



Anti-Syrian Parties Win Uncontested Lebanon Races

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BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) -- Druse leader Walid Jumblatt and his ally, Marwan Hamadeh, have won uncontested seats in Lebanon's parliamentary elections, bringing to 17 out of 128 the number of seats already decided on the eve of the polls, the government said Saturday.

Jumblatt, who was the most vocal anti-Syrian voice in Lebanon following the February assassination of former Premier Rafik Hariri, and Hamadeh, a Druse former economy minister who survived an Oct. 1 assassination attempt, guaranteed their seats in the Chouf district of Mount Lebanon because there were no challengers.

The four-stage elections, which begin Sunday, will be the first since Syria withdrew its troops from Lebanon last month, ending a 29-year military presence. The crucial polls, which many hope will sweep the opposition to power and break Syria's hold on the legislature, have been marked by a series of withdrawals of candidates amid changing public sentiment and the forging of alliances by influential politicians. Disputes within the opposition have also affected the race.

Beirut votes on Sunday and the balloting continues on three consecutive Sundays in other regions. Mount Lebanon votes June 12.

A total of six candidates in southern Lebanon, including the slain premier's sister Bahiya, and nine opposition candidates on the 19-member Beirut ticket of his son, Saad Hariri, have won uncontested seats.

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