

## Press Release

### For an Effective National Commission on the Disappeared in Lebanon

The “Forum for Memory and Future” welcomes the Lebanese government’s appointment of the members of the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared in Lebanon on 18 June 2020, and the publication of the decree in the Official Gazette on 23 July 2020. This decision is the result of a long struggle of families of the missing and concerned organizations for the past forty years, in their search to know the fate of around 17.000 missing from the beginning of the war in 1975. The commission will investigate the fate of the missing, may it be their whereabouts, places of detention, abduction, or burial.

The Forum hopes that the government will prove their political, constructive, and genuine engagement by supporting the fundamental role of the National Commission and ensuring their independence, transparency, and financial resources, and facilitating their tasks, especially in creating a unified list of all the missing persons. These safeguards are important to succeed in coordinating an effective, meaningful response to the families of the missing who are still waiting to know the truth of what happened to their missing loved ones, in addition to ensuring an integrated and sustainable solution to this complex issue.

Dealing with the Past in Lebanon is essential to prevent the reopening of past wounds fueling retaliation and instead promotes opportunities for genuine reconciliation and ensure justice for individuals and the Lebanese society as a whole. The Forum underlines the essential role of political parties, government, military, faith-based and research institutions, and all those who took part in the war, to cooperate with the National Commission and provide all the important data and testimonies confidentially. Such cooperation will invariably help in revealing the fate of the living and the dead and identifying the locations of mass graves spread throughout Lebanon, to recover and identify their remains.

Hence, we, as a “Forum for Memory and Future”, will put pressure on the Lebanese authorities and other relevant institutions, and will support the National Commission for the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared in their work. The Forum believes that the proper way to move forward in strengthening the state and legal institutions must first pass by confronting the past. The Forum reiterates that the right of families to know the truth of what happened to their loved ones is essential to turn the page on war and subsequent conflicts and, ultimately, prevent their recurrence.

**Forum for Memory and Future**

July 23, 2020, Beirut, Lebanon

On October 17, 2019, the “Forum for Memory and Future” was established, which is a body of organizations, NGOs, Civil Society Organisations, individuals and academics who have come together to collaborate based on shared principles of dialogue, respect and inclusion towards formulating a common language that contributes to a new national discourse over the best approaches to engaging with the past, will help, alongside other efforts, open doorways to a new discourse in Lebanon’s political life – a political life worthy of being labeled as such that strives for sustainable peace.