



44 NEWS & DOC EMMYS NOMINEE

beirut dreams in color

COMMUNITY GUIDE





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INTRODUCTION

**“THE SKY
IS SWEETER
THAN THE
EARTH; I WANT
THE SKY AND
THE EARTH.”**

Sarah Hegazi,
Beirut Dreams in Color

FILM OVERVIEW

At a concert in Cairo, the biggest band in the Middle East, Mashrou' Leila, energizes a crowd of 35,000 people. On stage, the charismatic lead singer, Hamed, the first openly gay rock star in the Arab world, faces a sea of swaying flickering lights. Among the incandescence, a fan raises a giant rainbow flag, capping off a magical night. Yet, that one simple act of pride and joy would ultimately catapult the band, the fan, and others headlong into a tragic series of events.

Award-winning filmmakers Michael Collins, Marty Syjuco, James Costa, and Sarah Kaskas bring us the timely story of a trailblazing rock band, a courageous fan, and a queer activist's daunting battle against religious extremists for equality in some of the most hardline places in the world. Spanning over a decade of activism *Beirut Dreams in Color* is, simultaneously, a rare and nuanced look into the LGBTQ politics of the Middle East, and a moving testament to the power of music, and the universal desire for freedom.

USING THIS RESOURCE

Increasingly the spaces for queer people to connect, be creative, share their art, and freely love are threatened. Watching *Beirut Dreams in Color* within supportive communities can provide a source of strength and solidarity, as well as a respite from this intolerance. Community gatherings, faith-based organizations, NGOs, schools, and universities can use this story as a touchpoint to:

- ✿ **discuss the stresses and vulnerabilities facing the LGBTQ community in Lebanon and around the world;**
- ✿ **reflect on what is lost when the lifeline of free expression is attacked within families, communities, and countries;**
- ✿ **connect as a community for support, healing, and ongoing wellness.**

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

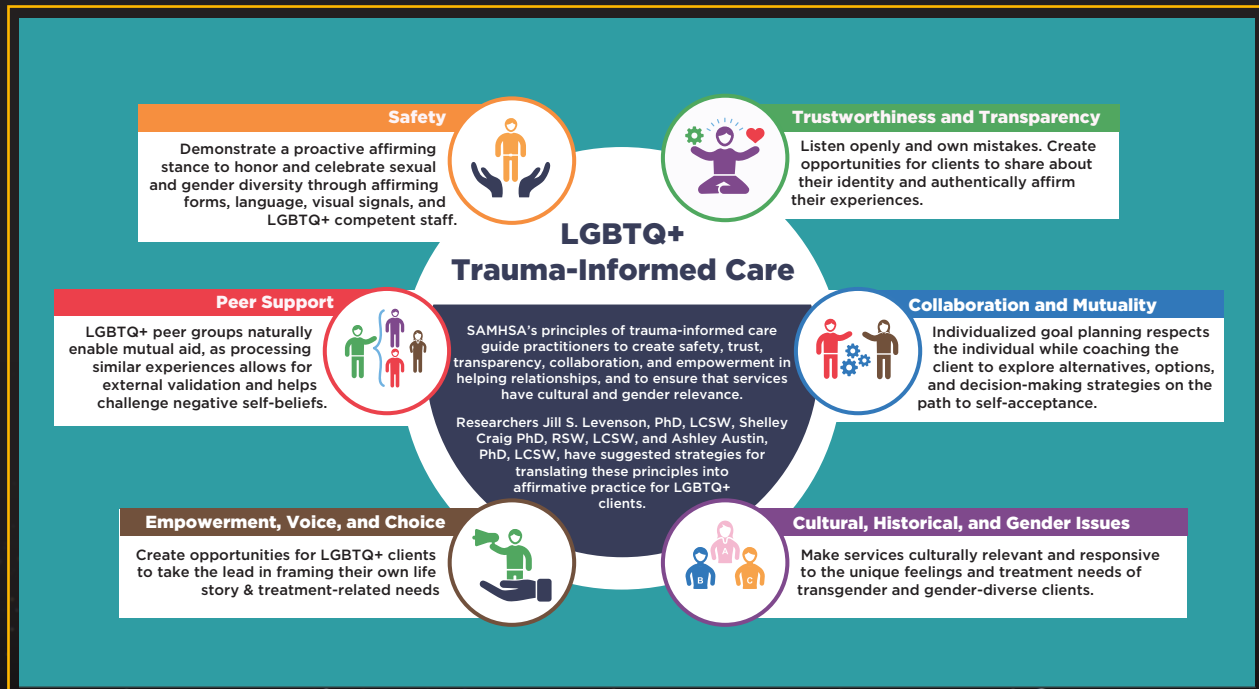
Beirut Dreams in Color is a beautiful story, but it is one that includes trauma, discussions of suicide, and violence. These topics may elicit a strong emotional response that requires additional support. If possible, it is highly recommended to work in partnership with local trauma-informed community organizations (see sidebar graphic) to provide support during or after any screening.

