

THE
POLICY
INITIATIVE

Salam's Government **First 100 Days:** Early Signals and Structural Constraints

Lea Ghandour
Sami Atallah
Sami Zoughaib

September 2025



Salam's Government First 100 Days: Early Signals and Structural Constraints

Lea Ghandour, researcher at The Policy Initiative.

Sami Atallah, founding director of The Policy Initiative.

Sami Zoughaib, economist and research manager at The Policy Initiative.

September 2025

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary	1
2. Introduction	3
3. Salam vs. Mikati: Cabinet and Legislation	4
4. Benchmarking Salam’s Government Against Current Priorities	13
5. Conclusion	16

Executive Summary

Lebanon entered 2025 amid overlapping crises: economic collapse, the devastation of the 2024 war, and years of political paralysis. The national currency had lost nearly all its value, poverty engulfed more than 60% of households, and reconstruction needs were estimated at \$14 billion. In this fragile context, a political breakthrough occurred: the election of Joseph Aoun as president on January 9, followed by Nawaf Salam's formation of a fully mandated government on February 8—the first since 2021.

This report evaluates the Salam government's first 100 days, benchmarking its performance against two yardsticks: (1) the record of Najib Mikati's 2021 non-caretaker cabinet, and (2) progress on three national priorities essential to recovery—advancing IMF reforms, initiating reconstruction, and operationalizing the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS).

The findings reveal a government that is more active and engaged than its predecessor, but still constrained by entrenched veto structures:

- ♦ **Executive Activation:** Salam's cabinet convened 12 sessions (vs. Mikati's 3) and issued 277 decrees and laws (vs. 141), including 35 regulatory texts (vs. 4). His government also made more appointments, accepted more international contributions, and issued fewer discretionary transfers and licenses.
- ♦ **Regulatory Activity Without Depth:** Salam's regulatory footprint spanned 13 policy sectors, but most texts were procedural—clarifying procedures, adjusting compensations, or issuing temporary measures. The only structural reform was the amendment to the banking secrecy law.
- ♦ **Administrative Recalibration:** The government made 35 appointments (including 7 in defense and security, compared to none under Mikati), approved 107 contributions worth \$14 million, and authorized fewer transfers and licenses. These shifts suggest greater external engagement and some restraint in clientelist practices, though motivations remain ambiguous.
- ♦ **National Priorities Still Blocked:**
 - IMF Reforms: Salam reactivated key files (Bank Resolution Law, bank restructuring strategy, banking secrecy amendments) but avoided decisive steps such as bank audits, capital controls, and fiscal planning. Vetoes by banks, Banque du Liban, and allied political parties remain intact.
 - Reconstruction: Despite appointing a ministerial committee, the government has made no substantive headway on reconstruction. There is still no national framework or implementation roadmap, leaving responses ad hoc and fragmented. Rubble removal which started months after the war is largely complete, but no government funding has been earmarked for rebuilding or compensation.
 - Social Protection: The NSPS remains sidelined. Salam extended donor-funded, poverty-targeted programs rather than moving toward universal, rights-based coverage. This perpetuates Lebanon's clientelist welfare regime, reinforced by donor preferences for humanitarian triage.

In short, Salam has reactivated executive machinery but has not yet translated activity into systemic reform.

The Salam government's first 100 days demonstrate that Lebanon no longer suffers from outright executive paralysis. Cabinet meets regularly, decrees are issued, and institutions are staffed. This is not trivial. Yet activation has not become transformation.

The same veto players that have long blocked reform remain powerful. Banks and BDL shield financial interests from loss recognition. Reconstruction remains on hold, with no strategy or funding in place. Sectarian brokers and donors sustain a fragmented welfare system. Salam has worked around these constraints but not confronted them.

This leaves Lebanon at a political crossroads, with three potential trajectories:

1. **Energetic Management of Stasis:** Cabinet remains functional, output stays high, but reforms are shallow. Lebanon gains procedural governance but no structural change.
2. **Reformist Confrontation:** Salam leverages his legitimacy to challenge veto players—pushing for capital controls, fiscal strategy, and a national reconstruction plan. This risks political backlash but could reorient Lebanon's trajectory.
3. **Donor-Driven Conditionality:** International actors impose stricter conditions, forcing selective reforms in banking or energy. This may unlock financing but risks deepening inequality and weakening sovereignty.

The first 100 days suggest that Salam is closer to energetic stasis than reformist rupture. Whether he evolves into a reformer willing to confront entrenched interests will determine not just his legacy but Lebanon's path out of crisis.

Introduction

Lebanon entered 2025 at a critical juncture. The country's economy had collapsed, with the national currency losing 98% of its value and over 60% of households pushed into poverty¹². The 2024 war with Israel added an estimated \$14 billion in losses³, deepening an already unprecedented crisis. Against this backdrop, a political breakthrough occurred: Joseph Aoun was elected president on January 9 after years of vacancy, and on February 8, Nawaf Salam formed Lebanon's first fully mandated government since 2021.

This report assesses whether the Salam government's first 100 days marked the start of institutional recovery or merely a procedural revival of the executive. The period is a critical barometer: it reveals both the government's capacity to act and the entrenched obstacles that continue to block systemic reform.

Our analysis finds that Salam's cabinet has reactivated the machinery of government but has not yet translated this into structural change. Compared to Najib Mikati's 2021 non-caretaker government, Salam convened more cabinet sessions (12 vs. 3), issued more decrees and laws (277 vs. 141), and made more appointments while reducing discretionary transfers and licenses. He also secured a broader base of international contributions. Yet most of this activity was procedural—clarifying rules, adjusting compensations, or managing operations. The only meaningful structural reform was the amendment to the banking secrecy law.

When benchmarked against Lebanon's three national recovery priorities—IMF reforms, post-war reconstruction, and the National Social Protection Strategy—the government's record remains partial. Files have been reopened, decrees issued, and donor engagement renewed, but fundamental reforms are still stalled by entrenched veto players, political fragmentation, and fiscal scarcity.

The report proceeds in two sections. Section I compares Salam's executive performance to Mikati's, focusing on cabinet activity, legislative decrees, and administrative behavior. Section II evaluates the government's alignment with three national priorities essential to recovery: advancing IMF reforms, launching a reconstruction framework, and operationalizing the NSPS. Together, these sections provide an early assessment of whether Salam's government represents a genuine turning point for Lebanon—or simply a more energetic management of crisis.

1. Blominvest Bank. 2025. "From Lollars to Dollars: How Will Beirut Stock Exchange Stocks Be Priced Next?" Blominvest Blog, <https://blog.blominvestbank.com/53030/from-lollars-to-dollars-how-will-beirut-stock-exchange-stocks-be-priced-next/>

2. Lebanese American University. 2025. "Lebanon's Economic Crisis Pushes 60% of the Population into Poverty." LAU News, <https://news.lau.edu.lb/2025/lebanons-economic-crisis-pushes-60-of-the-population-into-poverty.php>

3. World Bank. 2025. "Lebanon's Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Estimated at US\$11 Billion." Press Release, March 7, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/03/07/lebanon-s-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-estimated-at-us-11-billion>.

Salam vs. Mikati: Cabinet and Legislation

This section evaluates how Prime Ministers Nawaf Salam (2025) and Najib Mikati (2021) exercised executive authority in their first 100 days, focusing on two indicators: the frequency and scope of cabinet sessions as a proxy for governance engagement, and the volume and nature of decrees (regulatory and administrative) as a measure of institutional intent. The comparison reveals three core findings. First, Salam's government was significantly more active than Mikati's, convening nearly three times as many cabinet sessions and issuing almost double the number of decrees. Second, Salam's agenda was broader and more reform-oriented in its signaling—addressing issues like banking restructuring, judicial independence, and merit-based appointments—while Mikati's was largely reactive, centered on crisis management. Third, despite this surge in activity, most of Salam's decrees were procedural rather than structural; the only substantive reform was the amendment to the banking secrecy law. In short, Salam's first 100 days mark a shift from executive drift to administrative activation, but they stop short of institutional transformation.

