

Impunity Watch is a Netherlands-based, international non-profit organisation seeking to promote accountability for atrocities in countries emerging from a violent past. IW conducts periodic and sustained research into the root causes of impunity and obstacles to its reduction that includes the voices of affected communities to produce research-based policy advice on processes intended to encourage truth, justice, reparations and the non-recurrence of violence. We work closely with civil society organisations to increase their influence on the creation and implementation of related policies.

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Workshop Report

Lebanon: The Case of Memorialisation

Summary

In January 2014, Impunity Watch, (IW) in partnership with the Sustainable Democracy Center – Lebanon (SDC), organised an interactive workshop between victims, civil society, and youth representatives of political parties on the challenges of memorialisation in Lebanon. With a divided society in Lebanon, in which memorialisation is highly politicised, the focus of the discussion was aimed at the question how to achieve a more collective memorialisation process in which there is space for dialogue on multiple narratives. IW understands collective memorialisation as a method of seeking common ground about the past where it exists, and maintaining mutual respect where it does not.

The debate amongst the participants proved to be more of an impasse than a way to move forward towards a process of collective memorialisation. Nevertheless, all participants agreed on the necessity of strengthening the debate amongst political parties and civil society in order to conduct a critical self-reflection exercise on the role of the political elite in the past and the present that might begin to address existing obstacles towards collective memorialisation. Civil society representatives insisted that without a truth-telling process, through which all crimes against humanity and war crimes will be unveiled, any process for memorialisation would be doomed to failure. Political party representatives were more in favour of turning the page of the war and looking towards the future. Participants concluded the workshop while agreeing to engage in a constructive debate between various actors and especially between civil society and political parties.

Memorialisation

Impunity Watch describes 'memorialisation' as a deliberate action to preserve the memory of a violent past, rather than *ad hoc*, spontaneous acts of memorialisation that emerge after violence. Whilst the latter are important forms of memorialisation that affect social reconstruction, the Principles put forth in this Policy Brief are intended to inform decision-making by policymakers and practitioners on memorialisation as a planned action, rather than restrict the spontaneity and likely very personal nature of other acts of memorialisation. That being said, a number of the Principles would be appropriate considerations for any act of memorialisation. It must also be recognised that effective memory initiatives may build upon existing, spontaneous acts of memorialisation.

Memory initiatives

Impunity Watch understands memory initiatives to mean any activity that aims to commemorate or enhance understanding of a conflictive past, including – but not limited to – the erection and maintenance of memorials and monuments, the operation of museums and exhibits, traditional ceremonies and rituals, musical and theatrical performances on relevant topics, the running of educational, awareness-raising, dialogue and remembrance programmes, the teaching of history, and the gathering and preservation of information.

The workshop followed an interactive methodology through which participants worked together to identify obstacles and explore solutions for a memorialisation process in Lebanon. They also learned about other international comparative experiences to explore

and assess situations similar to their own without the emotional attachment that inhibits honest and open discussion. Impunity Watch's international guiding principles for memorialisation were debated and their applicability to the Lebanese context was analysed.

The workshops included presentations by several international and national non-governmental organisations working on memorialisation and forced disappearances in Lebanon, as well as testimonies from victims about their needs and expectations towards a more collective memorialisation process. The first two-day workshop was followed by a one-day working session during which the participants presented their recommendations for a more collective memorialisation process in post conflict Lebanon. The following analytical report is based on the discussions amongst the participants to the workshop.

The Conflict in Brief

Lebanon's current divisive nature is both a result of, and contributes to cyclical violence that the country has seen since 1840, the most brutal period being the country's civil war, which lasted from 1976 to 1989. The civil war had complex dimensions combining national, regional and international dynamics and players. The Lebanese conflict included inter- and intra-confessional and ideological conflicts. The 1989 Ta'ef Peace Accord signified the end of the conflict, but failed to afford Lebanese a process by which they could seek justice for past crimes. The subsequent 1991 amnesty law, often referred to by critics as 'state-sponsored amnesia,' even further damaged the possibility for future reconciliation and healing. The 1991 law granted all of the warlords in the country a general amnesty, exonerating them of their crimes that were still so fresh in the minds of the Lebanese people. As a result, Lebanon lost its chance for an effective process of transitional justice and finds itself in a continuous cycle of violence, albeit not to the extent seen during the civil war.

