

## Lebanon Lawmakers Adopt New Election Law

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BEIRUT (AFP)--The Lebanese parliament adopted a new electoral law overnight in a key move aimed at paving the way for legislative polls due early next year.

The move was the final step of a peace deal struck in May between Lebanon's rival pro- and anti-Syrian factions to end an 18-month political crisis that had brought the country to the brink of civil war.

The legislation, which amends one adopted in 1960, calls for several reforms including the redrawing of electoral districts and the holding of elections in one day rather than over several days.

Parliament, however, rejected several proposed reforms such as lowering the voting age from 21 to 18, introducing a quota for women in parliament and allowing Lebanese citizens living abroad to cast ballots.

Under the new law Lebanese expatriates will be allowed to vote in 2013.

The peace accord struck in the Qatari capital Doha in May had called for a new electoral law, following the election of army chief Michel Suleiman as president and the formation of a national unity government.

The deal also called for a national dialogue between rival political leaders. A first session was held earlier this month and a second one is scheduled for Nov. 5.