1. Volume and Quality of Cabinet Sessions

This subsection evaluates how Salam and Mikati used cabinet meetings as a vehicle for governance during their first 100 days in office, measuring both frequency and content as proxies for executive engagement and policy orientation. The comparison yields three main findings. First, Salam's government convened far more frequently—12 sessions versus Mikati's 3—reflecting a higher level of work intensity. Second, Salam's agendas were broader and more reform-focused, addressing banking-sector restructuring, judicial independence, and merit-based appointments, whereas Mikati's were dominated by reactive crisis management around COVID-19, fuel shortages, and aid coordination. Third, Salam used the cabinet agenda not only to deliberate but also to signal reform priorities, even if many items remain unresolved or stalled in implementation. Taken together, these patterns suggest that Salam's early cabinet activity marked a more assertive executive posture, though its institutional effects remain limited without follow-through in legislation and enforcement.

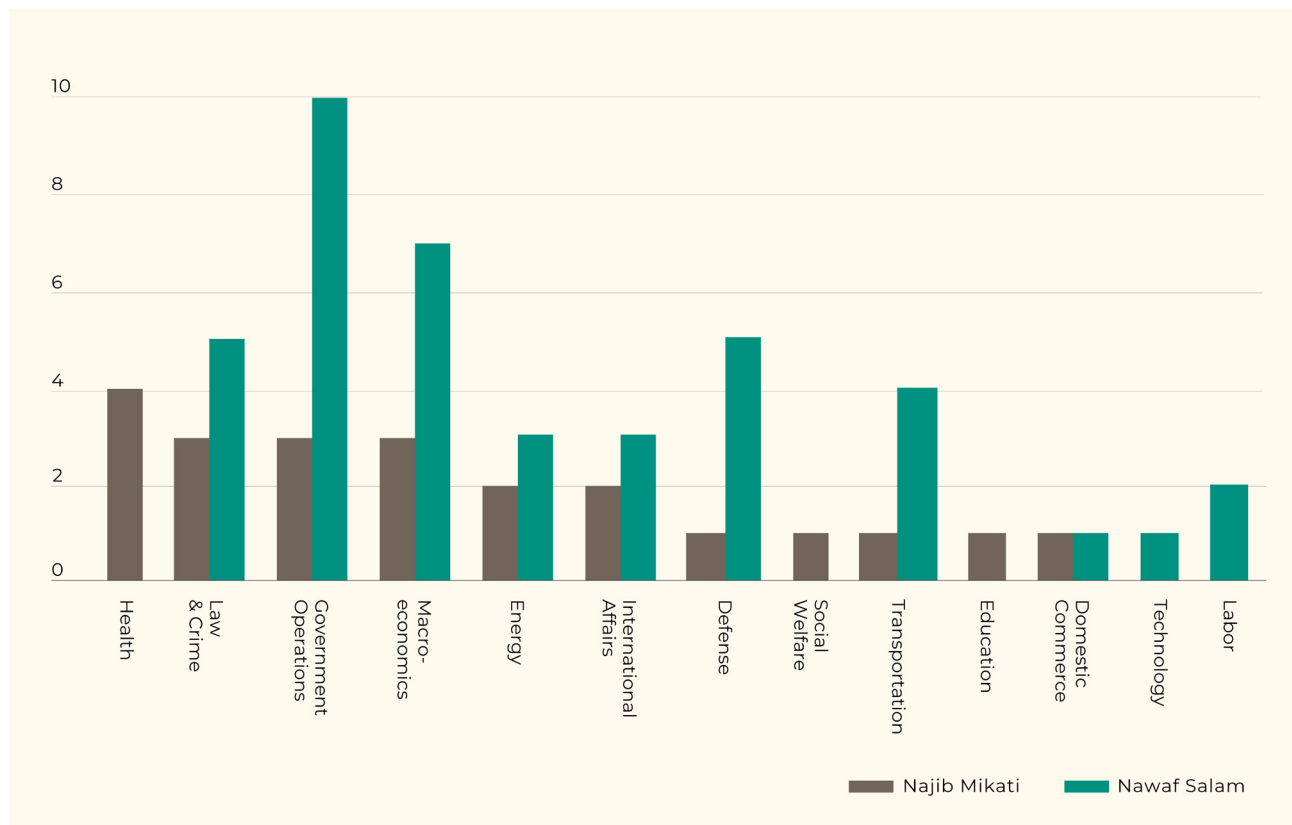
Content of sessions

In this analysis, a cabinet “agenda item” refers to any issue formally tabled for discussion during a cabinet session—ranging from draft laws and policy proposals to administrative appointments and general briefings⁴. Inclusion on the agenda signals political intent or executive interest, but it does not necessarily result in formal decisions, policy adoption, or implementation. Particularly in Lebanon's fragmented governance context, many items are raised but left unresolved, delayed in follow-up, or blocked during inter-ministerial review or legislative transmission.

A comparison of cabinet agendas during the first 100 days of Prime Ministers Najib Mikati (2021) and Nawaf Salam (2025) reveals greater activity under Salam, particularly in both frequency and scope. Although the number of discussion areas was relatively

4. The data is drawn from the publicly available minutes of cabinet sessions published on the Presidency of the Council of Ministers website.

Figure 1. Cabinet agenda priorities by policy area: Mikati vs. Salam



similar (11 under Mikati and 10 under Salam), Salam's cabinet revisited these areas more frequently, as shown by higher agenda-level mention counts (Figure 1).

Mikati focused primarily on health, especially COVID-19 relief and the provision of medicines. Despite leading a fully mandated government, his approach was essentially caretaker in practice, shaped by the lingering impact of the pandemic and severe fuel shortages. His agenda prioritized crisis response and external support, including compensation for the Beirut port explosion, vaccine donations, and aid pledges from Kuwait and France. Other items focused on sustaining essential services such as education, public health, and electricity supply.

Salam's cabinet focused on institutional reform, including banking-sector restructuring, judicial independence, and merit-based public-sector appointments. Additional agenda items outlined frameworks for administrative oversight and recruitment, leading in some cases to leadership changes at institutions like the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and OGERO.

These patterns suggest that Salam's government used the cabinet agenda not only as a decision-making platform, but also as a signaling mechanism for long-term reform priorities. The frequency and orientation of discussions under Salam point to a more assertive executive posture—though their institutional effect remains limited without sustained legislative support, bureaucratic capacity, and policy enforcement. Whether this agenda reflects the early foundations of institutional recovery or merely a temporary surge of ambition remains an open question.

