

LEBANON'S FEMINIST CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM

condemns the blatant dismissal of the gender quota proposal by the parliamentarians

Beirut, 11th October 2021

In light of the recent events that entailed a collective refusal on the part of parliamentarians belonging to all political blocs to discuss the proposal for a women's parliamentary quota submitted by MP Inaya Ezzedine and as a result of this blatant dismissal, Lebanon's Civil Society Feminist platform is outraged at the continuous regression in the narrative related to gender rights and women's representation in the political arena.

Lebanese women continue to experience pushback against their long-overdue rights and fundamental freedoms. This explicit disregard of the draft law proposal and the appalling refusal to even discuss it, coupled with the lack of political will to fulfill the promises made regarding institutionalizing affirmative action measures and a women's quota, requires immediate action.

Women's issues are not secondary and members of the parliament should not take them lightly. The dismal representation of women in parliament should not be the norm and is no longer viable. Legislative quotas in the Lebanese context are not solely representational guarantees but also an essential means to reverse the historical trends of women's exclusion from power and decision-making positions in Lebanon.

Women continue to face multiple challenges in taking up positions in political and public life. Hence, there is a need for reform in discriminatory policies that have been around for too long and to implement policies that are in line with global standards for women's equality.

In a country rife with sectarian and geographic quotas that infiltrate all aspects of one's life, denying women a gender quota is a pure act of hypocrisy.

The misogynistic behaviors of male politicians and the toxic masculinity projected during the session of the joint parliamentary committees coupled with their attempt to humiliate and marginalize Lebanese women are an indicator that there is an urgent need to break down the social, cultural, and political barriers that hinder gender equality.

The Members of the Lebanese Parliament do not miss an opportunity to flaunt their male power through their continued chauvinistic standpoints and continued control of women's lives by sidelining bills that contribute to positive change. They also use feminist causes to polish their image when it is convenient and introduce bills in support of women's issues, including quotas, and then implicitly retract when it's in their favor.

The Platform condemns these actions as they undermine basic democratic values of inclusion and deny Lebanese women access to public office. Moreover, they constitute a violation of international treaties that Lebanon pledged to implement and is contrary to the constitution that guarantees equal opportunities.

The members of the platform call upon the state to honor Lebanon's commitments under all international conventions and instruments including CEDAW, Beijing Resolution and Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda and SDG5, and UNSCR 1325. Nothing but a fair and equitable space for women in the political sphere.

Furthermore, the platform calls upon the international community to include the issue of equality and women's meaningful participation as a core condition to any financial assistance they may provide to the Lebanese government, especially those allocated to the holding of the 2022 parliamentary elections.

Additionally, should the gender quota fail to pass in parliament, we urge all voters especially women to vote against those who are denying them their basic political rights.

The signatories

ABAAD	Fiftyfifty	Palestinian Women's Humanitarian Organization (PWHO)
Abnaa Saida Al Balad association	Global Compact Network Lebanon (GCNL)	Safadi Foundation
Al Jalil Organization For Development	HELEM	Seeds for Legal Initiatives
Arab Forum for the rights of people with disabilities	Joumana Haddad Freedoms Center	Soins Infirmiers et Developpement Communautaire (SIDC)
Arab foundation for Freedoms and Equality (AFE)	Justice Without Frontiers (JWF)	The Arab Institute for Women (AiW/ LAU)
Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship	KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation	The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Woman (LECORVAW)
Association Najdeh	Khateera	The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (RDFL)
Association Beity	Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB)	Women Now For Development
Center for Inclusive Buisness and Leadership for Women (CIBL.W/ AUB)	Lebanese Union for People with Physical Disabilities (LUPD)	Dr. Halimé El Kaakour
Collective for Research & Training on Development - Action (CRTDA)	Lebanon Family Planning Association for Development and Empowerment (LFPADÉ)	Dr. Lina Daouk-Öyry
Dar Al Amal	Madaniyat	Ms. Abir Chebaro
DARAJ	M-Coalition	Ms. Diana Abu Abbas
FE-MALE	Mouvement Social	
	National Association for Disabled Persons (NARD)	

Lebanon's Feminist Civil Society Platform is formed of 50 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.