



10 August 2020

Dear Colleagues,

The Association for Middle East Women's Studies (AMEWS) Human Rights Task Force expresses its solidarity with our colleagues in Beirut. The explosion on 4 August 2020 took the lives of more than 160 people, injured over six thousand people, and devastated the port and much of Beirut. The port was the main point of entry for imports into Lebanon, especially foods. Like much of the world, the country was already experiencing the impact of COVID19. In addition, austerity measures had left many public services interrupted. Huge numbers of people had recently protested the corruption of the failing government. Economic problems abound. The country is still recovering from the civil war. At least 1.5 million people fleeing the conflicts in Syria had sought safety in Lebanon.

AMEWS Task Force extends its sympathy to our colleagues and to all the people of Beirut and Lebanon, and shares their outrage at the extraordinary mismanagement that led to the explosion. We know that the recent demonstrations offered a new vision of an inclusive, progressive, and democratic Lebanon. We continue to share that vision with our colleagues who are on the streets of Beirut once again asking for accountability of the government, which has just resigned, and to radically change a political system based on long-standing sectarianism and corruption. We would like to express our solidarity with our colleagues and friends in Beirut and Lebanon more broadly.

Sincerely,

AMEWS Human Rights Task Force

Nancy Gallagher, Chair, University of California, Santa Barbara

Sondra Hale, University of California, Los Angeles

Nadje Al-Ali, Brown University

Anita Fabos, IDCE Clark University

Hind Ahmed Zaki, University of Connecticut

Angie Abdelmonem, Arizona State University