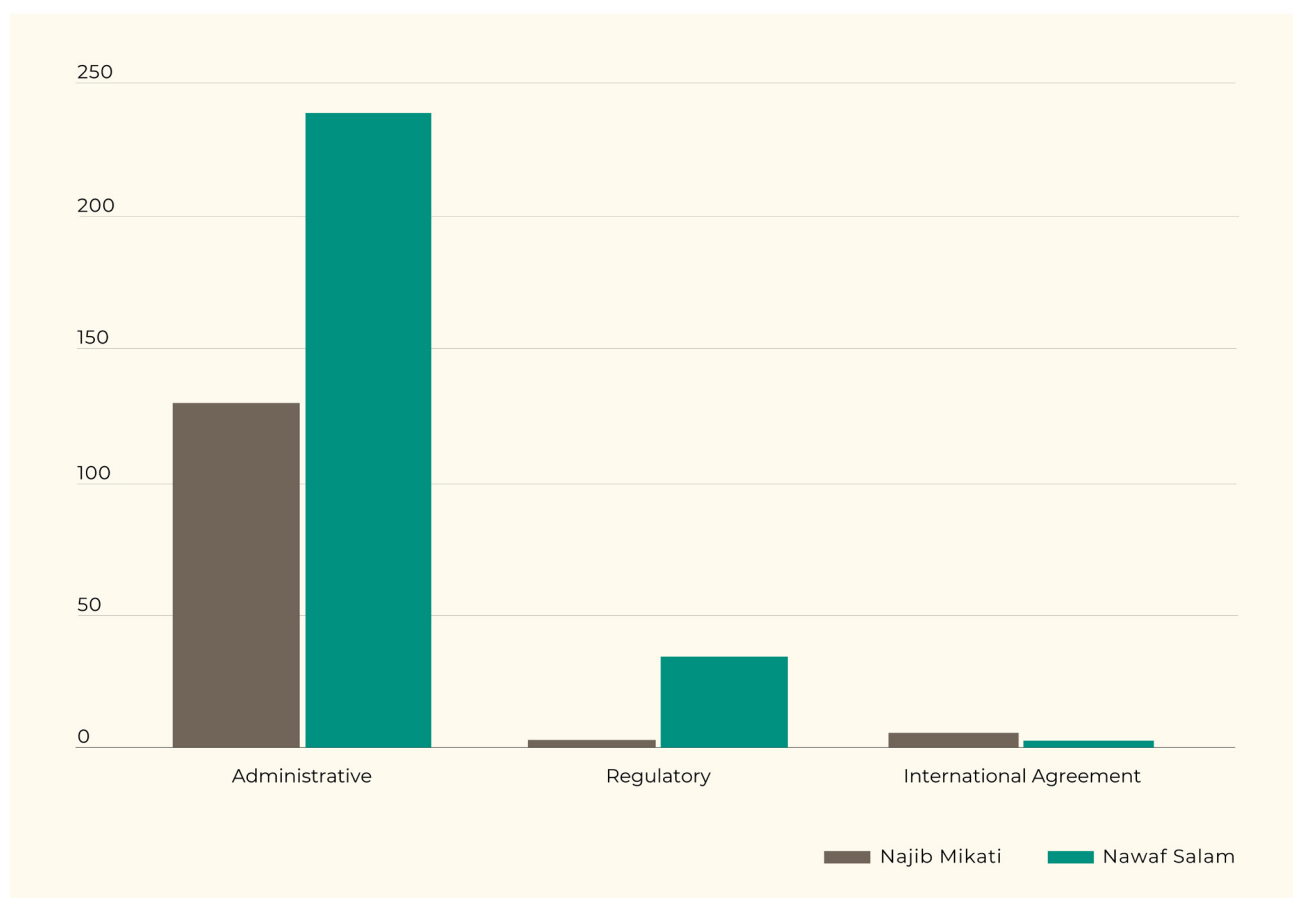
Legislative Activity

This subsection analyzes the legislative output of the Salam and Mikati governments

during their first 100 days in office, using decrees published in the Official Gazette as a measure of formal policy production. While this metric does not capture implementation or informal decision-making, it offers a standardized basis to compare the scope, frequency, and nature of legal instruments issued by the executive.

To interpret this output, the analysis distinguishes between two categories of decrees: regulatory texts, which introduce or modify legal and institutional frameworks; and administrative texts, which implement or apply existing rules, often through appointments, transfers, or procedural authorizations. This classification enables a more accurate assessment of whether executive action represents structural reform or routine governance.

Figure 2. Volume of legislative Outputs



The comparison shows that Salam's government issued 277 decrees and laws—almost double the 141 issued by Mikati's (Figure 2). This included a larger number of regulatory texts (35 vs. 4) and coverage in more policy areas. However, the majority of Salam's output remained administrative, and most regulatory actions were incremental. Aside from the amendment to the banking secrecy law, few decrees during this period addressed systemic constraints or introduced institutional change.

Taken together, the data suggest a more proactive legislative posture under Salam, but one still constrained by political fragmentation and limited bureaucratic capacity. The expansion in volume and coverage did not deliver a qualitative shift in reform depth.

2. Regulatory Texts: Volume and Scope

This subsection assesses regulatory output along three dimensions: (1) volume, or the number of regulatory texts issued; (2) breadth, or the range of distinct policy sectors covered; and (3) depth, or the degree to which texts introduced structural reforms as opposed to procedural clarifications or short-term measures.

A comparison of regulatory output reveals that Salam's government pursued a more active and wide-ranging agenda. Yet most of this activity was procedural, with limited structural impact. Mikati's government, by contrast, exhibited a much narrower and more reactive posture.

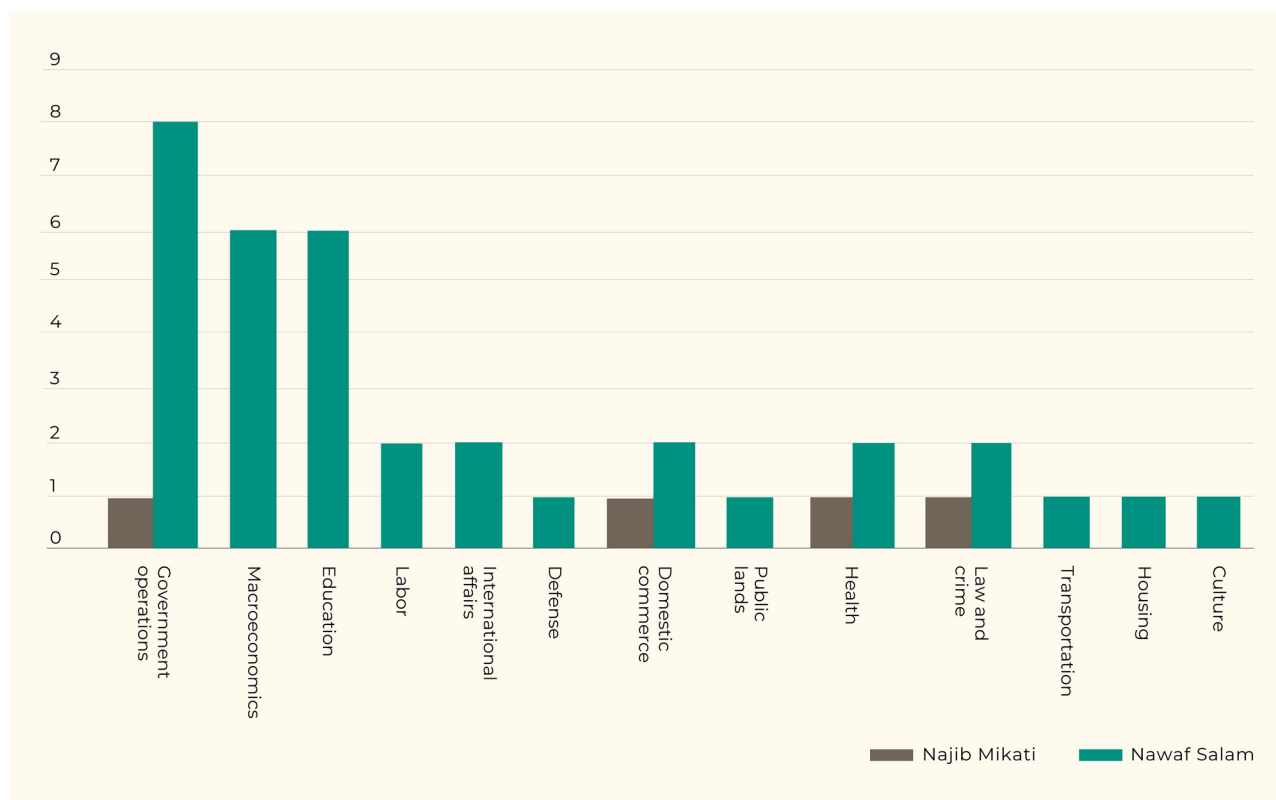
Volume: A Marked Disparity in Activity

Salam's cabinet issued 35 regulatory decrees during its first 100 days, compared to just 4 under Mikati. This near tenfold difference reflects a substantially more active use of the executive's regulatory authority. While this suggests a more assertive and engaged executive, volume alone does not capture the significance or effectiveness of these interventions. As detailed below, much of Salam's output was procedural or operational, with few instances of structural reform.

