ICAN’s 2014 Forum
Challenging Extremism and Militarism:
Women Standing up for Rights, Peace and Plurality

Lebanon Country Statement

**Key Messages**
- ultra-nationalism manifests as discrimination against refugees and domestic workers
- militarism and mobilization is increasing both for and against extremist religious groups

**Key Recommendations**
- reroute funding towards the protection of civil society, education, refugee security and economic programs

Rahaf, a one-year old child, cries for her father. He was in the Lebanese army, but was beheaded by Daesh in September 2014. She is crying but she doesn’t understand why. The daughter of another beheaded soldier keeps asking when her father is coming home. This is the story of tens of Lebanese Army men who were abducted by Daesh since August 2014 and tens more brutally murdered in other violent clashes. We hear and see stories every single day about young people being sucked into the viscous cycle of brainwashing, seeking out extremist religious groups as their “salvation.” We see ultra-nationalism manifested as racism against refugees and domestic workers. We see militarism in various forms: political parties picking up arms, preparing for battle, and increased weapon trade in the country, in addition to having politically and religiously-owned private schools.

We are facing extremism and militarism every day. We are fighting for coexistence between communities through arts, awareness raising activities, capacity-building, and peace-building, striving to regain the dignity that has been stripped of so many Lebanese. We are reviving tolerance, reconciliation, and citizenship with the aim of promoting national unity. We believe in the importance of women’s participation. We join our voices to the amazingly strong women like Rahaf’s mother who fight to protect their families despite the loss of husbands, sons, and relatives. Some are lost to death and others unfortunately join extremist armed groups, whether in Lebanon, Syria, or Iraq.

Some within the international community are funding armed extremist groups and supporting their existence. We demand a stop to the killing. We demand this money go to the protection of civil society in Lebanon, to education, to security for both refugees and Lebanese citizens, and finally to the elevation of the economic status of marginalized parts of the country in which extremism originates, in the hopes of restoring social justice. And we need your support to achieve that.

*Please direct questions and comments to info@icanpeacework.org.*