Here are other community guidelines to consider for your post-screening conversation:



- **Ask the group to devote their full attention to each person who speaks**
- **Allow each person to take their time and complete their thoughts**
- **Ask follow-up questions for clarity if necessary**
- **Share what is valuable about someone's question or comment**
- **Use people's names and refer back to earlier comments they've made**
- **Invite people into the conversation who have not spoken**
- **Answer any and all questions truthfully**
- **Acknowledge the quality of the conversation and express gratitude**

The ideas and suggestions for action in this guide are never a substitute for professional support when needed. If you have been affected by the issues raised in this film, help and support is available. In the UK, Hopeline UK, call 0800 068 4141, papyrus-uk.org. In the US, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255. In Australia, the crisis support service Lifeline is 13 11 14. Other international helplines can be found at www.befrienders.org. And the <http://suicide.org/international-suicide-hotlines.html>.



Source: <https://lgbtqequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Trauma-InformedCare-Final.pdf>

NOTE FROM MICHAEL COLLINS, DIRECTOR

BACK IN 2017, I WAS IN BEIRUT AND WAS FORTUNATE TO BE INTRODUCED TO TAREK ZAIDEN, WHO HELMS THE OLDEST LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS ORGANIZATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IT'S CALLED HELEM WHICH IS FITTING AS IT MEANS DREAM IN ARABIC.

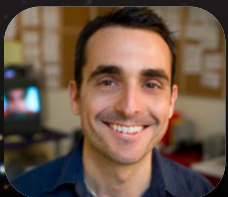
Over coffee, he told me about the rise in bullying and violence that the queer community in Lebanon was experiencing at the hands of the government security forces. Politicians were succumbing to increased pressure from religious extremist groups. Then, he told me about Mashrou' Leila - a popular indie band from Beirut that had been around for a decade, and whose lead singer, Hamed Sinno, was openly gay. Their music reflected all of the politics that they, as engaged young artists, were observing and reacting to, and this included the queer experience from a very personal point of view. In fact, their song "Smell the Jasmine" is known to be perhaps the first gay love song in the Arab world. This level of queer visibility is revolutionary in most countries, but, in this region, also dangerously tabooed. I started listening to their music, sung almost entirely in Arabic. I was hooked.

I experienced the power of it; how it resonates with truths that go beyond spoken language. I did then, of course, read all their lyrics and wished I had grown up with such beautiful artists to look up to, whose concerts I could go to, and dance freely at; and in my awkward youth be reassured that there was, indeed, in this crazy, motley world, a space for me. As a queer man who grew up in a Christian country, I could relate to feelings of being less-than that were ever-present in the lack of positive queer representation in media - we were relegated to caricatures or monsters. I could relate to the death-by-a-thousand-cuts all queer kids feel as the preachers and politicians use them as tools to drum up fear, votes and all the benefits of othering and dividing to serve their needs.

It became obvious to me why they are hugely famous all over the Middle East. This added to the devastation of learning that one by one they were being banned from performing in most countries in the region, including Egypt, their biggest fan-base. But Lebanon always seemed like one place they could return to, especially their hometown of Beirut, which was historically known as a relatively liberal oasis, hence dubbed as "The Paris of the Middle East." Yet by the time I reached them, that no longer held true. As Tarek points out in the film, "One good song can do more than 5000 protests." It's pretty self-evident that the very existence of this band, their fearless and often joyful expression of their experiences combined with their sheer talent, have done more to further the queer movement than we'll ever know. But sadly, as their fame has grown, so has their perceived power in upsetting the status quo, making them a target for all kinds of attacks.

Yet cocooned within the tragedy, I also discovered hope in the spirit of Sarah Hegazi, a young Egyptian woman, a luminous leader who was silenced in the worst way. I hope through this film more people can meet Sarah and find inspiration in her voice. But I also wanted us to collectively have a space to grieve her loss, an act that is often robbed of those whose safety depends on their anonymity.

For me, this is the most personal film I've made. The process has forced me to confront my own past, and the lingering traumas of living in a society that continues to steer so many of our queer siblings to early deaths. *Beirut Dreams in Color* is a film about belonging; a cautionary tale about what happens when greedy, fearful political and religious groups join forces to rehash some archaic worldview that serves them.



MICHAEL COLLINS
DIRECTOR

FILM PROTAGONISTS



Mostafa Fouad is currently Senior Program Director for HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement. He was Sarah Hegazi's best friend and works to continue her memory through his work and activism. In cooperation with Outright Action International and HuMENA, a website was launched to serve as a reference for everything related to Sarah Hegazi, including photos and blogs, as well as publishing her diary in Al Qanater prison, which she always dreamed of publishing to explain her psychological suffering, from repression, torture, persecution, and the suffering of women, especially lesbians.



