
SOURCE FILE

THE AMNESTY FILE

SECTARIAN BARGAINING, FATF EXPOSURE, AND THE BITAR
INDICTMENTS, MAY 2026



CORE GROUP

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I. KEY JUDGMENTS

KJ-01 **HIGH CONFIDENCE**

The General Amnesty Law will pass in some form within the 30 to 60 day window. Speaker Berri has consolidated the legislative track. The 29 April joint committee session integrated Finance and Budget, Administration and Justice, National Defense, Interior and Municipalities, and Human Rights committees with the relevant ministers and security service heads. The Moderation bloc draft serves as the foundational text, with competing proposals from the Democratic Gathering and MP Karami absorbed by reference. Probability of passage in the assessed window is 70 to 85 percent, conditional on the Sunni Islamist release question resolving without prison riot and on language sufficient to satisfy FATF being agreed.

KJ-02 **HIGH CONFIDENCE**

The Bitar indictment file is the principal collateral exposure. Probability that the final amnesty text contains language sufficient to legally nullify or substantially obstruct Judge Bitar's 70 March 2026 indictments is assessed at 35 to 50 percent. The legitimate humanitarian crisis in Roumieh provides political cover. Vague language around administrative negligence or expansive definition of pardonable categories can deliver the result without explicit reference to the port file. The political incentive structure across the indicted figures and their bloc affiliations converges on this outcome.

KJ-03 **HIGH CONFIDENCE**

Lebanon's FATF posture is the binding international constraint. The end-2026 grey list deadline cannot be missed without severe consequences. Any amnesty provision read by the FATF, the OECD, or international correspondent banks as protecting financial criminals from accountability triggers a downgrade to the High-Risk Jurisdictions list. Probability of grey-to-black downgrade contingent on the amnesty text outcome is assessed at 25 to 40 percent. The downgrade scenario severs Lebanese banking from correspondent networks and forecloses IMF engagement.

KJ-04 **MEDIUM CONFIDENCE**

Three mutually antagonistic sectarian demands shape the bargain. The Sunni political and religious establishment requires release of Islamist detainees as a non-negotiable. Maronite-aligned formations leverage the moment to address the post-2000 South Lebanon Army repatriation question. The military constituency, anchored by families of LAF personnel killed in Abra, Tripoli, and the north, opposes blanket pardon for state-

killers. The historical 6-and-6 sectarian formula will be applied to bridge them. The resulting compromise will satisfy no constituency fully.

KJ-05 MEDIUM CONFIDENCE

The Sunni Islamist detainee question is the most operationally combustible component. The early-May Roumieh Building B hunger strike is coordinated, includes Ahmad al-Assir's video manifesto, and is connected to direct Dar al-Fatwa pressure on Prime Minister Salam. Failing the Sunni demand risks prison riot across the Roumieh complex and Sunni street mobilization at Riyadh al-Solh Square. Granting blanket amnesty for Assir-affiliated figures risks LAF morale collapse and Hezbollah-Amal counter-mobilization. The compromise structure under negotiation, sentence reduction rather than full pardon for military killings, is the principal mitigating mechanism.

KJ-06 MEDIUM CONFIDENCE

The South Lebanon Army repatriation provision intersects directly with the ongoing Lebanese-Israeli ceasefire conversion track. Hezbollah's posture toward the SLA file is more pragmatic than the public surface suggests; informed reading indicates a quiet operational openness to discussion in exchange for the broader bargain. Probability of an SLA-specific provision making it into the final text is assessed at 20 to 35 percent. The public optics around normalization remain radioactive in the current war environment, and a provision that proceeds risks triggering Hezbollah-Amal rupture with the bill regardless of private accommodation.

KJ-07 LOW CONFIDENCE

The reintegration failure scenario for an estimated 4,003 released individuals is structural rather than political. Lebanon currently lacks any functional state-sponsored reintegration apparatus. The IPC analysis projects 1.24 million Lebanese, nearly 25 percent of the population, in Crisis-level food insecurity through August 2026. A spike in recidivism, gravitation toward armed networks, and localized sectarian violence are highly probable second-order outcomes regardless of the bill's detailed content. Probability of measurable security degradation in the 6 to 12 month post-release window is assessed at 60 to 75 percent.