Breadth: A Wider Scope of Governance Engagement

Salam's cabinet issued regulatory texts across all 13 policy areas, with the highest activity in government operations, macroeconomics, and education (8 and 6 texts, respectively). Other areas of engagement included labor, health, international affairs, defense, and domestic commerce—each with one or two texts. Figure 3 compares the distribution of regulatory texts issued by Salam and Mikati across 13 policy areas.

Figure 3. Breadth of regulatory decrees by policy area



In contrast, Mikati's government issued only four regulatory texts during the same period, each limited to a single domain: health, law and crime. This reflects a markedly narrower regulatory footprint.

Moreover, Salam's government submitted two regulatory laws that were enacted by Parliament, including one reform amending the banking secrecy law. Mikati's government also saw two cabinet-initiated laws passed, though neither addressed structural reform.

Depth: Limited Structural Reform

Despite higher volume and broader coverage, the depth of Salam's regulatory activity was limited. Most texts were incremental, clarifying procedures, coordinating administration, or introducing short-term fixes. Key examples include compensation adjustments for public employees and pension fund top-ups. The only notable structural reform was the amendment to the banking secrecy law, which strengthened financial transparency and aligned Lebanon more closely with international standards (Annex 1). Mikati's regulatory output was limited in depth and stood in sharp contrast to Salam's broader, though mostly procedural, regulatory agenda. Aside from a decree on organizing parliamentary elections—which was criticized for bypassing presidential approval—most of his decrees dealt with COVID-19 regulations, tourism tax incentives, and the referral of a fuel explosion case to the judiciary. These measures responded to immediate crises but did not seek to change institutional frameworks or introduce forward-looking reforms. By comparison, Salam produced far more regulatory texts across a wider range of sectors, but like Mikati, stopped short of pushing through systemic reforms.

3. Administrative Activity: Operational Engagement and Service Delivery

This subsection analyzes how Salam and Mikati used administrative decrees to manage day-to-day state operations. While such decrees do not typically create new legal frameworks, they offer insight into how the executive allocates resources, exercises personnel authority, and manages regulatory permissions. This analysis focuses on four categories most revealing of institutional behavior:

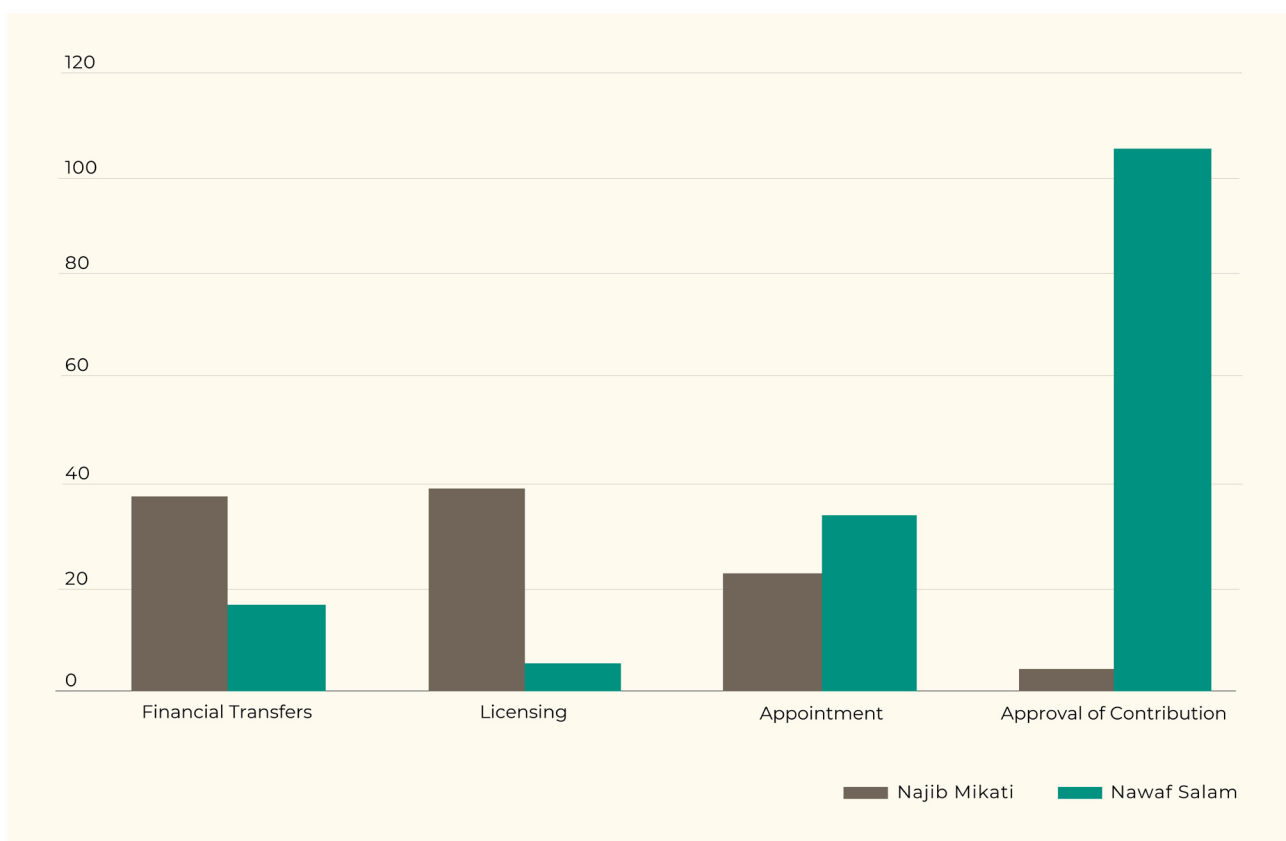
- ◊ Public sector appointments
- ◊ Extra-budgetary financial transfers
- ◊ Licensing activity
- ◊ Acceptance of domestic and international contributions

By comparing the volume, distribution, and content of decrees in these areas, this subsection evaluates how each government navigated institutional responsibilities during its first 100 days. Salam's government issued 239 administrative texts, compared to 131 under Mikati. It made more appointments and attracted more contributions, but authorized fewer transfers and licenses. This suggests a partial shift away from discretionary spending and licensing toward institution-building and external engagement, though its durability remains uncertain.

These findings indicate recalibration rather than rupture. Salam's government appears to have used administrative tools more selectively and with a broader institutional footprint, though whether this reflects a deliberate reform strategy or contextual constraints remains open to further assessment.

Across the four key categories, Salam's government issued 35 public sector appointments across multiple institutional domains (versus 23 under Mikati), authorized 17 financial transfers amounting to \$32 million (compared to 39 transfers totaling \$104 million under Mikati), and granted 6 licenses in sectors such as education and media, whereas Mikati's government issued 40 licenses, with a large share related to arms and ammunition trade (Figure 4). Salam's government also approved 107 external contributions totaling \$14 million (compared to 5 contributions worth \$241,536 under Mikati).

