

## LEBANON RECOMMENDATIONS

*The following recommendations for leveraging women's skills and expertise in seeking to moderate extremism were developed by Lebanese women experts convened by The Institute for Inclusive Security in January 2010.*

Following 35 years of war, occupation, and instability in Lebanon, during which the country has suffered from external interference by international powers, the country finds itself in a precarious situation on many levels. In addition to an ailing economy and in the absence of rule of law, there exists discrimination and lack of equal rights at all levels. Lebanon is also plagued by a sectarian system that fuels extremism and corruption. Combined, these challenges make it difficult for Lebanese women to have equal access to political opportunities through which they could affect positive change. Resolving these lingering issues and building a strong state would improve the overall situation in the country as well as the situation of women by helping them find the channels through which to access power and bring about peace and stability in Lebanon.

### **TO INCREASE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN ALL EFFORTS TO MODERATE EXTREMISM**

#### **THE US GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL DONOR COMMUNITY SHOULD:**

1. Mandate that US delegations to Lebanon meet with women leaders when in the region and include senior US women representatives in their delegations.
2. Increase support for women's economic empowerment by underwriting business development training and providing access for women to micro-credit. Fund projects that educate, provide access to, and increase women's capacity to use information technology.
3. Underwrite training and education for women leaders across religious, political, and regional sects to increase advocacy, lobbying, and coalition building skills. Invest in training for men and women on the importance of women's political participation.
4. Promote tolerance, respect for human rights, and women's rights by funding long-term independent civil society initiatives across regional, confessional, and class divides, specifically funding women's programs.
5. Fund a broader spectrum of university exchange programs through the US Embassy in Lebanon. Additionally, the US Embassy in Lebanon should meet with and fund a broader spectrum of university exchange programs.

**THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON – INCLUDING THE CABINET, PARLIAMENT, AND MINISTRIES – SHOULD:**

1. Ratify and implement all established international and national commitments to women’s inclusion, including the Beijing Platform of Action and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to ensure that women are represented at all levels of decision-making, specifically in the cabinet, parliament, and civil service. Mandate through legislation that 30 percent of all posts in these decision-making bodies be reserved for women.
2. Amend electoral laws to promote inclusion, equality, and greater representation of women, specifically through requirements for proportional representation and quotas for women. Ensure significant representation of women in all Lebanese delegations to all United Nations’ conferences, meetings, and deliberations.
3. Promote women’s rights and the spirit of citizenship by funding and implementing compulsory civic education programs that include inter-confessional dialogue and exchanges such as arts programs and athletic competitions.
4. Invest in public education reform and its implementation to ensure that curricula are unbiased, discuss tolerance, promote interfaith dialogue, and advance respect for human rights, especially women’s rights.
5. Mandate the inclusion of women in the National Dialogue Committee, ensuring that at least three women are included and that one woman is from civil society.
6. Combat discrimination and violence against women by adopting suggested amendments to the penal code, the nationality law, custody laws, and laws prohibiting violence against women.

**POLITICAL PARTIES SHOULD:**

1. Include women at all levels and in all decision-making meetings of political parties by:
  - a. Instituting a cross-party agreement to increase the number of women included within political parties;
  - b. Requiring the executive boards of parties to include a minimum 30 percent women;
  - c. Mandating that party lists for municipal and parliamentary elections include a minimum of 30 percent female candidates; and
  - d. Nominating women from political parties for cabinet posts.
2. Create a cross-party coalition of women that includes capacity-building programs to forge alliances among female members of different political parties.

**CIVIL SOCIETY SHOULD:**

1. Encourage women in civil society to engage in a nationwide dialogue that would frame a national women’s agenda and build a women’s coalition.