The obstacles towards a more collective memorialisation process are numerous and intensified by the inability to reach a consensus over the nature and root causes of the conflict as well as the failure to find to a common national identity.

The conundrum of collective memorialisation in Lebanon

Two massively attended unofficial commemoration days held in Lebanon truly exemplify the divisions that exist between Lebanese communities. The first is to honour the: '*Martyrs of the Islamic Resistance*'¹ and the second is devoted to the '*Martyrs of the Christian Resistance*'². Each day promotes one religious group's belonging of the martyr, which in itself carries an enormous political connotation that reflects the deeply rooted division within the socio-political construct of the Lebanese nation and its identity.

Another point of severe disagreement between the Lebanese is the usage of the terms 'martyr' and the 'victim'. Each political party considers itself as having the exclusivity of 'martyrdom' for its fighters who were killed and 'victimhood' for its partisans. Meanwhile it denies this right to the other by arguing that its own struggle was related to safeguarding the identity of the nation. This phenomenon of tacitly delegitimising other parties and communities is one of the many factors that make a more collective memorialisation process amongst the citizens so difficult.

The disputed Lebanese national identity, is best characterised by the journalist-politician Georges Naccach, who wrote in 1949, "A State is not the sum of two impotencies – and two negations never make a nation"³. The polarised identity of Lebanon on the societal level has led to a dysfunctional State that cannot reconcile with itself. The above statement was made six years after Lebanon declared independence from the French mandate in 1943 and remains largely valid until the present day.

One such facet of this polarisation is the refusal by the Christian group to 'Arabise' their identity while the Muslim group refuses to 'Westernise' it. This and other conflicts define the relationships between these groups, and while the political dynamics and alliances between various groups have shifted considerably through the last five decades, the country remains divided when bringing up the violent past and its root causes. The divisions around the national identity should not be underestimated in a country that only confirmed its identity to be 'Arab' rather than 'a country with an Arab face' very recently through the constitutional amendment of 1989 during the Ta'ef Peace Conference.

According to scholars and citizens alike, the Lebanese will have to face the challenge of collective memorialisation for generations to come, a challenge that remains, beyond any doubt, a long-term process. The renewed sporadic violence amongst various factions since 2005 is also a major obstacle to memorialisation given the fact that it revives the memory of the civil war, which ended with a timid treatment of the past.

Transitional justice and memorialisation in post war Lebanon, The Peace Accord of 1989

The Ta'ef Agreement of 1989, also known as "National Reconciliation Accord," or "Document of National Accord" was undertaken to reach an end to the civil war and return to political normalcy in Lebanon. The agreement was signed in 1989 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia successfully ended the hostilities that the country knew for three decades.

The agreement included the development of institutional reforms aimed at abolishing the sectarian governance system, one based on political religious and confessional representation in favour of a more secular one. This proposed institutional reform was aimed at revisiting the power sharing system in Lebanon and considered as a non-recurrence measure for the continuing conflicts. Up to date, many of the agreed upon institutional reforms, including the aforementioned one, are still pending.

A general amnesty law for crimes committed prior to March 28, 1991 was enacted in 1991 and granted amnesty for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by all warlords. The general amnesty law was not part of the Ta'ef agreement, and it is believed that the political elite, signatories to the peace agreement, purposely omitted any reference to dealing with the past in order to pass amnesty measures in a later stage. The agreement did not include any measures related to transitional justice, memorialisation processes, or exhumation of the many mass graves in Lebanon. Moreover, the Ta'ef agreement did not specify any specific measures for reconciliation amongst the various political and confessional factions. Meanwhile, the various reconciliation processes that the country witnessed after the war were manipulated by the warlords and are considered by many as cosmetic initiatives with a political or personal objective.

The political elite, participant to the peace conference, unanimously agreed on writing a common history book for Lebanon. As is the case with the many institutional reforms included in the peace agreement, the writing of the common history book is still pending due to the dispute amongst the various factions on the root causes of the conflict.

Memory in Lebanon

In creating a meaningful and effective collective memorialisation of past events in Lebanon, first those involved must come to some consensus both on the definition of memory and also on the objective of memorialisation. Without this, the memories and memorialisation can be politicised and used to advance individual interests at the expense of other participants and victims of past painful events in Lebanon's history.