Sarah Hegazi was an Egyptian lesbian and queer political activist. In 2017, Sarah raised the rainbow flag at the Mashrou' Leila concert in Cairo. Even though consensual homosexual relationships are not illegal in Egypt, there was a vocal and aggressive backlash by conservative politicians and the media claiming that this concert promoted "debauchery, immorality, and the promotion of sexual perversion." Sarah was arrested and detained for three months, the only woman out of a reported 75 to 100 arrested by the Egyptian police following the concert. She was tortured in prison before being released in January 2018. She was granted asylum in Canada. On the morning of June 13, 2020, Sarah died by suicide.

Read Hamed Sinno's article on Sarah published in Frieze
<https://www.frieze.com/article/hamed-sinno-pride-and-mourning-middle-east>



Mashrou' Leila was formed in 2008 while students at the American University of Beirut. Until 2022 this band was the biggest alt-rock band in the Middle East. Hamed Sinno, the band's lead singer and lyricist, maybe the most prominent gay musician in the Arab world. For almost 15 years, the band's shows were regular sell-out successes, but members still faced harassment from officials cracking down on events celebrating LGBTQIA+ people, as well as a wave of hostility from clergymen and other people. In 2015 and 2016, their concerts in Jordan were canceled, and in 2017, at a concert in Cairo, an Egyptian fan flying a rainbow flag would later be condemned by authorities as "inciting debauchery." In 2019, Lebanon's Byblos festival canceled a Mashrou' Leila concert "to prevent bloodshed" after calls from church leaders accusing the band of blasphemy and death threats was circulated on social media.

Haig Papazian, violinist, and Hamed Sinno, lead vocalist, are interviewed in the documentary.

Learn more about important milestones in the groups history in the *Before Screening Background*



Tarek Zeidan is a sexual and bodily rights activist from Beirut, Lebanon advocating for the rights and protection of LGBTI individuals and groups in the MENA region. He is the executive director of Helem, the first LGBTI rights organization in the Arab World, founded in Beirut in 2004. He was an ELI fellow at the Harvard Center for Public Leadership and an emerging human rights fellow at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard. Tarek has previously worked as director of communications and strategic planning for the MENA region at both the Brookings Institution and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He obtained his MPA in human rights law and advocacy from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

BEFORE SCREENING BACKGROUND

“A YEAR AFTER THE MASHROU’ LEILA CONCERT, A YEAR AFTER [EGYPT’S] BIGGEST SECURITY ATTACK AGAINST GAY PEOPLE, A YEAR AFTER I ANNOUNCED MY DIFFERENCE (YES, I AM A GAY), I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN MY ENEMIES. I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THE INJUSTICE THAT LEFT BLACK SPOTS CARVED IN MY SOUL AND BLEEDING, SPOTS THAT DOCTORS HAD NEVER BEEN ABLE TO TREAT.”

posted by Sarah Hegazi,
on the Egyptian journalism site, *Mada*.
September 14, 2018

The issues that surface in *Beirut Dreams in Color* have been shaped by the history of colonialism and nation-building, informed by human rights and international law, and traverse intimate and emotional spaces such as gender identity, sexual orientation, friendship, suicide, and loss. Navigating these wide-ranging areas requires some understanding of how people and culture are deeply interconnected with place, memory, and history.

The topics included in this section offer additional materials in support of these themes to provide a framework to guide conversations on the documentary, or be shared with audiences for deeper historical and cultural context.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF MODERN LEBANON

From the 19th century up until the 1960s, this region of the eastern Mediterranean was known as a crossroads for trade. As a result, the area became a refuge for minorities, a hub for the exchange of cultures and ideas, and a vibrant literary and art scene. From 1516 to the end of World War I, the region remained under the control of the Ottoman Empire. After the end of World War I, the League of Nations mandated that Lebanon be administered by France after the Partition of the Ottoman Empire in 1920. The nation then became part of the French colonial empire and part of the larger French [Mandate for Syria and Lebanon](#).

With the occupation of France by Nazi Germany on June 14, 1940, Lebanon's fate shifted. France became a divided nation under the Nazi government. The north, known as Vichy (named for the seat of the collaborationist government), was led by Marshal Pétain, while the south, (known as Free France) was under the provisional control of General Charles de Gaulle. As a French colony, the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon came under the control of Vichy France.

This control ended when Allied forces (French and British) successfully invaded Lebanon in June and July of 1941. An armistice was signed in Acre (at the time under British mandate) by General de Gaulle on July 14, 1941, and officially ending Vichy's control. Four months later with mounting national and international pressure, the independence of Lebanon was proclaimed on November 26, 1941. Two years later, the first government was formed. One of the first acts of this newly elected and independent government was to amend the Constitution and end the Mandate as a French colony.



Source: <https://www.worldatlas.com/maps/lebanon>

LEBANON TODAY: A FEW DATA POINTS

- In 2021, the World Bank had Lebanon with a population of nearly **6.7 million**.
- Nearly **90 percent** of Lebanon's population lives in urban areas.
- The Lebanese state recognizes eighteen religious sects, including **five Islamic sects** (Sunni, Shia, Druze, Alawite, and Ismaili); the Maronites and eleven other Christian sects; and the Jewish community. Shia Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Christians, and Druze are the main population groups in a country that has been a refuge for the region's minorities for centuries.
- **Beirut is the largest city** in Lebanon and, prior to the civil war, was known as the most cosmopolitan.

