciplined, lawful, and peaceful movement that succeeds in transforming the idea from a “threat” into a useful, predictable polity, we expect that the actors and power centers in the Lebanese Republic will fight it with everything they've got. They will fight us until the cost of opposing us becomes too strong.

This chapter maps the actors, motives, and tools that will resist Christian self-determination and the establishment

of a state. It identifies the pressure points where the project is vulnerable. It lays out a navigation doctrine grounded in law, service, realpolitik, and transparency.

We must know every predictable source of resistance: rival sectarian elites, armed actors, suspicious neighbors, hesitant international partners, and our own internal Christian fragmentation.

We do not romanticize resistance. We anticipate it. We lower the cost of acceptance, raise the cost of obstruction. We keep the movement non-violent, de-escalatory, and disciplined even when provoked. The project of Mount Lebanon must not let its enemies drag it into fields that are not its own. We should not let our opponents impose battles in timings and places of their choosing.

The objective is not to make our opponents love us. We know that some of them will never do that. The goal is to make acceptance cheaper than opposition. We keep building until a lawful Mountain State becomes the most rational outcome available to all parties.

Regardless of resistance, the core of the plan remains simple: reclaim our cultural identity, establish strong institutions, and build “de facto” autonomy by delivering utilities and social services now. That way, we turn every obstruction and persecution into leverage locally and abroad.

I. Tactical Foundations of a Movement Intent on Winning

Building a movement for Mount Lebanon independence requires tactical bedrock: principles that anticipate resistance and turn obstacles into advantages.

Here, we outline the core doctrines of political and tactical discipline to navigate the republic's internal obstacles.

Whenever talking about separation or independence, the biggest fear people usually have is that it might plunge the country into another violent conflict.

This fear is legitimate, and it shows a stark reality: the oppressors of Lebanese Christians prefer to burn the country instead of acknowledging our right of self-determination.

This problem is not new, though. This was the main tactic of politics in the 1990s and the early 2000s, used to silence dissent. Back then, whenever someone talked about ending the Syrian occupation, normal people shushed them because they were afraid. They were afraid of the criminal occupation and their own safety, but also were fearful that such a demand would bring back civil war. The Syrian occupation was driven out peacefully, and the civil war never happened. All the fear-mongering over 15 years turned out to be propaganda. We can learn a lot from this history and from the tactics used by the independence movement at that time.

We are sure that if we told a Lebanese Front officer in the eighties that Syrians could be pushed out of the country

peacefully, he would have laughed at us. And maybe when we propose that a Mount Lebanon State can become a reality without civil war or armed conflict, we will probably get the same dismissive reaction from many today.

Violence is a possibility, but not inevitable. There are realities of violence in Lebanon and the Near East. We have to be very mindful of it and accept that a violent clash might happen at some point for this dream to see the light. However, as a political scientist, I know that the likelihood of violence also depends on our strategy and tactics, and several local and regional conditions.

We caution against military coups, militias, or any violent shortcuts, because the Mountain State has to come from the collective will of its people and not from a partisan military victory. If violence were inevitable in the future, it should not be from our choosing.

Christians need to realize the reality of violent escalation. The truth is this: no other sect or external force can rule our areas with a militia, no matter how many fighters and weapons it has.

The only way the Mountain can be subdued in the militaristic sense is through the only way it ever happened in history: with Christian tools and internal treason.

The Republic and its centers of power will use the official institutions first to suppress the project. They will also use our own dhimmis to sabotage it in various ways. Eventually, our opponents will run out of options and might try violence, but no sect can sustain occupying the

regions of another by force. No sect can eradicate another either. So these efforts are also destined to fail if one condition is met: Christian unity. Our opponents will try their best to keep Christian factions fragmented and loyal to them and the old Republic, instead of our own cause.

This should put minds at ease, because in reality, our true battle is for Christian consciousness and their minds and hearts, and it is not against others. If we win that battle decisively, the Christians of Lebanon have already won their freedom.

However, any violent escalation can come in three forms:

- Traditional Christian centers of power using violence to shut down our institutions or intimidate our activists.
- The Republic using its courts, police, and military to crack down on the movement, obstruct our work, and silence our voices.
- Hezbollah or other sectarian militias using violence or making armed incursions into Christian areas, inflicting heavy damage on Christian properties and lives to intimidate the Mountain and incite sectarian hate. Militias like Hezbollah thrive in an atmosphere of civil war, and they were successful historically in bending the republic to their will through this threat.

In these scenarios, the self-determination movement will lose if it responds with violence, especially in the early years. Engaging in a violent reaction here is a lose-lose situation:

- If we fight our Christian opponents, we will be fighting our brothers and doing our enemies a favor. We will lose internal legitimacy and support among our Christian base.
- If we fight other sects, we are being led into the battlefield of our opponents, where they are better armed and better funded. We will be allowing them to potentially crush our movement prematurely and to portray it as an extremist sectarian movement.
- If we fight the state, we give the Lebanese Republic and its agencies the excuse to crack down further on the movement. This will justify repression as an acceptable reaction against an outlaw militant organization.
- Whenever we engage in violence, we will lose international legitimacy. International and regional media might paint us in the same light as other radical terrorist organizations around the world.

Staying non-violent means we can use every single incident against us to gain support and sympathy. It also means we neutralize the power of our opponents, as they cannot use their armed arsenal against us without heavy costs. This means that they will have to engage us on our own terms, where we can control the narrative and the rules of engagement.

Core Tactical Doctrine: Three Rules That Keep Us on the Road

With that said, we establish three rules to keep the project on track:

A. *Non-violence as a tactical choice*: zero coups, zero militias. Our legitimacy and alliances (domestic, ecclesial, international) depend on our own power and on lawful compliance and human-rights discipline.

B. *Two tracks in parallel*. We win authority at the ballot box and in courts and institutions, and we build authority by establishing institutions that deliver power, water, schools, and clinics through municipalities and lawful methods. The ballot box strategy is debatable. Personally, I support it at a municipal level only because it is inherently corrupt at the parliamentary level.

C. *Results narrate*. We are a movement of action, not speeches. We talk through measurable terms of work done, jobs created, and services offered. Let other Lebanese politicians drown in their useless poetry while we do the work.

Let us stress something here: adopting non-violence as a tactical principle is not the same as adopting pacifism as a philosophy. The self-determination movement is not pacifist; it is strategically non-violent by choice because that serves its goals, but it is spiritually and philosophically militant.

In some cases, for example, the movement might be patrolling Christian neighborhoods to reduce crime, prevent the incursions of “motorcycle gangs,” and support the safety of business owners and people. What it should not do, however, is become an armed militia.

It is important to understand that it is not the role of the movement to be the army of the Mountain State, but to make the Mountain State a reality. When the movement becomes big enough and the entire Christian community adopts its freedom, it will absorb the armed forces of the Lebanese Republic or build its own army.

These tactical foundations: non-violent discipline, de-escalation, and result-based work, equip the movement to endure provocation while raising acceptance's appeal. With this armor, we confront the first front: internal Lebanese opposition.

II. Internal Lebanese Opposition: Sects, Parties, and Patronage Elites

Within Lebanon, opposition arises from entrenched interests: sectarian elites, political parties, business cartels, bureaucratic silos, and patronage networks fearing loss of control.

The survival of such a corrupt network of power depends on centralized opacity. Their fear is simple: a rights-first, neutral, transparent state for Christians would remove their sources of money and power. It will deprive them of the bargaining chips they use to extract wealth and status from foreign patrons and local clients.

This section maps their motives, tools, and vulnerabilities, showing how the movement can outmaneuver rather than confront.

1. *Sectarian Leaders and Traditional Parties*

Internal opposition begins with Lebanon's sectarian dynamics, where rival sects view Christian self-determination as a threat to their influence or balance. In this section, we examine their motives, from preserving veto power to fearing precedent, and outline tools like alliances or propaganda they might deploy.

- *Ideological opposition:* Whatever we do and no matter how much we stress and explain the rights policy of our movement, the project will first be labeled as an extremist Christian position by all sects and by some Christian powers. There will be two kinds of cross-sectarian and ideological resistance to the project: secular objections and sectarian ones.

Lebanon, and especially the educated Christian class, are generally very moderate and secular (despite the sectarianism). Politically, the understanding of secularism is intertwined with the belief that Lebanon's ultimate message is *coexistence*. The perfect Lebanon in the eyes of these elites is a secular civic Republic, completely devoid of sectarianism. An autonomous Mount Lebanon, to them, is a regressive project. These elites will object to the project on ideological lines. They will believe it contradicts their commitment to human rights and equality. They have good intentions but misguided positions. They refuse a state for Christians and Druze that is naturally more aligned with equal rights and human

dignity, and cling to a failed republic that guarantees neither.

The second type of objections is sectarian: some people just do not like Christians, or maybe they tolerate them as long as they fall in line. For them, it is unacceptable to allow Christians rule their own affairs independently. These people will oppose the project purely on sectarian and religious lines. No amount of media work will convince them of the project's merit. It doesn't matter if the movement is committed to neutrality; it doesn't matter that it isn't theocratic or sectarian; it doesn't matter if it supports establishing other states for other sects in the rest of the Republic, and it doesn't matter that everyone in the Mountain will get equal rights. The mere thought of an independent Christian-majority state will be unacceptable to this kind of people. They will still oppose it even as they apply for work visas in it once it is established.