Though the Lebanese do have a robust understanding of the concepts of memories and memorialisation, their understanding is contextualised by Lebanon's suppression of history since the Ta'ef agreement. Though many understand the importance of a collective and honest history, justice for those who have wronged them, and accountability of the warlords turned politicians, the concept of memorialisation has been tainted by years of leaders and prominent figures denying and ignoring incidents that indict them and exploiting past events to promote political and personal agendas. The 1991 amnesty law mentioned earlier reinforces this defensive and repressive attitude. In essence, the state has acted in an official capacity to undermine the formation of a collective, reflective history of Lebanon's civil war and events beyond that. With this understanding, memory and memorialisation in Lebanon is not only defined by what it should be—an accumulation of events, experiences, and perspectives to form a common history—it is also defined by what it should not be—forgetting, ignoring, denying, or focusing on a single truth that delegitimises other perspectives and truths.

In addition to agreeing upon what constitutes memory and memorialisation (and perhaps more importantly identifying what must be excluded from these concepts), the Lebanese must also agree on the objective of memorialising a collective past. Some, especially those who seek to exonerate themselves or their benefactors, seek only the non-repetition of violent acts. They seek to "turn a new page" and, without extensively examining the past, move forward. While it is important to carefully craft a memorialisation in such a way that does not instigate future violent incidents, this attitude of dismissing and repressing

Participants' Citations:

"I do not participate in any memorialisation initiative in Lebanon since the objective is not clear."

"The context of the conflict is defined according to political interests and ideologies."

"In Lebanon the memory of transition is aimed at eliminating the memory of the Other"

"The amnesty that our leaders granted themselves after the war is and will always be the major obstacle to collective memorialisation"

memories of past injustices does not create a viable collective history. This is the same attitude behind the amnesty law, which has propagated and continued the intense distrust between parties and communities, which has come to define Lebanese politics and society. Those seeking justice and truth, especially those who are still impacted by the injustices of the past, will not be satisfied with a future that does not address the past. They will not be able to trust and partner with leaders and communities that not only have wronged them, but have also dismissed their grievances as invalid.

These grievances are not only limited to the clashes and massacres that took place during the civil war. These also include the 17,000 disappeared Lebanese whose status is still unknown. Those kidnapped, mostly civilians, were taken from their communities by various armed groups, both during the civil war, and after it. This issue continues to this day, yet those who are aware of their fates—even of those who were kidnapped decades ago—refuse to disclose the information that would give families and communities closure.

To create a viable collective history and a memorialisation that encompasses all of those impacted by the civil war and conflict beyond that, the Lebanese must be empowered to examine the truth about their history. They must be able to discuss and seek answers to questions of what happened during the civil war, what has become of their disappeared friends and family, and perhaps most importantly, they must be able to examine and determine what the origins and causes of the conflict were. This is the foundation upon which they can build a lasting justice, establish trust between communities, discuss reparations, and develop confidence in Lebanese leadership.

The challenges to examine the causes of conflict and create a collective memorialisation of it are immense, which is why such efforts need to be long-term in nature. These challenges extend beyond the amnesty law that exonerated the warlords of the civil war and the Ta'ef agreement that sought reconciliation without justice. Not only do leaders of various parties and communities seek to ignore and deny the past, but they also are emboldened by their exonerated status. They feel no pressure to apologise for past and ongoing violence carried out along sectarian lines, they act with impunity and are not held accountable for past and present actions, and their corruption both leads to, and is enabled by, the weakness of the Lebanese state. With this context, the Lebanese not only cannot look to their leaders for support in creating a collective history, but they can also expect to face resistance from them.

Beyond the institutional challenges from the state, the communities and different sects do not share common traditions and were never given a real opportunity to form a common identity. This division, of course exacerbated by the civil war, creates a feeling that there never was a foundation upon which a shared history could exist.

