

Hourani Gives a Lecture on Lebanese Out-Of-Country Voting at a Workshop in Tokyo, Japan

December 12, 2012

As part of its mission, the Japan Center for Middle Eastern Studies (JaCMES) invited Ms. Guita Hourani, Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) to give a lecture at a workshop under the title of “The Proposed Electoral Law for 2013 and Out-Of-Country Voting: Marginalization of the Lebanese Diaspora Engagement”, which was held at the Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA) of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS).

Following a brief introduction by Professor Hidemitsu Kuroki to an audience comprising of the Director of the Doctoral College, professors, researchers, and Ph.D. students, Hourani began her lecture by providing her audience with an overview of the efforts to grant Lebanese citizens living abroad the right to participate in parliamentary elections in Lebanon through out-of-country voting. She analyzed the political positions of the various political parties and parliamentary blocks, concerning the most recent Electoral Law proposal and its articles governing the participation of Lebanese expatriates in the 2013 election and the potential effect of out-of-country voting on the current political state in the country.



Figure 1. Director Hourani Delivers Her Lecture on Out-Of-Country Voting (Tokyo December 12, 2012)

Hourani discussed how the current Lebanese government proposes to allocate six new parliamentary seats, which will be filled largely by those elected by Lebanese expatriates while discussing the fact that a previous government found the allocation of twelve seats “unconstitutional” and “discriminatory”.

She also discussed at length the geographical distribution and estimated number of Lebanese expatriates as well as the estimated cost of out-of-country voting. Hourani further debated the procrastination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants in setting up a viable mechanism for out-of-country voting for the 2013 parliamentary elections and the unfounded claim by the same Ministry that Lebanese expatriates are apathetic to out-of-country voting. A Q & A session followed the lecture.