

Electoral Campaigns Started on TV

Report on Television coverage of Parliamentary elections

**Summary of analysis of media coverage
monitoring data of February 2022**



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The pace of electoral campaigns and political positions in addition to the involvement of parties, activists and political leaders in preparing for the electoral battle has increased with the approach of the elections after a relative calm in the past few months. This was highlighted by the study of monitoring the coverage of television stations of the upcoming parliamentary elections for the month of February, which is being carried out by Maharat Foundation in partnership with UNESCO. This monitoring report covers the fourth month in a row as it shows political and media indicators related to the electoral process by keeping pace with television stations¹

The monitoring process extended to include the media coverage of the electoral matter and the media appearance of political actors in the various news² and political dialogue³ programs of the Lebanese TV channels from ten in the morning until midnight throughout the month of February. The following seven stations were monitored: OTV, MTV, LBCI, ALMANAR, NBN, ALJADEED, Tele Liban. This monitoring allows keeping up with what these stations broadcast about the upcoming parliamentary elections during their political programs and news bulletins, identifying the people (politicians, activists and actors) who appear on screens, the duration of their appearance on the screen, the prevailing general rhetorical tone, the position of women in the media space, and the issues of electoral education and others concerns that accompanies the media discourse.

¹ Previous monitoring studies are available on the following link: [November](#), [December](#), [January](#)

² The monitoring process included the afternoon and evening news bulletins.

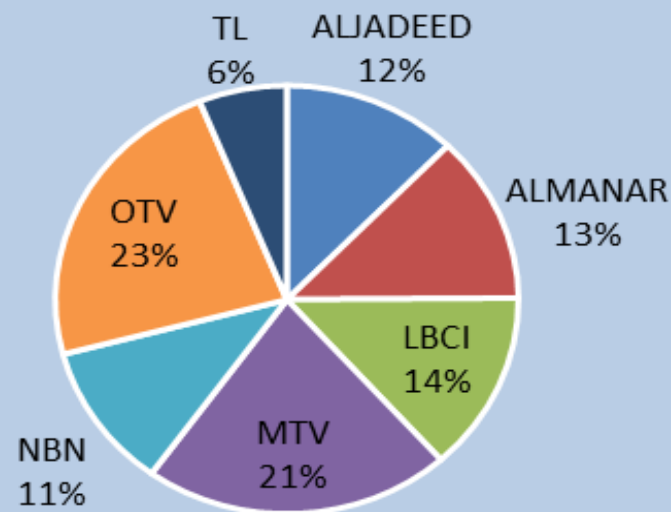
³ The number of the monitored talk shows reached 27 programs distributed among the TV channels as follows: 3 programs on ALMANAR, 4 programs on NBN and ALJADEED, 5 programs on MTV, LBCI, OTV, and one program on TL.

1- Increased proportion of the political discourse

The time of public television media coverage during the month of February reached 359.411 seconds (about 64 hours), compared to 174.691 seconds (about 48 hours) during the month of January, an increase of more than 30%. The coverage was distributed in general among the seven channels as follows:

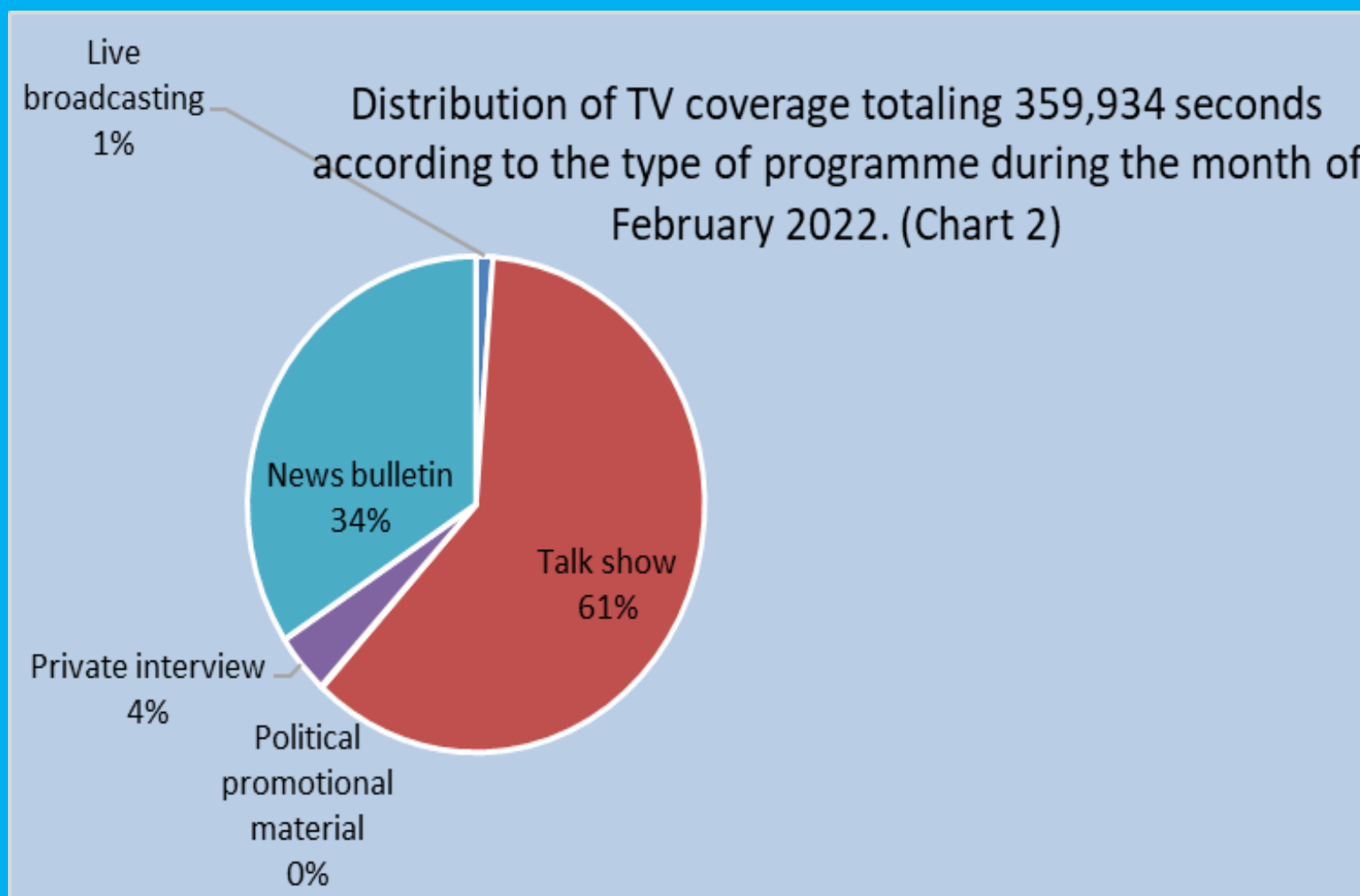
The channel with the most coverage is OTV, followed by MTV, LBCI, ALMANAR, ALJADEED and Tele Liban (Chart 1). What is also remarkable is the significant increase recorded by Al-Manar station during the month of February, where elections coverage time reached 13% of the total coverage while it didn't even reach 3% during the month of January.

Distribution of Lebanese TV stations total coverage of political actors for the parliamentary elections during the month of February 2022. (Chart 1)



Political actors' presences on the screens was distributed between talk shows and news bulletins, and their major presence was reached on talk shows with 61%, 34% on news bulletins, 4% on private interviews, and 1% for live broadcasts, while the stations have not yet allocated programs for political promotion (Chart No. 2).

The decrease in the percentage of live broadcasts by 1% indicates the delay in the launch of electoral campaigns, as well as the reluctance so far of some media outlets to open the air in a prominent way for electoral advertising and promotion.

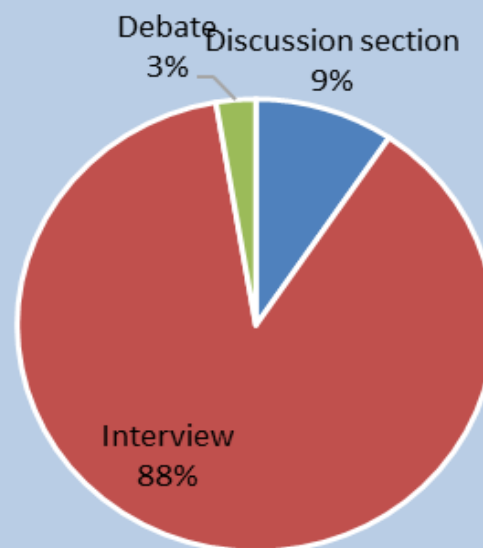


2- Types of TV dialogues

The duration of the monitored television dialogues of political actors amounted to 231.458 seconds (about 64 hours), distributed over the seven monitored TV channels as follows:

- 88% in the form of an interview with one guest of the political actors.
 - 9% in the form of a multi-faceted dialogue segment.
 - 3% in the form of a debate between candidates competing in the same electoral district (Chart No. 3).
- Here, it is apparent that the time of individual dialogue dominates the political discourse.