For more information on the history of the August 4, 2020 blast at the port of Beirut seen in *Beirut Dreams in Color*, review this [Blast Timeline](#) from *The Guardian*.

For additional insight into the evolution of the country, review this [Chronology of Lebanese History](#) from the BBC.

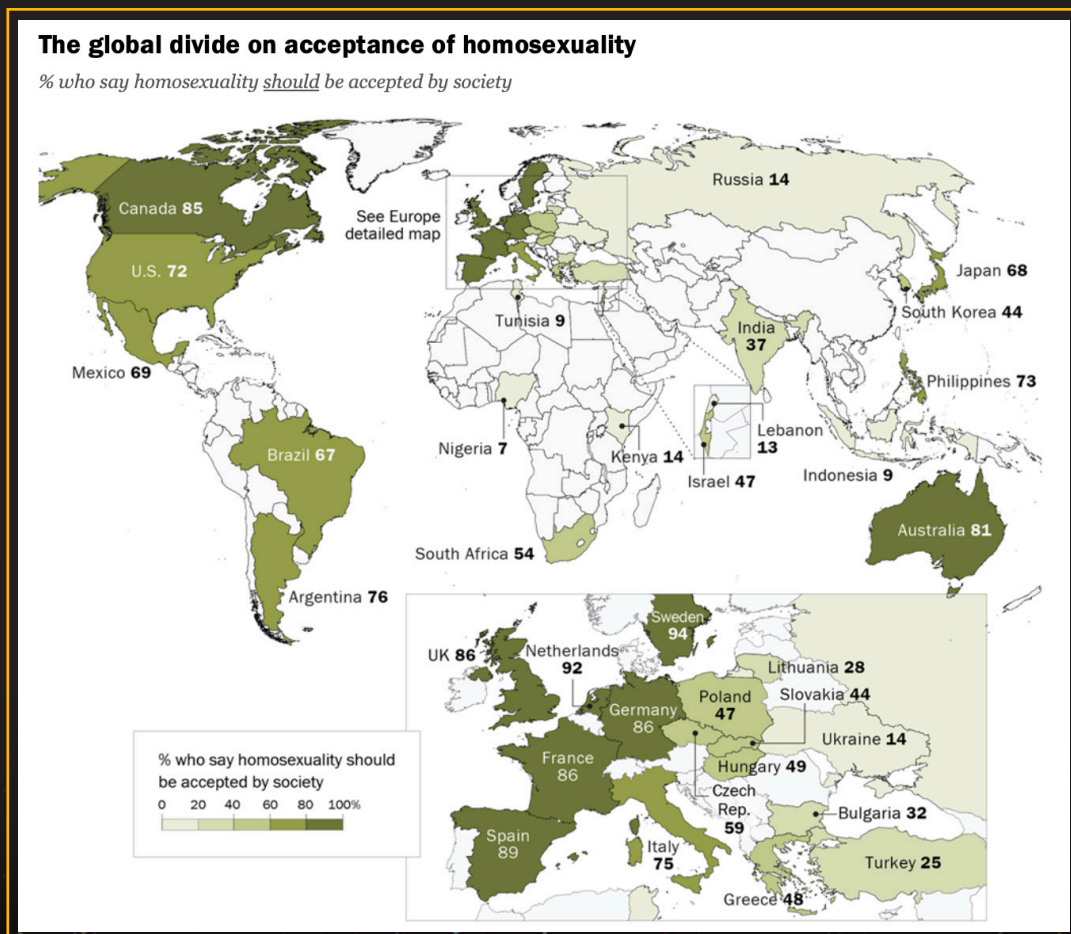
THE GLOBAL STATE OF LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

The lack of acceptance and violence perpetuated against the LGBTQ community is often the result of discriminatory laws, homophobic and transphobic political rhetoric, international influences, societal attitudes, bigotry, and ignorance. Numerous reports citing the rise confirm how unsafe it can be.

Take a moment to review this map from the Pew Research Center and discuss reactions or questions that surface from the group.



- A 2020 **Pew Research Center** reports that Lebanon was only second to Nigeria as the least accepting of LGBTQ rights.
- The **Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project** found that anti-LGBTQ activity, like demonstrations and violence, also increased in countries such as the US by over four times in 2021 compared to 2020.¹
- The Human Rights Campaign reports that anti-trans messaging, including equating gender-affirming health care with child abuse, was on the rise, as were anti-LGBTQ proposals in statehouses across the US in 2022.



Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/06/25/global-divide-on-homosexuality-persists/>

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS IN LEBANON

The Penal Code of Lebanon in [Article 534](#) (Republic of Lebanon, 1943), put in place during the French mandate of Lebanon, prohibits sexual acts “contrary to the order of nature.”

