

# Middle East Strategic Perspectives

A Strategic Outlook on Middle Eastern Affairs

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## [Oil & Gas Updates]: Sectarian and regional considerations already weighing on the petroleum sector

NOVEMBER 18, 2012 in [LEBANON](#), [LEBANON – OIL & GAS UPDATES](#), [OIL & GAS](#)

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[El-Nashra](#) reported on November 15, that Baath MP (and former minister) Assem Qanso believes stability in Lebanon is due to large oil deposits in the country, both offshore and inland, particularly in the Beqaa, his native region.

Qanso, who holds a degree in geological engineering from the University of Zagreb and is currently a member of the Energy and Water Committee at the Parliament, revealed that the assassinated PM Rafic Hariri refused to proceed with plans to extract oil in the northern region of al-Kaa, for its proximity to the Syrian borders and in order to avoid causing problems with Syria, especially that the quality of the oil is said to be better than on the other side of the borders.

Qanso criticized the Petroleum Administration whose board members were selected on a sectarian basis and added that these resources do not belong to sects but to the country and should be used to improve the economy and ease the country's massive debt. His close coordination with the Syrian regime throughout his political career might suggest that the current Syrian leadership does not favor the development of resources at the current stage.

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Ali Cherri, Le Pyromane, 2011, Burnt Matches, 185x40cm. Galerie Janine Rubeiz.

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[...] to conduct seismic surveys onshore will satisfy local leaders and populations, some of whom are anxious that the wealth will benefit some regions or sects at the expense of others. Although natural resources are the ownership of the State, local leaders will certainly seek to [...]

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