Distribution of the type of television discussion in comparison to the global time dedicated to it on monitored TV stations which totals 231,458 seconds during the month of February 2022. (Chart 3)

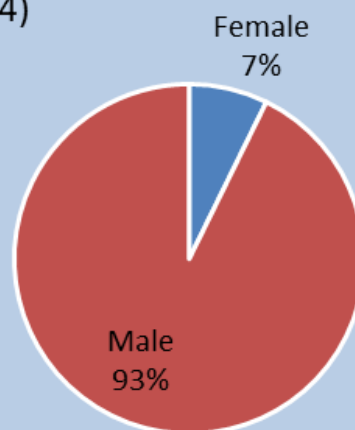


3- The constant marginalization of women

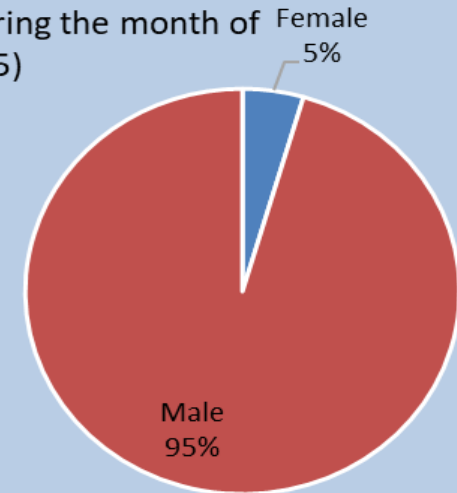
Women still suffer from marginalization in the media field, as they are not given enough opportunity to be interpreted in political positions. The study showed that the general media appearance of women in television coverage is 7%, compared to 93% for men (Chart No. 4), and this means that the difference between both genders is significantly large, which indicates the persistent marginalization of women in the media space.

This percentage drops to 5% in television news bulletins (Chart No. 5), and rises by a small percentage in talk shows coverage to 8%, which is also a very low percentage (Chart No. 6).

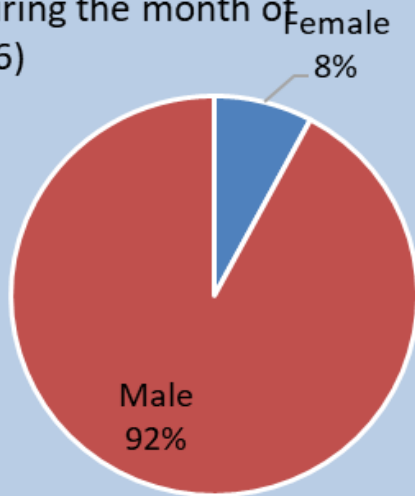
Distribution of the percentage of media appearance in TV coverage between men and women among political actors on a total of 274,776 seconds during the month of February 2022. (Chart 4)



Distribution of the percentage of media appearance on news bulletins coverage between men and women among political actors on a total of 46,632 seconds during the month of February 2022. (Chart 5)



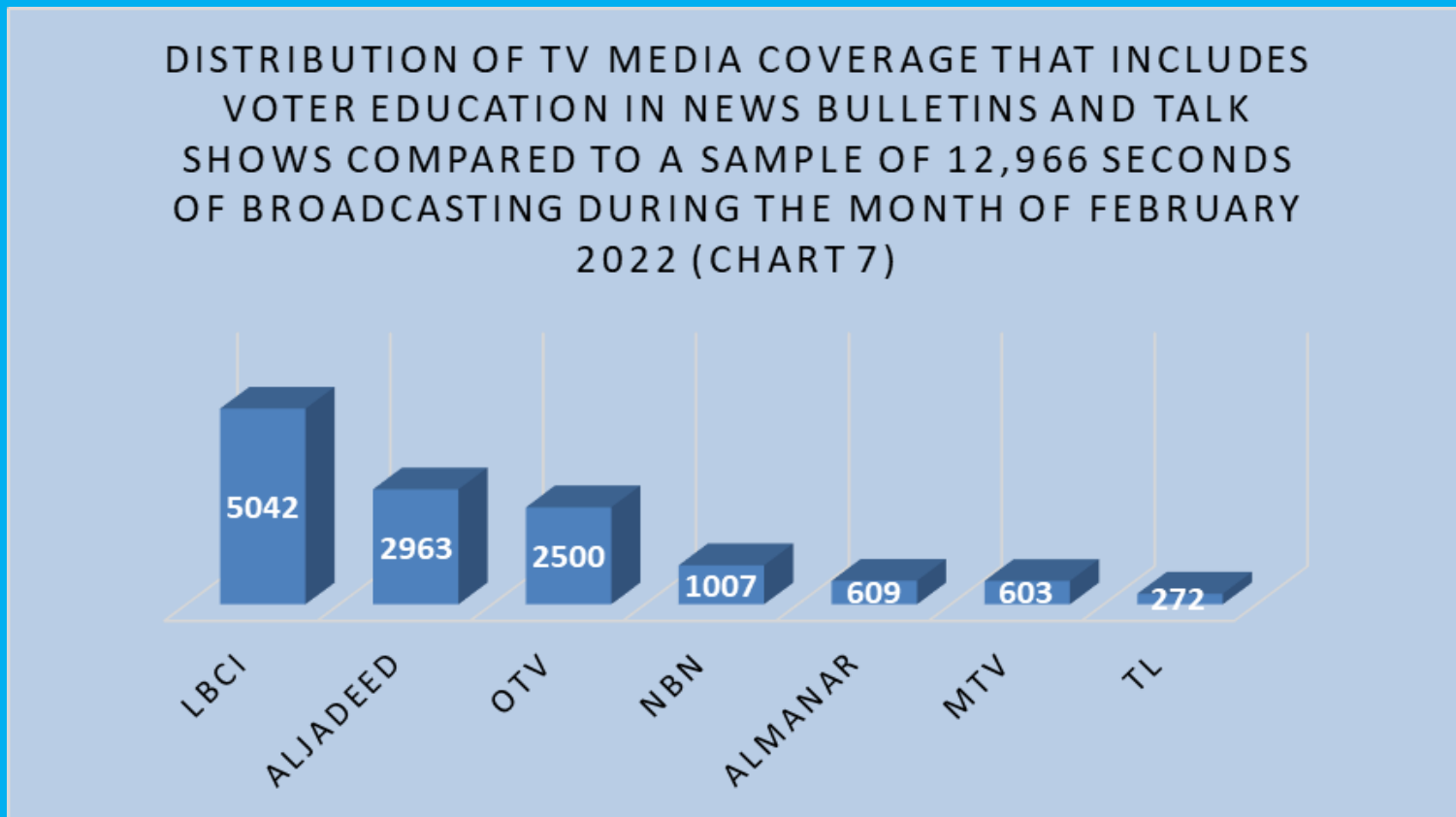
Distribution of the percentage of media appearance in talk shows coverage between men and women among political actors on a total of 228,144 seconds during the month of February 2022. (Chart 6)



4- The constant absence of electoral education

Do TV channels contribute to the electoral education process? An important question is on the verge of this entitlement, especially since the electoral media and advertising law stipulates this matter. In fact, there is no record of any electoral education material that was broadcast as an advertisement or as a separate segment from news coverage and talk shows.

However, the news and talk shows recorded a number of coverages that could be classified as electoral education material, in which LBCI took lead, followed by ALJADEED and then OTV. The time of these coverages and their distribution among the seven TV channels are as follows (Chart No. 7)