Figure 4. Distribution of administrative decrees by function: Mikati vs. Salam



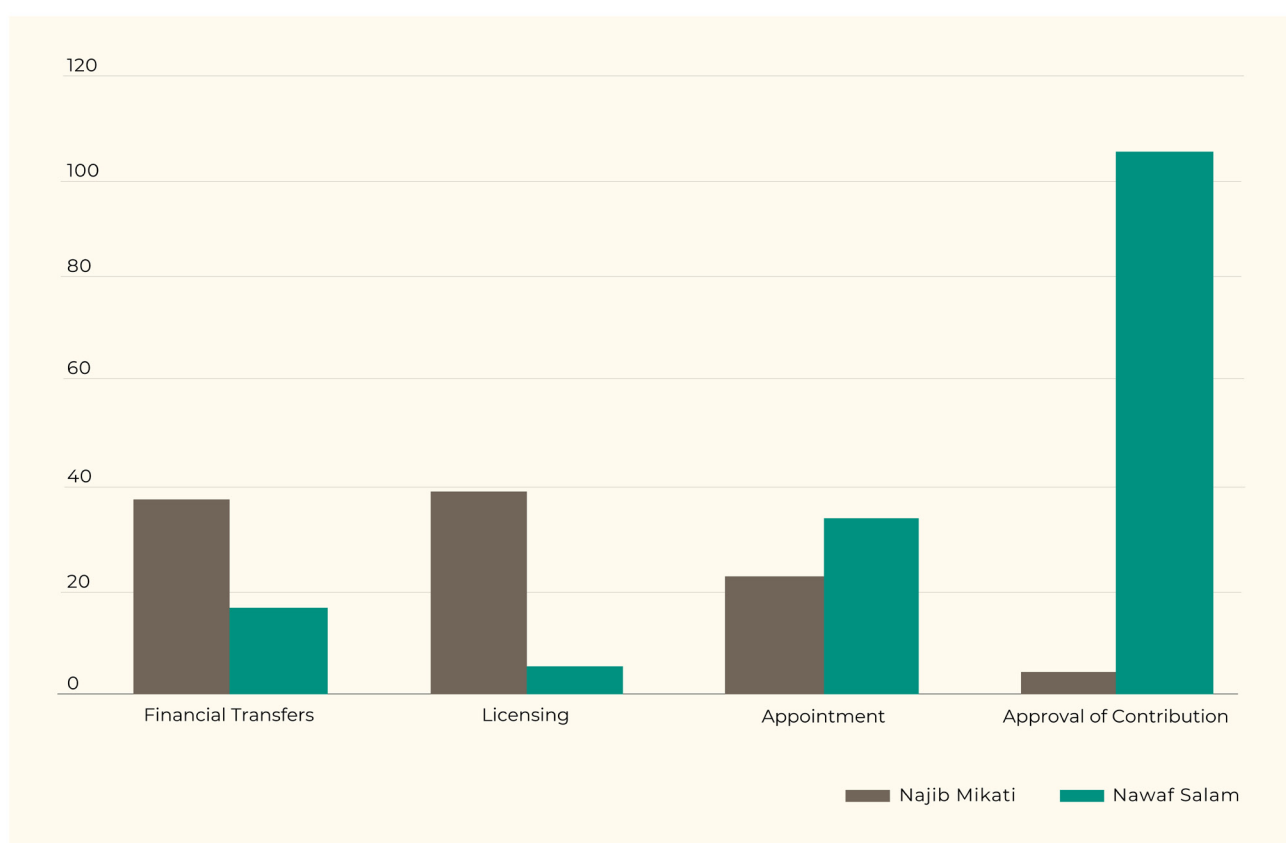
Appointments

Appointments provide insight into how each government exercised authority to manage and reconfigure public institutions. During its first 100 days, the Salam government issued 35 appointment decrees, nearly double the 23 issued under Mikati. According to the Prime Minister's office, these appointments were made through competitive procedures rather than political patronage, signaling a deliberate shift away from clientelist selections.

While both governments made appointments in the judicial and administrative sectors, Salam's activity was broader, covering nine institutional categories, including areas Mikati left untouched (Figure 5). Most notably, Salam made seven senior appointments in defense and security, compared to none under Mikati. He also refrained from symbolic or honorary designations, issuing just one appointment versus Mikati's three. This pattern suggests Salam's use of executive appointments was more targeted, and merit based.⁵

5. L'Orient Today. 2024. "Salam Government Adopts Skills-Based Mechanism for Appointments." L'Orient Today, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1452643/salam-government-adopts-skills-based-mechanism-for-appointments.html>

Figure 5. Distribution of appointments by institutional category: Mikati vs. Salam



Financial Transfers

In public finance, Mikati's government authorized 39 budget transfers totaling approximately \$104 million, while Salam's administration approved just 17 totaling around \$32 million—a reduction of nearly 60% in both number and value.⁶

Beyond scale, differences in concentration and purpose point to shifts in fiscal practice. Mikati's transfers spanned 11 ministries and agencies, while Salam's were confined to 7 (Figure 6). In Salam's case, reserve transfers were fewer and narrower in scope. Sectors like Defense, and Social Affairs, which received transfers under Mikati, did not under Salam, suggesting either greater reliance on pre-approved budget lines or tighter short-term spending priorities.

Licensing Activity

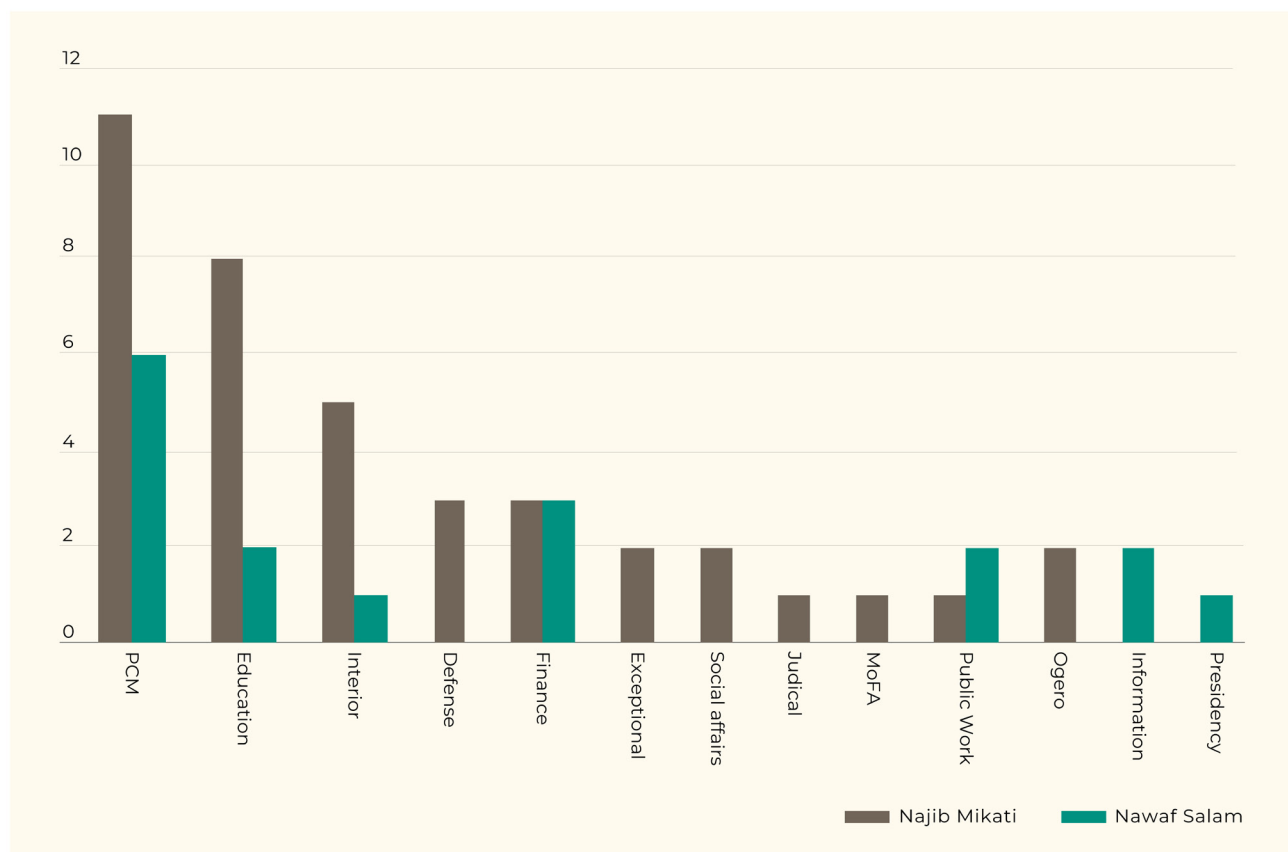
During their first 100 days, Mikati's cabinet issued 40 licenses, while Salam issued 6. High licensing volumes often raise concerns about politicized or discretionary gate-keeping. The category breakdown (Figure 7) highlights the divergent political roles of licensing. Roughly 72% of Mikati's licenses were arms-related, with 25 approvals to trade in hunting weapons alone—more than the total number of licenses Salam issued across all sectors. Salam's 6 approvals were evenly split: 2 for weapons, 2 for private schools, and 2 for radio stations.