While the movement should try to win over the seculars and the moderates, it should not bother with sectarian objections.

- *Traditional Christian parties:* Christian parties will either be the biggest winners or the biggest losers of this project. It all depends on whether they align with self-determination and Christian interests or stick to their own short-term partisan benefits. The parties that are benefiting – or think that they might benefit in the future – from the corruption of the central state, will defend the central government till the end. The parties that get their strength from their cross-sectarian coalitions or foreign support, will also do

the same. In contrast, those who genuinely care about Christians and can sense the pulse of public opinion will reposition themselves gradually along the project. We might see them adopting half-solutions first, like decentralization or federalism, or align completely with independence once it becomes inevitable.

- *Sunni leaderships* may frame the Mountain as a colonialist “partition” that weakens their national standing and their economic routes to the port cities. The conservative Sunni environment might respond by aligning further with regional powers such as Syria and by becoming more entrenched in Political Islam. The vast majority of the Sunni middle class is generally more aligned with the normality of the Lebanese Republic and will be concerned about business-as-usual elements like corridor continuity and a predictable trade environment. The latter will probe for signs of exclusion, but if we guarantee equal law inside the mountain and transit assurances that keep coastal-mountain commerce open, the project might be able to win them over. Many Sunni elites are currently aligned with the finality of the Lebanese state, and they will either find a good home for themselves in the Mountain where they are treated as equal citizens, or they might try to defend the republic or join with Syria. In all cases, our evaluation for Sunni reaction is that the Lebanese Sunnis have several options available, and do not need the Lebanese Republic to achieve continuity and prosperity. Therefore, their reaction will likely

be less severe and might be surprisingly reasonable and peaceful.

- *Shiite leaderships*, especially those aligned with Hezbollah and Amal, will vehemently oppose the project to the end. They fear an end to their rule over the republic and loss of coercive reach. Such a project will also end their ambition of achieving “Thirdism” in the republic and taking over a bigger share of the country’s wealth.

The creation of an independent Christian pocket, especially if coupled with a Syrian-aligned Tripoli in the North, complicates their strategic depth significantly. They will probe with narrative warfare (“foreign plot - Israeli agents”) and employ administrative pressure via their ministries. They will mobilize the state institutions under their control: courts, police, and the army. They will use economic and financial bribes on their Christian allies, and repression and violence against their enemies. They will try to break the movement apart using all methods, including violence, demographic settlement, and possibly full-scale war. They will try to raise their own militias in the heart of the Mountain using dhimmi Christians. They might even make a show of raiding or occupying Christian villages. They will raise the ceiling daily about their readiness for civil war and try to push our movement into militarization. They think that a premature militarization of our movement would allow them to achieve a decisive military victory and end the political project for good. This is the blueprint of their

strategy with The Future Movement and the 14th of March coalition that they used in 2008.

We know their games already, and we are not afraid of their posturing. The Mountain movement will not fall into their traps. Our counter is layered: we insist that the Mountain state is non-expansionist, neutral with non-aggression notes and no foreign bases. We recruit the apparatus of the Lebanese Republic ourselves to outmaneuver their maneuvers. We train non-armed neighborhood corps with published ROE that ensure they cannot sow chaos. We maintain non-violence and a civil-protection posture that keeps society functioning during friction without grandstanding, and that raises the cost of using their arms against us. Ultimately, the Shiite parties might still decide to go for military confrontation or might stand down. If our project is not an army that can be defeated in the field, but a grassroots movement made of hundreds of organizations and institutions, all their efforts will fail. The project will proceed despite their opposition.

- *Druze leaders* may prefer ambiguity, extracting concessions from all sides while waiting for the dust to clear. Their need is continued leadership, local stability, and non-encirclement. Their strategic interest as a distinct community is integrating with the Mountain State, but they are traditionally hesitant about making big moves without clear outcomes. They might prefer to wait and see. When the self-determination movement grows, we expect the masses of the Druze to be at the heart of it, working hand in hand with Christians towards

reclaiming our homeland. The Druze were and should always be one of the founding communities of Mount Lebanon. Ideally, they should have their place in it, offering a good life for their children while their heritage is protected and nurtured by the Mountain State.

The Druze leadership at the time will either have been renewed or will have to align with what its community demands. It is also possible that some traditional Druze leadership will be recruited in a wide coalition designed to fight the Mountain's independence. The other sects will try to use Druze blood to obstruct the project, just as they did before. We hope by then that the Druze awareness will have reached an advanced level, not to fall for these games. In the worst-case scenario for Druze, the southern range of Mount Lebanon will stay outside the initial borders of the new state. In this case, they will suffer from increasing settlement expansion and political pressure from the Shiite community, as the rest of the republic keeps ignoring them.

The Mountain State would extend a hand to the Druze from the beginning to the end, but it's up to them to decide if they'll hold it.

2. The Patronage Complex

The corrupt clientelism network of Lebanese politics is made up of both secular and sectarian elites. They are huddled around the republic's patronage economy and have contracts that reach billions in value. They occupy

parliamentary seats and positions of power that facilitate corruption and wealth from north to south. These elites will resist the project because a clean state threatens the old circuits of power.

Think contractors fed by opaque tenders, customs mafias, the neighborhood's generator gangs, and the cartels around electricity, fuel, and telecoms, in addition to state-adjacent unions and monopolies. All these actors will frame their objections under different names, but their true objection is market discipline. Their true problem is that they want to keep the corruption going for as long as they live, and they want to transfer the corruption to their children and grandchildren forever after.

The antidote for their opposition is not rhetoric. We will not be concerned with winning the hearts of the corrupt.

Our proto-state will push them aside slowly with open contracting, beneficial-ownership disclosure, and a procurement code that rewards competence rather than clientelism.

Those among them who can compete and perform under these clear parameters will find room among us. We expect many of them to shift their tone and positions as the movement acquires more power. We must be cautious not to let them influence or corrupt the project by keeping our ledgers clean and policy honest.

Our path to counter the deep corruption and clientelism octopus of the republic is performance and transparency. Our programs will publish costs and outputs, and we will provide institutions that ordinary people will come to prefer and trust simply because they work. The more

the Mountain delivers measurable goods and services, the more the patronage complex bleeds mindshare and leverage.

3. Church and Communal Hesitation

Prudence is a virtue, and the Maronite Church, concerned with flock safety, will be wary of provocation and radical positions. Other churches and Christian denominations will probably follow the same trajectory and might even be more hesitant in the beginning. We expect that the Patriarchate will avoid making any public alignment with the project until the very late stages.

Our posture must be obedient to law, modest in tone, and generous in service. We show that we do not chase confrontation; we build institutions of care. We serve where we can, with humility and integrity.

Bishops, orders, and parish councils will be respected and invited to cooperation and will become multipliers when they see standards and honesty that match ecclesial seriousness.

We do not doubt that eventually, the Maronite Church will align with the will of its parish and with what serves the Maronites and Christians of Lebanon best.

4. Tactical Pitfalls that Break Movements

The most likely problems and obstacles the movement will face from external actors are:

- Lawfare to suppress our activity. This would manifest through permit denials, registration challenges, and “public order” pretexts to block events and ban public displays.
- Smear: accusations of sectarian extremism, of foreign manipulation, or “militarization and war preparation.”
- Infiltration and compromise: Infiltration can manifest through extremist or bargaining language from plants, and from embarrassing discourse by some who claim to represent or align with the movement. Capture of key activists can happen through private entrapment with money, favors, flattery, or promises of power through compromise. The regime will use its 40 years of tyrannical training under Assad and Hezbollah against us.
- Protest theater: other political actors have done this before: staged confrontations and incidents designed to paint us as aggressors or bigots.
- Selective violence: “unknowns” would damage property or intimidate volunteers. Violent raids and incursions against areas known for their support of the movement.

As long as we focus on building our infrastructure and keeping our guard up, such tactics are not enough to obstruct the movement. However, movements fail more often by self-inflicted wounds rather than by enemy action. These internal risks include:

- Political capture: many movements can be captured politically by bigger actors in numerous ways – through funding, coalitions, corruption, personality politics, foreign meddling, and despair, among other factors. We have a historical example at our hands with the capture of the Free Patriotic Movement by Hezbollah. Once captured, a movement can be morphed against its purpose, even as it maintains the same vocabulary and discourse. Our movement must be very attentive to avoid such fate.
- Street politics and sectarian drift: There is a risk of self-inflicted sectarian drift and/or being absorbed by trivial politics and personal conflicts. Such pitfalls will distract the movement from focusing on what matters. The project must keep its eyes on the big picture, on criticizing mechanisms and providing solutions instead of attacking other sects, fanning hateful speech, or getting lost over a municipality seat here and there.
- Mission creep. The movement should not try to do everything at once. We start with what we can, and we only move on to the next step when we establish something successful.
- Financial slippage. Transparency is in place for a reason. What the Lebanese political class cannot destroy, it will try to buy. The Movement will also have to deal with a corrupt hustle culture in the larger society, in which personal enrichment is praised and considered smart. Finances must stay

clean, or else the project can self-destruct and rot from the inside.

