

Statement of “Kulluna Irada” on the campaign targeting “Mashrou’ Leila”

Combatting intolerance and hatred and guaranteeing freedom of expression and belief are basic human rights

August 2, 2019

Kulluna Irada joined 11 political and human rights groups in seizing the interim Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation concerning the serious violations targeting the musical band “Mashrou’ Leila”, and calling for the prosecution of those who not only launched hate speeches but also incited violence against an art group, a cultural festival and their respective audiences, which led to weakening State institutions, especially the judiciary, and replacing them with “street justice”.

Kulluna Irada warns against taking political tension and conflict into the streets by promoting extremism, fundamentalism and polarization, and gearing citizens towards identity conflicts, away from their main struggle to preserve themselves, their society and their livelihoods.

Now more than ever, we need to promote a moderate speech and responsible political action, and we need to resort to the rule of law and public institutions, which are the sole guarantee in the face of the political, economic and social challenges facing Lebanon today.

As part of our role in promoting the rule of law and public institutions, we reiterate our call for judicial authorities to take swift actions to safeguard the safety, rights and freedoms of citizens, namely freedom of expression, artistic creativity and freedom of belief.

We also call upon the Government to carry out its responsibilities in this regard, especially the concerned Ministers - namely the Ministers of Justice, Interior, Culture and Tourism - and to take the necessary measures to combat hate speech and intolerance, maintain security, civil peace and public safety, safeguard freedoms, and protect the country’s unity, reputation and interests.

And we call upon Parliament to question the concerned Ministers around their lack of intervention in order to prevent the escalation of this matter, which compromised the security and program of an international Lebanese cultural festival, given what it represents at the level of art, culture, freedom, tourism and the economy in Lebanon.