This remains in place but the 2018 election signaled a shift within the nation — **it was the first time in nine years that the Lebanese people were electing a parliament, the first time nearly 100 Lebanese political candidates called for the decriminalization of homosexuality, and for people under 30, the first opportunity to vote.** It is believed that these 800,000 new voters are a large factor in the shift in the debate of LGBTQ and women’s rights.² And on July 12, 2018, a district court of appeal in Lebanon issued a groundbreaking ruling stating that consensual sex between people of the same sex is not unlawful.³



Watch: [No Longer Alone: LGBT Voices from the Middle East and North Africa](#)



Read: Report [Audacity in Adversity](#), HRW, April 2018

In *Beirut Dreams in Color*, we learn of [HELEM](#) or Himaya Lubnaniya lil Mithliyeen wal Mithliyat (HELEM). In Arabic, the name means “Lebanese protection for gays and lesbians,” and its acronym means “dream.” Helem is the first LGBTQIA+ rights organization in the Middle East and is based in Beirut. Established in 2001.

Helem’s [mission states](#):

[T]o lead the struggle for the liberation of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Intersex, Transgendered, Queer (LGBTQIA+) and other people with non-conforming sexualities and/or gender identities in Lebanon and the SWANA [Southwest Asia and North Africa] region from all sorts of violations of their individual and collective civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

Tarek Zeidan, Director of HELEM, explains in *Beirut Dreams in Color* that despite these advances in LGBTQ rights and recognition in Lebanon, the reality remains perilous.

Sadly, we have witnessed an intense increase in bullying by Lebanese Security Organizations, pushed for by extremist religious non-governmental organizations. Our work has become more visible, our community was more courageous, and our triumphs more inevitable. The system we are trying to change is finally reacting seriously to what we are trying to do. We are not only facing a hostile state but also a deeply ignorant and fearful society, and we must be prepared for the retaliation that is coming.



Watch: Helem’s [Campaign and Advocacy Videos](#) to see their work across Lebanon.

A district court of appeal in Lebanon issued a groundbreaking ruling on July 12, 2018, that consensual sex between people of the same sex is not unlawful.

² The delay in elections are linked to the Syria’s civil war.
³ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/19/lebanon-same-sex-relations-not-illegal>

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AROUND THE WORLD

“EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION; THIS RIGHT INCLUDES FREEDOM TO HOLD OPINIONS WITHOUT INTERFERENCE AND TO SEEK, RECEIVE AND IMPART INFORMATION AND IDEAS THROUGH ANY MEDIA AND REGARDLESS OF FRONTIERS.”


[UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)





Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/11/Democracy-Report-92.png?w=637>

MASHROU' LEILA


The four-member Lebanese indie-rock group Mashrou' Leila was formed in February 2008 while students at the American University in Beirut. The band's name, loosely translated from Arabic as "an overnight project," was one of the biggest alternative rock bands in the Middle East until they disbanded in 2022. While the course of events that led to their dissolution has been well publicized and critical to know, it is also important to celebrate the beauty of their music and their global success.

 **In 2010**, the group headlined the Byblos International Music Festival, their first big break. As Hamed notes in the film, "They gave us the first real shot in the country." It was also the first time Hamed waved a rainbow flag on stage in solidarity with the LGBTQ community.

 **On September 22, 2017**, the band played in Egypt. As a violinist in the group, Haig Papazian shared in the film, "Egypt is our biggest fan base, we've played so many shows there. This concert was the biggest we had ever played, anywhere." Following the concert, the Egyptian security forces arrested concertgoers who waved the flag.

 **August 9, 2019**, Mashrou' Leila was scheduled to perform for the third time at the Byblos Festival. A US State Department report summarizes the course of events:

On July 30, organizers of the Byblos International Festival canceled a planned August 9 concert by internationally recognized indie rock band Mashrou' Leila, citing the need "to avoid bloodshed." Mashrou' Leila publicly supported LGBTQ rights and regularly sang about subjects such as sectarianism and corruption. Political and religious figures, as well as many private citizens, strongly criticized the band for a four-year-old post on Facebook of a controversial image that transposed the face of pop diva Madonna onto an image of the Virgin Mary, while figures ranging from MPs to private citizens threatened violence. Following a six-hour interrogation by security officials, band members met with religious authorities in an attempt to resolve the issue and removed the contested image from social media. Human rights activists and many members of the public, characterized criticisms of the band as an assault on freedom of speech and artistic creativity, calling on the public to play the group's music in protest.⁴

 **September 2022** Mashrou' Leila announces it is disbanding.⁵ Lead singer Hamed Sinno, in an interview on the *Sarde After Dinner* podcast, shared, "I decided it was enough. I also felt that each member of the band had a huge amount of stress on them. And this is not a normal life to have 100,000 people telling you on Facebook that you must die."

"ONE GOOD SONG CAN DO MORE THAN 5,000 PROTESTS."

[UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)



Take a moment to listen to their music before reviewing what led to their disbanding. *Al Jazeera* featured five of its most well-known songs in [this article](#).

