



Lebanon: Beirut Port Explosions

Situation Report No. 2

As of 7 August 2020

This report is produced by OCHA Lebanon in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 5 to 7 August 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 157 people were killed, and an estimated 5,000 people were injured in the Beirut Port explosions. More than 150 people remain missing.
- At least three hospitals and 12 primary health care centres have been severely damaged, rendered partially or fully inoperable.
- Emergency Medical Teams (EMT) are deployed to Beirut to support the ongoing medical response.
- A United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team is deployed to support response operations.
- Emergency shelter assessments are ongoing, and assessment of food supply status and market functionality/accessibility is planned.
- The United Nations and its partners are looking to adjust logistic networks to ensure sustained operations.
- The United Nations has released \$15 million to support emergency response operations. Donors have also provided numerous financial and in-kind donations.

157+

Reported deaths

5,000+

People reported injured

150+

People reported missing



SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 4 August, at approximately 18h00 (local time), a warehouse at the Beirut Port containing large quantities of ammonium nitrate exploded. After an initial explosion, a subsequent blast caused widespread damage, with reports of damage more than 20 kilometres from the port area. The explosions and ensuing fires reportedly released toxic materials in the environment.

On 5 August, the Government of Lebanon declared a two-week state of emergency in Beirut. Some of the most affected neighbourhoods include Ashrafiyeh, Central district, Gemmayzeh, Marfa and Mar Mikhail.

All imports and exports have been redirected to the Tripoli Port, which is about 85 kilometres north of Beirut. The Beirut Port is expected to be inoperable for at least one month, pending repairs, debris removal and safety clearances.

Initial assessments indicate that at least 12 primary health care centres have been severely damaged. At least three hospitals have been rendered partially or fully inoperable. An additional 120 schools, used by 55,000 Lebanese and non-Lebanese children, sustained various levels of damage. Humanitarian partners are conducting further damage assessments, in close coordination with relevant government authorities.

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On 6 August, a total of 255 new COVID-19 cases were recorded, a new record for Lebanon. The emergency in Beirut has caused many COVID-19 precautionary measures to be relaxed, raising the prospects of even higher transmission rates and a large caseload in the coming weeks.

The blasts destroyed an estimated 120,000 metric tonnes of food stocks, including wheat, soy and other staples. Grain silos at the port were also heavily damaged in the explosions. Approximately 85 per cent of the cereals in Lebanon were previously stored at the port. Current estimates suggest that, at regular consumption rates, the remaining grain supply in-country is sufficient for 4-6 weeks.

The explosions come as Lebanon faces a multi-faceted crisis. In recent months, economic contraction, increasing poverty and rising prices have compounded needs among Lebanese and non-Lebanese communities, including the large refugee population in Lebanon. Increasing COVID-19 transmission is straining the country's health systems. Social tensions continue to grow in many parts of the country.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Efforts are underway to support the ongoing Government-led response to the explosions, including in search and rescue operations. National and international search and rescue teams and disaster management experts have arrived to support ongoing emergency efforts. A United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team is deployed to help coordinate response operations and will shortly be joined by international operational partners. International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) classified Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams from over 13 countries have arrived in country to support the search and rescue operations.

Humanitarian workers are collecting available data to assess the situation and needs across affected areas. Volunteers are cleaning streets and removing debris from the streets as part of a wider clean-up operation. Numerous donors have dispatched relief supplies, mobile medical teams and field hospitals to support the medical response.

The United Nations has released \$15 million to support ongoing emergency operations. The Emergency Relief Coordinator released \$6 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to support trauma care and other urgent support to hospitals, repair damaged homes and logistic requirements. The UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator has also released \$9 million from the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF) to support ongoing efforts. The funding will help address primary health needs and provide food assistance, water, sanitation and hygiene support and protection assistance to the most vulnerable populations.

As of 7 August, financial contributions have been announced by Australia (US\$1.4 million), Canada (CA\$5 million), Denmark (EUR 1.6 million), European Union (EUR 33 million), Hungary (EUR 1 million), Norway (US\$2.74 million), UAE Red Crescent (AED10 million), United Kingdom (US\$6.6 million) and United States (US\$15 million).

In addition, operational support and in-kind assistance have been announced by numerous countries, including: Algeria (personnel and equipment), Cyprus (helicopters and personnel), Czech Republic (personnel), Denmark (equipment), Egypt (field hospital), EU (helicopter, personnel and equipment), France (field hospital and personnel), Germany (personnel), Greece (personnel and equipment), Iraq (personnel and equipment), Italy (equipment), Jordan (field hospital), Kuwait (equipment), Morocco (field hospital and personnel), Netherlands (personnel), Poland (field hospital), Russia (field hospital and personnel), Qatar (equipment and personnel), Saudi Arabia (personnel), Tunisia (equipment and personnel), Turkey (personnel and equipment), United Arab Emirates (equipment) and United States (equipment).



Health

Needs:

- Medical facilities and field hospitals continue to treat thousands of patients for trauma and burns.
- Damage assessments of affected health facilities continue. UNICEF reports that at least 12 health care facilities, maternal, immunization and newborn centres in Beirut have been damaged. These facilities previously served 120,000 people.
- The explosions destroyed ten containers of personal protective equipment (PPE), which remains essential for first responders and COVID-19 prevention.