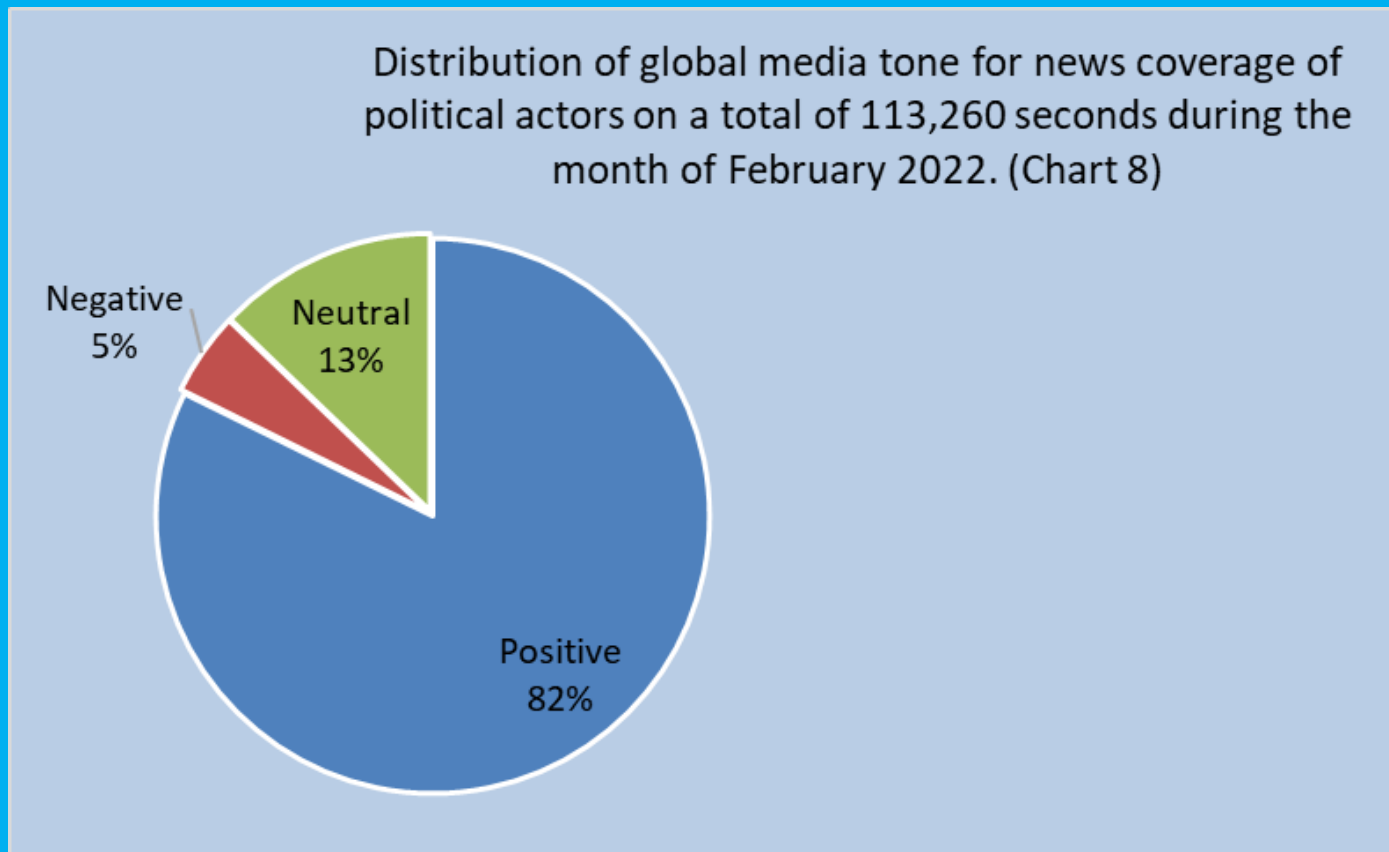


5- Media tone trends

How was the media tone distributed in relation to the political actors in the content of television news bulletins?

The percentage of the positive tone for political actors was 82%, the neutral tone was 13%, and the negative tone was 5% (Chart No. 8).

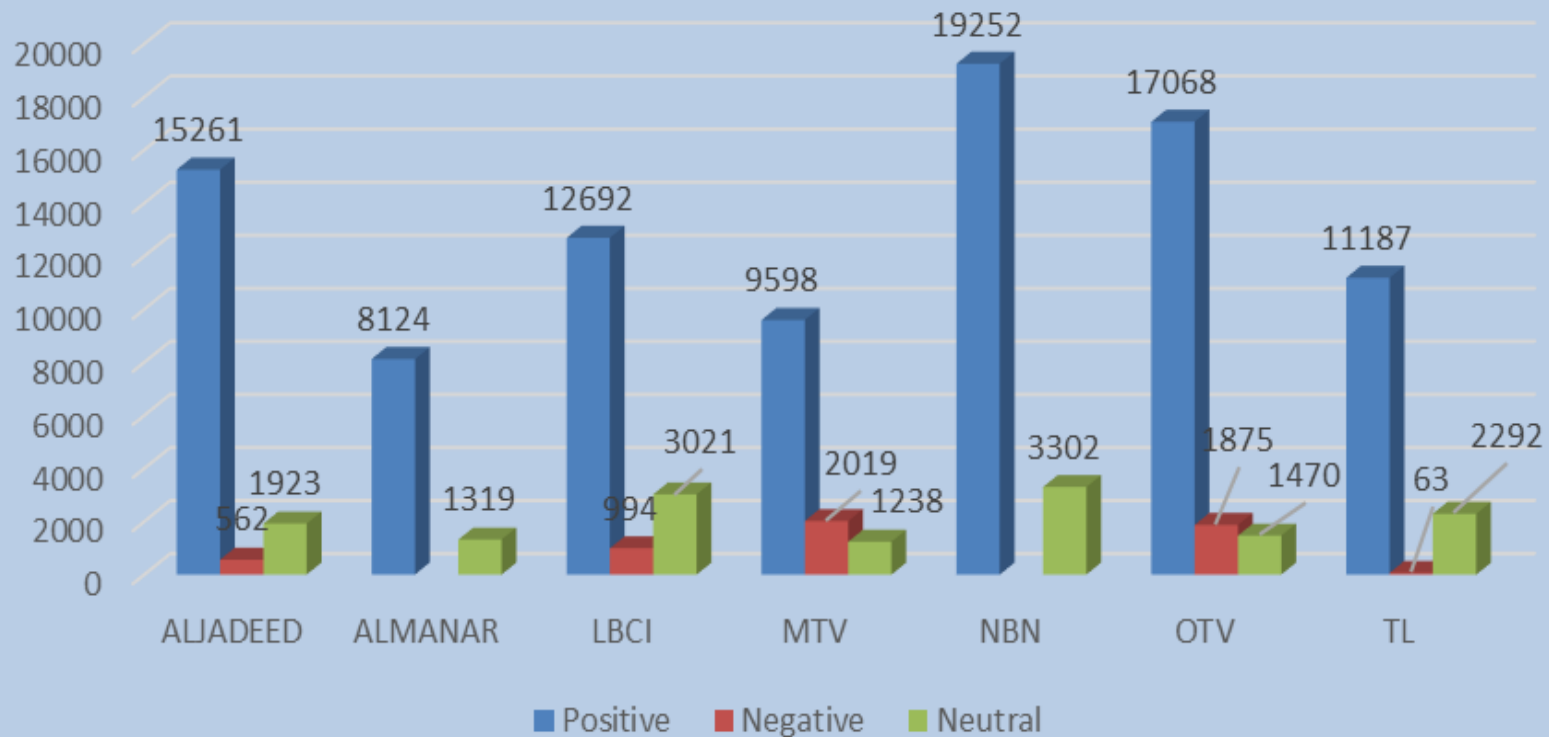
The high positive tone can be explained by the coverage of the activities and positions of political actors, which take up a large part of the news bulletins.



If we look at the content of the stations' news bulletins, we can see how the media tone is distributed in the news bulletins of each station. Chart No. 9 shows that the negative tone towards some political actors reached 2,019 seconds on MTV, followed by OTV, then LBCI.

On the other hand, no negative tone towards political actors was recorded in the news reports on NBN and ALMANAR.