⁴ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-report-on-international-religious-freedom/lebanon/>
⁵ <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/09/lebanese-band-mashrou-leila-quits-after-years-harassment-over-sexual-orientation>

DISCUSSION AND CONNECTIONS

PRE-SCREENING QUESTIONS

Before the documentary begins, take a few moments frame the story with background content gathered from this guide before diving into these suggested pre-screening questions:

- What were your perceptions of the LGBTQ communities existence in the Middle East?
- Tell us about a piece of music or art that either informed you of an issue, or inspired you to act on an issue?

**“IT IS HARD
TO FIGHT AND
GRIEVE AT THE
SAME TIME.”**

Tarek Zeidan
Beirut Dreams in Colors

After the film ends, take time for a grounding exercise before beginning your conversation. If helpful, guide your group in some deep breathing in silence that allows everyone a chance to transition, feel their emotions, take care of themselves, and return to the present moment.

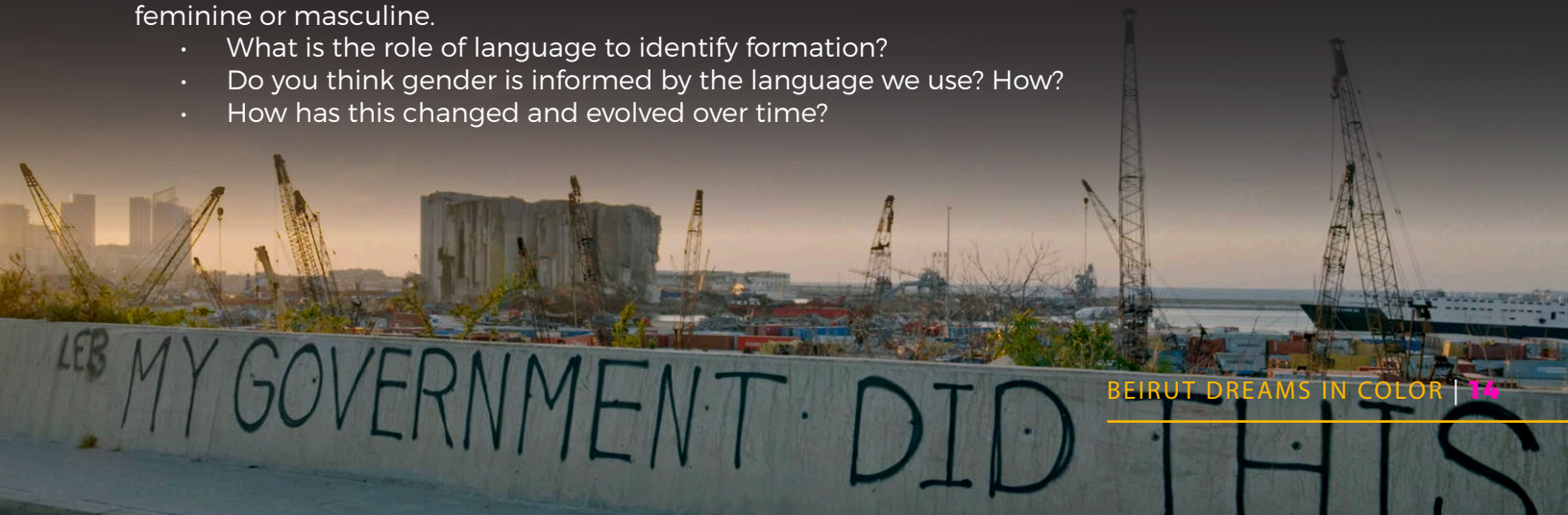
POST-SCREENING QUESTIONS

If a question and answer format meets your needs, consider these transition questions to begin your discussion before moving on to film-specific prompts:

- What scene or scenes stood out to you?
- What feelings came up for you while watching this documentary?
- What perceptions of the LGBTQ communities in the Middle East changed after watching the film?
- What do you feel you need right now?

The opening of the documentary begins with a Mashrou' Leila concert in San Francisco. Lead singer Hamed Sinno shares that in the Arabic language, everything is necessarily gendered, either feminine or masculine.

- What is the role of language to identify formation?
- Do you think gender is informed by the language we use? How?
- How has this changed and evolved over time?



Tarek Zeidan, director of Helem, shares, “I still can’t believe Mashrou’ Leila exists.”

- Over the course of the documentary, what do you learn about this band, and what made their existence different?
- Not all countries in the Middle East have the same monolithic attitude towards the LGBTQ community. As the film highlights, Lebanon and Egypt have two different views of LGBTQ rights. How surprising was that to you? What differences stood out the most?
- In the film, we see that Cairo, Egypt is where the greatest opposition to the banner occurred in the form of violent media rhetoric and the unprecedented, security crackdown. Yet it is also where the band enjoyed its largest fanbase, and evidenced by the footage of the Cairo concert. How do you explain that dichotomy?

Later in the film, Zeidan shares, “We cannot afford to lose Beirut... We are not only facing a hostile state but an ignorant community.”