The more striking disparity lies in overall volume. The sharp contrast suggests that under Mikati, licensing—including commercial and private authorizations—functioned as a discretionary governance tool often vulnerable to clientelist allocation, whereas

6. Financial transfer amounts under Najib Mikati were calculated using the average exchange rate of 22,104 LBP per USD. For Nawaf Salam, amounts were calculated based on the current parallel market rate of 89,500 LBP per USD.

Salam's limited licensing indicates either restraint or reduced demand in a stagnant economy.

Figure 6. Sector distribution of budget transfers: Mikati vs. Salam



Contributions

One of the most striking contrasts lies in contribution decrees, which authorize financial or in-kind support. During its first 100 days, Salam's government approved 107 contributions totaling about \$14 million from 86 donors—42 international and 44 domestic. By contrast, Mikati's cabinet approved only 5 contributions worth roughly \$241,536 from 5 donors (3 international and 2 domestic).⁷

This gulf highlights differences in scale and diversity. Salam mobilized multilateral actors such as UNHCR, UNOPS, and the Islamic Development Fund, which accounted for over half of total inflows, signaling renewed international engagement. By contrast, Mikati's largest item—furnishings for the embassy in Qatar—was inward-facing. Most of Salam's inflows were in-kind capital assets for security forces and regional water utilities.

7. The rate used to calculate Najib Mikati's approval of contributions from Lebanese pounds (LBP) to US dollars was the official exchange rate of 1,507 LBP per USD. For Nawaf Salam, contributions were calculated using the prevailing parallel market rate of 89,500 LBP per USD.

Figure 7. Licensing activity by type: Mikati vs. Salam

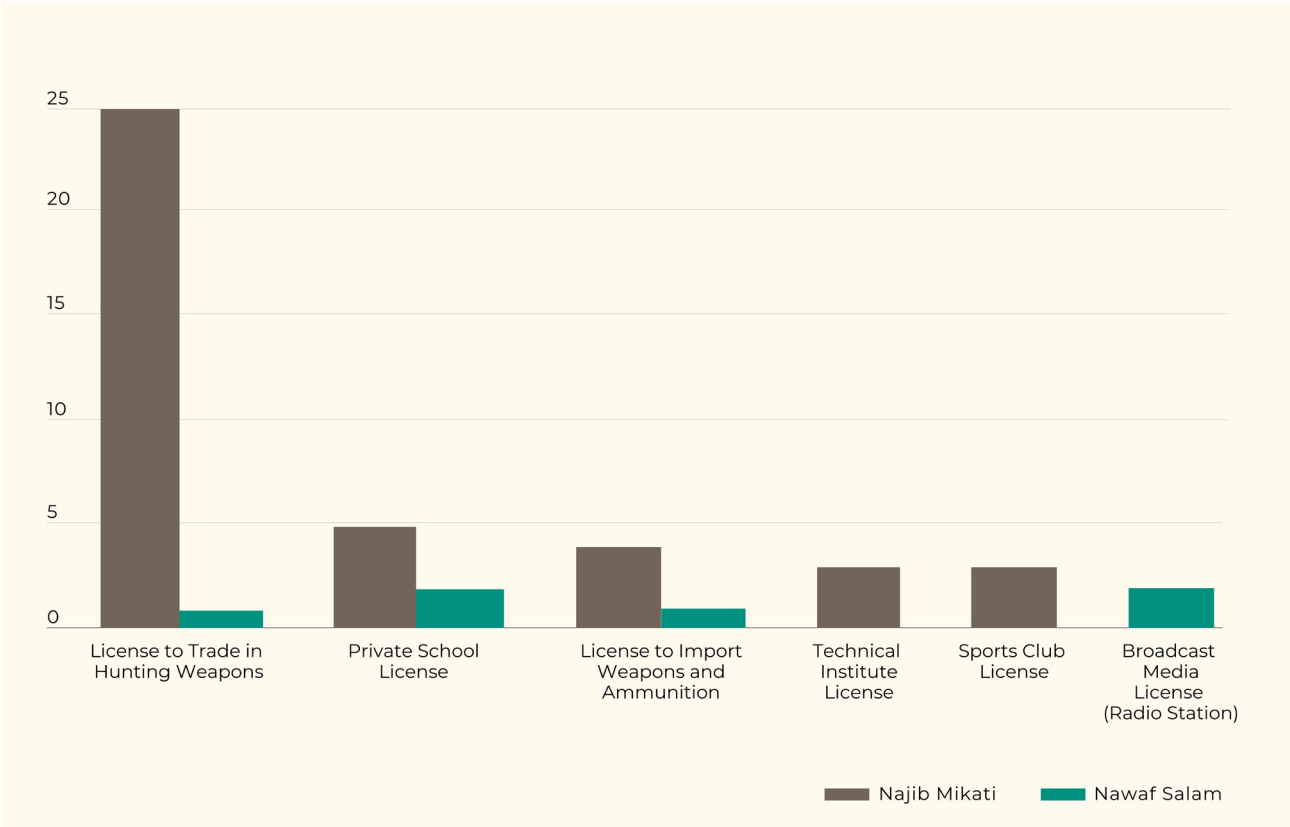
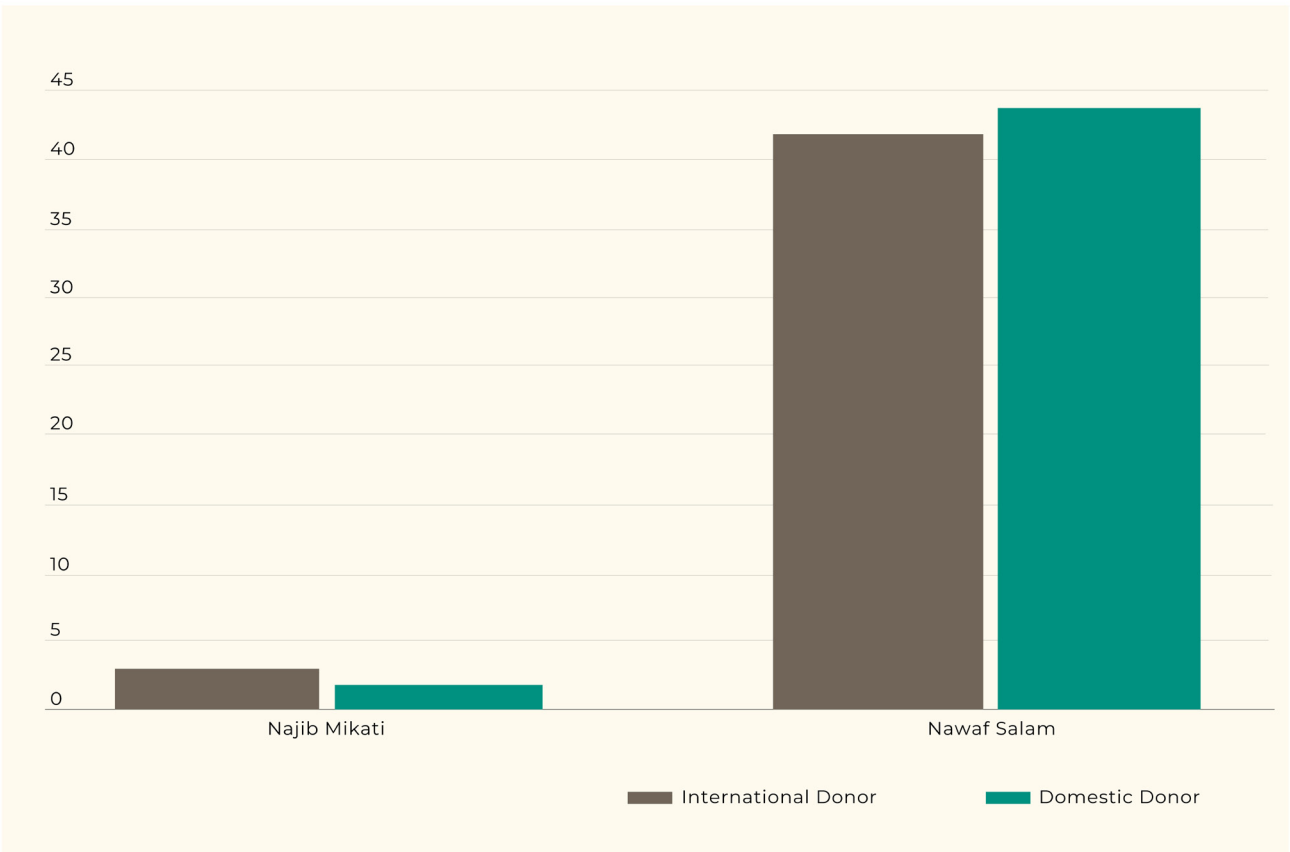


