



Lebanon: Beirut Port Explosions

Situation Report No. 4

As of 13 August 2020

This report is produced by OCHA Lebanon in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 11 to 13 August 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 178 people were killed, and an estimated 6,000 people were injured and at least 30 people remain missing in the Beirut Port explosions.
- Two quays have opened at Beirut Port and five of 16 cranes have resumed operations. Two more cranes are to be recommissioned by 14 August. Beirut Port is now functioning at 30 per cent capacity.
- Currently WHO estimates six hospitals are damaged (up from three) and more than twenty clinics (up from an initial estimate of fifteen).
- The Ministry of Public Health continues to report increasing COVID-19 transmission rates.
- The Shelter sector estimates that more than 47,000 apartments sustained some level of damage, affecting more than 170,000 residents.
- A WASH Sector survey of 558 buildings found that more than two-thirds of accessible sites lack access to clean drinking water.
- At this stage, food shortages are not anticipated, and the unofficial exchange rate of the Lebanese Pound (LBP) appears to be falling.



UNFPA staff recover supplies from a damaged facility in Beirut. Credit: UNFPA

178

Reported deaths

6,000+

People reported injured

30+

People reported missing

SITUATION OVERVIEW

A week after the Beirut Port explosions, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) reported that the death toll reached 178 persons. More than 6,000 were injured, and at least 30 remain missing.

Affected areas include neighborhoods that host refugees. A total 13 deaths are reported among the refugee community. 503 referrals were received for refugees reported dead in the blasts, injured or in need of assistance. 69 refugees are still not reachable or confirmed as missing. UNHCR reported that more than 37,000 refugee families lived within 5km of Beirut Port. UNRWA reported the death of two Palestine refugees and several injuries.

The explosions affected many neighborhoods across Greater Beirut, including several with poor, migrant workers and refugee communities. Many of these communities have limited resources to reconstruct damaged shelters or purchase food and non-food items. These groups also live in neighbourhoods with limited access to services, including WASH and health services. The majority of displaced are housed with families and friends.

Six major hospitals and 20 clinics sustained partial or heavy structural damage. A preliminary rapid assessment within a 15-kilometre radius of the explosions, has revealed that, out of 55 medical facilities, only half are fully operational and around 40 per cent have suffered moderate to serious damage and need rehabilitation. 120 schools, used by 50,000 Lebanese and non-Lebanese children, sustained various levels of damage. Humanitarian partners are conducting further damage assessments, in close coordination with relevant government authorities.

Debris is still reported inside houses and on the streets with removal operations and cleaning ongoing. The Municipality of Beirut asked residents to evacuate buildings assessed to be structurally unsound and safety hazards to responders and civilians. Despite having relocated and evacuated, many displaced people reportedly moved to makeshift shelters close to their houses or return to their neighborhood during the day for fear of looting and theft or to pick up their belongings.

Collective or crowded alternative accommodations prevent social distancing and could create greater exposure to COVID-19. The economic crisis resulting in loss of livelihood and savings for many Lebanese will represent a challenge for people to repair their homes. Given the high inflation, prices of construction and repair materials are likely to increase. As a result, the most vulnerable households might face prolonged displacement or live in hazardous conditions without basic services such as water and electricity, or privacy. However, over 55% of the houses assessed in the area were rented, which may allow the affected population to move elsewhere. Some households are predicting to be displaced for up to a month, others for a longer, indefinite period. It is reported that affected population from the Qarantina district may take up to one year to return.

Nabaa and Qarantina neighborhoods reportedly lack electricity. Other neighborhoods continue to have electricity at pre-explosion levels (i.e., less than six hours daily). Reportedly, cables and generators within the power grid were severely damaged cutting off electricity provision. While power outages of three to six hours a day are common in Lebanon, they went up to 20 hours a day in July due to fuel shortages.

Concerns remain over chemical substances stored at the port, many of which have been recovered during ongoing operations. Further assessments are required to make sure that all threats are identified, understand any actual or potential cascading risks and restore safety. Asbestos and other hazardous waste are a concern given the ongoing cleanup initiatives throughout the city. Guidelines have been issued for the population on air pollution and cleanup.

On 13 August, a total of 298 new COVID-19 cases were recorded. A total of 292 new cases were identified the day prior. The emergency in Beirut as well as the protests over the past four days have 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 situation is particularly concerning for the thousands of youth and volunteers from all over Lebanon that came to support in cleaning and rehabilitation activities.