Fortunately, there is opportunity in Lebanon to work toward establishing a collective memorialisation. Many Lebanese people from all sects have a desire to know their past and understand what has happened. The parents and communities who have lost children and friends to kidnappings, disappearances, and violence want to know of their fates and will continue demanding answers. In efforts to help the Lebanese public fulfill this desire for a true and robust understanding of their past, civil society organisations have emerged and taken the forefront in these issues. From creating a space for dialogue between the different sects and confessions, to advocating on behalf of the disappeared, to holding politicians and leaders accountable, civil society, led mainly by the post-war generation, strives for the transitional justice that Lebanon never saw. Those involved in civil society, however, must be careful in their role. On the one hand, they will push for changes in attitudes and approaches, which are necessary for bringing about real justice and change that people desire. On the other hand, when the focus turns to any particular sect or community, members in that community will be on the defensive.

Those working with civil society must be aware of these sensitivities and be careful not to drive a division between civil society and the people it seeks to serve.

Application of IW Guiding Principles to Lebanon

Topic: the challenges and opportunities hindering and/or consolidating memorialisation initiatives in Lebanon in light of the eight guiding principles.

Participants to the workshops analysed the eight 'Guiding Principles for Memorialisation' in the Lebanese context and focused on the opportunities and the obstacles related to the application of each of the following principles.

The **Context:** The root causes of the Lebanese conflict are a major point of divergence amongst the citizens. This gap is due to the structural political divisions between the different

IW's Guiding Principles of Memorialisation:

Context: Consider the root causes of the violence, the nature of the conflict, how (if at all) the conflict ended, the current social and political situation, and enduring legacies of the conflict, such as structural violence.

Critical Self-Reflection: about each actor's role in memory initiatives in light of differing values, biases and with awareness that the very presence of different actors can influence memorialisation, taking care not to burden memorialisation with overly ambitious goals. Seek inspiration from other contexts, but be aware of the dangers of transplanting experiences from one context to another.

Participation: Genuine grassroots participation can ensure that local needs, traditions, human rights, and socio-cultural sensitivity are respected for the purposes of ensuring local ownership, meaningful engagement and context-sensitive memorialisation.

Complementarity: Memory initiatives must be considered as part of a framework for transformative justice that includes complementary mechanisms for guaranteeing truth, justice, reparations and the non-recurrence of violence. Attention should be given to the diverse ways that memory initiatives can contribute to the goals of political and institutional reform, addressing socio-economic inequalities, demands for human rights, as well as the range of individual and community needs after violence.

factions who were involved in the war and the absence of a common history book. According to many Lebanese, the conflict is still ongoing although it has taken a different shape and follows different regional political dynamics. The ending of the war without any measures for realising transitional justice and identifying of the root causes of the conflict, does not allow for a clear definition of what collective memorialisation initiatives should be based on. In addition, the ongoing sporadic conflicts and political polarisation between the different political factions, each with their own regional agendas, constitute an obstacle towards memorialisation and renew the memories of the civil war.

The Lebanese society and the political leaders who enjoyed amnesty are incapable of acknowledging not only their responsibilities for the violence but also the victimhood of the other. The absence of a truth telling process in the country granted these political leaders immunity for their crimes and reinforced their ultimate monopolisation of the political scene. This phenomenon has a strong impact on the post-conflict generation who ignores to some great extent the wrong doing of its political elite and their role in the war. As a result, the new generation adopted the same values and political tendencies of their leaders and is reluctant to review the past and admit the responsibilities of their leaders in the conflict.

Critical self-reflection: Due to the dispute about the roots of the conflict, the ongoing divisions, and polarisation in the country, memory initiatives in Lebanon remain unofficial. Developed within a private sphere, they lack the needed national consensus for them to be fair and effective. Many unofficial memory initiatives were developed by various factions and were restricted to a specific geographical spot representing a certain political history and environment that is refuted by the other. Meanwhile, post-conflict Lebanon has witnessed several memorialisation initiatives, mainly through the production of movies related to the war and which claimed international awards, yet the Lebanese citizen remained divided around them and they were subjected to opposing interpretation. The critical self-reflection exercise of memorialisation experiences does not seek to transplant memories from outside the context that could burden the process but rather seeks to assess memories from within the context and on the roles of the different actors in the conflict.

Commemoration dates specific to the victims of one group see massive participation by the partisans of this group while another rejects them. The continued dispute over the past between the various political leaders who were never vetted or renewed after the war is considered a major obstacle to any critical self-reflection since none of them admitted their responsibilities about the violence. The sequencing of memorialisation initiatives in Lebanon is not respected since each faction rushes to commemorate an event as a political statement against the other and aimed at mobilising the masses to this end and confirming its political presence on the scene.