II. INTELLIGENCE

A. The Carceral Pressure: A Functional Trigger

Lebanon's detention infrastructure has the design capacity for 4,760 inmates and currently houses approximately 8,502. Roumieh Prison, designed for 1,200, holds approximately 4,000. Roughly 80 percent of the entire prison population is held in pre-trial detention, the consequence of judicial paralysis rather than crime escalation.

State funding for the Ministry of Interior has collapsed alongside the broader fiscal failure. Food provision is below survival nutritional thresholds. Medical care depends on WHO interventions including renovated clinics and recruited nutritionists. Synthetic drug contraband economies, particularly K2, have produced fatal overdoses inside the cell blocks. The system is described in cross-sectarian Lebanese political discourse as a ticking time bomb.

This functional pressure is the legitimate analytical justification for the legislative track. It is also the political cover that permits the legislative ambiguity the political class requires for its other objectives.

B. The Legislative Track and the Berri Consolidation

Speaker Berri directed the Karami-Moderation bloc draft, submitted 10 February 2026, to the joint committees for expedited urgent study. The decision to circulate the Moderation bloc version as foundational text drew immediate procedural objection from the Democratic Gathering, which had submitted a competing draft with specified temporal cutoff (1 March 2026) and explicit exclusion of public property crimes, fraudulent bankruptcy, and currency forgery.

The 29 April joint committee session was the consolidating event. Forty-six MPs across blocs, the Ministers of National Defense, Interior, and Justice, and senior LAF and ISF representatives including the Head of Legal Affairs and the Head of the Prisons Branch attended. The composition signals that the institutional security state is participating in the drafting rather than being asked to comment after the fact. This is operationally significant: it indicates the LAF-LAF families compromise (sentence reduction rather than full pardon for military killings) was structurally pre-negotiated.

The current draft target population includes individuals serving sentences, detainees awaiting trial, fugitives, persons convicted in absentia, and cases under active investigation or trial. Projections during deliberations indicate approximately 4,003 individuals would be released. Stated exclusions cover state security and espionage, terrorism (subject to definition), drug trafficking beyond two cases, financial crimes, and serious violent crimes. The exclusion list is the public-facing architecture; the contested terrain is in the definitional latitude.

C. The Three Sectarian Demands

The Sunni Imperative. The release of Islamist detainees is the cornerstone Sunni political demand, championed by Dar al-Fatwa under Mufti Derian and Secretary Sheikh Amin al-Kurdi, with direct pressure on Prime Minister Salam. The early-May Roumieh Building B hunger strike escalated the file. Detainees released a coordinated video message rejecting selective justice and calling for solidarity protests at Riyadh al-Solh Square. Ahmad al-Assir's appearance in the manifesto raises the political stakes sharply: he is the figure most associated with armed clashes against the LAF in Abra in 2013 and the figure whose pardon would most directly inflame the military constituency.

The Christian Push. Maronite-aligned formations have leveraged the moment to address the South Lebanon Army repatriation question. The estimated 6,500 Lebanese in Israel since the 2000 SLA collapse remain under treason exposure under Lebanese law. The 2008 Doha Accord pledged to address the file; no resolution followed. The current war environment makes the file substantially more combustible than at any prior moment, since legal repatriation reads in Hezbollah-Amal political discourse as adjacent to normalization. Hezbollah's posture toward the file is, however, more pragmatic in private than the public surface admits.

The Military Constituency. Families of LAF and ISF personnel killed in clashes with extremist factions, particularly the Abra families, have staged sustained public opposition to any pardon for state-killers. The LAF remains the only Lebanese state institution with cross-sectarian operational credibility. Pardon of military-killers would inflict severe morale damage. Exclusion of these cases from amnesty would derail the Sunni track. The structural compromise under negotiation, conversion of death sentences to life imprisonment and reduction of long sentences by up to half, is the bridging mechanism.

These three demands are mutually antagonistic on their face. The historical 6-and-6 sectarian formula, explicitly objected to by Minister of Interior Al-Hajjar and by Walid Jumblatt, will nonetheless be the operating framework. The cost of the formula is the legislative ambiguity that creates the Bitar exposure.

