



Fondation Ghazal and Fondation de France announced that "Fighters for Peace" won first place and "Adyan Foundation" won second place in the tenth batch of the 2023 awards for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, granted annually by Fondation Ghazal for Education, Research, and Peace in Lebanon, the region, and the world. The winners were selected with the help of a jury composed of past winners of the prize and were announced during a ceremony held in the François Bassil Hall at the Innovation and Sports Campus of Saint Joseph University (USJ) on Saturday, April 13, 2024, attended by the Acting Minister of Information Ziad Makari, civil society figures, media representatives, and students.

Michel Ghazal, President of Fondation Ghazal, presented the award to Ziad Saab, President of Fighters for Peace, and Dr. Nayla Tabbara, President of Adyan Foundation, with the participation of Axelle Davezac, President of Fondation de France, via the Zoom platform.

In his speech, Michel Ghazal highlighted the symbolic significance of April 13 as the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War, noting the absence of a genuine national reconciliation that left fault lines exposed and wounds open. He commended Fighters for Peace for understanding that "disagreements and differences do not necessitate a destructive civil war and that violence is not the solution." He also praised Adyan's film "Against the Current," which, in part, highlights the rejection and instability faced by peacebuilders in their communities. He concluded his

speech by stating, "It is impossible to sit idly by while our country faces the threat of loss... and we must be a beacon of light and hope for a Lebanon where living together is cherished."

Following Michel Ghazal's remarks, Minister Makari praised the roles of Fighters for Peace and Adyan Foundation, congratulating them on winning the award and stating, "The cause for which this award has been granted to you is a noble cause that you should be proud of."

Asaad Chaftari, Vice President of Fighters for Peace, thanked Fondation Ghazal and Fondation de France for the award, saying in his speech, "The end of military operations did not achieve true reconciliation between the Lebanese or with other parties." He pointed out that the reconciliation between military and political leaders did not extend to the Lebanese citizens through a genuine transitional justice process. Chaftari considered winning the Fondation Ghazal award a "moment we will always remember," affirming their commitment to work with dedication and passion, and that "this award is a privilege and a responsibility we take seriously."

The ceremony included screenings of films by Adyan and Fighters for Peace. Fighters for Peace will allocate the funding won by the peace award to a project focusing on grassroots reconciliation efforts between ex-combatants from formerly opposing sides and youth in the area of Tariq el Jdideh in Beirut, a location which witnessed sectarian and political tensions in the past years.

