Political institutions in Iraq and Lebanon are populated on the basis of sectarian and ethnic-based power-sharing arrangements. These structures are designed to reduce intercommunal political tensions but can in fact create perverse self-serving incentives for state officials and lead to poor governance outcomes. Such self-reinforcing trends may worsen division and animosity between sectarian communities and undermine prospects for peace and prosperity.

For more information on sectarianism in these countries, please see “The Summer of Our Discontent: Sects and Citizens in Lebanon and Iraq” by Maha Yahya.