- Security missteps. As the movement grows, our enemies will test us, and this test might come with a cost of blood. We should not let loss, anger, or fear cloud our judgment. Our process has to be in place from the beginning with proper non-violent tactical training, clear rules of engagement, camera-on at actions, and a non-escalatory approach. We will not give our enemies the civil war they wish for.

4. A Movement Focused on the Big Picture

The movement will be focused on its mission, no matter how our adversaries react. The whole project is treated as three interconnected threads:

Thread One: Culture. We connect with our culture and revitalize it. We teach our youth confident freedom, and give our people the words to describe their duty and the courage to carry it without hatred.

Thread Two: Organization. We gather a disciplined group of individuals, calm in public, firm in ethics, difficult to bait, and extremely effective in getting political results. We build a calendar that makes room for politics, work, family, worship, personal growth, and rest.

Thread 3: Public Service: We establish institutions that work and serve everyone in the community. Institutions that root people in their cities and villages, facilitate their lives and ease their daily struggles. We publish outcomes and use methods that others can audit and replicate.

No matter what our enemies do, our mission is our people. We make the Christian community functionally autonomous in utilities, water, education, clinics, and civilian policing before any declaration or recognition. All this can happen without violating the Constitution of the current republic.

We accumulate legitimacy, first socially, then institutionally, then diplomatically. Our tone stays narrow and factual. Our money remains boring. Our opponents gradually prefer to argue with someone else or learn that fighting us is very costly.

Beyond the arcs and bridges of daily work, done over years and decades, lies the constitutional horizon, which arrives not by theatrical pronouncement but by ripeness. When people already live according to the spirit of our future state, the referendum becomes a mirror of reality, and not a gamble.

We have to be prepared. Our enemies will use pens and swords, lies and jails, votes and money to fight this project.

Our discipline here must be impeccable: clean paperwork, a strict code of conduct, and a solid tactical posture. We stay honest and self-accountable. No lies to ourselves or our community. Swift, public self-correction must take place if we err, and third-party observers (jurists, medics, clergy) should be present at sensitive events to protect and expand legitimacy.

By understanding sectarian incentives and countering with service and transparency, the movement

neutralizes internal foes, turning rivals into reluctant accepters.

Yet, threats extend beyond borders. Next, we examine regional resistance from Syria, Iran, and others.

III. Regional Resistance: Syria, Iran, and others

Regional actors like Syria and Iran might view Mountain independence as a threat to their influence, potentially deploying proxies or diplomacy to obstruct.

The regional veto logic has two headlines: corridor risk (“You will interrupt lines of supply and political influence”), and precedent risk (“You will inspire other minorities to seek autonomy”). Neither is insurmountable if we are powerful and effective.

We will analyze the motives and mechanics of regional powers next, identifying hedges like neutrality to mitigate escalation.

1. The Toolbox of Regional Opposition

Regional opposition can deploy a multifaceted toolbox to undermine the movement, from disinformation to direct interference. Understanding these mechanics, from narrative warfare to political pressure via Beirut, allows us to prepare hedges that protect progress without escalation.

- Narrative warfare: We will hear things like “The Mountain is a foreign tool,” “a western client-

state,” “a collaborator with Israel,” and “a modern Crusade.” In response, the movement should focus on our right of self-determination and remedial solutions, and avoid sectarian discourse and regional alignments. This will not be enough, but we do not aim to win hearts in Tehran or Istanbul; we want to position ourselves in a legible way internationally.

- Political pressure via Beirut: Foreign capitals might push the Lebanese state to do their bidding: stall permits, oppress the movement, prosecute on technicalities, or fabricate charges. Our answer would be to diversify venues, build redundant institutions, enhance activist resilience networks, and keep everything legally duplicative.
- Calibrated security incidents: Some regional powers might go for covert escalation through fabricated incidents. This can include border frictions, harassment of logistics corridors, “mystery” rockets, or sabotage. Our answer would be civil-protection readiness, after-action transparency, and non-retaliatory precision against immediate threats. We should stay well inside our tactical posture of non-violence (saving lives, documenting harm, keeping schools and clinics open, neighborhood watch...).
- Cyber and financial harassment: Other tools they might deploy include phishing, credential stuffing, account freezes, regulatory “reviews,” and other policies that aim to stifle financing and

expose us digitally. We just need to keep operational security discipline, clean finance, and mirror backups outside Lebanon. We would also maintain legal counsel in friendly jurisdictions.

These tools highlight the need for resilience: narrative discipline blunts smears, legal duplication foils pressure, and civil-protection readiness deters incidents. With this knowledge in hand, let us shift into analyzing the deeper motivations of each regional player.

2. The Syrian Question

For decades, Syrian regimes treated Lebanon as their own backyard, interfering with governments, appointing rulers, and occupying the country directly.

Syria's interests changed significantly since the fall of Assad. The current Syrian regime, at least at the time of writing these words, is more concerned about border manageability, smuggling corridors, and its own economic development.

Unfortunately, the Syrian regime does have an extremist strand in its composition, and we cannot predict how strong it would become or which policies it might push on Damascus in the coming years. We do not know what the regime will look like in the near future. Naturally, any Syrian regime would be concerned about the precedent of a Christian state on its borders because it has its own minority problems with the Druze in Suwaida, the Kurds in the north-east, and the Alawites on the coast. The Syrian regime might see such a precedent as a direct threat to its own territorial integrity and might deny recognition and push for "unitary

Lebanon.” It might try to acquire leverage in Beirut to halt the progress of the project.

In a worst-case scenario, Syria might pressure northern municipalities and raise the possibility of secession. It might weaponize refugee and trade flows, and enact episodic border or terror incidents, with intelligence and media ops to brand the Mountain as a foreign-Israeli crusader movement.

Our counter posture: there are things we can do to establish reasonable relations with Syria, but there are things that cannot be allowed to take place. We would insist on regional neutrality and non-aggression and stress our non-expansionist doctrine. We would codify transit/telecom/grid compacts with time-boxed dispute resolution to defuse tensions and guarantee trade. We will keep minority guarantees explicit for Sunnis and Druze inside the Mountain and send positive signals if the Lebanese North wants to join Syria. Generally, we should avoid rhetorical escalation. This would defuse many potential conflicts.

What we cannot allow, however, is the weaponization of refugees: no rival militias will be a non-negotiable principle inside the borders of the Mountain with zero tolerance. Every foreigner in Mount Lebanon must have proper papers as a worker or a resident. The refugee problem will not be allowed to continue or fester in the Mountain and will definitely not be allowed to be used against us.

Some people think that Syria will invade immediately if an autonomous Mount Lebanon takes place, but this is far from reality and is not easily achievable under the

current conditions. The central Syrian government has a limited ability to project power, as demonstrated by the events of Suwaida in 2025. However, our projection scenarios take this possibility into consideration, which is something we will discuss at the end of this chapter.

While Damascus' motives may vary post-Assad, our neutrality and restraint would position us as a non-threat, easing pressures with this neighbor.

3. Regional Players: Iran, Turkey, the Gulf countries, and others

Iran's interests in Lebanon are in the retention of Hezbollah's strategic depth. It is expected that the Mullahs regime will refuse a neutral mountain enclave that complicates its deterrence calculus. Without a central Lebanese Republic, Hezbollah is stripped of the legitimacy it needs to keep its posture. With partition, Hezbollah cannot rule over the republic or expand its influence in the Mountain.

However, the Iranian response will only come through Hezbollah's political, security, and information tools. It will encourage legal/administrative harassment and calibrate incidents to raise the cost of Christian autonomy without triggering a full war.

Turkey, on the other hand, is interested in the Sunni north. It might also hold a long-term vision for bringing the entirety of Lebanon under its fold through a close alliance with the Syrian regime. Turkey is also against the principle of ethno-religious self-determination, as it

is dealing with its own Kurdish challenge in northern Syria and inside its borders.

Turkey could back northern municipal actors rhetorically to keep leverage on Beirut and Damascus, but it is not an ideological state like the Islamic Iranian Republic. Ankara might follow a more pragmatic approach even as it opposes the project and escalates against it. It might take a non-recognition posture paired with selective engagement if the Mountain proves useful, as it wants to maintain maritime/economic routes, trade standards, and relations with Syria.

Our response here would be similar to what we outlined in previous paragraphs, with a focus on neutrality and continuity of trade corridors through Tripoli and the airport.

Saudi Arabia's policy is regional stability, curbing Iranian leverage in Lebanon, clean trade and investment channels, coupled with a calm valuation of Lebanese education, tourism, and health sectors. The United Arab Emirates follows a similar strategy, with a focus on investable stability and availability of logistics nodes on the Mediterranean. The UAE might be more open to cooperation and recognition than its Gulf counterparts, due to its pragmatic policy.

The most likely response from Gulf countries is cautious watchfulness. If the Mountain is lawful, neutral, and service-competent, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi and other Khaliji capitals could extend technical cooperation first. This can include cooperation on education/health support, standards, cultural preservation, and investments, without overt political recognition. If we

look adventurist and volatile, they will keep their distance to avoid precedent risk.

A lot of beneficial work can be done between the Mountain state and the Gulf region as we offer a stable node on the Mediterranean. This might influence Lebanese Sunni leaders to be more moderate in their reactions as well.