Participation: People's participation in the development of memory initiatives in Lebanon is inhibited by the division amongst the political elite, who never engaged in a truth-telling process or a genuine reconciliation process. The political culture in Lebanon is more top-down than participatory in nature. Religious leaders, traditional, sectarian and feudal leaders have a strong hold on the political scene in the Lebanese society. They are reinforced by the Lebanese population, who, divided along political, sectarian and ideological lines of the existing political factions, strongly believes they are protecting them from the other Lebanese of different factions. As a result, the population is easily manipulated and mobilized by these leaders and they often partake in any memory initiatives launched by their party without questioning its objectives and aims.

Meanwhile, the emerging secular civil society has made several attempts to consult with the population and to gather the Lebanese around collective memorialisation initiatives, yet the participation of the citizens remains timid.

Complementarity: Lebanon did not witness any form of transformative or transitional justice process. The general amnesty law granted extensive legitimacy to the warlords after the civil war and confirmed once more their supremacy as political leaders in post-conflict Lebanon. The absence of transitional justice mechanisms in post-conflict Lebanon is an obstacle to any memorialisation initiatives. Without complementarity between memorialisation and mechanisms by which that process can continue in a robust fashion, memorialisation can be transformed into a tool to blame and incriminate the other. Moreover, the reparation program for victims, considered a key component for memorialisation, took a financial form and was confined to one sectarian leader who abused it to allocate an enormous amount of money to his partisans while ignoring others. This situation regenerated latent hatred amongst the Lebanese and led in a later stage to the perpetration of renewed violence.

The **process:** When talking about memorialisation in Lebanon, the process and sequencing are important factors and should be dealt with as long-term endeavours given all the

Process: Memorialisation is a long-term, participatory process that requires the sustained involvement of all actors and in particular the involvement of younger generations through inter-generational dialogue. Timing and sequencing are key factors in memorialisation.

Multiple Narratives: There can be no one truth after violence; the multiplicity of discourse, different understandings and the value of social dialogue should be acknowledged, respected and adapted to, but recognising that this does not inevitably lead to reconciliation or require affected communities to give up their claims for justice.

Youth: Memorialisation must prioritise and promote the active inclusion of younger generations as agents for change, for the non-recurrence of violence and for dignifying the memories of survivors, especially since youth are often left on the side-lines of memory initiatives by a focus on direct conflict actors.

Politicisation: Memorialisation is an inherently political process that can be utilised for the reclamation of violated rights or appropriated to serve malevolent purposes that can entrench impunity and subvert fundamental rights.

Participants' Citations:

"... NGOs should triple their efforts when working with youth on memorialisation and memory since they are confronted by a strong political propagandist political parties who have more influence on the new generation than any other civil society initiative."

complexities of the conflict, the way it ended, and its recurrence. Secular civil society initiatives towards collective memorialisation processes must be valued and supported given the fact that they are acting as an alternative process for truth telling that Lebanon never witnessed. Meanwhile, the recurrence of the violence nowadays jeopardises the sustainability of the process and presents new challenges. Strategising the process and preserving what has been achieved is vital given the fact that political divisions are coming to define the new post-war generation who never had the chance to unveil the realities of the conflict in an impartial manner.

Ensuring an ongoing sustainable process of memorialisation in Lebanon is always hindered by the lack of interest on behalf of the decision makers and the political elite who prefer to practice amnesia rather than accountability or truth telling for the past violence.

Multiple Narratives: In a country where violence emanated from a severe division over the nature of national identity and where multiple international, regional, and national players played a crucial role in the violence, multiple narratives become a tool to defend one's views and ideologies. As long as the root causes of the conflict are not agreed upon and the various actors do not exhibit a mutual recognition of their role in the violence, the multiple narratives will be used to divide the people and maintain each faction's insulation from the others. The media in Lebanon, privately managed and owned, reflects this division and often reminds the population of the past violence in a biased manner. The disagreement on the narratives, polarised as they are, is probably the hardest obstacle for the Lebanese to overcome should they want to move towards a collective memorialisation process.