Figure 8. Number of donors by type: Mikati vs. Salam



Benchmarking Salam's Government Against Current Priorities

This section assesses the early policy record of Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's government during its first 100 days in office (February 26 – June 6, 2025) against three priority areas widely recognized as essential to Lebanon's recovery: (1) progress toward an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), (2) initiation of post-war reconstruction, and (3) operationalization of the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS). These benchmarks reflect not only the expectations of Lebanon's international partners and reform-oriented stakeholders, but also the minimum requirements for state functionality in the aftermath of financial collapse and armed conflict.

The analysis finds that while the government re-engaged on several dormant files, progress across these domains remained partial. On IMF-related reforms, Salam's cabinet advanced key legislative items—including amendments to the banking secrecy law and a draft bank resolution framework—but major conditions remain unmet. On reconstruction, activity was largely limited to diplomatic outreach and financing commitments, with minimal on-the-ground implementation. On social protection, the government resumed inter-ministerial planning around the NSPS but remained reliant on donor-funded cash assistance schemes, without advancing the strategy's structural pillars.

Taken together, these early steps suggest a shift from executive paralysis to policy reactivation. However, the overall trajectory remains tentative. Reform momentum is constrained by entrenched veto players, weak institutional capacity, and a fiscal environment still shaped by short-term crisis management. Whether these initial measures constitute the foundation for systemic recovery—or simply a temporary revival of process—remains unresolved.

1. IMF Negotiations and Financial Reforms

Re-engagement with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) 2022 staff-level agreement has become a key test of the Salam government's commitment to structural reform. The \$3 billion agreement, stalled under the previous caretaker government, ties disbursement to eight core prior actions—many of which are still only partially implemented.⁸

In the financial sector, the Cabinet approved a 39-clause Bank Resolution Law and submitted it to Parliament in May for approval.⁹ A deposit recovery and bank restructuring strategy was also drafted by a government-appointed committee, but the IMF

8. International Monetary Fund. 2022. "IMF Reaches Agreement on Economic Policies with Lebanon for a Four-Year Fund Facility." IMF News, April 7, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/04/07/pr22108-imf-reaches-agreement-on-economic-policies-with-lebanon-for-a-four-year-fund-facility>

9. On July 31, 2025, Parliament approved the Bank Resolution Law, and it was published in the Official Gazette on August 7, 2025.

has not endorsed it due to concerns about international standards and debt sustainability.¹⁰ In addition, the government has yet to launch the mandatory external audit of Lebanon's 14 largest commercial banks.

The most tangible progress came in April, when Parliament adopted amendments to the Bank Secrecy Law, granting regulators ten years of access to account data—a reform welcomed by the IMF¹¹. However, the central bank's audit of its foreign assets remains unpublished, and no official update has been issued. On the fiscal front, Lebanon has yet to adopt a medium-term revenue and expenditure framework to improve transparency and create fiscal space for social protection and investment. Meanwhile, capital control legislation remains stalled in Parliament.¹²

Overall, while the Salam government has reactivated several dormant reform files and achieved incremental gains, major gaps persist—particularly in banking diagnostics, loss recognition, and fiscal planning.

2. Post-Conflict Reconstruction Efforts

In the aftermath of the 2024 Israeli assault, Lebanon faces its most serious reconstruction test since 2006. A World Bank-led Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA), published in March 2025, estimated \$6.8 billion in physical damage and \$7.2 billion in economic losses, with total recovery needs surpassing \$14 billion.¹³

Despite Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's public commitment to "rescue, reform, and rebuild," no national recovery strategy has been issued.¹⁴ A ministerial committee—expanded to five members in March 2025—was formed to oversee reconstruction, but has yet to take substantive action.¹⁵ On the financing front, the government did not allocate resources from Account 36 (the state-held fund of about \$7 billion) to recovery efforts.¹⁶ No compensation framework has been introduced for displaced or affected populations.

Some procurement steps were taken. On January 13, Lebanon's Public Procurement Authority finalized rubble removal tenders for Nabatieh and surrounding areas. Beta Engineering and Contracting was awarded contracts covering Jezzine, Sidon, Nabatieh, Hasbaya, Western Bekaa, and Tyre, while Elie Maalouf Company (EMC) was assigned to Bint Jbeil district.¹⁷

According to Elie Mansour, co-lead of the UN Debris Taskforce, rubble clearance has reached nearly 100% in Beirut's southern suburbs and the Beqaa, and around 80% in the South. In the suburbs, rubble was moved quickly to temporary sites to facilitate resi-

10. International Monetary Fund. 2025. "IMF Staff Concludes Mission to Lebanon." IMF News, June 5, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2025/06/05/pr-25182-lebanon-imf-staff-concludes-mission-to-lebanon>

11. L'Orient Today. 2025. "Parliament Approves Banking Secrecy Bill." L'Orient Today, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1457278/parliament-approves-banking-secrecy-bill.html>

12. Soueid, K. 2025. "Captive to the Banks: How Karim Soueid's Appointment Signals the End of Reform." The Policy Initiative, <https://www.thepolicyinitiative.org/article/details/446/captive-to-the-banks-how-karim-soueid%E2%80%99s-appointment-signals-the-end-of-reform>

13. World Bank. 2025. "Lebanon's Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Estimated at US\$11 Billion." Press Release, March 7, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2025/03/07/lebanon-s-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-estimated-at-us-11-billion>

14. Middle East Eye. 2025. "Lebanon's Nawaf Salam Is Failing to Rebuild While Bending to US and Israeli Interests." Middle East Eye, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/lebanon-nawaf-salam-failing-rebuild-while-bending-us-israel-interests>

15. Al-Akhbar. 2025. "تخصيص 2.7 مليار دولار لإعادة الهيكلة... الحكومة تدير ظهرها." Al-Akhbar, <https://www.al-akhbar.com/lebanon/847700>

16. Ibid.

17. Al-Akhbar. 2025. "مصالح وأطماع تؤخر رفع الركام في الجنوب." Al-Akhbar, <https://www.al-akhbar.com/lebanon/827571>

dents' return. In the Beqaa and South, however, further transport to official sites hinges on the disbursement of a World Bank loan¹⁸. Municipalities in these regions have acted within their limited means, lacking both guidance and funding from central authorities.¹⁹

As of its first 100 days in office, the Salam government has made only modest procedural progress. While rubble removal is largely complete, a national reconstruction plan is still absent, and no clear roadmap exists for what comes next.