Egypt and Jordan are interested in maritime and land corridors, refugee management, and avoiding precedent contagion. The most likely response is non-recognition with readiness for corridor/port/health-education MOUs if we are predictable.

Israel is interested in quiet borders, Hezbollah containment, and regional predictability. Its response will most likely be positive if we signal stability and peace, or cautious if the Mountain State signals chaos. Despite the Arabist rhetoric, Israel generally just wants boring neighbors and will accept a neutral, stable state that welcomes normal relations with it.

Navigating regional powers demands cunning diplomacy and de facto competence. We need to offer value while building non-threat status.

As external pressures mount, international hesitation poses another layer that we will address next.

IV. International Hesitation: Instability and “Balkanization” Fears

The global community often hesitates on partitions, fearing "Balkanization" and instability. For Mount

Lebanon, this means we should prove that we are a stabilizer, not a disruptor.

This section explores their concerns and strategies to gain reluctant support through legibility and usefulness.

Partners abroad are allergic to surprises. Their default concerns are volatile borders, refugees, sanctions exposure, precedent anxiety, and donor fatigue. They will ask: Are you lawful? Are you useful? Are you predictable?

With the help of its diaspora, the Mountain would convert concern into cooperation and pave the way for recognition in The Vatican, Washington, Brussels, Moscow, Sydney, Riyadh, Ankara, and elsewhere.

The Mountain State would answer concerns with technical work on the ground that builds routine and lowers risk. It will achieve diplomacy through security, stability, and predictability.

Every regional capital will probe Mount Lebanon state for weakness through proxy pulls, corridor risks, and precedent contagion. Every international center of power will scrutinize us to determine whether this development brings stability or chaos.

Our answer to regional and international players is the same grammar, spoken with different accents: neutrality, open corridors, equal law, transparency, and a single coercive chain inside our borders.

Diplomatic predictability can be achieved by:

1. Neutrality: no foreign bases, normal relationships with everyone willing; training-

only cooperation and public Rules of Engagement.

2. Open Corridors: the networks of transit, telecom, and power grids are kept open internally and regionally. Disputes resolved in days, not months, and contracts are public.
3. Equal law for all: explicit protections for non-Christians inside, and treaty-level care for Christians outside.
4. Transparency: beneficial-ownership disclosure, open contracting, and quarterly dashboards. It is imperative that we offer governance without corruption.
5. Single chain of coercion: no party arms and no proxy players inside. Lawful policing under civilian control and judicial review.

This ruleset lowers each actor's worst-case fear (hostile base, blockade, instability, refugee problems) and raises the benefits of quiet cooperation (clean trade, safe heritage, reputationally safe engagement).

Syria must see that transit is faster with us. Iran must see that coercion is costlier than cooperation. Turkey must see standards and stability. Saudi Arabia must see clean ledgers and moderation. Gulf investors must see procurement that they can defend. Egypt and Jordan must see corridors that never jam. The US and Western Nations must see a lawful, capable state that enhances regional stability. Russia, China, and India must see a dependable partner on the Eastern Mediterranean coast.

When each actor's cheapest option becomes quiet cooperation with a lawful, useful, stable neighbor, resistance decays into routine, and routine is how small states survive.

Recognition follows utility and restraint. We do not ask capitals to bless a theory. We ask them to work on a problem with a reliable partner. By framing independence as a rights-based remedy and demonstrating viability, we convert hesitation into neutrality or aid.

As a stable, lawful, and efficient state, opposition will be followed by caution, then observation. Observation will become cooperation, and cooperation becomes recognition.

With opposition mapped, we now turn to realpolitik scenarios with possible futures shaping the Mountain's path.

V. Realpolitik Scenarios: Possible Outcomes and The Future of The Mountain

Any serious independence movement in Mount Lebanon must think in scenarios, not wishes. We understand that no path is certain; we must game out outcomes from drift to war, measuring each against our survival.

That said, in every projected scenario, Christians in Lebanon fared better with a strong self-determination movement than without. In every scenario we studied, the cost of non-action was the same, if not higher, than

the cost of action. This leads us to a conclusion that we can put forth even before discussing scenarios: our community should start building its proto-state institutions today, not tomorrow. These institutions do not need permissions or approvals and can be done by any group with enough discipline and will. They would enhance our collective immunity to local and regional shocks, and reverse the social, cultural and political decline that we have been suffering from in this republic for decades.

This section outlines four baselines and a best-case independence scenario, highlighting triggers and trade-offs that can inform our strategy under each.

1. Scenario 0: Business as Usual; The Failed Republic Lives on

This is the control case: no partition movement, no parallel institutions, no political discipline, just the continuation of the current drift. It is the scenario against which all others must be measured because it is also the likeliest one if we do not take deliberate action.

Political mechanics: The center remains paralyzed. The political system becomes worse, and bargaining logic hardens around the eventual arrival of “thirdism” المثلثة – a tripartite formula that formalizes a Shiite one-third share alongside Sunni and Christian ones.

In practice, this does not stabilize the system; it cements permanent minority vetoes and expands the militia power over sovereignty. This would also move Shiite power in the Lebanese state from veto capability to majoritarian rule.

Christians, already a political plurality with diminished demographic weight, lose further leverage in cabinet formation, security appointments, and senior civil service rotations. The presidency becomes a ceremonial lever for others' negotiations, not a guarantor of constitutional balance nor a position of Christian power. The price of every appointment rises, and the value of every office falls as the state stays dysfunctional.

Institutional arc: Courts continue to be slow, compromised, and selective. The administrative state functions as a brokerage, not a public service. Regulatory bodies (energy, telecoms, ports) remain para-fiscal cash machines while failures to deliver services become more pronounced. The blacked-out republic slips further into failure in all services and sectors.

The Army is asked to "keep calm" without a political mandate to monopolize coercion. Parallel security ecosystems deepen and rebuild. Municipalities fend for themselves with declining budgets. "Reform packages" are drafted for audiences abroad but never implemented at home.

Economic trajectory: Without a credible plan, the currency remains volatile. Banking sector restructuring is postponed or politicized, and capital formation collapses. The productive economy shrinks to small pockets. Agriculture suffers from input costs and water loss. Industry cannot grow or export. Services shift to low-margin survival. Regional logistics rearrange around more predictable hubs in Israel, Syria, Egypt, and Turkey. Ports and the airport lose throughput and pricing power. Tourism becomes shorter, cheaper, and

more fragile. Youth unemployment and poverty levels stay high.

The skills ladder turns into a boarding gate. The “new” economy of tech, standards-led exports, and eco-tourism cannot scale inside a system that cannot honor contracts or clear payments predictably.

In a few years, impoverishment deepens, and poverty keeps breaking records. Daily life will be characterized by higher informality, extreme crime rates, lower real wages, and a tax base so eroded that even basic services cannot be funded without constant new fees and taxes.

International posture: Lebanon becomes internationally isolated not by embargo but by irrelevance. Partners de-risk: fewer MOUs, fewer staff visits, fewer lines of credit, more compliance red flags. This would create a much harder financial and investment environment.

When the country speaks, the world hears contradictory signals from factions and not a unified state. Humanitarian flows persist, but development finance stalls. The diaspora’s patience narrows to private charity and family remittances. Institutional support declines because there is no credible counterpart.

As the diaspora gets bigger, this will not translate into more support inside the country. More Lebanese will become hopeless about their homeland and simply cut ties and focus on their personal affairs.

Demography & culture: Emigration remains high and becomes the default choice of the competent. Christian households, already below replacement rates, bleed quietly. More schools close or downshift, more choirs

thin, more parish networks fray, more villages become empty. Consequently, political parties relying on youth participation shrink, and our voice and leverage in the state diminishes even further.

The cultural share in media, publishing, and universities decreases, as institutions fail to pay, hire, or plan. Identity becomes curatorial rather than civic: something that is remembered in festivals but not reproduced in daily life, law, and school.

Mixed regions experience attrition and become more homogenous and Islamicized, as talented Christian families leave first, and vulnerable families follow. Over time, the community remains visible but becomes decisively less consequential in public decision-making.

As Christian decline continues, all aspects of its culture will decline with it. From Christmas decorations on holidays to the deeper expressions of freedom and inclusiveness, the traces of Christian culture will keep being removed from public space.

As Lebanon becomes gradually more Islamicized, secular culture and enlightenment-based human rights are put under siege. The country becomes more socially conservative and less tolerant of diversity and dissent.

This loss opens the door towards a deeper erosion of Christian values and way of life, both in private lives and the public sphere. When the Christians of Lebanon start naming their kids “neutral” names instead of explicitly Christian ones, to give them a better chance in a country stacked against them, we will know that this transformation is complete.

Security climate: Armed exceptions persist and grow in power. Calibrated incidents are managed but never resolved. Border frictions rise and fall with regional weather. Lebanon gets used to a permanent state of low-intensity conflict.

Low-level tensions flare into incidents, but no full war. This reality drains resources through constant crises.

Christians face selective vulnerabilities in mixed areas, with emigration as the quiet exit. The Army will keep being praised and under-resourced. The police are tasked and under-legitimized. Civil protection remains volunteer-heroic but under-trained and under-equipped. In each crisis, informal authorities fill vacuums and then become centers of power themselves, intensifying political conflict and fragmentation. The public learns the wrong lesson: order is a favor, not a right.

