



At least 220 people were killed and more than 6,000 were wounded following explosions that erupted in Beirut on August 4. Broken glass and debris could be seen as far as two miles away, encompassing an area where more than 750,000 people live.

On August 4, an explosion ripped through Beirut, killing more than 220 people, injuring more than 6,000 and leaving some 300,000 homeless. As the city continues recovery efforts, the trauma of the explosion has piled problems onto people already weary from an incredibly difficult year. In October 2019, the worst wildfires in decades—which included a series of approximately 100 forest fires—were followed by unprecedented protests demanding a complete overhaul of the political system. The country's prime minister was forced to resign, plunging the country into a political crisis. Amid this immediate political emergency, Lebanon was struggling with a deep-rooted economic crisis that had been brewing for years. Even before the protests, the unemployment rate was climbing. By May 2020, the unemployment rate stood above 30%, with food inflation skyrocketing to around 190%.¹ Since October, the Lebanese pound has lost more than 80% of its value and an electricity shortage has caused frequent power cuts across the city—with some areas experiencing blackouts for nearly 20 hours a day.²

The economic collapse was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, where containment measures—lockdowns and restrictions—created rising unemployment and a situation where two out every three Lebanese households are suffering from a reduced income compared to previous years.³ Additionally, one week after the explosion, the country has reported record numbers of new infections. The displacement of nearly 300,000 people and relaxed precautionary measures as a result of the explosion are raising concerns about increased transmission rates and the risk of overwhelming medical facilities, many of which are already at capacity or were damaged during the explosion. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Connection Research Development, completed a rapid assessment of medical facilities and primary healthcare centers (PHCCs) in Beirut. Of the 55 PHCCs surveyed, less than half are able to provide full routine services. According to the survey, at least 15 medical facilities, including six major hospitals, sustained partial or heavy structural damage and those that are operational are in desperate need of more equipment.

FAST FACTS

Our Footprint

- International Medical Corps has partnerships with more than 50 primary healthcare centers (PHCCs) throughout Lebanon, supporting primary healthcare services for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese at facilities in Bekaa, Beirut, Mount Lebanon, Akkar and other areas throughout the north and south.

Our Response

- Since the explosion, International Medical Corps has delivered 23 shipments of medical supplies and personal protective equipment—including masks, gloves and gauze—to 19 PHCCs and eight hospitals in Beirut.
- The team has provided more than 530 medical consultations and 450 mental health consultations through its Mobile Medical Units (MMUs), which were deployed to highly impacted areas of Geitaoui-Karm El Zeitoun, Mar Mikhael, Bourj Hammoud and Mdawar.

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/10/already-in-financial-meltdown-lebanon-endures-daily-blackouts.html>

² Ibid.

³ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000116784.pdf>

International Medical Corps Response

International Medical Corps has been active in Lebanon since 2006 and plays a critical role in providing relief to people affected by war in recent years. We have partnerships with more than 50 PHCCs and hospitals throughout Lebanon, and our activities address the needs of both refugees and vulnerable Lebanese residing in greater Tripoli, Akkar, Beirut and Mount Lebanon, Bekaa and the South.

Immediately following the explosion, International Medical Corps delivered 23 shipments of medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE)—including masks, gloves, gauze and plaster—to 19 primary healthcare centers (PHCCs) and eight hospitals in Beirut. The team also distributed PPE to 2,000 civil society volunteers who were assisting with recovery and clean-up efforts. The team deployed its mobile medical units (MMUs) and mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) tent to Bourj Hammoud, Karm El-Zeitoun, Geitaoui, and Mar Mikhael municipalities, to provide immediate support to residents affected by the explosion and alleviate the burden of PHCCs in these areas. The community health team also began distributing hygiene kits door-to-door.



Map of International Medical Corps support programs and facilities in the Greater Beirut area.



In response to increased health and mental health needs, International Medical Corps is providing integrated services through MMUs.

As recovery efforts continue, International Medical Corps has put a priority on providing critical healthcare and mental health services in Geitaoui-Karm El Zeitoun, Mar Mikhael, Bourj Hammoud and Mdawar. The team will continue to couple its MMUs and MHPSS tents to provide integrated support to residents affected by the explosion. On August 11, International Medical Corps stationed an MMU in the Geitaoui/Karm El Zeitoun area. In Geitaoui, 95% to 100% of the population currently lives in partially damaged buildings, while 70% of the dwellings in Karm El Zeitoun are partially destroyed.⁴ Major hospitals in the area were so severely damaged that they had to shut down and send patients to other facilities. Though the main hospital—Geitaoui Hospital—remains open, it was damaged in the blast and many community groups in the area face difficulties accessing services, since remaining facilities have been overwhelmed by casualties. Additionally, many intensive care units (ICUs) are already near capacity due to COVID-19. To address these gaps in

critical healthcare services, the MMU—which is staffed by a physician and nurse—provided primary healthcare consultations, while patients were referred to the MHPSS tent for psychosocial support. Additionally, the community health team went door-to-door to distribute hygiene kits to community members who are in desperate need of basic hygiene materials.

On August 12–13, the team deployed MMUs to Geitaoui, Bourj Hammoud and Mdawar. Bourj Hammoud is a particularly vulnerable area, characterized by a chaotic urban environment with shelters built haphazardly and unconnected to basic government services. Needs in Bourj Hammoud and Mdawar are particularly great given their close proximity to the port. Over the course of two days, the team provided nearly 200 medical consultations and 100 psychosocial support sessions to residents. Additionally, to support healthcare facilities and safeguard healthcare workers, International Medical Corps distributed PPE to health partners, including the Child and Mother Welfare Society, Social Medical Center-Fanar, Hadath Lebanese University, Sacre Couer Hospital, the Beirut Governmental Hospital and the Jdeideh Clinic.



International Medical Corps' staff provides support and medical consultations to residents in Mar Mikhael on August 15.

⁴https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Lebanon_Beirut%20Blast_Rapid%20Needs%20Assessment%20Report_August%202020_final.pdf



International Medical Corps' team has stationed MMUs in neighborhoods throughout the Greater Beirut area to serve residents affected by the explosion on August 4.

On August 14–15, International Medical Corps stationed MMUs in Bourj Hammoud and Mar Mikhael, where the physician and nurse team provided consultations to more than 180 patients and nearly 200 people received psychosocial support.

As days have passed since the explosion and services continue to be disrupted, the need for basic services in these target areas has increased. In response, the community health team distributed more than 240 hygiene kits during these two days. Additionally, International Medical Corps distributed PPE to four additional PHCCs, the Family Medicine AUB, Dar el Fatwa, Dar el Wafa and Makhzoumi Medical Center.

In total, International Medical Corps has provided more than 530 medical consultations to patients via the MMUs and more than 450 mental health consultations since the explosion. Moving forward, International Medical Corps will continue to deploy MMUs and MHPSS services to target areas to increase access to essential healthcare and mental health services. Additionally, the team will distribute PPE, medical supplies and essential medications to health facilities throughout the greater Beirut area.