Despite the government's resignation on 10 August the situation on the ground remains tense. On 11 August, there was another large protest in downtown Beirut, the fourth consecutive one since 9 August. According to the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC), the clashes injured ten people, who were hospitalized, and 32 wounded who were treated on site. Over the four consecutive days of protest, LRC reported that 85 civilians were transported to hospitals and 311 were given first aid support on site. 105 security forces personnel were also reportedly wounded according to Lebanese security forces.

On 13 August, following Parliamentary decision, the state of emergency will be in place until 21 August.

On 12 August, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers approved a draft decree aimed at accepting and exempting donations and aid to several public and non-profit entities. The exemption, which is still pending, may facilitate the implementation of the humanitarian response in Lebanon.

On 12 August, the Minister of Economy and Trade (MoET) reported that Lebanon is not facing difficulties with the flow of goods from abroad. According to the MoET, all three ports in Lebanon are functioning (Beirut, Tripoli and Sidon), with Beirut operation at 30 per cent capacity and Tripoli at 70 per cent capacity. Reportedly, quay #12 and quay #13 at Beirut port opened on 13 August and five cranes (out of 16) have been recommissioned/functioning, and two more are expected to be operational by 14 August. In addition, besides the container terminal re-opening, wheat unloading has also resumed for two ships. WFP will assess the Beirut Port on 14 August.

At this stage, food shortages are not anticipated, noting that WFP is bringing into the country a three-month supply of wheat flour and grains for bakeries and mills as reported earlier. Essential items, including food, fuel and electricity, were already becoming more expensive before the explosions due to the inflation, the banking restrictions and the loss in value of the local currency. It is expected that prices of food and other essential goods could continue to increase.

The economic situation has been stable since the explosions, with the dollar value slightly decreasing. On 13 August, the unofficial value of the US dollar dropped to 6,600-6,800 Lebanese pound (LBP). This constitutes a strengthening of the LBP, as it previously reached LBP8,000 to the US dollar before the explosions.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Efforts are underway to support the national response to the explosions. The priority sectors responding are Shelter (rehabilitation), Health (stress mental health, capacity and continuity of care), Food security and Protection. As assessments are ongoing, more information will be available on WASH and Education needs. The Humanitarian Coordinator has authorized the use of \$9 million from the Lebanese Humanitarian Fund (LHF) to support national and international NGO partner projects in the Health, Food Security, WASH and Protection sectors.

Cash programming is likely to play an important role in responding to multi-sectoral needs and given the large amount of in-kind assistance provided so far. Plans are being developed to provide cash-based assistance to people affected by the explosions. UNICEF is designing an emergency cash assistance project to serve up to 80,000 vulnerable people living in the poorest and most affected areas. WFP is providing 105,000 Lebanese individuals with assistance via e-cards as part of the Government's National Poverty Targeting Programme and is working on expanding its programmes to include more vulnerable groups including those affected by the explosions.

As the Lebanese authorities declared that the life-saving phase for search and rescue is over, most of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams have completed their mission. Only a few experts from international teams are still in country supporting the Civil Defense to clear rubble, recover bodies and support structural assessment efforts.

On 12 August, the Damage Assessment Coordination Cell (DACC) closed. SARAID, who was running the DACC, has undertaken a "training of trainers" course for the Municipality Engineers and some militaries on structural assessment criteria.

The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team is still supporting the OCHA Country Office together with other incoming UN personnel. An Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) Coordinator arrived in Beirut on 11 August to coordinate with partners and national operators and to assess the communication needs of the response community and affected population.

UNICEF mobilized 1,170 youth, including Palestinian volunteers, in a community-based response at the damaged sites. Eleven damaged sites, 650 houses and 10 streets were cleaned by youth. Minor rehabilitation of 142 households and shops were completed by young people. In addition, 210 youth produced and distributed 20,100 cloth masks, along with 400 helmets, 300 goggles and 300 safety vests.

A coalition of non-profits has joined forces to reduce duplicate work and streamline efforts in Beirut relief efforts (Live Love Beirut, Jobs for Lebanon, Volunteer Circle, Nusaned, Codi, Rebuild Beirut, Rebuild Lebanon, Unicef, Mouwaten Lebne, Basmeh & Zeitooneh, Arcenciel, AltCity Impact, Bloom.pm, Aie Serve, Morta).

Telecoms Sans Frontières (TSF) plans to establish a helpline within two weeks with the local organization "livelovelebanon".