Demographic Pressures: Fertility remains low; youth exodus accelerates. Christian communities thin, losing critical mass for institutions like schools, parishes, and political organizations. Assimilation pressures mount, with media and education reinforcing majoritarian narratives. Maronite and Christian heritage fades into folklore without active renewal.

What Scenario Zero means for Christians and Maronites: Scenario 0 is not a plateau; it is a downward slope. The political script moves toward thirdism; institutional capture grows; demographic thinning accelerates; and economic agency withers. Christians might keep their symbols, but will lose potent instruments.

The most adaptable individuals may prosper abroad. The community's collective voice at home becomes polite, ignorable, and more inclined towards self-dhimmitude in social attitude and national politics.

The Christian cities and villages survive partially as a summer address but become a memory for the rest of the year. In a couple of decades, there will still a Christian presence, but it will be less able to protect worship, educate at scale, or shape public policies. The country around it is poorer, less connected, and more brittle. Lebanon will be a low-trust environment marred by constant crisis and corruption.

As the country slides slowly into disintegration, the Shiite sect restores and expands its parallel state. Sunni voices from the North calling to join Syria become louder - especially if Syria gets back on track with economic growth. In the meantime, the Christians will be on their own, marching slowly towards impotence and silence.

Maybe before reading this book, you would have preferred that things would stay the same or just somehow work out on their own, and this is exactly what scenario zero is.

Scenario zero looks safer because it demands nothing of us today. But its risk is cumulative: every month of drift locks in losses that are hard to reverse: youth uprooted from their homes, lands abandoned, businesses delisted, and courts and political positions emptied of all credibility.

The exit ramps to better futures narrow: there will be fewer partners to call, fewer institutions to stand up,

fewer families willing to return, and fewer people to mobilize. By the time a shock forces radical change, the capacity to shape our future will be extremely limited.

Bottom line: Despite the risk and cost of building a movement to carve an independent Christian state in Mount Lebanon, Scenario 0 is the most expensive option precisely because it is the quietest.

It purchases temporary peace with permanent diminishment. If we do nothing, Christians will be relegated to a symbolic participation in the state with shrinking leverage and numbers. The economy will be in chronic low gear, and Lebanon will matter less and less to everyone who counts, including its own people.

The case for building parallel institutions now begins with refusing to mistake inertia for safety.

2. Scenario A: Constitutional Federalization or Legal Autonomous Zone

This second scenario assumes that the current crises of Lebanon will force a negotiated shift to federalism and enhanced local autonomy. Such a scenario would offer partial gains and gives us breathing room, but perpetuates central asymmetries, falling short of the benefits of true self-rule.

As the cost of Lebanese dysfunction becomes a regional threat to stability, and with internal pressure rising (especially from Christian voices demanding partition or federalism), the local political actors might be pressured

by the international community to update the regime of the Republic.

It might start with administrative decentralization and evolve into the adoption of the federalization of municipalities and districts through the parliament.

This process might either stop there with a large-scale federalization, or would go on to establish more autonomous cantons within a constitutional framework that does not completely dissolve the Lebanese Republic.

This scenario is possible but challenging because federalism requires the buy-in of all political actors in the country. For many, it will be the best-case scenario as it involves the least amount of conflict.

For this scenario to become probable, the movement for Christian self-determination would have made significant gains. The looming atmosphere of partition forces other actors to take steps towards decentralization and federalization to avoid partition. This will happen under quiet encouragement of international actors who are pressing for stability and are wary of potential chaos from full partition.

Traditional de facto powers in the republic might start this path by implementing the 2014 decentralization draft. It enacts provincial councils with real budgets and competencies, grants municipal autonomy from the Ministry of Interior, and adds local development funds.

This might lower the political temperature for a while and contain the Christian demand for independence. As it offers no hard security powers or guarantees and can be easily blunted by ministerial obstruction, most of the

Republic's problems will persist. Such an atmosphere will push political discourse and actors – even the most traditional parties – towards using a federalist vocabulary.

In this scenario, politics will continue to harden without devolving into civil war. Under more international pressure for stabilization, the major Lebanese players might agree to a kind of constitutional convention that ratifies federalism. This time, it will be done with proper fiscal, economic, educational, and security autonomy for the districts, divided along geographic and sectarian lines.

Cross-sectarian consent is required for this to work, but it can be possible in the right circumstances. The issue of mixed districts might stay as a source of contention and bargaining.

Cantons or federated regions would be granted local powers (e.g., taxation, education), but central vetoes on security/foreign policy remain. Christians will gain leverage inside the Mountain but lose national influence.

"Thirdism" will still make an appearance, possibly through trading Shiite parity at the center for federalism (which is mainly a Christian demand). This would further dilute Christian weight in national politics even as it gives it more power on the local level. Bargains harden, with armed groups exceptions still present in other cantons.

Local bodies strengthen, but central courts would override local ones on "national" issues. Services and security improve regionally, but will be uneven across

the country. Corruption might shift to the canton level, supported by a rotten center.

Localized economies emerge (e.g., Mountain tourism/agro), and standards of living improve. Inter-canton barriers and central debt would still drag growth. Remittances flow better locally, but each canton will be constrained by the centralized fiscal policies. Under federalism, it is possible that canton militias will multiply and formalize, risking escalations. Without a true monopoly of arms, Christians will stay vulnerable to spillovers.

Demographic drain would slow down, but majoritarian pressures persist in mixed areas. Regional control would aid heritage and cultural revival, but many Christian powers will still be captured by the national majoritarian narrative.

Things might stabilize at this point for decades. If the Republic becomes worse, and the independence movement continues gaining momentum, another legal possibility might open up. Establishing a wider Autonomous Zone within the federal constitution for Mount Lebanon becomes a possibility.

This might be modeled after other comparable international cases like Åland (Finland) and South Tyrol (Italy). It might also include similar arrangements in the North, South, and Bekaa.

The Act on the Autonomy of Åland (originally enacted in 1991) gives the region legislative powers in education, culture, health, local policing, and local language guarantees. It also has instruments that entrench

demilitarization/neutralization. Åland's parliament must consent to any treaty-implementing legislation. This is a procedural guarantee that prevents stealthy and gradual erosion of its autonomy.

In its turn, South Tyrol acquired the Autonomy Statute in the Italian Constitution in 1972. This transferred the state authority to the province (Bozen/Bolzano) with enactment decrees negotiated bilaterally. It delivered language rights, finance, education, landscape, and policing competencies.

An Autonomous Mount Lebanon within the Lebanese Republic can happen with a constitutional amendment that recognizes it as an autonomous sanctuary, with constitutional-rank competences in civilian policing, education, health, land & water, utilities, local taxation, public procurement, and culture. It would all have treaty-level guarantees. It would be complemented with a referendum in the Mountain and the establishment of a Mountain Council (elected) and an Executive body accountable to a Mountain Assembly, with judicial review.

Although in this case, Beirut might keep primacy in foreign policy, currency, customs, borders, and treaties. The Lebanese Army will still operate in tandem with the Mountain's own police as well. However, what this would do in practice is create a kind of proto-state for the Mountain with some limitations.

The Lebanese Republic at this point will be a federation/canton hybrid. The caution here is that without an effective mechanism to resolve disputes and conflicts, the autonomous zones might quickly devolve

into de facto states in a permanent state of tension. All the basic building blocks for an independent state exist in this scenario, and it will likely keep moving towards a fully recognized state from this point onward.

Internal exhaustion, international pressure, and the Christian desire to self-determination are the three engines that would push for such a scenario.

Elites might prefer negotiated fragmentation to collapse, especially when the alternative is a continuation of the dysfunctional state or a fundamental change in balance that lets one sect rule the others. This voluntary federalization or autonomy might be the least costly option for all the political actors. International politics also play a pivotal role here, especially if there's strong opposition to fragmenting the Lebanese state and a wider regional agreement is reached between patron nations.

The problem, however, is that federalism will always be a compromise that delays decline but does not completely reverse it, as vetoes and armed pluralism linger.

3. Scenario B: De facto Parallel States Inside Lebanon

In this scenario, parallel institutions of different sects evolve into a de facto autonomy without a formal split. It assumes that Lebanese sects will carve functional enclaves amid central decay, without the legal legibility of federalization that we discussed in the previous scenario.

In this scenario, we also assume that the Christian self-determination movement made significant gains, but instead of going for formal federalization, the major actors of the country decide to keep business as usual for as long as possible.

This is a real possibility, but its unstable nature risks fragmentation and escalation. Lebanon already exhibits layered sovereignties, and if they develop further, we could easily see reality formalizing into three or four parallel administrations:

(1) A mountain canton with a Christian majority, a legalist-neutral doctrine, and significant Druze participation.

(2) A northern belt with Sunni majority and logistical/political gravity toward Syria/Turkey.

(3) A south/Bekaa zone under Hezbollah administration with Iranian-linked security logic.

In this scenario, no one fully secedes, but each zone collects taxes, polices space, runs its institutions, and negotiates technical deals, as if it were a state.

The national shell of the Lebanese Republic persists for passports, currency, and flags, but reality will move through a plurality of sub-states. This happens when all cantons become powerful enough to govern themselves, but not strong enough to rule the rest. In this scenario, the Lebanese Republic stays unified in name only.

