

LERC Representatives Attend Conference on Security Sector Reform

By Dalia Atallah, LERC Grant Recipient

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The Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) of Notre Dame University- Louaize (NDU) was represented on Friday November 14, 2014, at a conference organized by International Alert, in collaboration with the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS), titled, “*People Centered Approach to Security Sector Reform,*” which was held at the Phoenicia Hotel, Beirut.

LERC Grant Recipient Ms. Dalia Atallah and LERC Research Assistant Ms. Jasmin Lilian Diab attended the conference in which several prominent figures spoke.

The ceremony started with opening statements by Mr. Dan Smith, Secretary General of International Alert, and Mr. Sami Atallah, Executive Director of the LCPS. Minister of Interior and Municipalities H.E. Nohad Machnouk also delivered a speech on the challenges faced by the Internal Security Forces (ISF), and focused on the citizens’ perception of the ISF. The speakers included a number of other important personalities, notably a representative of the European Union Delegation to Lebanon.



from left: Former Akiki Grant Recipient, Mr. Michel Ghanem; current Akiki Grant Recipient Ms. Dalia Atallah; LERC Research Assistant, Ms. Jasmin Lilian Diab and Mr. Amin Nehme of the Lebanese Development Network, (Phoenicia Hotel, Nov. 2014)

The conference presented to the attendees the results of a survey on public perceptions of security and insecurity in Lebanon conducted by International Alert and the LCPS, as part of a project supported by the EU, aiming to better understand challenges facing the security sector in Lebanon. It also shared the findings of the studies carried out based on the survey, which mainly tackled the Syrian refugee crisis, gender issues, and joint efforts to reform the security sector. These findings were later debated with experts, civil society activists, and security officials, notably high-ranking officers in the ISF.

The nationwide survey focused on how Lebanese citizens perceive potential threats to themselves, to whom they resort to address such threats, and how they assess the performance of security agencies. The survey revealed that a majority of Lebanese feel less safe now than they did three years ago, and that the threat posed by Syrian refugees is consistently identified as “serious” across the country. It is worthy of note that over 70% of the respondents felt particularly threatened by religious extremists and Syrian-related factions.

A report was later presented on the role that gender dynamics play in defining how Lebanese security institutions act and react to different security-relevant situations and how they affect working conditions within the institutions.

Following the report, suggestions were made by several officials on how to improve and reform the existing security institutions, notably the ISF, and how to render them more efficient and friendlier in dealing with the citizens’ complaints.

Each topic was followed by a panel discussion, and the floor was open for the attendees’ questions at the end of each part of the conference.