

Together We Build Civil Peace

This open letter stems from our determination to share with you our painful experience of the war, which lasted for over 15 years (1975-1990), so that it is not repeated. Let us work together to build a Lebanon that is: democratic, just, politically stable, secure, prosperous and where everyone is equal in rights and responsibilities.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE WAR COST US?

Over 150,000 people killed	Over \$40 billion in losses
17,000 missing and kidnapped: their families are waiting to bring closure to their suffering	Environmental degradation and disfiguration of cities and towns
Hundreds of thousands of wounded and handicapped: physical injuries and psychological trauma	Destruction of historical sites and theft of archeological treasures
Over 900,000 internally displaced and refugees	Increased use of sectarian incitement
Economic and technological decline and brain drain	Deterioration of political debate

DO NOT BELIEVE AT ALL THAT:

- You cannot influence the political situation
- Lebanese fought the war because they were from different religions. (Religion was used by leaders to mobilize and scare people into action)
- Lebanese cannot agree on the future of Lebanon. (The other is a partner not an enemy)
- Foreign powers decided to have Lebanese fight each other. (Local leadership bears most of the responsibility)

IT IS VERY TRUE THAT:

- The conflict was and remains about power, government positions, distribution of resources and the protection of interests
- The Lebanese state is weak, and some politicians who benefit contribute to its weakening
- Divisions among Lebanese encourage foreign intervention in local affairs
- Most political parties in Lebanon do not hold internal elections and do not stick to their campaign programs
- The Lebanese constitution and electoral system need reform to be more inclusive and stable
- We need an independent judiciary to protect citizens from political obstruction of justice
- We need to write our history in a transparent way and to have a civic education curriculum that celebrates our diversity so it does not become a source of conflict
- We need to invest more in our government ministries and institutions to be able to better defend our national interest

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

- Always refuse to resort to violence. It is your decision. Dialogue is the solution
- Hold on to your rights and respect your obligations: “You” are the source of power
- Be involved in and concerned with what goes on around you. Democratic participation is the way to change and reform the Lebanese political system
- Demand financial accountability and transparency from political leaders, the government’s money is the people’s money
- Learn to appreciate the richness of Lebanon’s different cultures and religions and work to protect it
- Raise your voice against provocative and discriminatory language between Lebanese



The “Gathering Wahdatouna Khalasouna” aims at strengthening civil peace and is non-sectarian, non-political and non-regional