With no legal recognition or clear mandates and processes, ad hoc bargains and tensions are frequent between different cantons. Informal "zones" emerge to

fill the gaps of the central state. Central government exists on paper but is irrelevant, and vetoes shift to inter-zone deals.

Proto-institutions (e.g., social funds, local courts) function effectively in enclaves but might clash with state remnants, creating dual systems prone to disputes. Economies thrive locally and begin to diverge in different zones, but trade barriers and currency chaos will limit growth and scale. Without formal armies, de facto militias might deter threats but invite escalations. If the Christian enclave is not unified under a de facto government, it might risk internal rifts.

The mountain's task in B would be to become the most lawful and predictable node: good governance, public budgets, clean procurement, rule of law, equal rights, and a single coercive chain under civilian control without armed exceptions.

Economically, B requires inter-zone compacts for transit, telecoms, power grid, and goods imports, backed by internal understandings and international observers to reduce friction.

Diplomatically, this scenario offers a path towards real independence despite the risks. The mountain courts quiet regional and international acceptance: "We are neutral, trade-friendly, and competent."

Over time, defacto function hardens into recognition: first informal (aid pipelines, university exchanges), then technical (standards, civil-protection drills), possibly culminating in treaty-like instruments that resemble Outcome A without the ceremony.

Risks in B are creeping blockades, narrative warfare, sectarian tensions, and internal complacency.

Like A, this is a mixed-to-positive scenario for Christians, as it allows them to build their institutions on their own pace while the other areas of the republic are doing the same.

The Mountain, in this case, should become the gold-standard administrator and would function as if it were already the State it wants to be.

B can endure for decades with relative peace if violence stays low and services stay up, and it might move into scenario C of open conflict.

If conflict is averted, at some point in the future of this scenario, the reality on the ground can become the legally internationally recognized reality, and the Mountain state will achieve its lifelong dream of self-determination.

4. Scenario C: Civil War and Foreign Invasions

This is the second worst-case scenario after scenario zero. In this scenario, we also assume that the mountain independence movement made significant gains and reached a decisive threshold. However, instead of moving towards federalization or trying to maintain business as usual, this scenario assumes that other factions and regional powers will make moves to crush the independence movement and rule Christian areas by force.

This scenario envisions a breakdown into conflict and external intervention, triggered by vacuums, internal disputes, or regional ambitions.

A determined refusal by Hezbollah and the Syrian regime to tolerate a Christian statelet on their flank could produce coercive escalation, ranging from targeted intimidation to open conflict.

Such a scenario would start with smear campaigns that portray the Mountain as a foreign aggressor client-state, coupled with administrative harassment and nationwide persecution of the movement. It will pass through a phase of staged unrest (with raids or refugee cells mobilizing), and might start including border clashes, armed incursions, and calibrated strikes, before escalating to a full invasion to push for capitulation. The ultimate violent response in this scenario is a full invasion of the mountain with a local militia, an official foreign army, or both.

The viability of such a war depends on terrain, cost calculus, and how the Mountain reacts. We have to keep in mind, that if this scenario is a reaction to Christian self-determination, it means the project has grown to a stage where it can impose a serious geopolitical change, and therefore it would have the tools to defend itself at this point with proper institutions, training, and mobilization.

The mountain's ridgelines and chokepoints favor defense-in-depth. If the mountain followed a whole-of-society civil protection posture, it would be successful in keeping society functioning under pressure, denying quick victories.

History lends us a lot of insights into what might happen in this case. Every invader in the history of Mountain Lebanon, whether domestic or foreign, will face three problems:

First, attrition vs. payoff: Fighting over geographic control in the mountain is costly and yields propaganda and legitimacy losses for every shell that hits a school or monastery. At the same time, the mountain is not rich in natural resources or workforce. The cost of geographic and social occupation is much higher than the payoff.

Second, overstretching: the mountainous nature means there will always be multiple fronts that favor guerrilla warfare against standing armies and militias. Being a Christian majority, the mountain cannot be subdued easily by a different sect or a foreign army. Even a powerful militia will hesitate to trade low-risk influence for high-visibility occupation.

Third, legibility: a movement that has banked neutrality, rights discipline, and open ledgers makes foreign partners likelier to deploy air bridges, observers, corridors, and reputational penalties to support us. The diaspora extension of the mountain will also raise the sanctions-exposure risk for the invader, making prolonged operations expensive.

Still, war remains possible because we are not always facing rational actors. Prudence means considering the worst cases.

The defense grammar in this scenario is law, resilience, and precision: evacuate civilians efficiently from conflict areas and provide them with the services and support

they need to stay. Disperse leadership and ensure the continuity of government. Harden defense nodes with field cheap ISR and counter-UAS. Rely on small, trained units and local knowledge to hit hard and fast. Keep communication networks redundant and after-action transparency high. Make the narrative truth known, document aggression, publish casualty and damage logs, invite observers, and let the war accelerate international legitimacy.

Any armed conflict in Lebanon would incur mass displacements and emigration surges, especially in mixed districts. The economy contracts, services halt, and the state fragments. The worst-case outcome for this scenario is short-term territorial and humanitarian loss with population displacement. Here, the movement survives by providing support to the affected, keeping institutions portable, and preserving diaspora advocacy that presses for corridors, returns, and accountability.

Without Christian backing, no external or internal force can occupy the Mountain for extended periods of time. It is just impossible. Our enemies have little to gain strategically from such a move. The Mountain should keep its strategic posture in such a crisis: we seek nothing beyond self-rule and neutrality; any assault on us is a casualty-heavy grind for little durable gain.

For Christians, such a scenario is an existential peril with high costs, but it also offers a decisive, unprecedented opportunity for full independence. When the mountain is under attack, the argument for remedial secession and the establishment of a state that enables Christian self-

determination will be stronger than ever, internally and internationally.

A failed coercion attempt will convince skeptics that the mountain cannot be bullied and will push stakeholders back to adopt other solutions such as federalism, autonomy, or full independence.

A crisis of this scale might accelerate international and internal recognition and open a path towards a fully independent Mountain State.

5. Scenario D: Full Independence and Sovereignty for the Mountain State

This best-case scenario envisions the successful execution of the roadmap from the previous chapter, leading to a sovereign Mount Lebanon through negotiated or opportunistic separation, without full-scale conflict.

Such a scenario requires perfect timing, internal unity, external neutrality, and the right international policies that will pressure the central government and non-state actors into avoiding violent escalation.

As the Lebanese state continues its implosion, this scenario assumes that support for the self-determination movement over decades of work will be successful in establishing a full-fledged proto-state in Mount Lebanon. It would have local governance institutions filling in the role of the center, while the republic withdraws further from public life. Basic law,

transitional MoUs, and referenda are followed through without major escalations, despite tensions.

Geopolitical shifts in the region, such as a balkanization of Syria or a shift towards decentralization and federalization, would create diplomatic windows for international recognition.

A constituent convention in the Mountain ratifies the constitution. Borders stabilize via treaties despite incidents or incursions. Governance leans local, with proportional Druze/Christian representation ensuring stability without central paralysis.

Gains will come with trade-offs like economic adjustment and ongoing vigilance, but it delivers true self-determination.

Proto-institutions formalize into state bodies with transparent courts, municipal services, and audits, delivering efficiency the Republic could not. Political stability and sound economic policies yield growth and improve lives for everyone in the Mountain.

Agro-exports, tech hubs, and diaspora investments stabilize currency and jumpstart growth. Trade pacts with neighbors and regional players, including Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Gulf countries, and others, hedge against isolation, but initial adjustments, such as supply chain reroutes, test resilience.

Digital innovation and diaspora networks would become significant economic engines, fostering startups, tourism, and services that generate jobs and reverse emigration waves.

A successful implementation of a whole-of-society hybrid defense doctrine that we outlined in Chapter 12, blending civilian readiness with terrain leverage, deters threats and makes peace the cheapest option for internal and regional opponents.

Neutrality pacts and peace treaties secure borders, but vigilance against infiltration remains. In the first years, the new state might not enjoy full peace, but will manage controlled risks.

Renewal incentives for families and children reverse demographic decline. Returnees from abroad bolster the population, though mixed areas require ongoing covenants with other internal players. The education-culture engine of the new state revives Christian heritage; Syriac and rites flourish, turning the state into a cultural beacon for all Christians in the East.

Druze partners share in governance and undergo their own cultural and social revival, and other minorities access equitable services, lowering internal opposition and providing an example for others. Communities steward land sustainably, fostering social and political stability inside the mountain.

For the Christians of Lebanon, this is the optimal path: sovereignty shields from the Republic's failures and from regional shocks, enabling the Christians to thrive. However, it demands sustained effort. Gains like fixed rights and prosperity come with realities like diplomatic isolation risks or economic bootstrapping. It is not utopia, and it will not be perfect, but it will be a hard-won homeland where dignity, faith, and freedom endure.

VI. A Free Mount Lebanon: Making Acceptance Cheaper than Opposition

The scenarios we discussed, from an eroding status quo to hard-won sovereignty, underscore action's urgency: inaction invites the worst cases, while disciplined pursuit unlocks the best.

