

**Joint Statement by the International Democrat Union (IDU) and the Centrist Democrat International (IDC-CDI) on Lebanon - The political culture of impunity must end.**

On August 4, 2020, the explosion of a large amount of ammonium nitrate at the Beirut port devastated the city, killing more than 230 people, injuring more than 6,500, and forcing 330,000 to abandon their homes, at least temporarily.

Two and a half years have passed since then, and the local legal investigation into the responsibilities related to this disaster is being obstructed by unsubstantive legal and political arguments and with disregard of basic democratic principles such as transparency and accountability.

The chief investigator, Judge Tarek Bitar, the families of the victims, and all those who show solidarity with them have frequently been the target of political and legal pressure, threats, and even violence.

This is not acceptable under any circumstances.

The International Democrat Union (IDU) and the Centrist Democrat International (IDC-CDI) declare their solidarity with the families of the victims, who have a legitimate right to see this disaster investigated and those responsible held accountable.

We support the statement issued by 40 members of the Lebanese Parliament of January 27, 2023, calling for the investigation to continue unimpeded.

We call on the Lebanese authorities to stop obstructing the investigation into the explosion of the port and to provide the necessary support to the lead investigator, Judge Tarek Bitar. The attempts to prevent him carrying out his investigation and to intimidate him must be stopped.

The political culture of impunity must end. This applies not only to the port blast, but also to the political assassinations, the economic crimes, and corruption that the Lebanese people must endure time and again. This is the only way can Lebanon emerge from the multiple crises facing the country and preserve social peace.