



LADE commends authorities for holding calm elections

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The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) said Sunday the final round of municipal elections was calm and regulated despite previous political tension.

LADE praised the efforts of the Interior Ministry and of security and military officials in holding the fourth and final round of the municipal polls on time, despite the murder of two brothers a couple of days prior.

Tony and Naef Saleh, Marada Movement followers, were killed in the village of Dahr al-Ain, Koura, Friday. They were involved in a family dispute with a Lebanese Forces supporter from the Bersawi family.

“The Quick and decisive measures by the Interior Ministry and by security and military authorities led to holding the polls on time and without delay,” LADE said in its report evaluating the elections. But it said polls were delayed in Dahr al-Ain due to the decision of Interior Minister Ziyad Baorud.

LADE had 600 observers working in North Lebanon, of whom 329 were permanently stationed at 198 polling stations. The observers were able to note several violations, including that some voters did not cast their vote behind the isolating curtain.

In the Akkar village of Qobayat, the wife and mother of MP Hadi Hobeish were seen casting their votes without going behind the curtain. “Hobeish angrily headed to the polling station and made a statement outside the station, accusing [LADE] and its observers of bias,” LADE’s report said.

LADE responded to the statement by stressing it has been an impartial association since 1996 and has been making all efforts possible to meet its role as a civil society organization. “LADE guarantees that candidates and official parties fully abide by the law and by the principals of citizenship,” the report added.

The association also noted some “limited disputes” in certain villages and one attack against a LADE observer, in addition to a high percentage of voter turnout – 41.9 percent in total until 5 pm – which led to chaos in some polling stations.

Among its list of violations, the report added: 52 cases of electoral advertisements, 56 cases of handing out flyers near polling stations, three cases where security forces were absent, 16 cases of violence, 17 cases of pressuring people into voting and 19 cases of not checking the identification of voters.

**Meanwhile, the Lebanese Transparency Association also noted violations committed during the polls.**

**It issued a statement in which it noted disagreements between polling station officials and delegates in Batroun, in addition to pressuring voters with special needs. It noted the presence of previously marked lists in Tripoli, the presence of prepared lists behind isolating curtains and some cases of switching lists.**

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