Armed with this foresight, our navigation doctrine in this last chapter charts the course to victory.

We might not get to choose which scenario we get because such things depend on dozens of geopolitical, economic, cultural, and social factors. We can say that fate will decide, but is fate not the outcome of readiness and courage when facing the odds?

Victory demands a doctrine that anticipates every blow: realpolitik navigation blending law, service, cunning, and endurance to make our dream a reality.

The movement's leverage is to pre-shape outcomes, to draw its own possibilities, regardless of the final form. We build institutions that lower the cost of A for all players (federalist devolution); behave with such legality and competence that if B happens (de facto parallel states), the mountain becomes the gold-standard administrator others must accommodate, and invest in resilience that makes C (civil war) costly and unrewarding for our enemies and reduce its effects on our community.

Our preparedness will turn sympathy into standing, standing into mandate, and mandate into facts. In a region where ideology often loses to logistics, the side

that keeps its head cool, its schools open, and its courts credible, writes the map more quietly than armies do.

The East will test the Mountain State before it accepts it. Parties built on patronage, militias that thrive on ambiguity, regimes that disfavor neutral neighbors, and partners abroad who fear precedents will all tug the same thread: this is a dangerous project.

But to us, inaction is much more dangerous. Our answer is to make acceptance cheaper, legally, socially, and diplomatically, than obstruction. Movements fail when they confuse heat for light. Ours will not. We will measure ourselves by actions and outcomes and not by slogans.

The navigation doctrine we outlined here transforms opposition into opportunity, ensuring the movement endures smears, infiltrations, and escalations. By raising acceptance's appeal through useful institutions and lawful pleas, we inoculate against the Republic's graveyard.

A free Mount Lebanon is not inevitable, but with this realism, it is achievable: not through wishes, but through wills forged in struggle.

Self-determination will not be begged. It will be built into plausibility, brick by brick and person by person. By action, will, faith, and courage, all with a calendar.

We build our Mountain by behaving like a small republic in rehearsal. We organize, vote, serve, and write reality into law. The Mountain sanctuary will be our normal before becoming a logo on our passports, and the odds be damned.

Conclusion

A Free and Thriving Nation

As we reach the book's culmination, let us reflect on the profound arc that has brought us here.

In the historical foundations laid in Chapters 1 through 5, we traced the origins of Maronite identity from ancient Syriac roots and mountain enclaves like Kadisha, through the Ottoman Mutasarrifate's fragile autonomy, to the civil war's devastation, up to the post-Taif decline.

The modern Lebanese Republic stripped constitutional leverage from Christians and entrenched marginalization. We have seen how partnership in a flawed Republic eroded self-rule and basic rights. This set the stage for understanding the threats and failures we outlined from Chapters 6 to 8: the systemic collapse of the Second Republic under Syrian occupation first and Hezbollah dominance second. We analyzed our demographic hemorrhaging with fertility rates plummeting below replacement, and our cultural erosion through Arabization and diaspora drain. We also exposed the structural majoritarianism tilting confessional balances, and the irreversible state failure that hollowed out sovereignty, justice, and services, leaving Christians exposed as second-class citizens.

Yet, from this sobering diagnosis emerges inspiration that we shared in Chapter 9: the enduring Maronite spirit of resilience, forged in faith, land stewardship, and

disciplined will. Our enduring identity offers a moral imperative to fight for preservation, and is in itself a mechanism for survival and prosperity in our mountain.

In Chapter 10, we shared practical insights from small nations like the Jewish revival and institution-building of Israel, Armenian diasporic endurance, and European models such as Switzerland's subsidiarity or Estonia's digital agility. These successful nations offer lessons that teach us to prioritize identity, unified coercion, and legitimacy over illusions.

These models informed the vision we offered in Chapters 11 and 12: we established the political and legal case for autonomy against reform or federalism's traps. We also envisioned a lean republic with fixed rights, a hybrid whole-of-society defense, a niche economy, and education-culture engines reviving Syriac heritage.

The actionable roadmap in Chapter 13 charts the sequence from moral principles and cultural renewal to grassroots cells, up to building proto-institutions like social funds and civil defense, along with diaspora covenants with e-Residency and more. This plan builds a layered legitimacy and makes the plea via White Paper and referenda actionable and practical.

Finally, Chapter 14 navigated risks, mapping internal resistance, regional proxies' escalations, international balkanization fears, and scenarios from drift to sovereignty. We navigate this reality with a tactical doctrine that outlasts opposition through cunning and service.

This conclusion distills the Maronite cause of Christian self-determination and freedom in Mount Lebanon into a timeless vision. What we dream of is not an abstract ideal, but a lived reality: secure, just, and thriving, for generations to come.

This book reaffirms self-determination as the only path to a governable homeland where bells ring freely, land flourishes under stewardship, and our people endure with dignity, free from the Republic's chains.

I. A secure homeland for Maronites and Lebanese Christians

This is what we mean by success: a governable life for Christians in Lebanon, ensuring a quiet, durable, and free existence.

We mean a country where we do not worry about borders. A place where church bells ring for prayer and school without apology. A hillside greener each year, and terraces as beautiful as the mountain's sun. An infrastructure where electricity and roads do not fail every winter. A ledger with a clean balance and a court date that arrives on time. A choir rehearsing in a language as old as the stones, and a child who is not asked to leave his parents behind to succeed in life. A nation that is proud of its past, secure in its present, and at ease with its future.

We want to build a nation where safety is ordinary, and danger is exceptional. We want to govern the land with just laws that are unafraid of power. We want a nation where worship and speech are not permissions granted

by a majority, but immutable guarantees held by institutions that actually work. We want a state where due process is not a rumor, but a promise kept, and where property and dignity are protected without bribes.

Success looks like Christian villages vibrant and thriving, with their lights on, with warm bakeries and loud schoolyards. It looks like well-tended orchards and plains because the land is covenant, not scenery. It looks like young couples planning five years ahead without the quiet cruelty of exile or geopolitical disasters on every page. It looks like a single chain of coercion that answers to civilian authority without militias and outlaws. It looks like a judiciary that binds the strong and follows the rule of law. It looks like budgets that add up, contracts anyone can read, and officials who leave office poorer in ego and richer in trust.

The Mountain's security is not the drama of barricades nor the showmanship of militias; it is the calmness of rules and the guarantees of rights. We do not seek enemies or stage victories. We seek a small neutral, stable polity that neighbors can rely on. We seek predictable corridors, tidy compacts, and a reputation for keeping our word.

A secure homeland for Maronites and Lebanese Christians is not just a fortress but a home. A place that is orderly enough for childhood, generous enough for old age, exact enough that the honest are unafraid and the corrupt do not rule the day.

We do not want to rule or displace anyone; we just want to live in our own home, proud and free.

II. A beacon of Freedom for all Christians in the Middle East

The state we imagine is not a podium for others, nor a proxy for external powers. It is not a place to settle regional conflicts. Nevertheless, the Mountain we dream of is a beacon of light, where rights replace the moods of power.

The Christians in the Middle East will look up to us, and as they are still being driven from their homes, the Mountain will always welcome them. Any Christian who arrives from the region, no matter their denomination, will meet protections that are not theatrical: the protection of conscience, the ordinary dignity of school, clinic, and work, and the simple miracle of sleeping safely without negotiation. We do not advertise this with slogans nor seek to promote it outside our borders; we just demonstrate it with open doors and dependable institutions.

The Mountain is a house of learning and chant, of ordinary life with extraordinary spiritual depth. Monasteries in conversation with universities. Archives cared for as if memory itself is a sacrament. Mentors trained to teach languages, science, culture, and belonging.

We propose an example that is radical by its restraint: freedom without domination, identity without enmity.

From such a place, the region can borrow hope. Not as a political export, but a civic one: the sight of a small nation living without servility or arrogance, grounded in law

and neighborliness, able to disagree without implosion, careful with borders, generous with culture.

The Near East has known too many flags raised on loud claims and low competence. The Mountain's witness is quieter: a long obedience to honest rules. If others wish to learn, we will teach. If others seek refuge, we will protect. If others stand far off and simply watch, we will keep the light steady.

III. Continuity with the Maronite Spiritual Mission

Our mission is not a memory but practice.

The Maronite triad of Heaven, Land, and Community, of Warrior, Steward, and Monk, was never an antique. It is a grammar for public life.

The warrior is not a cult of arms; it is the disciplined vow to defend home under law, with restraint that dignifies both protector and protected.

The steward is not a museum of tools; it is the vow to cultivate a deep relationship with the land, with its rivers, forests, valleys, and peaks, so that soil and people improve with each other over time.

The monk is not a seclusion of thought; it is prayer, piety, study, and mercy arranged into institutions that serve. It is parishes that chant the Lord's name, schools where truth can breathe, clinics where the weak are honored, and archives where memory is preserved so that conscience does not grow thin.

We will keep our institutions small enough to visit in a day and audit in a week. We will let the liturgical year remind politics to breathe, with feasts that gather, fasts that discipline body and soul, and traditions that keep the community true to itself and to one another.

The Christians chose to survive in this mountain because they chose to hold their cross in the most challenging environment in the world. They chose asceticism, gentleness, strength, and mastery so they can endure and fulfill their spiritual mission in this world. They chose to determine their own fate because they will always and forever choose to be free.