Youth: Due to the fact that Lebanon did not adopt any transitional justice mechanisms, especially a truth telling process, the youth who were born during the conflict and the post-conflict generation inherited the biased views of their political leaders on the root causes of the conflict. The top-down political culture in Lebanon does not allow for an active participation of the youth in a process such as memorialisation. As a result, and due to the ongoing existentialist fear of the other, the youth often adopt the same discourse as their leaders and have the tendency to incriminate the other rather than engage in a critical dialogue. The on-going polarisation and sporadic violence in the country did not spare the youth who find themselves involved in the justification of the violence and even playing a role in it which makes memorialisation the least of their concerns.

Politicisation: Lebanese political life is strongly dominated by the same political elite who have been in power for decades before, during, and after the conflict. Memorialisation for this elite is a tool to sustain the mobilisation of their partisans against the others rather than reviewing the past and moving towards a true reconciliation. Historical truths in Lebanon are not used to depose regimes that violated or continue to violate human rights, but rather to depose the political opponent. The power sharing formula in Lebanon and the shifting political alliances amongst the political elite for personal gains and interests prevents the population from dealing with the past. This dynamic is usually justified by the so-called will of the politicians to protect national unity and therefore the transformation of an enemy into an ally becomes normalised. Added to this phenomenon of shifting political alliances, is the lack of accountability of the political elite. As a result, the political elite, which has no interest in dealing with the past or moving towards collective memorialisation, find themselves protecting their supremacy by manipulating their partisans.

The Role of Political Parties in Memorialisation

In undertaking memorialisation, one has to take into consideration the various political parties working in Lebanon, both as actors who in their histories are part of the memories of so many Lebanese, and as current leaders, whose support the Lebanese will need to achieve the transitional justice they were deprived of.

While the parties denounce the civil war and continued violence in general terms, when the focus turns on them, and they are asked to expose darker parts of their own histories, they become defensive and reactionary. They justify, downplay, or deny their actions of the past, and refuse to acknowledge the plights of other sects and communities that suffered at their hands. Their idea of memorialisation does not deal with memories or history at all. As mentioned earlier, the parties continue to urge the Lebanese to "turn the page" and move forward. This dismissal of the past is not conducive to creating the trust between communities that will be necessary to bridge the gaps and division that exist currently.

The youth in these parties find themselves in a precarious situation as well. First, most of them weren't born during the atrocities that took place in Lebanon's civil war. Not only do they not have a shared collective memory, but their skewed memory of past event is not even their own, but rather something that has been passed down to them. These youth carry the message of their leaders and yet cannot do much to address the needs and demands of their

“... As an international actor working in Lebanon on memory, I find it very hard to understand the context of violence that youth often refer to. Usually they repeat what they hear from their politicians without critically reflecting on the past. Many of the youth have not had the chance to meet with other Lebanese outside of their environment and they have deeply rooted stereotypes about their fellow citizens.”

Victims' Citations:

“... most of us know who kidnapped our children and relatives. We know who controlled the neighbourhoods and who intimidated us. My husband was kidnapped from under the house in 1986. I tried everything possible to know where he is... I was extorted by many and paid lots of money to have information... Only those who kidnapped him know where he is.”

“...I joined the committee of the parents of the kidnapped and the disappeared because we all suffer from the same misery and cruelty but we will continue our struggle... maybe ours are dead by now... it has been more than 25 years now... but we still need to know what happened.”

victims and Lebanese society on the whole. Even if they did want to shift the party line and address those needs and demands, they are powerless to do so. The same youth who support the parties are not involved in those parties' decision-making process. They can't urge the party leadership to acknowledge painful details in their past any more than the victims themselves can. They have little ability to shape the future of their own party, let alone the future of Lebanon.

The parties and their supporters acknowledge the need for a dialogue and communication between those affected by the civil war, but they stop short before any discussion of their own culpability can begin.

In response to the reluctance of parties to take responsibility for their past, the people have lost and will continue to lose confidence in the political elite. They will see them as self-interested rather than nationally minded putting their own interests before the interests of the people. This will be especially true as sporadic violence continues along party lines and the leadership continues to refuse to address their part in the problem.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Thus far, in trying to create a collective memorialisation of Lebanon's tumultuous history, the workshop results in steps aimed at opening a dialogue and addressing grievances. The Sustainable Democracy Center (SDC) and the Forum Civil Peace Service (ZFD) have formed a partnership. Together, and working with seven other NGOs, they work on encouraging a dialogue between different political parties and civil society members. They focus on issues relating to the past in general and also on the cause of forced disappearances.

