



## Literature and arts help Slemani cope with COVID-19

Slemani, a city in Iraq, became a UNESCO Creative City of Literature in 2019. Literature plays an active role in the cultural and economic development of Slemani - a regional cultural center.

Literature and literary creation hold sway over the city, which is also a regional translation capital and home to seven major publishing houses. Today, the city hosts major literary festivals including the annual Galawezh Festival, founded in 1996, that invites Kurdish, Arab, Persian, Turkish and Iraqi writers to participate and contribute with their work.

Slemani focuses on designing and implementing policies and measures to support both the creators and the creation of new literature.

Facing the outbreak of coronavirus, the city of Slemani had launched an initiative entitled 'Literature and Arts as Helpmate and Therapist' to help people practicing social distancing in confinement to stay resilient and united.

The initiative has aimed to support the COVID-19 patients in particular by providing them with creative and inspirational literary works and materials. Writers, authors, artists and journalists from other Creative Cities of Literature were called upon to share their optimistic creations and visions, as well as positive life experiences to help people cope and recovery.

Several Creative Cities of Literature including Durban (South Africa), Melbourne (Australia), Ulyanovsk (Russian Federation), Óbidos (Portugal) and Odessa (Ukraine) have shown their interest and contributed to this initiative.

The collected literary works have been integrated and digitalized in a collection entitled 'You will remain' is made available online and disseminated among the participating Creative Cities.

### To know more:

<http://slemani.gov.krd/so/newsDetail.php?newsID=1736&secID=36>

Book Link: [http://slemanicityofliterature.com/pdfepub/You\\_Will\\_Remain.pdf](http://slemanicityofliterature.com/pdfepub/You_Will_Remain.pdf)

**KEY WORDS:**

- Solidarity and mutual aid
- Access to and participation in culture
- Intercity collaboration