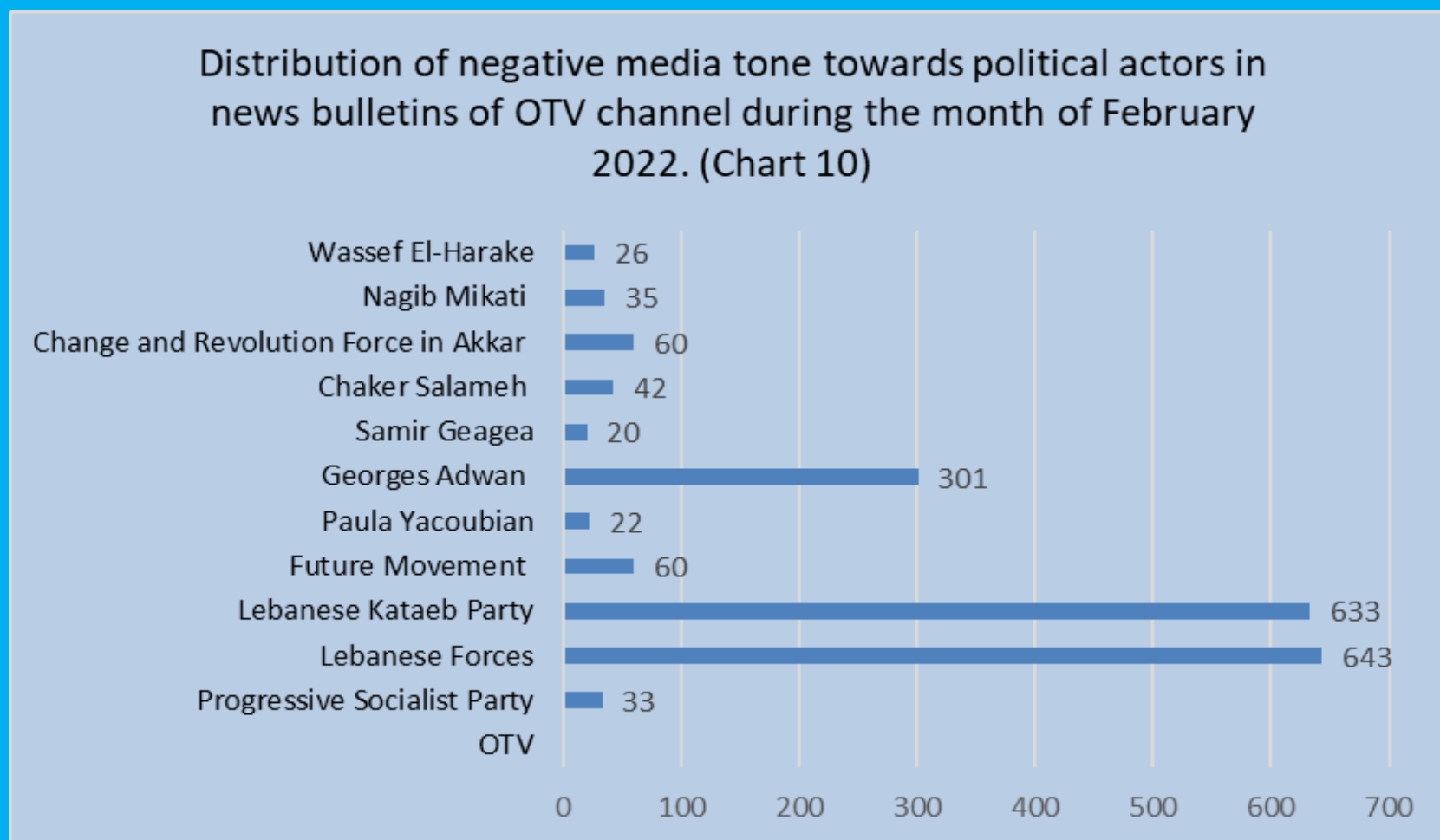
Distribution of media tone for news coverage of political actors among monitored TV stations on a total of 113,260 seconds of coverage during the month of February 2022. (Chart 9)



6- Target of the negative tone

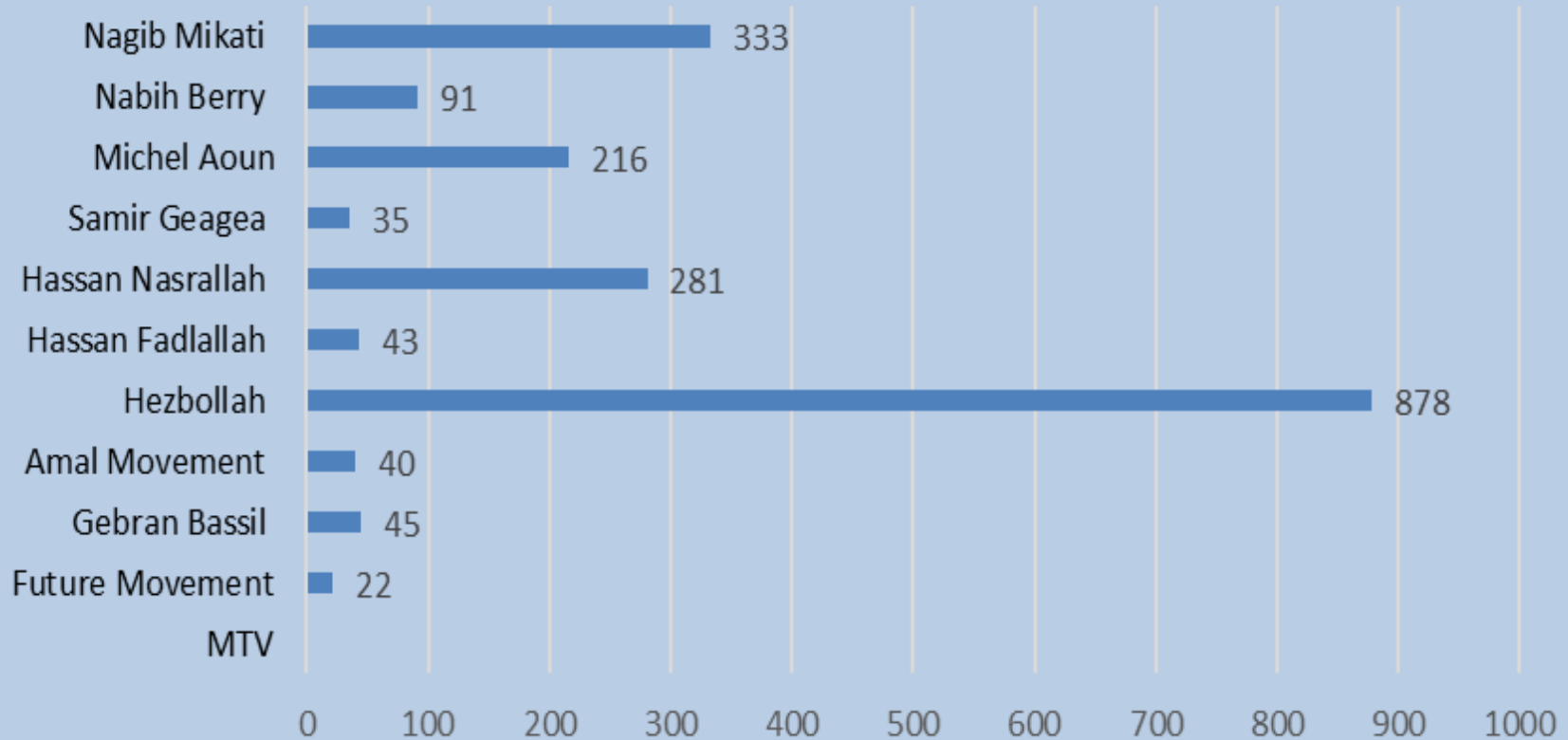
The following charts: 10,11,12,13,14, show the targets of the bad tone for each individual TV station.

OTV station: Chart No. 10 shows that OTV mainly targeted the Lebanese forces, the Lebanese Kataeb Party, and MP George Adwan, i.e. the main opponents of the Free Patriotic Movement in the Christian arena. Followed by the Future Movement and the forces of revolution and change in Akkar, with a much slighter degree.



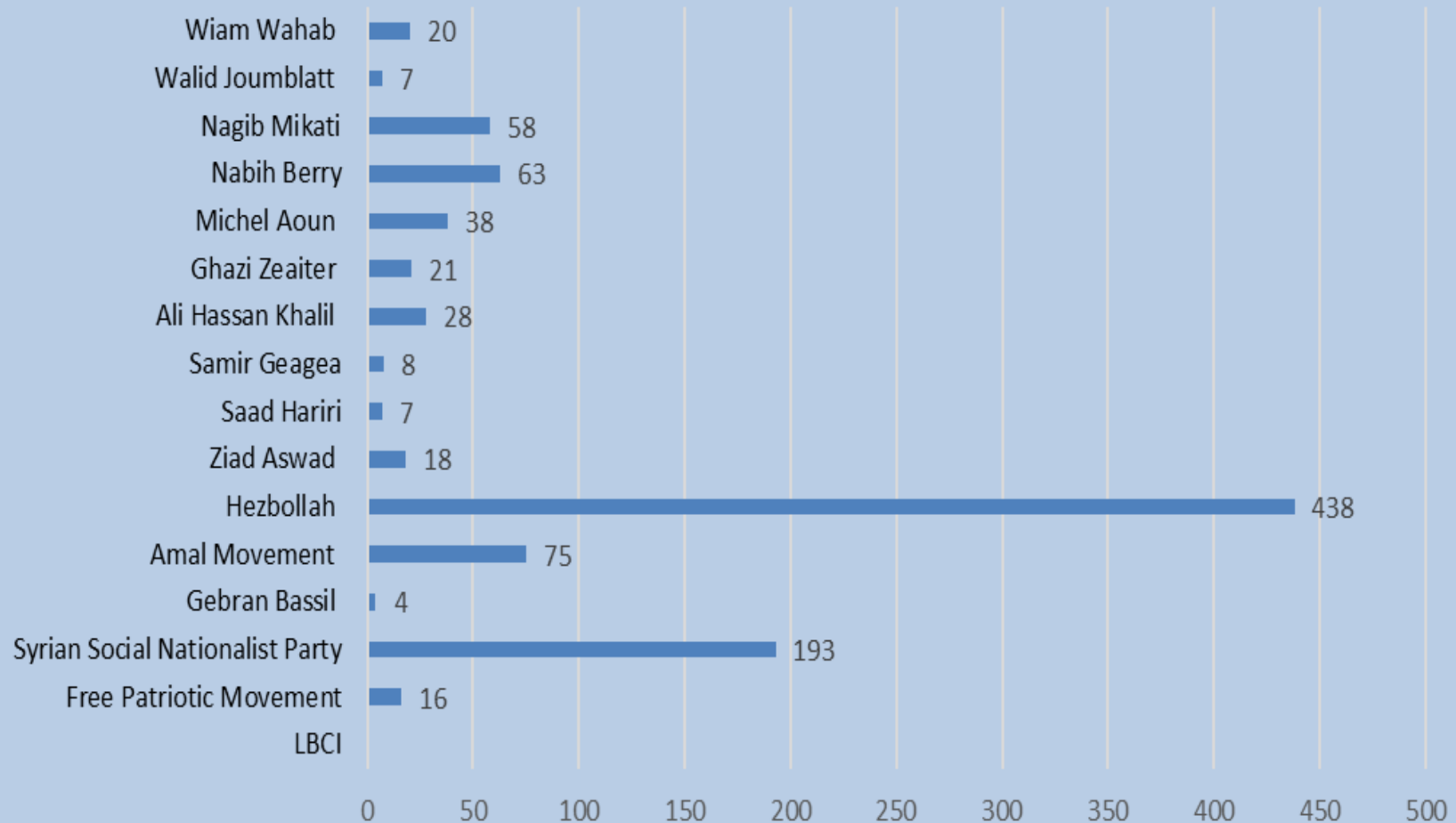
MTV station: The main negative tone on this station is directed towards "Hezbollah", followed by Prime Minister Najib Mikati, Secretary-General of Hezbollah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, and then President Michel Aoun. It also directs much less towards President Nabih Berri (Chart No. 11).

