



Language

The assassination of a former prime minister, Rafiq Hariri, prompted large numbers to go on strike, take to the streets and pitch tents on Martyrs' Square in March 2005, to protest against the dominance of Syria in internal politics. This upsurge of protest did succeed in securing the resignation of the pro-Syrian prime minister and, with the help of US pressure, resulted in Syrian agreement to withdraw their troops (present since the earlier civil war from 1975-91 in Lebanon). But the demonstrators were mostly Sunni Muslims, Christians and Druze, and Hizbollah mobilized a counter-demonstration of up to 300,000 poor Shias in favour of Syria, raising fears of reviving the conflicts of the civil war. Despite car bombs and assassination attempts, civil war has been avoided, but attacks on Israel from Lebanese territory led to an Israeli invasion in 2008 which brought widespread destruction. In general Lebanon suffers not only from internal religious divisions but from its role in regional and international rivalries, with Israel and the USA opposing Syrian and Iranian influence. These wider conflicts can also impinge on interpretations of the Cedar Revolution. There were revived protests in January 2011 against the accession of a Hizbollah-backed prime minister, and since then Lebanon's proximity to the bitter struggle between the regime and the opposition in Syria 2011-12 has also polarised Lebanon, with the Sunni community generally supporting the Syrian opposition.

Hirst, David, [Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East](#) [1], New York, Nation Books, 2010, pp. 496

Analysis by the *Guardian* Middle East editor of Lebanese politics.

Kerr, Michael ; Knudsen, Are, [Lebanon: After the Cedar Revolution](#) [2], London, C. Hurst, 2012, pp. 256

Covers Lebanon since the mass movement in response to Hariri's assassination, covering the role of Hizbollah and other political groupings.

Young, Michael, [The Ghosts of Martyrs Square: An Eyewitness Account of Lebanon's Life Struggle](#) [3], New York and London, Simon and Schuster, 2010, pp. 336

Sympathetic account of the 'Cedar Revolution' by journalist of mixed Lebanese-American parentage.

Zimmer, Benjamin, [Budding Hope: Lebanon's Cedar Revolution](#) [4], Harvard International Review, Vol. 27, issue 3 (22 November), 2007

Discusses the mass protests and Syrian troop withdrawal in 2005.

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