

Beirut Crisis meeting – August 10th 2020

Statement by Ambassador Paul Beresford-Hill, CBE

Permanent Observer,

Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you Sir Mark, thanks to the Secretary General and the President of the General Assembly, esteemed colleagues, particularly Ambassador Amal, and all those who are committed to supporting the people of Lebanon at this time. The Sovereign Order of Malta offers its condolences to those who have suffered loss or injury during this tragic event and extends encouragement to the citizens of Beirut as they deal with both this catastrophic humanitarian and civic event, coupled with the consequences of unexpected national political transition.

The Sovereign Order of Malta, with over 40 years of activity in Lebanon, was among the First Responders following the tragic explosion on August 4th. Despite severe damage to one of our hospitals located close to the explosion site, we managed to re-allocate our medical resources and have provided 2 mobile medical units to help the sick and the wounded. Over 200 of our volunteers, many of them young adults, are currently cleaning rubble and making houses habitable. This past weekend our Emergency Response corps, Malteser International, deployed emergency relief teams from Germany. These professionals will augment medical care and provide logistical support. Our ambulance service is operating almost non-stop and medical resources from our centers across the country are being made available to critical care facilities in Beirut. The Lebanese Order of Malta Association is mobilizing its 1000 person volunteer body to enlist additional help in the recovery effort. Throughout the world, national Order of Malta Associations are engaging in various fundraising and relief activities.

The Sovereign Order of Malta has a special commitment for those who are left behind and we recognize that almost a quarter of Lebanon's population are refugees, the majority from Palestine and Syria. The welcome and empathy that Lebanon has extended to these displaced, and often forgotten, people is indicative of the nature and character of the nation. The global response in this critical hour of need, therefore, must be proportionate to the generosity that the country has shown to so many others who have sought refuge and succor there. We urge those providing support and assistance not to forget the highly dependent and vulnerable refugee community who will, in a short time, be impacted by food shortages and a scarcity of medical supplies.

We pledge to continue to work closely with UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent organization and other humanitarian bodies to continue to provide aid in both the short and long term.

Thank You.