

For Immediate Release



Beirut: 16-5-2017

## **The Global Health Initiative at AUB and “Médecins Sans Frontières” Sign Strategic Framework for Collaboration at 48<sup>th</sup> Middle East Medical Assembly**

The Global Health Initiative (GHI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) signed a memorandum of understanding with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) outlining a strategic framework for collaboration. This historic move symbolizes the beginning of a humanitarian and academic partnership between the two institutions to address the burdens of conflicts.

The memorandum of understanding was signed at the end of the opening ceremony of the 48th Middle East Medical Assembly (MEMA), which took place May 11-14, 2017. This year's MEMA was organized as the First Global Conflict Medicine Congress, with MSF as one of the main partners. The MOU was signed by Jonathan Whittall, Director of the Analysis Department from MSF, and Dr. Shadi Saleh, Associate Vice President for Health Affairs and Lead of the Global Health Initiative at AUB.

From the AUB side, work outlined in the MOU will be spearheaded by the Conflict Medicine Program at GHI. It is a culmination of a collaborative path that was initiated at the “The Changing Ecologies of War and Humanitarianism” conference that was co-organized by AUB and MSF in May 2016. “The MOU between AUB's Global Health Initiative and MSF builds the path for a strategic partnership to alleviate the burden of conflicts, especially in our region. This is a key overarching goal of AUB's vision on health, HEALTH 2025,” said Dr. Saleh of the emerging partnership.

“This strategic partnership is an important part of MSF's medical humanitarian work in the region and beyond,” said Whittall. “Subjecting our practice to critical research and reflection through the lens of Conflict Medicine will help us to better navigate the challenges posed by contemporary warfare”

Dr. Ghassan Abu Sitta, co-director of the Conflict Medicine Program, was also present at the signing. “The American University of Beirut's Global Health Initiative and Doctors Without

Borders [MSF] are signing a truly groundbreaking partnership agreement for research and training in Conflict Medicine, and in doing so are building bridges between academia and humanitarian organizations to be better able to serve the victims of war.”

“This is the culmination of years of collaboration between AUB and MSF into a shared vision and partnership to think about and respond to contemporary conflicts in the region,” said Dr. Omar Dewachi, co-director of the Conflict Medicine Program. “It is a platform for research, capacity building, and designing innovative approaches to health in settings of war.”

Dr. Saleh stressed on the significance of the partnership between the two institutions. “This partnership, led by GHI's Conflict Medicine Program, will serve as a model for how to strengthen collaborations between academic institutions and humanitarian organizations.”

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**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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