IV. Two Choices for Christians in Lebanon

This Republic has failed us. It is time to let it go. It is not going to be easy, and the first reaction for most of us will be fear. Fear of the unknown, fear of opening the doors of violence that is ever-present in this region. Fear of taking the wrong turn and ending up with the opposite of what we intended. Yet, we have no other choice. Doing nothing is much more dangerous for our future than any other choice before us.

Lebanon's modern story is a set of bargains that evaporate when power shifts. It is a story of a Republic that, instead of being a sanctuary for Christians, was transformed gradually into their prison.

There is mercy in naming things as they are. This book wants to offer you the kindness of helping you make peace with the end of the Republic. The Lebanese Republic, as constituted and practiced, is a dysfunctional

failure immune to reform. It has not collapsed by accident. It has failed structurally and permanently: by building power on patronage instead of law; by a constitution that can be abused by majoritarianism and bargains; by armed ambiguity instead of a single chain of coercion; and by borrowed money instead of earned competence.

After one hundred years of a Lebanese Republic, the sects that make up Lebanon still have not agreed on the foundations. They disagree on every little thing while administering the country, and it is impossible to bring them together to a future that builds a proper state with guarantees.

A system that cannot keep courts honest, borders quiet, lights on, water clean, schools open, or budgets real has broken the contract that binds people to a common house.

Many Christians in Lebanon find it difficult to let go of the Republic, as they have a sense of ownership and hope, but the longer we cling to this failure, the more we expose our community to its slow ongoing erasure. We cannot wait another one hundred years or another civil war to shock us into reality.

For the Maronites especially, the choice cannot be postponed by sentimentality. It is stark and simple: assimilation into extinction, or renewal into survival.

Assimilation wears pleasant masks: cosmopolitan slogans, temporary safety, and the soft triumphs of personal distance. There's comfort in making peace with the status quo. A community can die while its

individuals prosper. This is what is currently happening with Lebanese Christians. But the arithmetic of decline does not lie: demography, emigration, cultural dilution, and the slow surrender of freedom and dignity. It is the slow, steady process of hollowing a people from within, long before any flag is lowered.

The alternative is renewal: a return to roots in a way that is not nostalgic but constructive: a self-governance that allows us to shape our destiny and choose our fate. Renewal is not a feeling; it is a decision to build the conditions under which our children can remain themselves, grow up free in their homes, and build a good life in their own country.

The mountains of Lebanon make this decision concrete. They are our destiny. Either they are reclaimed as the natural architecture of Christian freedom in the East, or history will erase them and us with them.

Our path before one is one of discipline: to rebuild our home, individual by individual, street by street, village by village, parish by parish, and school by school. The mountain taught us limits, cooperation, patience, and defense-in-depth, and it is time to put these lessons into practice.

Our mountains reward the humble and expose the performative. They are a home that asks to be earned. A people that refuses the demands of their own geography will be replaced by those who accept them. To reclaim the mountain is to accept the moral shape of our homeland: small, steep, courageous, rugged, faithful, and stubbornly free.

Letting go of a failed republic and choosing renewal in the mountain is not a negative act. It is a positive vow: to live for a truth that is stronger than convenience.

We are not entitled to survival because our story is old or beautiful. We will only survive if we become strong and reliable. Reliability is the language of international politics. It is also the most persuasive argument in a region exhausted by spectacle. When we build our institutions and keep our promises consistently, the world will recognize what we have. If we do our part well, our neighbors will prefer cooperation to conflict. Our young will see a reason to stay, and our state will be a reality and not a suggestion.

Some will say: wait, reform will come; demographics will turn; a better coalition will fix the center. We have waited long enough to know that “later” is often a synonym for “never.”

The republic we were given was not built to protect us; it was built to bargain us away. It is not treachery to stop exposing our children to its uncertainties. It is duty. Duty to our martyrs whose names still echo in parish records; duty to our living whose talents should not be scattered around the world by necessity; duty to those who may yet come seeking light and law in a dark hour.

Others will say: a Mountain State is risky. Of course it is. So is extinction. So is the steady loss of culture, language, liturgy, and land under the generous name of “coexistence.” So is a community that becomes exiled to the four corners of the earth because it cannot sustain life in its homeland. So is a life where an entire generation of

Christians forgets its heritage, its history, its culture, its purpose, and its cause.

All futures exact a price. The question is not whether we will pay; a price will be paid, whatever we choose. The question is what we will buy with the time and energy we have.

The price for doing nothing is complete and gradual annihilation. The price for a state that guarantees Christian self-governance and freedom will be blood, sweat, discipline, and patience. We can afford that, but we cannot afford confusion, and we will not accept extinction.

V. The Road Ahead

The Christians of Mount Lebanon survived historically not because they were many, but because they were organized: spiritually, socially, and institutionally.

The central claim of this book is that our historical endurance must now graduate from memory to mechanism. It must move from the courage of valleys to the text of a charter; from the improvisation of crises to the routine of working organizations, schools, clinics, courts, water, and power.

We cannot predict the future but we can control what we can do with our time, energy, and resources, as individuals and as a community. Even if one does not agree with the end goal of establishing a state for Christians in Mount Lebanon, there are three crucial tasks that are a net positive for every Christian in this

land: reclaim and revive our culture including a return to family and church values, establish political organizations that hold the cause of self-determination and defends the interests of Christians in Lebanon, and finally, build services institutions that support the day to day life of Christians as the central state fails to provide.

These three tasks do not need anyone's permission; they do not require international support, and they cannot wait for the approval of the government or any other center of power. We can start with them today and whatever happens tomorrow, the Christians will fare better because of them.

We have shown that the usable past, the long arc from John Maron to the Mutasarrifate, offers valuable lessons and can serve as instruction.

When autonomy worked, it worked because rules were written, responsibilities were clear, and security was civilian. When it failed, it failed from external shocks and internal ambiguity or treason: dysfunctional governance systems, uncertain borders, weak revenues, leaders that were interested in their own success at the expense of their community, and under flimsy guarantees that depended on the goodwill of distant capitals.

The remedy today is not a return to the 19th century, but a 21st-century sanctuary that installs enforceable rights for all its children. The way forward is clear because it is narrow. We have already traced it: consciousness followed by organization, followed by institutions and legitimacy.

Culture comes first, because it is the *why* of our cause: no nation moves without a reason to move. Organization second because conviction without coordination is fatigue. Institutions are third, because competence is the only rhetoric people can trust. Legitimacy thereafter because society and the world must be invited to test and trust us.

We will be tempted by anger. We will be tempted by grandeur. But we must pass all tests. Anger burns the hearts that hold it. Grandeur makes promises that humble work cannot keep. Slogans without action erode trust.

We are not promising paradise. We are promising adulthood: law before power, action before words. We will keep the rails of rights and the habit of mercy. We will steward land as if our great-grandchildren were watching, and we will speak softly because the truth does not need shouting. We will be neutral in quarrels that are not ours and firm in duties that are. We will publish our ledgers and sing our prayers and teach our children in the tongue of their forefathers and the sciences of their time. We will welcome the stranger who honors our rules and guard the weak who cannot protect themselves. We will make our borders secure and our festivals bright. We will prefer restraint to rage, precision to passion, and patience to panic.

VI. Our Final Vow

Our path is simple: faith, courage, and will.

Our path is *Faith*: the life with Christ that makes gentleness strong and sacrifice sane.

Our path is *Courage*: the willingness to stand where it is harder to stand and to speak when silence is safer.

And our path is *Will*: the capacity to continue the good in bad weather, to build the wall that no one will photograph, to keep the ledger that no one will praise, to drill the skill that will save a neighbor's life on a bad day.

We arm ourselves with our faith in The Light of the World, with the courage of the Redeemer on the Cross, and with the Will of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We call on Maronites and the Christians of Lebanon to fortify themselves with these values and start building their future. We call on them to have faith that prays with their hands as well as their lips, with courage that neither picks fights nor flees them, and with will that endures no matter the odds.

We choose to stop mourning a republic that cannot love us back. We choose to build a haven where we live free. We choose to build a nation where law is predictable, and church bells are loud. We choose to steward a mountain where forests are green, water is clean, and work is honest. We choose to build a state where authority is accountable and rules are enforceable. We choose to build a polity where the powerful are afraid of the law and the weak are protected. We choose neutrality

without indifference, identity without enmity, and freedom without arrogance.

If we keep these choices, we will not need to shout for recognition. Reality will recognize us. The most reasonable person in each camp will admit, perhaps grudgingly, that our success makes their own life easier, safer, more accountable. That is how small states are born in serious places: by making acceptance cheaper than opposition, by making reliability more attractive than patronage, by making the truth of a people's vocation visible and useful.

This book is a blueprint and a pledge. The blueprint says: here is the vision, here is the roadmap, and the pledge says: we will do the work.

The Mountain is more than enough for us and our future: it is our home, it is where we want to be secure without apology, faithful without fear, and free without "ifs" and "buts."

The Mountain will remain what it has always been at its best: a narrow ridge wide enough for a free people, and bright enough to guide those who need a light.

Our bells are ringing, so let us go up to our white peaks, faith in our hearts, courage on our faces, and will at our hands. The path is steep and honest, but this is our path. This is the path of the Mountain.

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