- After watching this documentary, how do you understand this statement?
- What are the connections between Beirut, Lebanon, and what Mashrou’ Leila was and what it represented?
- Is what we witnessed in the film — the trend of intolerance and neoconservatism — indicative of what’s happening in your part of the world? In the wider world? What are some examples?
- One of the primary critics of the band was a cleric of a small religious minority that is based in Lebanon, which is a secular country. What do you think are the main ingredients that allow religious extremism to flourish anywhere?

Hamed Sinno notes that at the first Byblos Music Festival, Mashrou’ Leila played was also a “big deal” as it was the first time that someone from the LGBTQ was given the platform. In 2010, he shares, this was “unheard of.”

- Is queer representation in the Middle East and the Arab world different than in others places in the world? Why?
- What is the relationship of art and music to politics?
- This film explores the dialogue and the impact that art and politics have on each other. There was a quote in the film, where Tarek, the director of Helem, said “One good song can do more than 5000 protests”. What does that mean? Do you agree with the premise?
- Hamed Sinno, the lead singer of the band, Mashrou’ Leila, believes art is the first frontier that gets attacked when there is a shift in the political and cultural climate. Do you agree? Why?



Sarah Hegazi, a feminist, a lesbian, and someone who attended a Mashrou' Leila concert in Egypt and waved a rainbow flag, we come to know is also deeply connected to Mashrou' Leila. Her death by suicide is a tragedy and is directly tied to the repression of LGBTQ rights and visibility in Egypt.

- What thoughts or feelings do you want to share about Sarah that came up for you after learning about her life and her death?
- Her tragic death highlighted, among other things, the depth of intolerance of the powerful elite in Egyptian society. What other important themes did her storyline reveal to you?
- Research shows that LGBTQ youth (ages 10-24) are more than four times as likely to attempt suicide than their peers. (Johns et al., 2019; Johns et al., 2020). What are the underused, unconventional ways we can foster more inclusivity?
- At the Queer Liberation March scene in New York City, we see Larry Kramer, a prominent gay activist, and the founder of Act UP, giving a speech where there are people holding signs that say "Silence Equals Death." That poster with its iconic pink triangle (the symbol used by the Nazis to label gay men) became synonymous with AIDS activism in the 1980s. What does that phrase "silence equals death" mean to you today?
- Take time to visit her [blog](#) and read [her account](#) of her imprisonment one year later. We invite anyone to share a passage from this collection to remember and honor Sarah.

As a closing exercise to your community conversation, return to the final scene of the documentary and the song Hamed Sinno composed for Sarah.

Take a moment to listen or read these words. Close your eyes if comfortable, and take several long, relaxed deep breaths. Repeat these words in your mind as you take a moment to honor Sarah and reflect on her memory.

The lyrics are:

**I WANT THE SKY
SWEETER THAN THE EARTH
I WANT THE SKY
I DON'T WANT THE EARTH
MOTHER, THE SKY**



CONNECTIONS

BUILDING ALLIANCES

- When you think of a definition of courageous work, what are the qualities that come to mind?
- Organizations like Helem are courageous in their work, their mission, and their conviction to be visible amidst living in a state of oppression. What did you learn about the power and the fragility of NGOs like Helem working to advance LGBTQ rights in the Middle East?
- Consider connecting with organizations in your local community working to support LGBTQ youth, artists, or other leaders in your community.



TRAUMA RELIEF

Trauma is stored in your body, and finding time and support to release these experiences is foundational. Begin by exploring your own healing through Trauma Relief Exercises (TRE). It is always important to consult with trained professionals before engaging with any TRE-related work.

- Meditation
- Yoga and stretching
- Healing trauma workshops
- Art therapy

“THE BLAST’S REAL DAMAGE WAS THAT IT BLEW IT ENTIRE COMMUNITIES. BEIRUT, WITH ALL OF ITS FAULTS, THERE WAS A QUINTESSENTIALLY UNIQUE LEBANESE QUEER COMMUNITY HERE. THIS IS THE BIGGEST COMMUNITY SPACE FOR QUEER PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THINGS HAPPEN HERE THAT HAPPEN NOWHERE ELSE. IF THEY DON’T, WE ARE BACK TO WHERE WE STARTED, AND WE CAN’T LET THAT HAPPEN.”

Tarek Zeidan
Beirut Dreams in Colors

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LEARN MORE

“Homosexual Relations in the Penal Codes: General Study Regarding the Laws in the Arab Countries with a Report on Lebanon and Tunisia.”

<https://daleel-madani.org/sites/default/files/Resources/HelemStudy.pdf>

“Joint statement on the second anniversary of the death of the lesbian and queer activist Sarah Hegazi/ WANA Lesbian and Queer Woman’s Pride Day”

<https://humena.org/publications/topic/265>

An interesting “Brief History of Helem (2011)”

<https://almanshour.org/2021/03/16/the-story-of-helem-2011/>

Rasha Younes, “[For Sarah Hegazi: In Rage, in Grief, in Exhaustion](#),” *Human Rights Watch*, Jun 16, 2020.