Health

Needs:

- Damage assessments continue. Updated assessments suggest more hospitals and primary health centres (PHCs) were damaged than previously estimated. WHO estimates that six hospitals are damaged (up from three) and more than twenty clinics are damaged (up from an initial estimate of 15).
- WHO completed the results of the Rapid Hospital Assessment of the five hospitals that were most affected: 1. Beirut Governmental Hospital ("Qarantina"), 2. St Georges University Hospital, 3. Geitawi Lebanese University Hospital, 4. LAUMC-Rizk University Hospital and 5. Rosary Sisters Hospital. The Beirut Governmental Hospital building has been

designated as unsecure, and staff are prohibited from entering the facility. Four additional hospitals requested structural assessments.

- There are concerns that hospitals in Beirut do not have enough Intensive Care Unit (ICU) available as the country enters in phase 4 of community transmission since many ICU beds are still occupied by critically injured patients.
- As the COVID-19 situation remains extremely alarming with an increased resurgence of positive cases, including among healthcare workers, extensive efforts are undertaken to link the response of COVID-19 to the blast emergency response in order to promote awareness and preventive measures.

Response:

- As part of the LHF Reserve Allocation, International Medical Corps and Relief International will provide a comprehensive package to support 12 PHCs. The package includes structural and non-structural rehabilitation, refurbishment, equipment repair and supply, chronic disease medications, medical supply including Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and surgical first aid kits, consultations, mental health and staffing support for nine to twelve months.
- Health Sector partners are providing PPE items and humanitarian supplies that were destroyed by the blasts: on 11 August, WHO provided seventeen tons of PPE to be distributed to 23 public and private hospitals. Delivery of supplies to Beirut is ongoing. Two more flights with health supplies are expected to arrive on 12 August. UNICEF is procuring PPE/IPC (Infection prevention and control) material, vaccine commodities and acute medicine cold chain support, health emergency kits, obstetric, newborn and midwifery kits and nutrition supplies to replenish essential diminishing stocks. UNFPA delivered some 10,000 PPEs to the MoPH's warehouse in Qarantina.
- UNICEF is providing technical support to the MoPH in developing a "PHC re-start package," including minimum rehabilitation of buildings for immediate outpatient treatment, including IPC measures needed for COVID-19, space for wounded, antenatal care and paediatric consultations. The package will also include medical equipment and emergency supplies for treatment of injured. The rehabilitation of 16 PHCs and the Newborn Unit will be prioritized.
- Mobile medical units (MMUs) continue to cover Qarantina (operated by Amel Association) and Bourj Hammoud, Geitawi, Karm El Zeitun, Gemmayzeh/Mar Mikhael/DT (operated by IMC), Ashrafieh (Caritas) and Al Makassed (supported by UNFPA).
- UNICEF facilitated the distribution, logistics and cold chain of 10,000 tetanus vaccines donated by Sanofi (pharmaceutical company), 42 emergency kits and emergency drugs to PHCs.
- UNFPA has also supported Al Makassed Association in hiring a midwife to join the MMU and to conduct door-to-door visits to provide guidance and counselling for pregnant women, women that newly delivered and lactating women. UNICEF also supported lactation specialists and community health educators in providing face-to-face counselling to 32 families.
- UNFPA distributed some 4,700 dignity kits to some 1,500 adolescent girls and women (contains sanitary pads, towels, soap bars, toothbrush and toothpaste) through UNFPA's partners.
- The Lebanese Medical Students' International Committee (LEMSIC), supported by UNFPA, assessed 36 PHCs to determine the damages to sexual and reproductive health and maternity departments.
- UNICEF has provided Psychological First Aid (PFA) to 720 children and adults. Tents in Qarantina, Basta and Geitawi have been installed to provide recreational activities and PFA for children and providing health counseling sessions.
- UNFPA trained 40 frontline social workers to provide psychological first aid to women.
- Embrace is currently operating the National Emotional Support and Suicide Prevention helpline to respond to individuals in emotional distress. Furthermore, the organization plans to open a walk-in center in Hamra to provide counselling.
- UNICEF will establish youth friendly spaces in different communities, including Palestinian communities, to support adolescent and youth coping with the impact of the explosions.

Shelter

Needs:

- Shelter partners are supporting a rapid humanitarian shelter needs assessment, prioritizing the most affected areas, mobilizing emergency weatherproofing materials and support repair and rehabilitation efforts. Some partners have been providing shelter kits over the past couple of days.
- The Shelter sector estimates that 29,771 apartments (89,313 ind.) have minor damages, 17,100 apartments (51,300 ind.) have moderate damages and 1,144 buildings (30,660 ind.) have heavy damages.