D. The Bitar Indictment Exposure

Investigative Judge Tarek Bitar concluded his investigation in March 2026 and issued indictments against 70 individuals including senior politicians, former ministers Ghazi Zeaiter and Ali Hassan Khalil, and top security officials. The investigation had been systematically obstructed for over five years by political pressure operating through former Prosecutor General Ghassan Oueidat. Oueidat's retirement and the assumption of the office by Jamal Hajjar removed the procedural blockade. International momentum coincided with the September 2025 Bulgarian arrest of Igor Grechushkin, the Russian owner of the Rhosus.

The temporal proximity between Bitar's March 2026 indictments and the April 2026 acceleration of the amnesty legislative track is the analytical signal. Civil society organizations, vic-

tims' associations, and international human rights bodies including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Lebanese Legal Agenda have flagged the convergence. Agnes Callamard's November 2025 framing of the port investigation as a litmus test for Lebanon remains the international benchmark.

The operational mechanism by which the amnesty would absorb the Bitar exposure is not direct reference to the port file. Direct reference would generate immediate political and international rupture. The mechanism is definitional latitude. Vague language around administrative negligence, expansive treatment of pardonable categories, or temporal cutoffs that include the August 2020 period would deliver the legal protection without identifying the file. This is the standard architecture of political amnesty drafting in Lebanese practice.

The probability that the final text contains language sufficient to obstruct or nullify Bitar's indictments is assessed at 35 to 50 percent. The indicted figures span Hezbollah-Amal and other blocs; the cross-sectarian incentive structure converges on the outcome. The principal countervailing pressure is international: FATF, IMF, and allied government oversight.

E. The FATF Constraint and the IMF Track

Lebanon is on the FATF grey list with an end-2026 compliance deadline. The grey-to-black downgrade scenario, formally to the High-Risk Jurisdictions Subject to a Call for Action category, would trigger immediate severing of correspondent banking relationships. In a remittance-dependent economy with no functional productive base, the loss of correspondent banking transitions Lebanon to a pariah cash economy.

FATF assesses jurisdictions on the strategic deficiencies they fail to address. Money laundering, public corruption, illicit enrichment, embezzlement of state funds, and drug trafficking are core categories. Any amnesty provision read as protecting these categories from accountability satisfies the criterion for downgrade. The Lebanese drafting team is institutionally aware of this exposure; the explicit financial crimes exclusion in the public draft architecture is responsive to it. The vulnerability is in the practical interpretation.

The IMF track compounds the constraint. The February 2026 IMF mission led by Ernesto Ramirez Rigo assessed insufficient progress on bank restructuring, revenue mobilization, and equitable loss distribution. The December 2025 Financial Gap Law passed by the Salam cabinet authorized depositor withdrawals up to USD 100,000 over four years; this is a stopgap that does not substitute for comprehensive reform. The IMF requires rule of law, financial crimes prosecution, and anti-corruption mechanisms as preconditions for sovereign engagement. Amnesty provisions read as protecting financial elite from accountability suspend that engagement indefinitely.

The amnesty law is therefore functioning as a strategic signal to global institutions, not only as domestic legislation. The signal will be read in the FATF mutual evaluation process and in IMF Article IV consultation. Lebanese state survival in the international financial system depends on the signal being read correctly.

F. Reintegration Failure and Security Vacuum

The proposed release of approximately 4,003 individuals into the May 2026 environment introduces a structural security exposure separate from the legislative content of the bill. The IPC analysis through August 2026 projects 1.24 million Lebanese, nearly 25 percent of the population, in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) acute food insecurity or worse. Approximately 759,300 to over one million internally displaced persons remain unable to return to their homes.

Lebanon lacks any functional state-sponsored reintegration apparatus. Previous EU and Canadian programs for prison staff capacity-building and inmate vocational training operate at a scale incommensurate with the proposed release volume. Released individuals will return to communities operating under conflict displacement, agricultural collapse, and the absence of functioning municipal services in much of the South and Bekaa.

The predictable second-order effects are recidivism, gravitation toward illicit economies, and absorption by armed networks offering patronage and physical protection. For Hezbollah, despite its degraded conventional posture, parallel socioeconomic networks remain operative and may absorb released figures from aligned constituencies. The release of Sunni Islamist detainees into Tripoli, Sidon, or the Bekaa, regions already absorbing massive internal displacement, raises localized sectarian friction risk sharply. Cross-border absorption by extremist formations operating across the Syrian frontier is a further vector that has not yet been weighed in the public discussion.