Mostafa Fouad, “[Is it already a year?](#)” *The Tahrir Institute of Middle East Policy*, June 28, 2021.

GLOBAL RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT

Australia

The Crisis Support Service Lifeline

Phone: 13 11 14

Lebanon

EMBRACE (Emtional Support and Suicide Prevention Hotline)

Phone: 1564

embracelebanon.org

United Kingdom

Hopeline UK

Phone: 0800 068 4141

papyrus-uk.org

United States

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Phone: 1 800 273 8255

LGBT National Youth Talkline

Phone: 1 800 246 7743

SOME MILESTONES IN GLOBAL LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

1791: France becomes the first nation to decriminalize homosexuality.

1897: The Scientific-Humanitarian Committee, the first known LGBTQ+ organization, is founded in Berlin by Magnus Hirschfeld, who would later conduct groundbreaking work on transgender identity.

1930s

1933: The German Nazi Party bans gay and lesbian community groups and academic research on sexual orientation. Under Nazi rule, LGBTQ+ people face persecution, imprisonment, and even extermination at concentration camps.

1950s

1950: The Mattachine Society, the first enduring national LGBTQ+ organization in the United States, is founded. The first U.S. lesbian rights organization, the Daughters of Bilitis, is established five years later.

1953: U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs Executive Order 10450, which bars gay and lesbian applicants from federal employment and permits their firing on the grounds of “sexual perversion.” The order’s enforcement, known as the Lavender Scare, persists until 1975.

1960s

1969: The Stonewall Riots, regarded as the world’s first major protest for LGBTQ+ equality, erupt in New York City. A year later, the first gay pride event is organized to commemorate Stonewall’s anniversary, sparking solidarity events in European cities.

1970s

1973: The American Psychiatric Association stops classifying homosexuality as a mental illness. It is not until 1990 that the World Health Organization depathologizes homosexuality.

1978: The rainbow flag, now a ubiquitous symbol of gay pride and liberation, is first unfurled in San Francisco.

1980s

1980: The Center for Disease Control identifies the first HIV/AIDS patient in the United States. The ensuing epidemic ravages LGBTQ+ populations. President Ronald Reagan does not publicly acknowledge the growing outbreak until 1985.

1989: Denmark becomes the first country to recognize same-sex civil unions. Eleven years later, the Netherlands becomes the first to legalize same-sex marriage.

1990s

1994: U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno issues an order that recognizes persecution based on sexual orientation as grounds for asylum.

1999: James Hormel becomes the first openly gay U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg under President Bill Clinton.

2000s

2005: The U.S. Department of State begins including abuses against LGBTQ+ individuals in its annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

2009: Johanna Sigurdardottir of Iceland becomes the world's first openly gay elected head of state.

2010s

2010: Argentina becomes the first Latin American country to recognize same-sex unions. Two years later, it recognizes transgender rights, another first in the region.

2013: President Barack Obama nominates five openly gay men to serve as ambassadors. The U.S. Supreme Court extends federal marriage benefits to same-sex couples. Two years later it recognizes marriage equality in all U.S. states and territories.

2016: A single assailant murders forty-nine people, most of whom identified as members of the LGBTQ+ community, at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. The UN Security Council, in its first statement on sexual orientation, condemns the shooting as a terrorist attack.

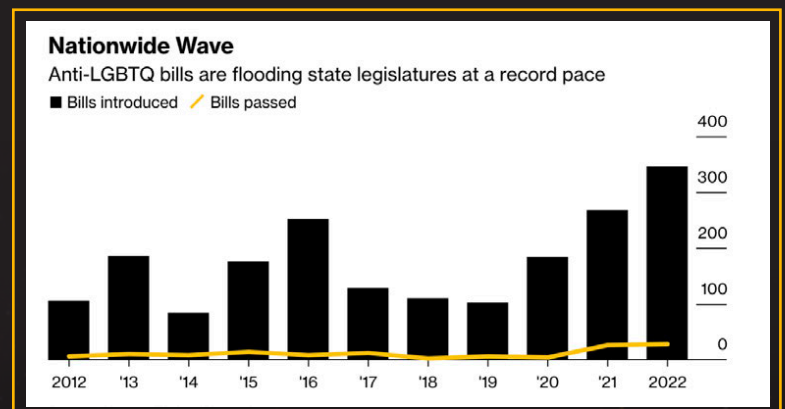
2018: India's Supreme Court decriminalizes homosexuality. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights rules that same-sex marriage and transgender rights constitute human rights, effectively mandating protections in twenty Latin American countries.

2019: Taiwan legalizes marriage equality, a first in East Asia.

2020s

2020: Russia passes a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage.

2022: In the US, the Respect for Marriage Act signed into law protecting same-sex and interracial marriages.



Source: bit.ly/3hp6E14

beirut dreams in color

THOUGHTFUL ROBOT AND GUARDIAN DOCUMENTARIES PRESENT "BEIRUT DREAMS IN COLOR" A FILM BY MICHAEL COLLINS
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