Response:

- Shelter Sector partners, working closely with the LRC and other partners, conducted more than 3,500 emergency shelter needs assessments. A total of 839 shelter kits (e.g., plastic tarpaulins, timber and ironmongery) were distributed in affected neighbourhoods including Qarantina, Geitawi, Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhael, Karm el Zeitoun and Rmeil.
- UN-Habitat is carrying out an assessment of 70 evacuated buildings in Mar Mikhael and Qarantina. It also supported the municipality of Beirut and Bourj Hammoud building assessment by providing municipal and volunteering engineers with a mobile application to conduct the rapid building assessment which will help identify most affected geographic areas and level of damages.
- Caritas distributed NFIs to 40 families and hygiene kits to 133 people.
- UN-Habitat is planning to support around 800 of the most vulnerable families evacuated from their homes in Mar Mikhael and Qarantina through the “cash-for-rent” modality once vulnerabilities have been identified. The amount to be provided is \$800 per family to cover families/individuals housing needs for four to five months.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Needs:

- Preliminary results from a coordinated assessment by UNICEF and the Beirut and Mount Lebanon Water Establishment did not find major damage on the main water network. Damages to residential buildings, however, have interrupted many households' access to clean water.
- In a survey of 558 affected buildings, the WASH Sector found that only 337 were accessible and occupied. A total of 225 of these locations did not have access to water.
- Building-level assessments of water needs will continue to inform ongoing repair activities. Further assessment of the water network from pumping stations to buildings will also be expedited.
- Waste management activities remain delayed and limited in most areas, increasing the risk of water born disease.

Response:

- UNICEF distributed water, personal hygiene items, including sanitary pads and infection prevention and control (IPC) materials, to 80 families in temporary shelters. The direct distribution included 20 baby kits. LRC distributed an additional 250 kits were delivered to provided by UNICEF to the LRC were distributed and 150 kits are repositioned for immediate use.

Food Security

Response:

- Caritas delivered hot meals to 30,000 people and food kits to 700 people in need.
- UNICEF is designing an emergency cash assistance project to reach up to 80,000 vulnerable people, including households with children, differently abled, elderly and migrant workers living in the poorest and most affected areas.
- WFP continues its engagement with several partners (e.g., IOCC, LRC, Abaad, Caritas, SHEILD) to provide food parcels for kitchens providing hot meals to frontline responders and those affected by the blast. Partners are also distributing dry rations for families with access functioning kitchens.
- The first shipment of 12,500 MT of wheat flour is due to arrive by 20 August at Beirut Port. As the container terminal and port approach have been confirmed to be operational, WFP will import wheat to ensure continuity of the national grain reserve, with Tripoli Port as back-up.
- WFP is planning to carry out a rapid food security and basic needs assessment.

Protection

Needs:

- The Protection sector is prioritizing the provision of psychosocial support and psychological first aid to the most affected populations.
- Two children remain separated from their immediate families. Case management services is providing for alternative care while they stay with extended family.

Response:

- UNFPA implementing partner are distributing more than 10,000 dignity kits to women in Qarantina, Al Khanda Al Ghami', Mar Mikhael and Geitawi. Partners active in the area include Amel Association, Akkarouna Association and INTERSOS.
- Protection monitoring has been adapted to identify protection risks encountered by affected populations.
- Dedicated hotlines have been established and are being operated by Terre des Hommes Italy, Himaya and UPEL to support protection referrals. Other partners are scaling up existing protection hotlines.
- Community outreach volunteers are visiting affected families to provide information and support and refer to assistance and services as needed.
- UNHCR is working with the Personal Status Department of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities to assist affected people in replacing lost documentation.
- Child friendly spaces have been established by Himaya, UNICEF and War Child Holland in different areas of Beirut.
- UNICEF provided food and water to 700 children and caregivers, along with clothes and detergents to the most vulnerable families.

 **Education****Needs:**

- Ongoing assessments have identified 20 public Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) and training schools damaged in the blasts. Approximately 8,000 adolescents and young persons attend the damaged schools.
- These locations are in addition to the 120 public and private schools that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education identified as damaged in the blasts.

 **Logistics****Response:**

- The sector continues to conduct warehouse and port assessments, with initial results expected in the coming days.
- Mobile storage units for imported bulk wheat will be set up at Beirut Port in the coming days.

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