



**AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY  
OF BEIRUT**

## **Speech to the AUBMC and AUB community after the moment in silence in memory of the bombing of the Baptist Hospital in Gaza October 18, 2023**

**Fadlo R. Khuri**

This is not the moment to mince words. John F. Kennedy quoted arguably the greatest Italian writer of the last millennium, turning Dante's words "*non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa*" to say: "The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their silence in times of moral crisis." These are the words of a famous and posthumously much beloved and quoted American president. They appear to be lost on the West as they turn a deaf ear. What has happened here? We at AUB are constant in our values and beliefs. We are not neutral on the subject of targeted assassination. We are not neutral to 75 years of continuous Palestinian suffering. But our goal here, our mission, what we do every day, is to save lives, to educate and empower citizen leaders, and to work actively every day for a better tomorrow for our community, our peoples and the world.

Nothing that has happened, I am sad to say, has surprised those of us who are used to targeted assassinations, carried out on these streets in the 1960s and 70s and the bombings of towns and villages as part of a consistent strategy. Nothing surprises us. And yet we have to continue every day. We can never shut AUBMC down, not for a minute. Not the hospital. AUBMC has protected our peoples, Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian, Iraqi, Jordan, everyone and everything.

We are firmly against violence. But we will not and cannot stay silent when there is destruction of hospitals, murder of innocent civilians and children, and deliberate targeting of journalists.

We cannot be neutral. We will continue to care for our people every day. We will carry on doing what we must. Because what it appears the West would prefer us to do is to either be completely silent, or otherwise waste our breath condemning acts to an audience that could care less. We have to continue. The act of resisting this sort of wonton injustice and ignorance of facts is to work, to care for people, to educate them, and teach them to be better than the examples we are getting from the leaders from the West.

America is an idea. It is not a foreign policy. It is an idea. Let's be the best possible version of America, a far better version of America than the one we're seeing from the White House.

Thank you.