

LEBANON'S FEMINIST CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM COMMEMORATES THE MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE BEIRUT BLAST

Beirut, 4 August 2021

A year ago, on 4 August 2020, a deadly explosion destroyed Beirut and claimed the lives of 217 persons, injuring 7,000 with hundreds of them acquiring a physical disability. The blast also destroyed tens of thousands of homes and forcibly displaced over 300,000 people, many of whom have yet to return. Furthermore, the explosion caused invisible psychological wounds, where almost every person in Lebanon experienced trauma, anxiety, and/or mental distress.

The explosion has further highlighted structural problems, a governance crisis, and claims of grand and pervasive corruption. This led to a failure to ensure the protection of the rights of persons living in Lebanon, including the right to life, liberty, health, and adequate housing.

One year later, justice is yet to be met. The Lebanese authorities have failed to hold anyone accountable for the explosion and have been obstructing the investigation and the course of justice using all means possible. These include flagrant political interference, removal of the judge leading the investigation, and claiming immunity rights for members of parliament and high-ranking officials. All this has led to delays and challenges in ensuring justice, accountability, and remedies to the victims.

We, the members of Lebanon's Feminist Civil Society Platform, signatories to this statement, condemn all attempts to obstruct the course of justice and impede the lifting of immunities of suspects of the port explosion and demand that those responsible for the third deadliest non-nuclear blast in the world be held accountable. We reiterate our call for a prompt, impartial, credible, and independent investigation to examine all claims and concerns in relation to the explosion and to integrate a gender lens in all actions taken. Effective reparation should be warranted to all affected people, without discrimination, including women and girls as well as persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees, LGBTQIA2+ people, among other marginalized communities.

We also call on the international community to protect the investigation from any undue influence and obstruction, to ensure that justice is rendered for the victims of the explosion and the people in Lebanon at large, and to ensure non-repetition. Such a crime should not be repeated or go unpunished.

As members of Lebanon's Feminist Civil Society Platform, we have been following with great concern the recent escalation of violence against the families of victims who have been protesting and demanding truth and accountability. We stand in solidarity with the families who have lost loved ones, the injured survivors, and those whose lives have been forever affected by the port explosion. Authorities should not suppress peaceful protests but rather ensure the protection of protestors especially that mothers, daughters, and spouses of victims have been at the forefront of the demonstrations and have faced excessive force and violence from security forces.

On this first commemoration, we recall the charter of demands for a gendered response plan that we issued in August 2020. We restate our demands that women are placed at the heart of the response plan and that all humanitarian assistance processes recognize and address existing gender inequalities and seek to ensure that all women and girls' needs and priorities are met. We also call for all processes to be transparent and subjected to due diligence as well as clear accountability mechanisms. Furthermore, we reaffirm the need to take gendered needs and concerns into account and to ensure women's

representation, leadership, and inclusion in all decision-making bodies involved in the response, recovery, and rebuilding process.

As we pay tribute to the people who have lost their lives in the 4th of August blast and its aftermath, and to all the survivors who continue to suffer from the horror of what has happened, we call on women, girls, and all allies to raise their voice, refuse impunity, and stand in solidarity with the victims and their relatives in their fight for truth, justice, and accountability.

The signatories:

ABAAD	Helem	Palestinian Women’s Humanitarian Organization (PWHO)
Abnaa Saida Al Balad association	Joumana Haddad Freedoms Center	Restart Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and Torture
Al Jalil Organization For Development	Justice Without Frontiers (JWF)	Safadi Foundation
Arab Forum for the rights of people with disabilities	KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation	Soins Infirmiers et Developpement Communautaire (SIDC)
Arab foundation for Freedoms and Equality (AFE)	Khateera	The Arab Institute for Women (AiW/ LAU)
Arab Institute for Human Rights- Lebanon branch (AIHR)	Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE)	The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Woman (LECORVAW)
Association Najdeh	Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB)	The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (RDFL)
Center for Inclusive Buisness and Leadership for Women (CIBL.W/ AUB)	Lebanese Union for People with Physical Disabilities (LUPD)	Women From Lebanon (WNLB)
Collective for Research & Training on Development - Action (CRTDA)	Lebanon Family Planning Association for Development and Empowerment (LFPADÉ)	Women Now For Development
Dar Al Amal	LiHaqqi Feminist Group	Dr. Carmen Geha
DARAJ	Maharat Foundation	Ms. Dima Matta
FE-MALE	Marsa Sexual Health Center	Dr. Guita Hourani
Fiftyfifty	M-Coalition	Dr. Halimé El Kaakour
Global Compact Network Lebanon (GCNL)	Mousawat Organization	Dr. Lina Daouk-Öyry
Haven for Artists	National Association for Disabled Persons (NARD)	Ms. Manar Zeaiter
		Ms. Victoria El- Khoury Zwein

Lebanon’s Feminist Civil Society Platform is formed of 46 feminist civil society actors and activists who were convened by UN Women in the aftermath of the 4th of August blast and issued a unified [Charter of Demands](#) to put women’s issues at the center of the disaster response plan. Since then, the Feminist Platform conducted various advocacy efforts including the contribution to the development of the Lebanon Reform, Recovery & Reconstruction Framework (3RF) sector plans as well as meetings with representatives of the donor community in Lebanon and the leadership of the United Nations, European Union, and the World Bank to share their gendered priorities and demands.