3. National Social Protection Strategy

Lebanon's National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS), finalized in early 2022 with technical support from UNICEF and the ILO, offers the country's first comprehensive, rights-based framework for universal social protection. Developed through a multi-year consultation process, the NSPS envisions a structural shift away from Lebanon's fragmented, sectarian, and privilege-based welfare model. It introduces a lifecycle- and pillar-based framework encompassing social assistance, social insurance, access to services, and labor inclusion. Its goal is to progressively build a unified, rights-based system that guarantees protection for all—regardless of political affiliation or income level.²⁰

On 14 March 2025, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam reaffirmed the government's intention to implement the NSPS and enact changes to the NSSF.²¹ Earlier, on 26 February, the Minister of Social Affairs, Haneen el Sayed confirmed the continuation of the World Bank loan-financed Aman emergency social safety net (ESSN),²² a targeted cash-transfer program serving about 800,000 individuals of an estimated 1.4 million people living in poverty.²³

Beyond these announcements, the Social Affairs Minister signaled activation of a Social Safety Net Task Force, system upgrades across development service centers, and an intention to propose a Social Safety Nets Law.²⁴ However, within the first 100 days, the Ministry is yet to no publicly make available a concrete roadmap, legislative timetable, or financing plan to operationalize the NSPS. While Aman provides essential short-term relief, reliance on a single, donor-dependent, poverty-targeted program is not a substitute for structural reform. Advancing a rights-based system requires codified entitlements across the life cycle, supported by predictable financing and institutional guarantees.

18. The New Arab. 2025. "Explainer: How Lebanon Is Handling the Rubble Left by Israel's War." The New Arab, <https://www.newarab.com/features/explainer-how-lebanon-handling-rubble-left-israels-war>

19. The New Humanitarian. 2025. "Challenges Confront Lebanon on Long Road to Reconstruction." The New Humanitarian, January 16, <http://thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2025/01/16/challenges-confront-lebanon-long-road-reconstruction>

20. The Policy Initiative. 2023. "Intentions Are Not Enough: Lebanon Must Adopt the National Social Protection Strategy." The Policy Initiative, <https://www.thepolicyinitiative.org/article/details/190/intentions-are-not-enough-lebanon-must-adopt-the-national-social-protection-strategy>

21. National News Agency. 2025. "Salam Heads Meeting on Social Safety Nets Reform." NNA, <https://nna-leb.gov.lb/en/politics/765725/salam-heads-meeting-on-social-safety-nets-reform-s>

22. National News Agency. 2025. "الشؤون: تحويل المساعدات للمستفيدين من برنامج 'أمان' بدءاً من اليوم." National News Agency, February 26 <https://nna-leb.gov.lb/ar/762061/اقتصاد>

23. Arab News. 2025. "Lebanon's Cabinet Approves 2025 Budget with Record Deficit." Arab News, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2593623/middle-east>

24. Arab News. 2025. "Lebanon's Cabinet Approves 2025 Budget with Record Deficit." Arab News, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2593623/middle-east>

Conclusion

The first hundred days of the Salam government mark a clear departure from executive paralysis but not yet the onset of substantive reform. The government has demonstrated greater administrative discipline, transparency, and engagement than its predecessor. Cabinet meetings are regular, decrees are more numerous and diverse, and donor relations have been revived.

However, this activation has not yet evolved into structural reform. Most decrees have remained procedural rather than transformative, and the core pillars of national recovery—IMF reforms, post-war reconstruction, and the National Social Protection Strategy—have not advanced beyond partial reactivation. The persistence of entrenched veto powers continues to constrain transformative implementation.

The government's next phase will therefore determine whether Lebanon's renewed administrative activity can translate into systemic change. Sustained progress will depend on moving from procedural governance to rule-based reform. Without such a shift, Lebanon risks remaining in a state of energetic but contained stagnation.

Annex 1: Regulatory decrees activity

Decree #	Date	Description
Najib Mikati		
8377	October 14, 2021	Referral of the case of the explosion that occurred in the Tleil area on August 15, 2021, in Akkar to the Judicial Council.
8406	October 28, 2021	Extension of the declaration of general mobilization to confront the spread of the coronavirus.
Nawaf Salam		
56	March 13, 2025	Considering the 2025 budget draft, subject of the draft law referred to the Parliament by Decree No. 14076 dated 4-10-2024, as valid and in effect
56	March 13, 2025	(Continued) Considering the 2025 budget draft, subject of the draft law referred to the Parliament by Decree No. 14076 dated 4-10-2024, as valid and in effect

Decree #	Date	Description
96	April 3, 2025	Pertains to the procedures for the use and repayment of Lebanon's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund
189	April 17, 2025	Aims to grant a temporary allowance to all employees of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education
131	April 17, 2025	Exempting the Ministry of Education and Higher Education – Directorate General of Education – Examinations Department from holding the official Brevet exams for 2025 for ninth-grade students enrolled in public and private schools for the 2024–2025 academic year
207	May 1, 2025	Opening an additional credit in the 2025 general budget under the shared expenses section to fund pension payments
213	May 1, 2025	Establishing procedures for preparing and publishing annual reports of public water investment institutions
209	May 1, 2025	Canceling official exams for the “Professional Complementary” and “Preparatory Technical Qualification” certificates and the entrance exams to the first year of the Professional Complementary Certificate for those who completed a (400) or (800)-hour training course for 2025
214	May 1, 2025	Amending certain articles and annexes of Decree No. 6971 dated 4-7-1995 (regulating implementation of the law establishing the Housing Authority for Volunteer Military Personnel)
215	May 1, 2025	Amending Decree No. 5671 dated September 20, 2019 (exempting all customs duties, including the minimum customs fee)
210	May 1, 2025	Amending compensations for examining committees and monitoring bodies in the competitions and exams conducted by the Civil Service Council

Decree #	Date	Description
198	May 1, 2025	Extending the enforcement of Decree No. 3065 dated 12-3-2016 (organizing the general inventory of movable antiquities)
235	May 8, 2025	Amending the schedule annexed to Decree No. 780-1971 concerning fees for housing impounded vehicles (as amended by Decrees No. 4340 dated 10-11-1993, No. 6624 dated 26-10-2001, and No. 7793 dated 20-3-2012)
275	May 15, 2025	Amending the fixed monthly compensation for the Chairman and members of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority
320	May 16, 2025	Amending the appointment of primary and higher electoral registration committees in the electoral districts
343	May 23, 2025	Amending the schedules of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursors
342	May 23, 2025	Amending the schedules of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and precursors
330	May 23, 2025	Defining the special and travel compensation for employees delegated to carry out electoral duties
359	May 29, 2025	Amending the fee amounts collected by the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture in Sidon and the South
353	May 29, 2025	Setting the maximum number of Lebanese civilian nationals who may be granted national medals or promoted within medal ranks in 2025
354	May 29, 2025	Authorizing courts to hold sessions outside their official premises
402	June 5, 2025	Amending Decree No. 13973-2024 regarding the identification of the most representative bodies of employers and employees



THE
POLICY
INITIATIVE

TPI is a homegrown and independent think tank that aims to critically and empirically assess existing policies and to generate meaningful alternatives. We endeavor to shape a well-researched and evidence-based policy vision that is representative of the interests of the broader public and to empower people in demanding a better alternative.

www.thepolicyinitiative.org