In addition to this civil society effort, the Lebanese Phalanges Party (Kataeb) promised to support two local NGOs attempting to present the forced disappearances draft law to the parliament. Unfortunately the NGOs failed to find a parliamentary group willing to adopt the new draft law, a step necessary to turn the draft into a bill that would be up for discussion in the parliament.

Going forward, participants to the workshop proposed the following recommendations that are aimed at addressing Lebanon's need for transitional justice and a common historical narrative:

- Generate guarantees and a code of conduct prior to any memorialisation initiatives. This will prevent factions and groups from exploiting the memorialisation for political and personal interests. This will include defining what memorialisation is, and what their objective in pursuing it is. If they fail to define their terms and objectives, political parties that do not resist memorialisation altogether will surely try to utilise it on their own terms in an attempt to exonerate themselves while vilifying other parties. Having a code of conduct will also help ensure the non-repetition of violence that might step from attempting to memorialise the history given Lebanon's frail security situation.
- Develop a common value of citizenship amongst the new generation, the youth will be better able to embrace collective memories and create a genuine reconciliation. This would allow young people to bridge the gaps that divide the different confessions and groups and inhibit dialogue. With this, the paradigm of Lebanese diversity can be shifted from a divisive concept to a uniting one and that leads to true pluralism.
- Undergo an exhumation process of mass graves, and the strengthening of the capacity of NGOs offering psycho-social support to victims who have been affected by the civil war, and continued sporadic violence. To do this, a political consensus amongst the concerned various factions to pressure the political elite to sanction the exhumation process and strengthen these efforts must be generated.

Specific action to achieve these objectives could include, but is not limited to, creating a space for dialogue between political parties and groups that they might share their narratives (both in Beirut and across Lebanon), organising youth conferences focused on memorialisation of Lebanon's history outside of the normal political framework, and encouraging university students to study different texts and accounts from the different political parties using them to form a collective history in context with one another. Furthermore, to broaden the impact of these programs, they can be made widely available to the Lebanese public, whether that means broadcasting dialogue events or youth conferences through the media or distributing materials focused on memorialisation.

The efforts undertaken by civil society members and those seeking a collective memorialisation of Lebanon's history are important, but must fit into a larger, long-term endeavour. Due to the immense challenges they face and the deep distrust that exists in Lebanese communities, this will be the work of many years, if not decades. Fortunately, as time passes, more and more political will exists to achieve these goals and improve Lebanese society. Those invested in memorialisation have an opportunity to seize this political will and utilise it to achieve the transitional justice Lebanon was denied—thus forging a promising future for the country.

¹Martyrs of the Islamic Resistance refers to those who were killed while fighting the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and mainly members of the Shia' dominant Hezbollah party and known for their religious allegiance to Iran and strong political allies to Syria.
²Martyrs of the Christian Resistance refers to those who were killed while fighting the Syrian and the Palestine occupation in Lebanon and mainly members of the Lebanese Forces and the Lebanese Phalanges who were known for their collaboration with Israel between the end of the seventies and until the peace accord of 1989.

³ Un Etat n'est pas la somme de deux impuissances – et deux négations ne feront jamais une nation'
<http://www.lebanonrenaissance.org/assets/Uploads/11-Deux-Negations-Ne-Font-Pas-Une-Nation-by-Georges-Naccache-1949.pdf>

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Impunity Watch is a Netherlands-based, international non-profit organisation seeking to promote accountability for atrocities in countries emerging from a violent past. IW conducts periodic and sustained research on the root causes of impunity that includes the voices of affected communities to produce research-based policy advice on processes intended to enforce their rights to truth, justice, reparations and non-recurrence. IW works closely with civil society organisations to increase their influence on the creation and implementation of related policies. IW runs 'Country Programmes' in Guatemala and Burundi and a 'Perspectives Programme' involving comparative research in multiple post-conflict countries on specific thematic aspects of impunity. The present Policy Brief is published as part of IW's Memorialisation Project, within the wider Perspectives Programme.

Contact Us:

Impunity Watch

't Goylaan 15
3525 AA Utrecht
The Netherlands
Tel: +31.302.720.313
Email: info@impunitywatch.org

www.impunitywatch.org

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