Response:

- The Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) mobilised up to 75 ambulances and 375 Emergency Medical Teams and staff in Beirut to help the most vulnerable and activated blood transfusion centres across the country (i.e., Antelias, Jounieh, Nabatieh, Saida, Spears, Tripoli and Zahle).
- WHO delivered trauma and surgical supplies to ten major hospitals, containing essential medicines and medical supplies needed to immediately support trauma interventions at local hospitals, to cover over 1,000 trauma interventions and for 1,000 surgical interventions.
- Emergency Medical Teams (EMT) are progressively being deployed to Beirut under the coordination of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and supported by the WHO.
- Twenty-four children, including nine newborns, who were inpatients at the new-born unit in the severely damaged Qarantina Governmental Hospital, were transported to a hospital with ICU capacities with support from the Lebanese Armed Forces. Sadly, one newborn died.
- As a precaution, UNICEF will support tetanus vaccination shots for the injured prior to medical intervention. It will also work with the health partners to fill PPE stocks gaps, including those destroyed at the port.
- WHO is working with its regional hub for environmental action to explore the establishment of air quality monitoring hubs. WHO and the American University of Beirut are working on public guidance about avoiding environmental exposure.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Initial assessments indicate that the MoPH warehouses at Qarantina, which is located less than 3 km from the blast location, sustained structural damage. WHO and UNICEF supported the transportation of acute and chronic medication from the warehouse has relocated to other storage facilities.
- The blasts destroyed five out of seven UNICEF-supported vaccine cold rooms. All vaccines were immediately transferred to the two partially damaged, yet functioning cold rooms in the port, saving over 90 per cent of the stock.
- A key priority for health partners is the relocation of vaccines and cold chain equipment and medicines from the damaged warehouse. Based on the MoPH assessment, UNICEF will support the rehabilitation of a cold room at MoPH central warehouse and two cold rooms in Rachya and Zahleh districts.

 **Shelter**
Needs:

- As part of an initial response, LRC is coordinating emergency shelter assessments with other sector partners. Several priority areas in Beirut and Mount Lebanon areas have been identified in coordination with government authorities.
- UNHCR will support a rapid humanitarian shelter needs assessment, prioritising the most affected areas, mobilise emergency weatherproofing materials and support repair and rehabilitation efforts.
- The Disaster Risk Management unit in the Prime Minister's Office and the Order of Engineers and Architects (OEA) with UN-Habitat will conduct subsequent assessments, as required.

Response:

- LRC is opening multiple temporary shelters, which are ready to receive 1,000 families in the coming 72 hours. It will also provide affected households with meals, hygiene kits and all basic needs.
- UNCHR is mobilising in-country stocks of shelter kits, plastic sheets, tents and core relief items for immediate distribution and use.
- Debris removal continues across affected areas to facilitate peoples' return to their homes.

 **Livelihoods and basic needs**
Needs:

- Amid growing unemployment rates and salary cuts, many of the affected people from the explosions are even more vulnerable.
- An estimated one million people in Lebanon are living below the poverty line.
- The Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) requested support for food parcel provision for vulnerable families.
- An assessment of Beirut's food supply status and market functionality/accessibility will be part of the multi-sectoral rapid needs assessment.

Response:

- All WFP's suppliers are reportedly functioning and have available stocks for a period of two months.
- WFP has allocated an additional 5,000 food parcels for families affected by the blasts. Each parcel is sufficient to feed a family of five for one month.
- Three cargo flights are due to arrive in the coming days with additional food supplies.
- Local NGOs already on the ground are being identified to support in providing parcels or hot meals. LRC is planning to assist 1,000 families with basic food distributions in form of cash and voucher assistance.
- Fifteen livelihoods/social stability sector partners are adjusting ongoing programmes to accommodate the new needs, including for home rehabilitation, food and water distribution.
- Plans are underway to expand cash assistance to affected families.

 **Protection**
Needs:

- Mental health, psychosocial support and other protection services are critical areas of intervention in the current emergency.
- Migrant workers remain among the most vulnerable populations. Embassy and consulates reported that four migrants died in the blasts and at least 128 more were injured. Two individuals remain missing.

Response:

- UNHCR reception centres across the country, including in Beirut, are open for critical/emergency cases, and the national call centre as well as regional hotlines across the country are fully manned to respond to requests for assistance.
- A local NGO has established a mental health and emotional support clinic in Mar Mikhael district.
- UNICEF continues to operate hotlines to provide psycho-social support to affected families and children. Family tracing and reunification of separated children are also underway.
- UNICEF has also established child-friendly spaces in selected sites to deliver in-person support.
- Caritas is rehabilitating worker centre damaged in the blasts. It is also assisting those in need through mobile clinics, providing food, water and hygienic kits, as well as referring cases to social workers for case management.

 **Logistics**
Response:

- With the Beirut Port inoperable, the United Nations and its partners are looking to adjust logistic networks to ensure sustained operations. Most humanitarian materials will be redirected through the Tripoli Port.
- Beirut International Airport remains open for passenger and cargo flights. Customs brokers at the airport are fully operational to facilitate the arrival of materials.

Constraints:

- The change may have adverse consequences for some supply chains, as Tripoli Port has approximately a third the capacity of Beirut Port. Rerouted vessels may congest the port.

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