Distribution of negative media tone towards political actors in news bulletins of MTV channel during the month of February 2022. (Chart 11)

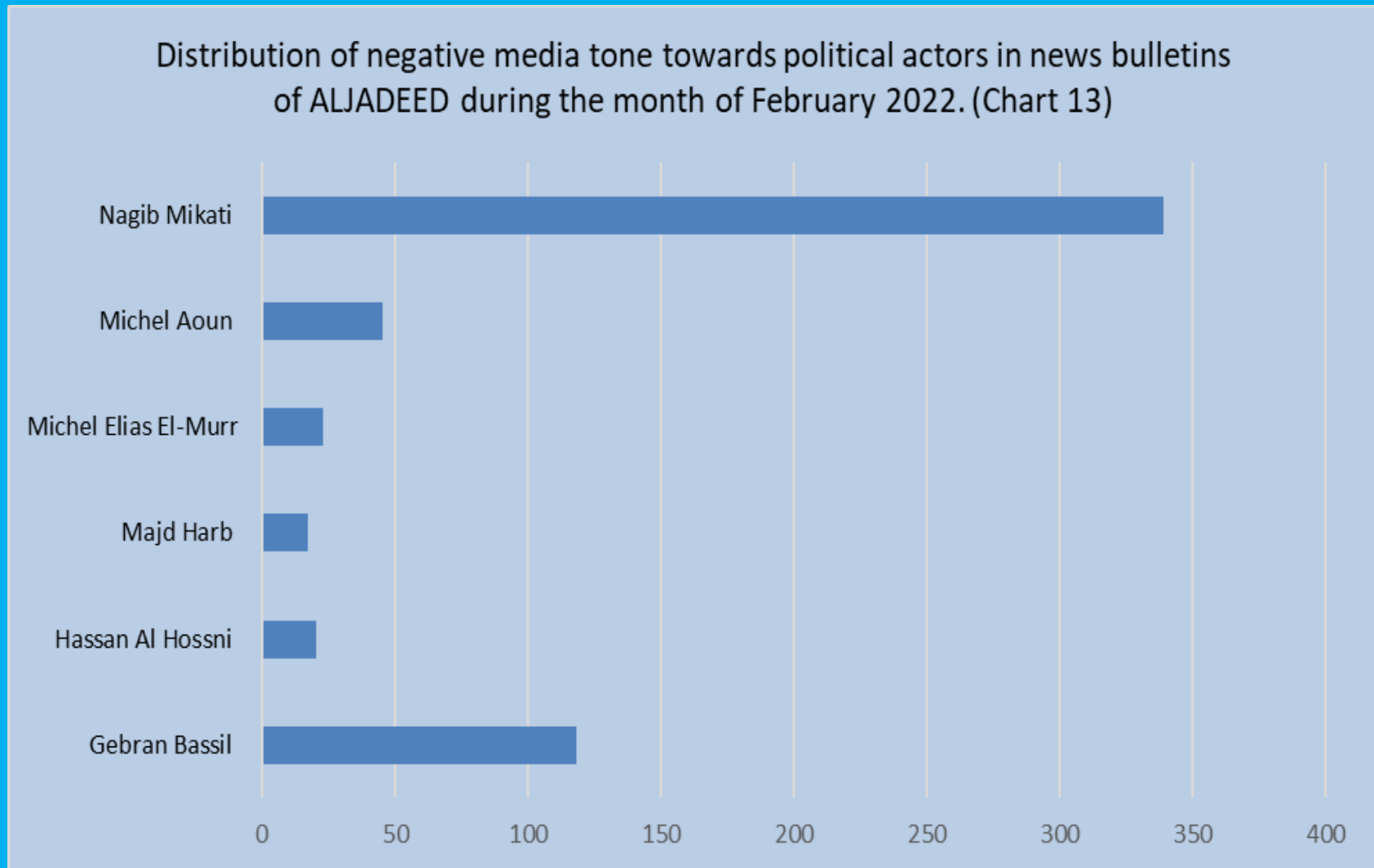


LBCI station: The first target in the negative tone on this station appears to be "Hezbollah", followed by the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, then President Nabih Berri, President Najib Mikati and the Amal Movement are equally targeted but in much smaller degrees (Chart No. 12).

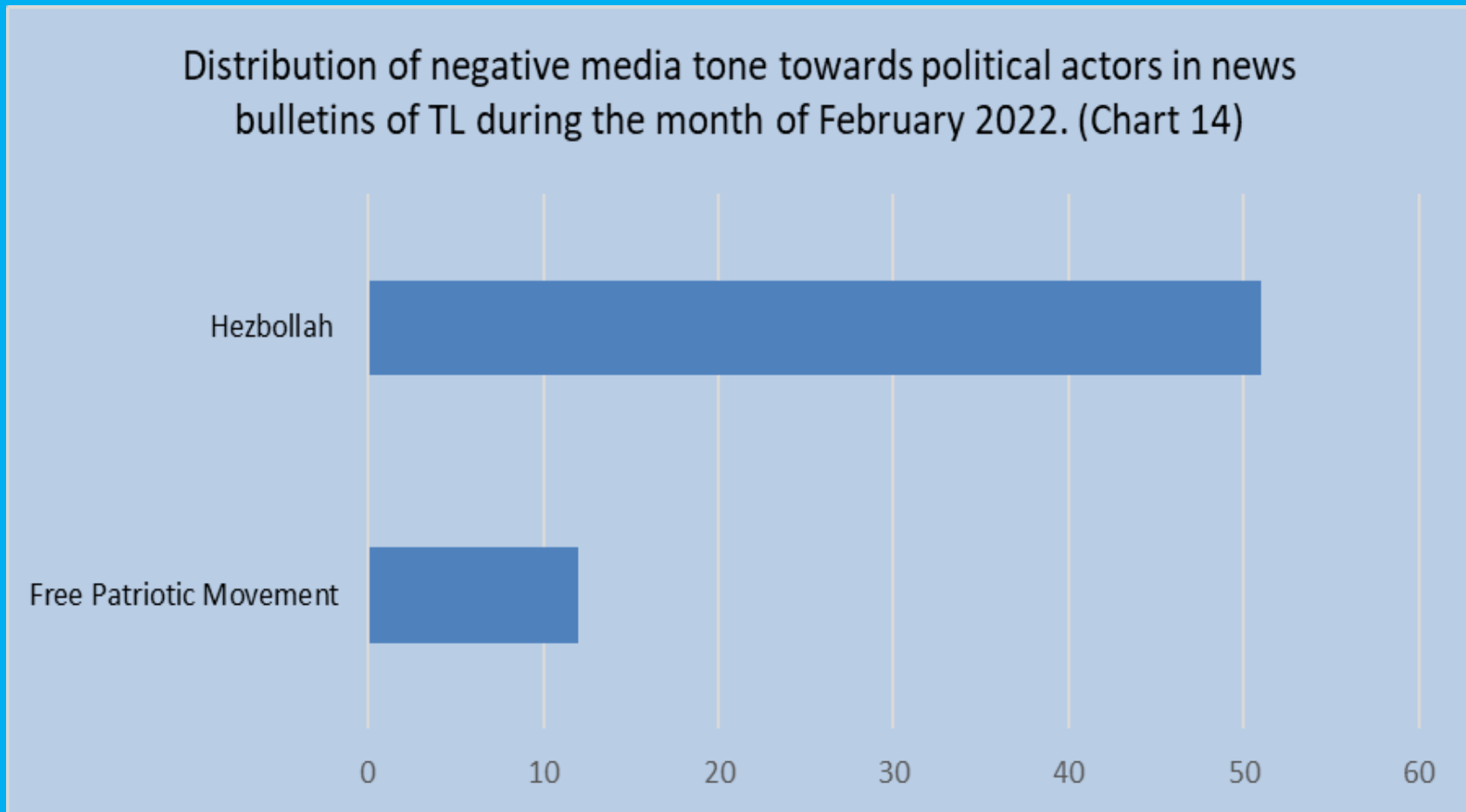
Distribution of negative media tone towards political actors in news bulletins of LBCI channel during the month of February 2022. (Chart 12)



ALJADEED Station: President Najib Mikati appears to be the first target on this station, followed by far by the head of the Free Patriotic Movement, Gibran Bassil, and to a lesser extent, President Michel Aoun (Chart No. 13).



