



## **Statement in response to the journalist Hussein Al-Ghawi**

22/2/2023

On 21/2/2023, a Saudi journalist, Hussein Al-Ghawi, published a series of tweets on his Twitter page that contained a series of misinformation related to Helem and its executive director. The journalist claimed that the organization held a meeting with a Lebanese advertising company called “World Of Business” on 8/22/2022 which he is accusing of fraud. He also claimed that the meeting was held with the executive director of the organization, Tarek Zeidan, in a cafe’ in Sidon, Lebanon.

It is important for the organization to clarify the following:

First, we assert that there is no, nor has there ever been, any sort of collaboration between Helem and the “World Of Business” company and that we had no prior knowledge of its existence or its scope of work .

Second, we stress that the executive director of the organization, Tarek Zaidan, did not hold any meeting with “World Of Business” nor with any individual representing it, nor did he visit the city of Sidon, as this so called journalist has claimed.

Third, we strongly condemn the publication of such intentionally false allegations that are not based on any facts or evidence, but rather contain flagrant, irrational and deliberate fallacies aimed at using the LGBTQ community and Helem to what appears to be a settling of scores between the so called journalist and the aforementioned company.

Finally, we would like to assure all parties concerned that Helem will be taking all necessary measures in accordance with the law to defend itself and its staff from being used and targeted in this manner. . The organization also affirms its commitment to continue to advocate for the rights of the LGBTQ community in Lebanon and the Arab region, and will remain vigilant in confronting any attempt to spread lies and fallacies affecting it or the LGBTQ community for any reason or purpose.

Helem