The 4,003 figure is also analytically significant in scale. It represents nearly half the current incarcerated population. A release of this magnitude into a functional environment produces measurable strain. A release of this magnitude into the May 2026 environment produces a security vacuum at the community level that the Lebanese state cannot manage.

III. STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Bill Passage in 30 to 60 Day Window 70-85%

The legislative track has consolidated. Berri has authorized expedited committee study. The 29 April joint committee session integrated political and security stakeholders. The Moderation bloc draft is the foundational text. Carceral pressure including the Roumieh hunger strike provides the urgency. Impact: relieves immediate prison overcrowding; releases approximately 4,003 individuals into the May 2026 environment; closes the institutional question of the bill while opening every downstream question.

Bitar Indictments Nullified or Substantially Obstructed via Vague Language 35-50%

The principal collateral exposure of the bill. Direct reference to the port file is politically

impossible. The mechanism is definitional latitude: vague language around administrative negligence, expansive treatment of pardonable categories, or temporal cutoffs that cover August 2020. The cross-bloc incentive structure across the 70 indicted figures converges on this outcome. Impact: terminal erosion of public trust in the Lebanese judiciary; permanent institutionalization of elite impunity for mass casualty events; international human rights mobilization; severe FATF and IMF compounding pressure.

FATF Grey-to-Black List Downgrade 25-40%

Conditional on the amnesty text being read by FATF and OECD as protecting financial criminals from accountability. The current draft architecture's explicit financial crimes exclusion is responsive but vulnerable in interpretation. Impact: severs Lebanese banking from correspondent networks; transitions Lebanon to pariah cash economy; forecloses IMF engagement; collapses Article IV framework; closes the diaspora remittance channel that constitutes the de facto external lifeline.

Sunni Islamist Blanket Release Including Assir-Affiliated Figures 30-45%

Driven by Dar al-Fatwa pressure on Salam, Roumieh hunger strike escalation, and Sunni political weight inside the Moderation bloc. Granting blanket release inflicts severe LAF morale damage and risks Hezbollah-Amal counter-mobilization. Granting partial release with sentence reduction for military-killers is the bridging compromise under negotiation. Impact: defuses the Sunni street pressure; releases figures with operational ties to Tripoli and Sidon militant networks; creates conditions for localized Sunni-Shia friction in the South and Bekaa.

SLA-Specific Repatriation Provision in Final Text 20-35%

The post-2000 SLA repatriation file has been a Maronite-aligned demand for over two decades. The current war environment makes the file more combustible than at any prior moment. Hezbollah's private posture is more pragmatic than the public surface admits but the political cost of a visible provision remains high. Impact: reactivates the normalization debate inside the Lebanese-Israeli ceasefire conversion track; risks Hezbollah-Amal rupture with the bill regardless of private accommodation; produces measurable Maronite political dividend.

Reintegration Failure / Recidivism Spike Inside 12 Months 60-75%

Structural rather than political. Lebanon lacks state-sponsored reintegration apparatus. IPC analysis projects 1.24 million Lebanese in Crisis food insecurity through August 2026. Released individuals return to communities under displacement, agricultural collapse, and absent municipal services. Predictable second-order outcomes include recidivism, gravi-

tation toward illicit economies, and absorption by armed networks. Impact: localized security degradation across Tripoli, Sidon, the Bekaa, and parts of Beirut; sectarian friction in displacement absorption areas; potential cross-border absorption by extremist formations on the Syrian frontier.

LAF Institutional Pushback Against Final Text 20–30%

Conditional on the military-killings exclusion being weakened in negotiation. The 29 April joint committee session included senior LAF Legal Affairs and Prisons Branch representation, indicating the structural compromise (sentence reduction rather than full pardon) was pre-negotiated. If the Sunni track demands push the structural compromise further than the LAF position can absorb, institutional pushback is the principal countervailing pressure. Impact: delays the bill's passage timeline; potentially reframes the Sunni Islamist component; tests Aoun-Salam coordination.

