

Lebanese Campaign Urges 'Right to Know' Fate of Disappeared

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A Lebanese rights group launched a campaign Wednesday to push for new efforts to determine the fate of some 17,000 people still missing more than 20 years after the country's brutal civil war.

The "right to know" campaign comes after fresh violence following a car bomb attack two weeks ago that raised memories of Lebanon's 15-year civil conflict.

"The campaign's goal is to mobilize Lebanese society, especially the youth, so that they in turn put pressure on the authorities and push for a solution," said Justine Di Mayo, president of ACT for the Disappeared, a Lebanese association spearheading the campaign.

The initiative aims to seek justice over a central issue of the civil war's legacy -- one that has never been resolved and has often been shrouded in silence.

"The media campaign aims to put the issue of the missing and disappeared back in the headlines until a solution is reached," the group said in a statement.

Justice for victims, it said, is crucial if Lebanon is to move forward from its violent history.

"If Lebanon does not put victims at the center of its priorities, the future of the country is likely to remain hostage to violence," the statement said.

Di Mayo believes a national commission should be established to investigate the disappearances, which took place during the 1975-1990 civil war that saw the country overrun by militias vying for power and left more than 150,000 dead.

"A national commission would be able to carry out inquiries into what happened to the missing," she said.

The media campaign includes television spots, billboards and actions on social networks, said the organization.

Five TV spots will be aired for two weeks on several Lebanese channels starting from Wednesday.

One of the spots shows a woman laying the dinner table and pouring water into a glass for her husband, who went missing 20 years ago. The clock ticks uncomfortably, as she dines alone.

"For 20 years, Tawfik's wife has been living on hope," says the voiceover. "Enough waiting."

Another spot shows a young man cleaning up his missing father's car and old cassettes. The man then looks at a photograph of his father, holding him up as a small child.

"Twenty years on, Walid has not lost hope," says the voiceover.

Source [Agence France Presse](#)