TL Station: The negative tone on this station seems limited in quantity and limited in time, and it is not measurable compared to the other stations. Although noticed a tone in the direction of "Hezbollah" and the Free Patriotic Movement can be noticed (Chart No. 14).



7- Total media appearances for TV station guests

The study monitored the time of the media appearance of political actors in the talk shows on the seven television channels monitored during the month of February. Table No. 15 shows the total time during which political actors and activists appeared, and this of course falls within the framework of preparing for the upcoming parliamentary elections and the share that each of them obtains in the public space⁴. (Table 15)

Appearance per second	Name	Ranking	Appearance per second	Name	Ranking
2700	Ihab Hamadeh	39	7159	Elias Hankach	1
2570	Hagop Pacradonian	40	7115	Omar Harfouch	2
2517	Cesar Abi Khalil	41	7037	Emile Rahme	3
2500	Gina El-Chammas	42		Representant of the Free	
2400	Representant of Hezbollah	43	6750	Patriotic Movement	4
2215	Vera Yammine	44	6660	Ali Darwish	5
2202	Fadi Alama	45	6318	Edgard Traboulsi	6
2025	Alain Aoun	46	6084	Laury Haytayan	7
1971	Simon Abi Ramia	47	5960	Amal Abou Zeid	8
1800	Ali Khalifeh	48		Female representant of the	
	Representant of Shamaluna		5800	Free Patriotic Movement	9
1740	Coalition	49	5243	Antoine Habchi	10
1660	Eid Azar	50	4980	Oussama Saad	11
1651	Ghayath Yazbeck	51		Representant of the Future	
1644	Riad Tawk	52	4709	Movement	12
1643	Nicolas Nahas	53	4500	Paula Yacoubian	13
1560	Camille Chamoun	54	4500	Hassan Fadlallah	14
1560	Walid Fajreddine	55	4318	Nicolas Sehnaoui	15
			4305	Samer Saade	16

⁴ Representatives of the parties are mentioned in the calculation, and they are often partisan people, but they are not directly concerned with the elections, as they will not be candidates in it, and therefore the time of their media appearance for the party to which they belong is calculated.

1500	Wassef El-Harake	56	4200	Representant of the Lebanese	17
1435	Moustafa Alloush	57		Democratic Party	
1373	Hani Saliba	58	3998	Majd Harb	18
1292	Georges Nader	59	3856	Razi El-Hage	19
1210	Nazih Najm	60	3850	Farid El-Boustany	20
1201	Michel El-Helou	61	3750	Wiam Wahab	21
1200	Khalil El-Helou	62	3721	Faysal El-Sayegh	22
1200	Adel Al-Adraa	63	3720	Hussein El-Hajj Hassan	23
1080	Ghassan Moukheiber	64	3600	Jad Dagher	24
950	Bilal Abdallah	65	3600	Ali Fayad	25
940	Eddy Maalouf	66	3550	Assaad Dergham	26
847	Elias Abou Saab	67	3526	Farid El-Khazen	27
806	Salman Samaha	68	3317	Salim El-Sayegh	28
	Representant of the Change and Rovolution Force in		3250	Richard Kouyoumjian	29
771	Akkar	69	3240	Mohamad Khawaja	30
	Representant of the		3108	Achraf Rifi	31
752	Progressive Socialist Party	70	3046	Ramzi Kanj	32
	Representant of Amal			Representant of	
430	Movement	71	3018	Matniyoun Moustakiloun	33
273	Shamaluna Coalition	72	2964	Chamel Roukoz	34
230	Simon Bechwati	73	2880	Ghassan Khoury	35
	Representant of the Change and Rovolution Force in		2858	Fadi Karam	36
220	Akkar	74	2716	Fares Souhaid	37
150	Inaya Ezzeddine	75	2714	Pierre Abou Assi	38
15	Shaden Daif	76			

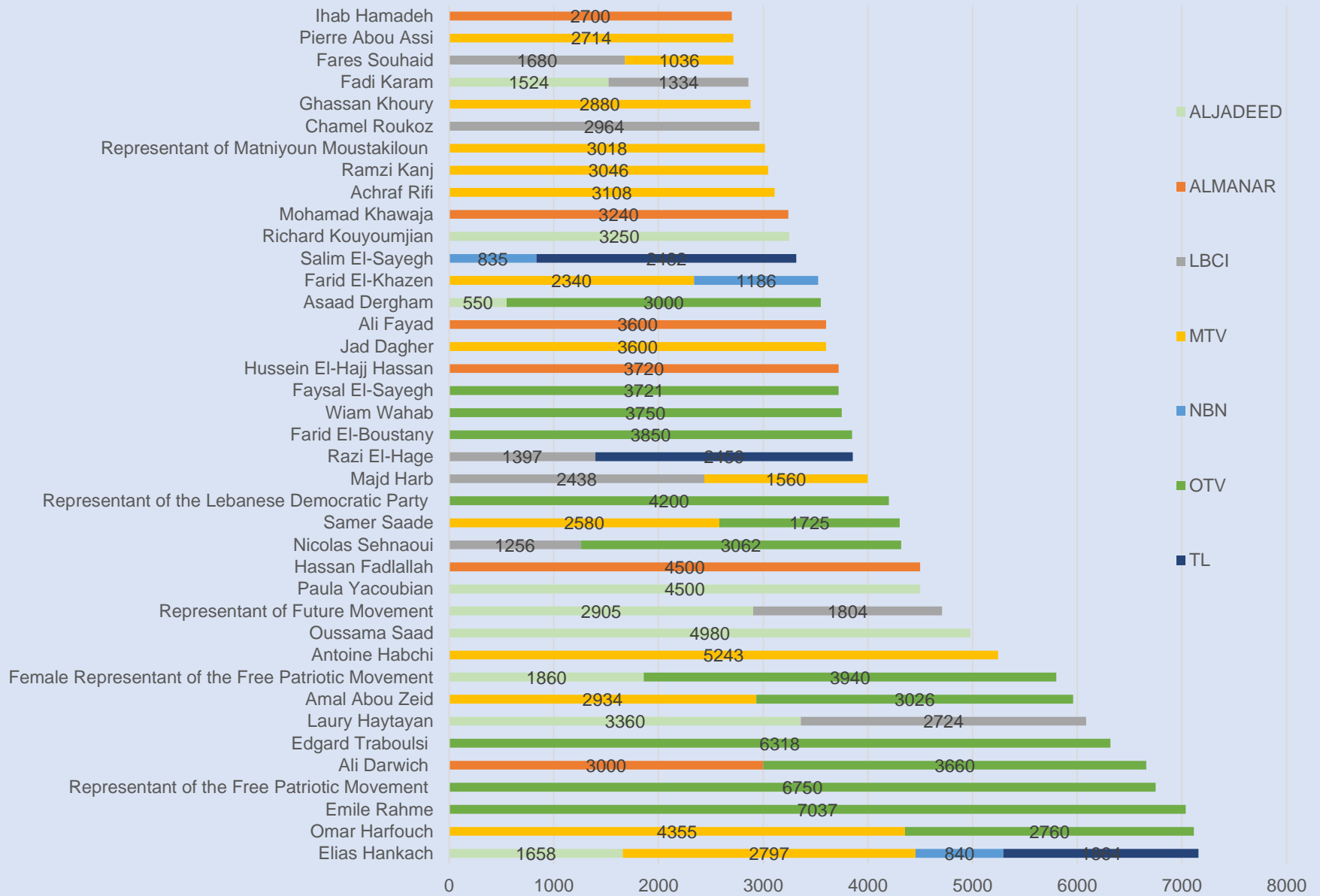
8- TV station and their guests

More detailed version of Table No. 15 of the actors and activists who appeared on the stations, Chart No. 16 lists their appearances in each station separately, allowing the identification of the guests of each station and the share that each guest received. Thus, we conclude, for example, that Emile Rahme, who was among the first in the number of appearances, was hosted only by the OTV station, while the first in the size of the appearance, MP Elias Hankach, was hosted on each of the following stations: MTV OTV, NBN, TL. The case of the multiple Hankach interviews on different stations remains uncommon, as the majority of the guests were hosted by one station, as shown in Chart No. 16.

