

For Immediate Release



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AUB's KIP Project and Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs
Launch Campaign for Legislative Reform around Sexual Harassment in
Lebanon

From July 31 to August 15, 2017, the KIP Project on Gender and Sexuality at the Olayan School of Business at the American University of Beirut (AUB), and in partnership with the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, is launching "Mesh Basita," a national campaign that aims at highlighting the need for legislation around sexual harassment within the Lebanese landscape and mobilizing the general public's opinion towards pushing for legal reform.

Currently, there exists no national legislation specifically confronting sexual harassment in Lebanon. To confront this lack of laws, a number of initiatives by civil society organizations and government entities have recently pushed for legal reform to address sexual harassment in public spaces and at the workplace. Within the last few years, draft laws criminalizing sexual harassment in public spaces and in the workplace have been prepared and submitted by various bodies, the latest of which is now pending voting by the parliament.

In order to confront the idea that sexual harassment is not a serious issue, "Mesh Basita" stands for the idea that sexual harassment is "not okay." In doing so, the campaign ultimately aims to highlight the need for legislative reform around sexual harassment in Lebanon.

The campaign encourages all members of the public, including members of private sector, public sector, academia, and civil society, to share photos, videos, and text which show that sexual harassment is "not okay" and that mechanisms are needed to confront it at the national legislative level in Lebanon. Those interested can use the hashtag "مش_بسيطة" or "#mesh_basita" across various social media platforms in an effort to provide a range of messages around the issue of sexual harassment in Lebanon.

This campaign is the latest in the KIP Project's work around issues of sexual harassment in the Lebanese landscape. The project, made possible through a grant from the US Department of State, held five multi-stakeholder, multidisciplinary, multi-sector private roundtables during its first year to identify gap areas for research and work related to gender and sexuality in Lebanon. Through these roundtables, the themes of discrimination and sexual harassment were identified as overlapping areas where knowledge-production and dissemination should be focused within the Lebanese context. A campaign entitled “#NotYourAshta” was therefore launched by the KIP Project in November 2016 encouraging individuals to share their messages against sexual harassment. The project also organized a multidisciplinary conference on discrimination and sexual harassment on March 31 and April 1, 2017, during which stakeholders across sectors and disciplines presented their work around related issues. In addition, two training days were organized for students and members of the private sector around sexual harassment.

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Simon Kachar
Director of News and Media Relations
Mobile: 03427024 Office: 01374374 Ext: 2676
Email: sk158@aub.edu.lb

Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 130 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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