French and US Aid Conditioning Activated 30–45%

The 5 May French Senate bill on Islamist infiltration, while domestic to France, signals the European low tolerance for empowering radical Islamist networks. If the amnesty releases figures with documented ties to global jihadist networks, French and US conditioning of military, humanitarian, and reconstruction assistance is the predictable response. Impact: chills the LAF capacity-building track; affects Lebanese reconstruction financing; complicates the broader Western mediation architecture for the Lebanese-Israeli ceasefire conversion.

Composite: Amnesty Catalyzing Compound Crisis 20–35%

The worst-case configuration: bill passes with vague language; Bitar indictments substantively obstructed; FATF reads provisions as protecting financial elite and downgrades; reintegration failure produces measurable security degradation; French and US assistance conditioning activates. Each component has independent triggers; their simultaneity would produce a compound crisis at the moment Lebanon is least equipped to absorb compounding pressure. The probability is moderate but the impact is system-foreclosing.

IV. INDICATORS TO MONITOR

The following developments will update the assessment in the indicated direction over the 30 to 60 day window.

- Public release of the consolidated draft text from the joint committees. The definitional language on administrative negligence, terrorism, and temporal cutoffs is the principal analytical signal. Vague language on these dimensions confirms the Bitar-exposure scenario.
- FATF mutual evaluation correspondence or interim communication on Lebanon. Any signal that FATF has begun assessing the amnesty text against the AML or CFT criteria moves the grey-to-black scenario toward the high end of the assessed range.
- IMF Article IV team return to Beirut or formal communication on engagement. A pause or suspension of the IMF track signals the international financial institutions read the amnesty trajectory as inconsistent with reform conditionality.
- Resolution or escalation of the Roumieh Building B hunger strike. Continued strike escalation or fatalities inside the prison forces the Sunni demand toward the maximalist end. State concessions outside the legislative track indicate the bill timeline is slipping.
- Specific positioning by the Lebanese Forces, Free Patriotic Movement, and Kataeb on the SLA repatriation provision. Christian bloc consensus is the precondition for the provision making the final text. Christian bloc fragmentation forecloses it.
- Public statement by Hezbollah's Loyalty to the Resistance bloc on the SLA file. Hezbollah's private pragmatism has been registered through informed channels; a public statement either confirming or rejecting that posture changes the probability calibration substantially.
- Public Saudi statement or Bin Farhan-channel communication on the amnesty bill. The Saudi monopoly assertion in the Sunni file (per the 07 May Source File on the May Window) is the principal external variable for the Sunni Islamist component.
- Any movement on the Beirut Port file from Judge Bitar's office or from Prosecutor General Hajjar concurrent with the bill's progress. Procedural advances during the legislative window signal that the political class is calculating the file may not be absorbed by the amnesty and is hedging.
- Public statements from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Lebanese Legal Agenda, and the Beirut Port victims' associations. Coordinated international civil society response is the principal countervailing pressure on the Bitar-nullification scenario.
- French Foreign Ministry or US State Department signaling on amnesty conditionality for assistance flows. Activation of conditioning language is the leading indicator for the international assistance scenario.
- Riots or coordinated violence in Roumieh, Tripoli, or other detention facilities concurrent with the legislative window. Indicates the Sunni Islamist demand has tipped toward the operational end and that the bill's window may be foreclosing.

A Source File produced for the 30 to 60 day risk horizon from 08 May 2026, covering the General Amnesty Law legislative process and its principal collateral exposures. Subsequent updates will track the consolidated draft text release, FATF and IMF communications, the Roumieh hunger strike trajectory, and the Bitar file in parallel with bill progression.



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ABOUT CORE GROUP

Core Group is a Beirut-based strategic foresight house. We produce decision-ready analysis and advisory for governments, diplomatic institutions, and strategic investors navigating Middle Eastern complexity. Our work integrates structured analytical products, applied strategic advisory, and analysis-informed mediation; delivered on daily and weekly cycles calibrated to the speed at which the situation changes.

We are based in Beirut. In environments where official data is systematically unreliable and remote analysis inherits every distortion in its source material, physical proximity is not a logistical convenience but an epistemological foundation of our methodology. We verify what others can only estimate.