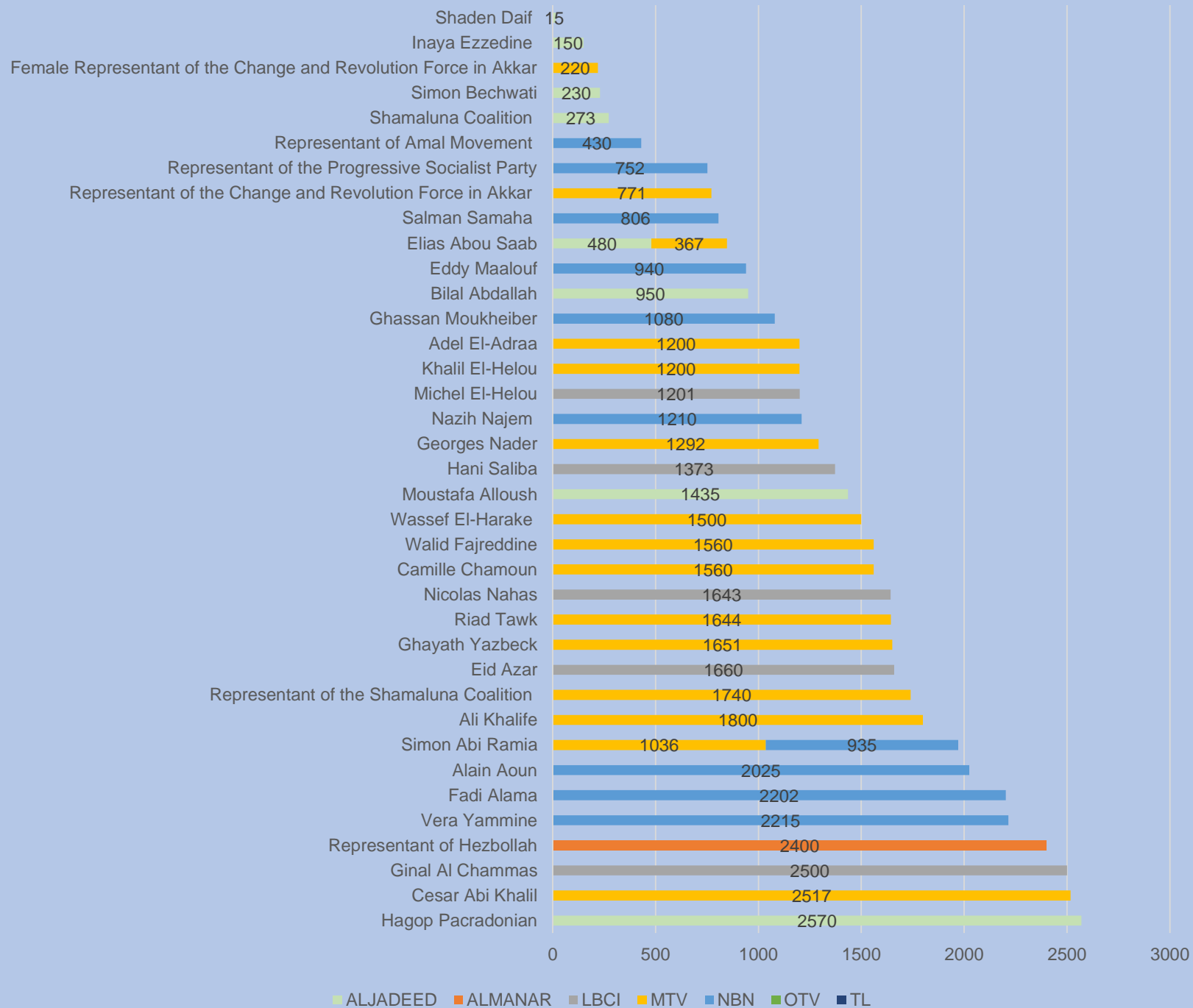
This Chart (16) constitutes an important source of information, as it is possible to know the guests of each station and the time it provides to each of the political parties and to the actors on the local scene.

Chart No. 17 also shows the media appearances of political leaders in interviews and special appearances during the month of February not within the talk shows and their scheduled dates.

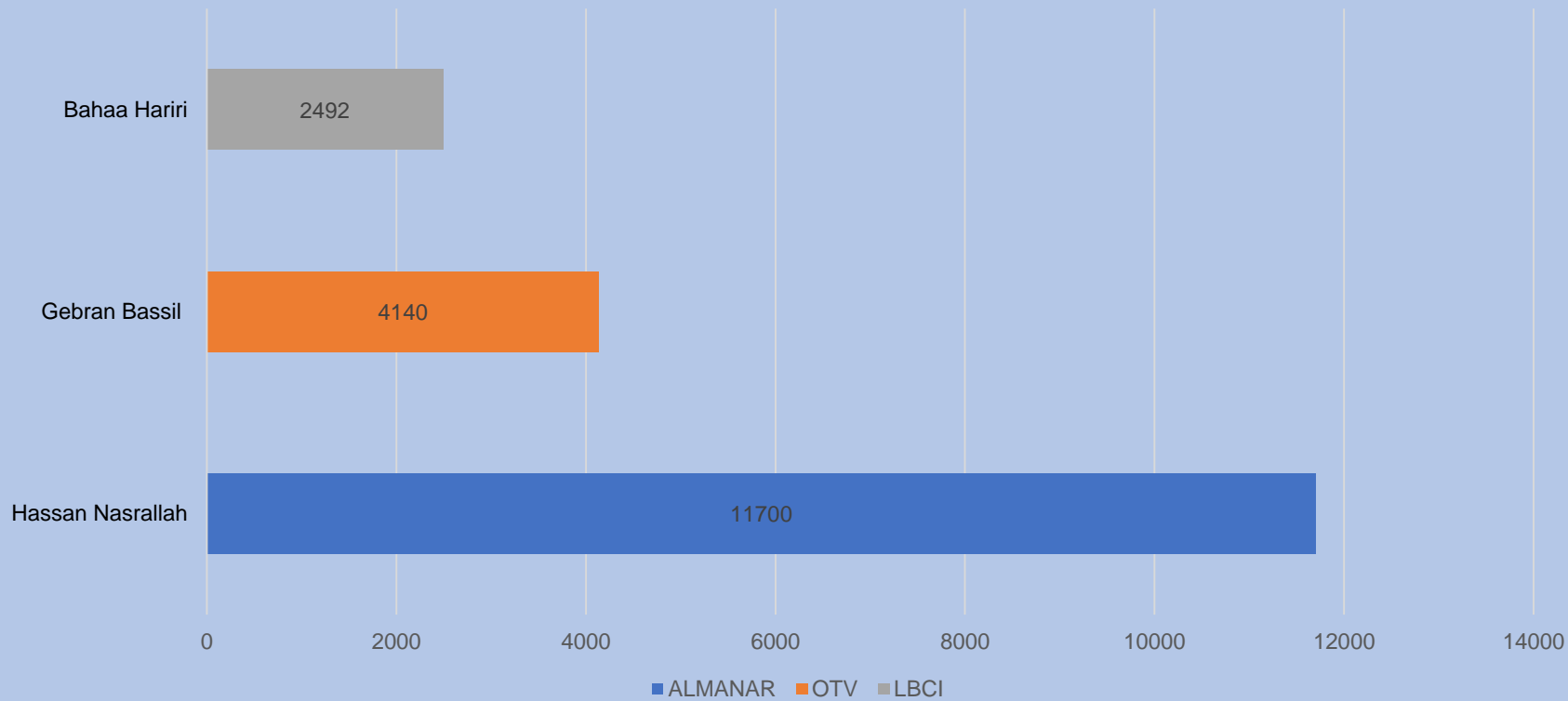
Media appearance of political activists in talk shows on the 7 monitored TV stations during the month of February 2022 (Chart 16 continued)



Media appearance of political activists in talk shows on the 7 monitored TV stations during the month of February 2022 (Chart number 16)

