

An Intersectional Cure for a Traumatic Disease

Nadim El Kak

To cite this article: El Kak, N. (2022). An intersectional cure for a traumatic disease. *Al-Raida*, 46(2), 87-88. DOI: 10.32380/alrj.v46i2.2526

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.32380/alrj.v46i2.2526>

© 2022 The Author(s)

Corresponding author: Nadim El Kak

Author contact: al-raida@lau.edu.lb

Article type: Article

Published online: 4th August 2022

Publisher: Arab Institute for Women

Publication support provided by: Escienta

Journal ISSN: 0259-9953

Copyright: This is an Open Access article, free of all copyright, and may be freely reproduced, distributed, transmitted, modified, built upon, or otherwise used by anyone for any lawful purpose. The work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.

An Intersectional Cure for a Traumatic Disease¹

Nadim El Kak

The piercing sound of lingering shattered glass. Images of the victims and wounded. Cries of sorrow from the hearts of loved ones. The cold and shaky emptiness of lost memories and a stolen future. Beirut and Lebanon ache as trauma sets in and sweeps away whatever hope was left in an ailing population.

A morally bankrupt political and financial establishment has plagued this country like an unceasing disease for countless generations. Elites have long lost their sense of humanity. Speeches by President Aoun, Hezbollah Secretary General Nasrallah, and now-resigned PM Diab are a clear testament to that, but so are the thirty years of criminal governance and fifteen years of civil war. As much as some people nostalgically long for a better Lebanon, the reality is that this country, throughout its history of nominal independence, has always been a terrain of inequality, exploitation, and oppression. Labor rights, gender rights, queer rights, migrant rights, refugee rights, and human rights more broadly have always been threatened and violated.

The characteristics of this disease, which have allowed it to linger for so long, abound: A robbed state subjected to apportionment, never-ending clientelist networks of all kinds, divisive sectarianization tools, predetermined elections mired with vote-buying and intimidation tactics, regional and international powers legitimizing theft and exploitation while operating as financial lifelines, business elites thriving off neoliberal subjugation, defunct policies, and greed...you name it.

This is not another one of these outdated cries for resilience. This is a call for a collective reckoning of the intersectional and inter-relational nature of our problem. "*Kilon Yaani Kilon*"—a thousand times yes, but let's go beyond that in our diagnosis. This explosion exposed all the ills in this country: corruption, ineptness, and violence from the top, certainly; but also, racism, sexism, xenophobia, and queerphobia at the societal level.

Relief work and communal solidarity was undoubtedly heartwarming and crucial with the absence of the state, yet we must acknowledge the sexual harassment that still occurred on the ravaged streets of the explosion during cleaning efforts, the racism and xenophobia that migrant workers and refugees experienced while seeking all forms of relief, the discrimination queer folks face during relocation and so on.

When those espousing radical intersectional politics on the streets of the uprising speak of a collective struggle and an all-encompassing revolution, we're referring specifically to a comprehensive diagnosis of the issue that sees how neoliberal economics, heteronormative patriarchal structures, colonial legacies, neocolonial realities, racialized superstructures, environmentally unsustainable systems, and violence in all its forms shape the realities of ALL individuals on this earth.

This internationalist perspective is key because it allows us to look beyond the capitalist nation-state construct breeding hyper-individualist chauvinism. It allows us to realize that the discourse of "prioritization" is merely another divisiveness tool by local and global oligarchs. Thriving for an internationalist and intersectional revolution does not mean letting go of the local. If anything, it is a reiteration of the urgent significance of the grassroots. Only through these inclusive and radical politics can we develop the solidarity networks that allow us to cope with the recurring blows handed to us. With the current realities Lebanon is facing, there is no other alternative. Whether you emigrate or stay here, all we can do is resist and organize, collectively.

Notes

¹ This testimony was collected and originally published by the Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship at the American University of Beirut.