

Virtual Briefing on the Humanitarian Situation in Lebanon

Statement by Ambassador Richard Arbeiter, Chargé d'affaires, Permanent Mission of Canada to the UN

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AS DELIVERED

Thank you Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock,

I would like to first share my heartfelt condolences on behalf of Canadians to the victims of last week's tragic explosion in Beirut. Canadians, including hundreds of thousands of Lebanese Canadians, have been connecting with those in Beirut, a demonstration of the deep and longstanding friendship between Lebanon and Canada.

My thoughts go as well to our dear friend and colleague Amal, Ambassador Mudallali and all of the staff of the Lebanese mission, who have our support.

I would like to also extend our deepest sympathies to UN personnel and their families who were affected, including the 22 peacekeepers from Bangladesh who were injured while serving with UNIFIL's Maritime Task Force, and to Germany and the Netherlands for the loss of their embassy colleagues.

To support the people of Lebanon, Canada announced last week it is providing up to \$5 million in humanitarian assistance to respond to the crisis, with \$1.5 million going immediately to the Lebanese Red Cross and other trusted humanitarian organizations providing emergency relief on the ground. As part of this commitment, Canada announced on Saturday the launch of the Beirut Matching Fund to help Canadians mobilize resources to assist those affected by the explosion. Through this mechanism, the Government of Canada will match, up to a maximum of \$2 million, every donation made by individual Canadians to Canada's Humanitarian Coalition and its members between August 4 and 24, 2020. Canada's contribution will help support emergency medical services and provide shelter, food and other essential items.

I will emphasize this is only one part of Canada's long-term commitment to help see Lebanon through an already challenging time that has been compounded by economic, financial, and health crises. We have taken careful note of the information shared today to help inform our collective continued response, and thank Ms. Rochdi [Deputy Special Coordinator, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon] and WFP Executive Director David Beasley for their briefings. We will continue to work with our partners, the international community, and civil society to identify how we can support urgent needs.

We will also continue to support the Lebanese people and their demands for fundamental reforms and effective and accountable governance structures, to ensure full accountability for the explosion, to fairly and honestly manage Beirut's recovery and reconstruction, and to respond effectively to the multiple other crises facing Lebanon.

We stand together with the people of Lebanon in mourning but also in solidarity as they work to heal, overcome this tragedy, and rebuild the city of Beirut that we know and love.

Thank you. Merci.