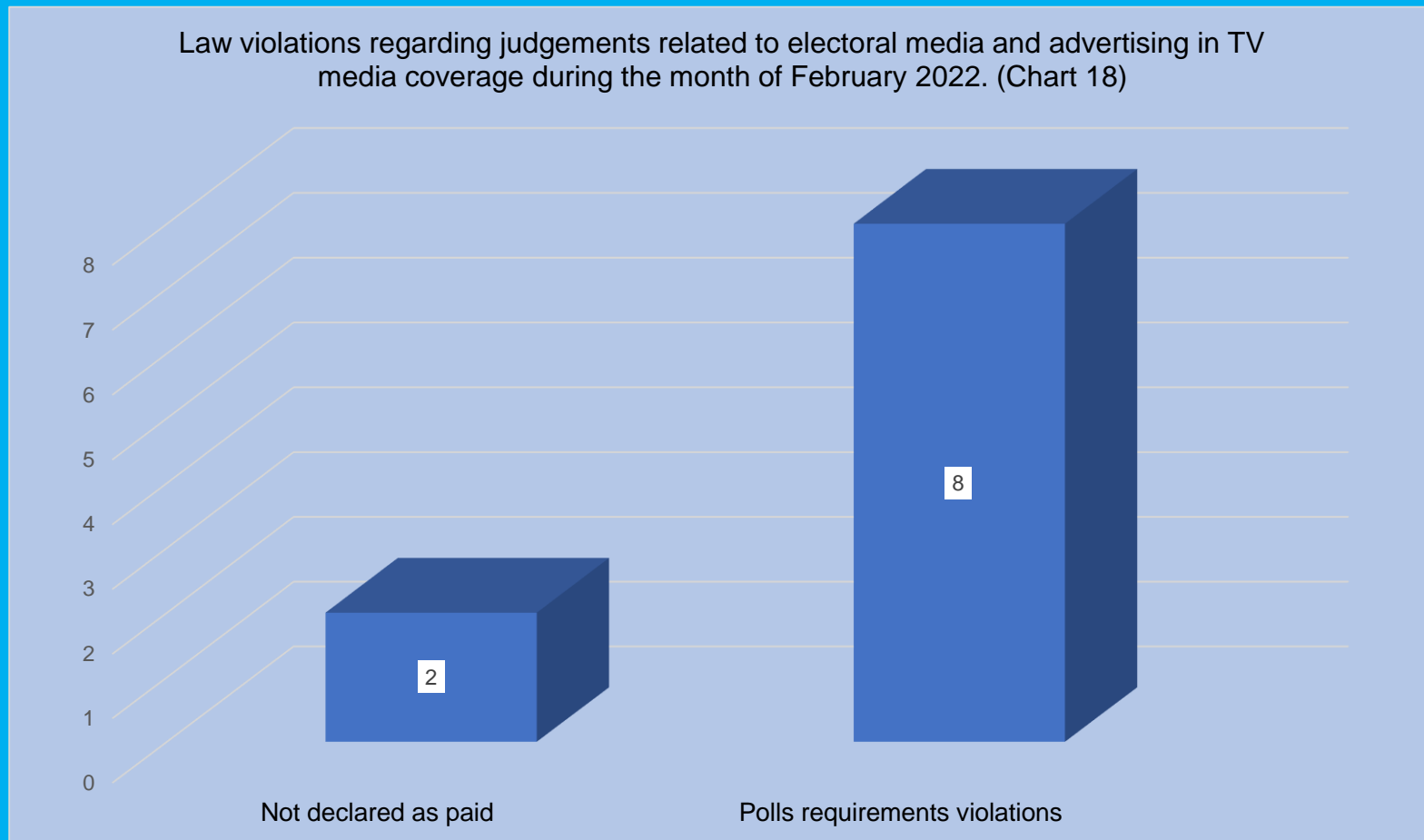


Distribution of TV interview time dedicated to political actors compared to a sample of 18,332 seconds of broadcasting time during the month of February 2022. (Chart 17)

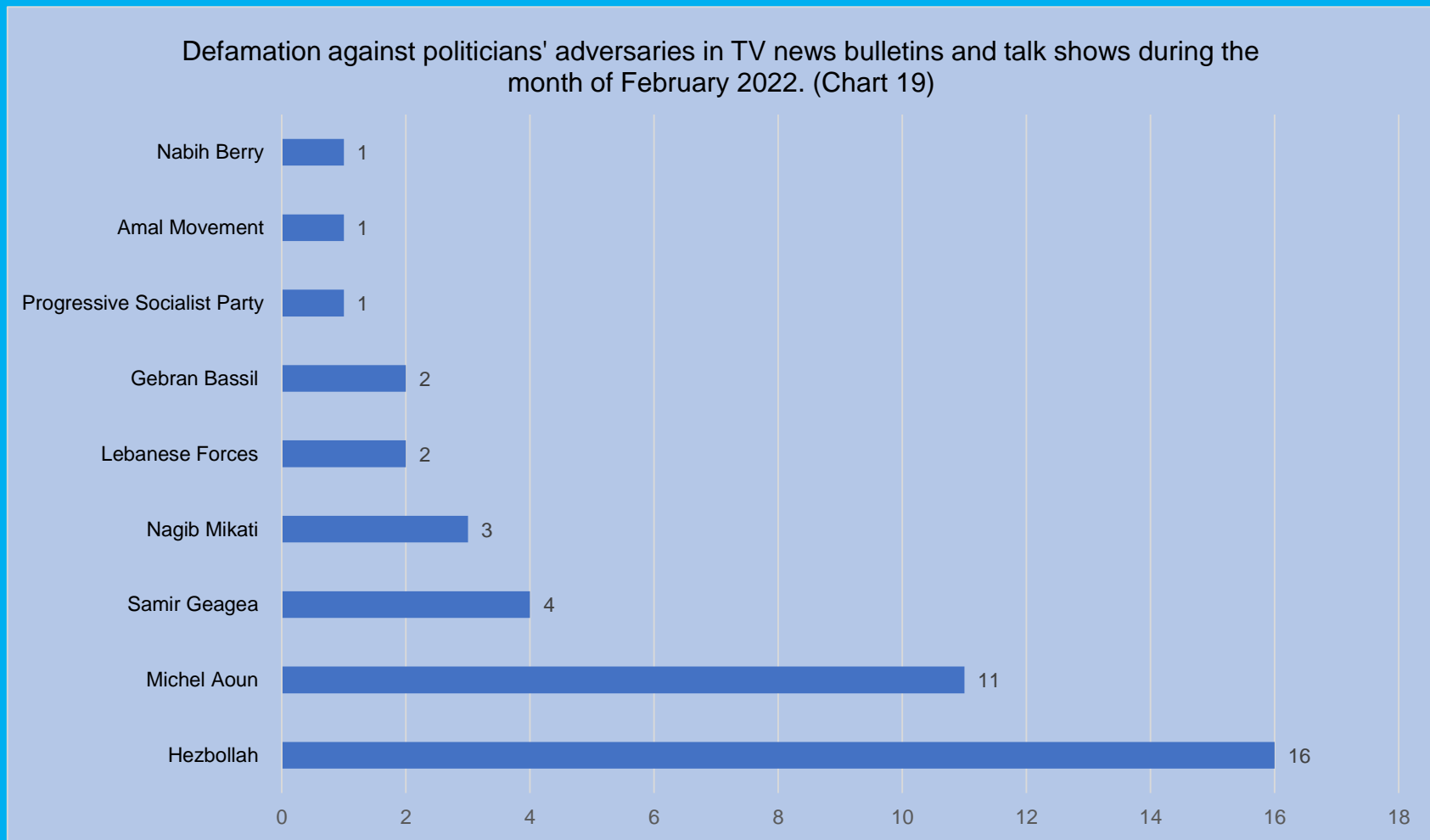


9- Electoral Law violations

Several violations of the provisions of the electoral law were recorded when it comes to the separation of electoral media and advertising, and the largest share of violations were related to the publication of opinion polls, opposing the principles set by the law in order to ensure transparency in opinion polls. It was also monitored that electoral propaganda was broadcast for the benefit of candidates without declaring that it was paid (Chart No. 18).



It was also found, by monitoring news and talk shows, that accusations or descriptions were made by the media or the guest against political opponents, which are classified as defamation and are as follows (Chart No. 19)



Conclusion

The monitoring of the month of February, compared to previous months, shows that television stations have increased their interest in the topic of the upcoming parliamentary elections in their coverage and programs. The time allocated to the topic in news bulletins and talk shows has increased by more than 30%. It was also noticeable that ALMANAR station has increased interest in the elections, when it had been less interested in them in the past months.

Women remained marginalized, as their presence did not exceed 7%, compared to men who monopolize the media space, and consequently the political. Electoral education was also absent as an independent media material that was supposed to be produced by the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities in coordination with the concerned media, which stations are supposed to broadcast during the electoral campaign period, for at least three hours a week, as stipulated in the electoral media and advertising law.

The monitoring process showed the distribution of the stations' guests, "who hosts whom", and the amount of time spent on each of the actors and activists in the political arena. It also monitored the negative tone used in the media space and some violations of the provisions of the law in television coverage.