

UNHCR Flash Update on Lebanon: Beirut Port Explosions

11 August 2020

Situation Overview

- On 4 August, the city of Beirut was hit by a devastating explosion which flattened most of the city's port, damaging neighbourhoods and buildings across the capital. It left at least 170 people dead and over 5,000 people injured. The explosions come as Lebanon faces a multi-faceted crisis. In recent months, the socio-economic situation of Lebanese and refugees has continued to deteriorate, with the cost of basic needs exponentially rising as a result of the deep economic and financial crisis, exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19.
- The impact area of the explosion included neighbourhoods hosting refugees. UNHCR is saddened to report that there have been at least 34 deaths reported from among the refugee community. At least 8 refugees are still missing and over 120 were injured in the blast, 19 of whom severely.
- UNHCR is mobilizing, together with other humanitarian partners, to respond to the immediate needs. We continue to work with the rescue teams and other humanitarian partners to identify the victims and are extending support to the families who have lost their loved ones.

UNHCR Response

- Over the past days, UNHCR mobilized to provide shelter support to affected families, working closely with the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) and other partners to conduct assessments and distribute basic shelter kits to help people repair their homes. More than 2,700 emergency needs assessments have been conducted and distributions of shelter materials such as plastic tarpaulins, timber and ironmongery began on 9 August. Carpenters are on the ground to help vulnerable families install the materials and weatherproof their homes.
- UNHCR is also prioritizing the provision of psychosocial support and psychological first aid to those who have been most affected. A dedicated helpline is being established to ensure timely response to requests for assistance. Community outreach volunteers are visiting affected families to provide information and support, and refer to assistance and services as needed. Protection monitoring has been adapted to collecting, verifying, and analysing information in order to identify protection risks encountered by affected populations. We will also be working with the Personal Status Department to assist people in replacing lost documentation.
- Shelter, protection and coordination capacity are being boosted through emergency deployments from UNHCR's regional Bureau and Headquarters.
- Refugees themselves are supporting the clean-up efforts, offering shelter to those left homeless, and donating blood to help the injured.

UNHCR Emergency Response Plan

- As part of the inter-agency humanitarian appeal, **UNHCR is mobilizing USD 12 million** to provide immediate emergency response to the most affected and most vulnerable households and individuals in Lebanon. This includes USD 9.6 million for shelter interventions and USD 2.4 million for protection activities.
- UNHCR's initial response will focus mainly on: (1) Shelter and (2) Protection, notably community-based protection and mental health and psychosocial support. The response will adopt a whole-population approach, targeting the most affected and most vulnerable households and individuals, including Lebanese, refugees and migrant workers. While assessments are still underway, initial estimates indicate that at least 10,000 vulnerable households have been severely affected by the blast and are in need of urgent support. Affected people displaced outside the Beirut area will also be targeted with assistance.
- UNHCR continues to call on the international community to stand by the people of Lebanon, show solidarity and provide meaningful support to this generous country that has hosted so many refugees even during a very difficult period.



Photo © UNHCR

UNHCR Lebanon Operation



Funding:

USD 607.5 M requested for the
UNHCR Lebanon operation in 2020

39% funded as of 4 August 2020
(USD 239.5 M received)

Additional Links

- [Briefing Note: Beirut blast death toll includes dozens of refugees, emergency response ramps up](#) (11 August 2020)
- [UNHCR Flash Update on Lebanon: Beirut Port Explosions](#) (7 August 2020)
- [Briefing Note: UNHCR rushes support for Beirut in the aftermath of massive blast](#) (7 August 2020)
- [Statement attributable to UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on the explosions in Beirut, Lebanon](#) (5 August 2020)
- [Statement by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi at virtual briefing on the humanitarian situation in Lebanon](#) (10 August 2020)

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