



## Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship

On April 23, 2021, The Asfari Institute launched its first event of the Feminist Roundtable Series titled “Gender, Conflict, and Refugees: The Case of Syria.” This event was successfully delivered by the esteemed guest speakers, Sabah El Hallak, the director of Moubadarat Al Mouwatana, and Rola El Rokbi, the director of Women Now for Development. The event started by streaming a short scene from the movie “[Nehna Mou Heik](#)” by the film director, Carol Mansour. Later, the discussion of the event was moderated by Dr. Muna Khalidi.

As a kick-off of the series, the first roundtable discussion has been concluded successfully as it was very fruitful, highly informative, and well-elaborated. It also encouraged the participants to learn from women with wide expertise in the field, as well as share their knowledge and ask critical questions. The diversity of backgrounds of the attendees was a key success of the event. They varied from university professors, students, directors of institutions, dean of the Faculty of Sciences (FAS) at the American University of Beirut (AUB), to representatives of various civil society organizations.

The guest speakers managed to tackle the topic from different angles ranging from sexual violence, the exploitation of women in refugee camps, the active political participation of women, the protection of women by law enforcement, women leadership, to the importance of economic development for female refugees, and much more in between.

*“I really liked what Ms. Rola El Rokbi said about the importance of showing women as resistant, not a victim. I utterly support that. I also admired her idea about the importance of supporting women with small startups to enhance their capacities and secure their economic independence.”* – Fatima Nasser, Administrative Assistant at the Asfari Institute.

*“Finally, there are women who are shedding light on the difference between religiousness and extremism. From the bottom of my heart, thank you, Sabah and Rola, because most of the people deal with us as victims of our own religious community, and that is not true.”* – Jasmine, a Syrian attendee.

*“That is how enlightening the mindsets of the public starts. Incrementally, a small change after another, and by raising awareness on human rights, not using violence and destruction. All the best.”* – Mahmoud Mahdi, an attendee.