

## Anne-Marie Buhoro Award:

“We are key for building peace”,  
celebrates Lebanese gender  
equality leader



After four years of war and isolation, this is the first time that many Lebanese people are hopeful again. For the women’s movement in the country, this is twice the truth, as they receive international recognition for their work and seize new perspectives with the current positive momentum for Lebanon.

**“We hope the humanitarian response will resume soon in the levels of before in Lebanon. And we need reforms and accountability in place for a real change”**, said Ghida Anani, founder and director of ABAAD – the Resource Center for Gender Equality, a leading civil society organisation (CSO) in the country advocating for gender equality.

Ghida has been nominated the winner of the 2024 Anne-Marie Buhoro award for her commitment to ending gender-based violence in Lebanon. The prize is awarded annually by INOVAS (International Network of Victims and Survivors of Serious Human Rights Abuses).

Amidst war, ABAAD's team members managed to operate shelters in bombed areas, while many have lost their own houses in the wave of attacks by Israel that started in October 2023 and currently are on hold by a fragile ceasefire.

Israeli attacks have killed **4,163 people**, including **290 children** and **790 women** and have displaced more than 100,000 people inside Lebanon. At least **29 civilians** who have reportedly been killed in Israeli attacks after the ceasefire was announced on 27 November.

To protect women from violence and discrimination during war, ABAAD also launched the campaign “**Assault Does Not Justify Assault**”. It calls for closer collaboration with humanitarian organisations for the provision of safe spaces, healthcare and uninterrupted access to justice for women.

**“I'm very proud of our team's work, it also showed we are a key part of the response for peace building. Despite the crisis and the war, the women's movement was able to show its value and to remain solid with clarity and vision for the Lebanon of tomorrow”**, said Ghida.

Ghida celebrates the advances on legislation and access for gender responses worldwide, but highlights the challenges ahead. “Gender-based violence continues to be a huge problem, and we are especially concerned with the increase in femicide in conflict in the Middle East, in Sudan and Gaza. **GBV cannot be reduced if we do not tackle its root causes and change behaviours. Engaging men is essential, as well as faith-based groups and technology companies to influence society**”, she explained.

Globally, almost one in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their life, according to the UN. And four out of every ten people who died as a result of conflict in 2023 were women.

Ghida is also a board member of ICVA (International Council of Voluntary Agencies), and has been nominated before by the UN Solutions Summit and by the World Bank as one of the 10 Extraordinary Solution Makers across the Globe Advancing SDGs, and an Inspiring Women Entrepreneur Making a Difference across MENA.

The Anne-Marie Buhoro Award Committee who voted for Ghida was impressed by her capacity to transform systems by putting women in the center.

**“Ghida has established safe spaces for women and girls, helping them to shift their roles and enabling them to go beyond traditional roles. These spaces have empowered women to take control of their own lives and influence the lives of others”, celebrated Fatna El Bouih, INOVAS member**

# About the Anne-Marie

## Buhoro Award:

The Annual **Anne-Marie Buhoro Award**, established by **INOVAS**, aims to honour those who make “**a significant impact on the reduction of gender-based violence and on the promotion and protection of the rights of survivors**”.

The prize honours the memory of Anne-Marie Buhoro, a human rights activist from the Democratic Republic of Congo who dedicated her life to fighting against sexual violence and promoting gender equality.

As a victim of sexual violence herself, Anne-Marie and other women founded the Initiative for Vulnerable Persons and Women in Action for Integrated Development (IPVFAD), which provides support to victims and survivors of sexual violence in eastern DRC.

She played a central role in the establishment of INOVAS and its expansion in the DRC, as a step towards making survivors' voices heard globally and lobbying for justice at the international level.

The selection panel for the 2024 award comprised Fatna El Bouih (Moroccan activist and co-founder of INOVAS), Gentil Kasongo (Programme Lead for the DRC at Impunity Watch), Karim Abdessalem (Tunisian activist and INOVAS board member), and Providence Bireke (sister of the late Anne-Marie Buhoro).