

## Rima Nakkash

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**From:** Rima Nakkash <rn06@aub.edu.lb>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 26, 2011 5:13 PM  
**To:** 'info@najib-mikati.net'  
**Subject:** Introduction -Tobacco Control  
**Attachments:** Nakkash -Letter to Excellency Mikati-Sep 2011.pdf

Your Excellency Mr. Mikati,

I am an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Health Sciences, at the American University of Beirut and I coordinate a team of faculty from across the University who are focused on developing and advancing the science on tobacco control through research and advocacy. In the past months we worked with Civil society and media to lobby for an improved version of the tobacco control policy law that was being discussed by the Parliamentary committee of Administration and Justice early in 2010. The law at that time was archaic and not in line with best evidence. It outlined many weak articles and had loopholes that if passed as such will be a tremendous failure and historic lost opportunity of saving lives of millions of Lebanese. I am happy to say, that despite opposition and difficulties faced, much of our efforts have paid off since the current law is stronger and in line with best evidence as stipulated by the International Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which Lebanon has ratified in 2005. This was possible through lobbying one on one with parliamentarians and through intensive media advocacy. Much of the effort thanks to collaboration with TFI and Indyact two dedicated Lebanese NGO's, as well as with the National Tobacco Control Program. I know in fact that your NGO , Azm & Saada NGO has contributed to this campaign as well.

At this stage we need to shift our focus from working with the legislative branch of the government to working with the executive branch. Much of the guidance should come from the ministry of health which is responsible for issuing bylaws to support enforcement. Other ministries are also concerned such as the Ministry of communication , tourism, economy and trade and many others. As head of the Council of Ministers , your support is crucial in making sure that various ministries collaborate as well as practice their individual duties.

In all the countries where tobacco control policy has been successful in reducing consumption and decreasing mortality and morbidity from tobacco control, cooperation between academics, media, and civil society has been crucial. More importantly the commitment of a champion in the government has been also crucial. I look forward to meeting you to discuss this important social and national concern and see how in your position , you can push for and facilitate proper enforcement and compliance.

Enclosed, a formal request for a meeting,

best regards,

Rima

**Rima  
Nakkash, DrPH**

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