

Advocacy Persuasive Speech on YouTube:

Introduction:

- I know that many of you may not like to hear what I'm saying, but think about it. If unlimited freedom of expression continues to fan the flames of sectarian tension in Lebanon, if it deepens the divisions that tear us apart, isn't it time we question whether absolute freedom is really serving us? I understand the power of free speech. I understand the need to speak our minds, to criticize, to hold others accountable. If someone silenced me for my beliefs, I would be outraged. But that doesn't mean society should let every word become a weapon.

Where do we draw the line between freedom and responsibility? Between expression and protection? That is the real question Lebanon must answer today.

- Lebanon's fragile social fabric has been deeply affected by decades of sectarian tension. Freedom of expression has been misused to inflame division, risking further conflict.
- Growing up in Lebanon, I've seen how a single speech or a few dangerous words can quickly escalate tensions and even lead to violence. This isn't just a topic I've studied, it's something I've experienced around me, which is why I feel strongly about finding ways to address it.
- The need today is for a balanced approach, one that respects freedom of expression while implementing necessary legal and social measures to prevent speech that directly incites violence or worsens sectarian divisions.

Body:

***Reason 1: Unchecked speech can escalate sectarian tension and threaten public safety.**

- In Lebanon's multi-sectarian society, inflammatory speech, whether on social media or public platforms, has a history of provoking violent incidents.
- We've all seen how a few provocative words can shift the atmosphere in a community from tense to dangerous. In Lebanon, these tensions aren't just political, they're personal. When sectarian rhetoric fills social media, neighborhoods that once coexisted can suddenly turn into battlegrounds. A report from the American University of Beirut (2021) highlights how such rhetoric played a role in triggering deadly clashes in Tayouneh. Many families stayed locked inside their homes that day, fearing the echoes of past conflicts returning.
- Some people might say that once you start limiting any kind of speech, you're opening the door to censorship or even risking losing personal freedom altogether.
- This concern is understandable; freedom of speech is one of the foundations that allow us to express who we are and voice our grievances.
- But when speech directly endangers lives and weakens the very fabric of our society, there must be lines we agree not to cross. Protecting free speech doesn't mean ignoring its consequences; it means shaping it in a way that safeguards both expression and safety.

***Reason 2:**

Unchecked harmful speech discourages foreign investment and tourism.

- Lebanon's economy relies heavily on tourism and international cooperation. A country perceived as unstable or violent due to sectarian conflicts becomes less attractive to investors and visitors.
- Lebanon has always had the potential to attract investors and travelers with its rich culture, hospitality, and vibrant business opportunities. Yet, when violent rhetoric makes headlines, it overshadows these strengths. A report from the World Bank (2021) noted that political instability

and social unrest, often fueled by divisive speech, were major factors behind Lebanon's shrinking foreign direct investment in recent years. Imagine a foreign investor reading about sectarian clashes or hearing inflammatory speeches, they will likely hesitate to bring their business into what appears to be a volatile environment.

- Countries like Rwanda and Northern Ireland experienced economic growth after addressing hate speech and improving social cohesion (World Bank, 2011; Bell, 2015).

- Some may claim that Lebanon's inability to attract foreign investment and tourists is mostly tied to political corruption or mismanagement of the economy.

- It's true, corruption and poor governance have significantly contributed to Lebanon's financial decline and damaged investor confidence.

- However, the problem runs deeper. Social unrest fueled by sectarian language worsens these pre-existing issues. When streets are unsafe, even well-intentioned visitors hesitate to engage.

Section 2

***Solution**

Introduce and enforce laws that limit incitement to sectarian hatred while promoting civic education and responsible media practices.

- Lebanon's freedom of speech is a core democratic value, but it does not have to come at the expense of national unity and public safety.

A fair solution would be one that creates laws aimed at criminalizing speech that deliberately stirs up sectarian hatred and violence, but without suppressing political disagreement or genuine criticism. The goal would be to draw a line between harmful speech and free expression, ensuring that voices of opposition are still heard while protecting public safety and social harmony.

- Consider implementing training for media outlets to ensure that news and content shared on social platforms are accurate and free from bias, while also encouraging a national campaign to promote unity and tolerance across all communities.

Conclusion

- In conclusion, the issue of unchecked harmful speech in Lebanon is not just about the balance between freedom and responsibility, it is about protecting the very essence of what holds our society together. Sectarian rhetoric, left unchecked, has the power to deepen the divisions that tear us apart. However, this doesn't mean we have to silence free expression
- What Lebanon needs is a balanced solution. It's time for Lebanon to act, to stand up for freedom of expression that contributes to, rather than detracts from, the common good.
- Let's stand together, use our voices responsibly, and advocate for a Lebanon where freedom of expression strengthens unity, not division, because the future of our nation depends on the words we choose today.