

Statement by Ghida Anani, Founder & Director of ABAAD – Resource Centre for Gender Equality

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Global progress towards gender equality has stalled and not a single country today can claim to have achieved gender equality. The COVID-19 pandemic has created even more obstacles on the path to gender equality and exacerbated pre-existing inequalities, including gender-based violence, the “shadow pandemic” which has worsened.

The situation of women in Lebanon is no different. In fact, Women in Lebanon did not witness any changes since the last UPR, which included 78 recommendations related to women’s rights (out of 404). Although Lebanon agreed on 18 of those recommendations, none were implemented to date.

Despite being an integral part of the popular uprising in Lebanon since its beginning on October 2019, and playing a vital role in economic, social, and political life, women in Lebanon still suffer from discrimination and marginalization in the various spheres of life, especially following the economic downturn and reduced job opportunities. GBV continues to hold us back. There has been an increase in harassment/violence/abuse against women and girls since the COVID-19 outbreak. The situation is now exacerbated by the Beirut Blast which has left thousands of women and girls more vulnerable than ever. It is high time to recognize GBV as a global long-standing emergency, addressing it with absolute urgency and with the political will, resources, and accountability mechanisms required to respond to other emergencies of this scale.

Today, we call upon member states to recommend to Lebanon to:

- 1. Provide core sustainable and multi-year funding.**
- 2. Ensure accountability for GBV is shared widely across the Global Humanitarian Response Plan through concrete actions and implementation targets.**
- 3. Innovate and adapt evidence-based GBV prevention and response activities.**
- 4. Recognize as essential, and fund comprehensive services for GBV survivors including women and girl specialized services and other support services and referral and reporting mechanisms, as an integral part of response and recovery from COVID-19, including in conflict and humanitarian settings.**
- 5. Given the increase of risk of harm to women and girls as a result of GBV in the context of COVID-19, provide urgent funding to front-line support service providers to operate during the pandemic and to address the long-term consequences of gender-based violence for victims.**



6. Ensure effective application of State Due Diligence principle, in practice and not in literature.
7. Support the partnership of men and boys' organizations with women's and girl's rights activists to transform harmful social norms and promote gender equality.

One of the most effective strategies to reduce GBV and eliminate gender inequalities is involving everyone in the process... and by everyone, I mean everyone. Men being part of the problem, they cannot be excluded from the solution... men as allies, perpetrators and victims should be part of the equation of achieving equality.

The day we make GBV a real concern to all, is the day where we will witness a real reduction, if not complete elimination, of GBV around the globe!

