

Lebanon



After years of war in neighboring Syria, Lebanon continues to host the highest per-capita number of Syrian refugees globally. The massive influx of women, children and men fleeing war has inevitably strained essential services, limiting access to

them for both refugees and vulnerable Lebanese.

International Medical Corps provides comprehensive primary healthcare and mental health services to help meet urgent needs, including gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response programming for at-risk people throughout the country. Our primary goal is to support the expansion of an affordable healthcare system in Lebanon, one that enables those who are most in need to access a broad range of quality services.

International Medical Corps began operating in Lebanon in 2006 and has played a key role in providing relief to people affected by war in the years since.

Following the 2011 outbreak of armed conflict in Syria, we have expanded programming to meet the basic medical and mental health needs of Syrians who have sought refuge in Lebanon.

Moreover, the aftermath of the devastating port explosion in Beirut on August 4, 2020, continues to compound challenges faced by families already struggling with the health and economic crises caused by COVID-19. Today, our activities address the needs of vulnerable populations—including refugees, migrants and Lebanese—in Akkar, Beirut, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, greater Tripoli and other areas throughout the north and south.



PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

International Medical Corps ensures access to quality health services for Syrian refugees, migrants, vulnerable Lebanese and other people at risk. We do this by supporting a network of more than 50v primary healthcare clinics (PHCCs) and dispensaries across the country, focusing on prevention and health maintenance. Services include routine physical examinations; wellness exams for children; malnutrition screening; immunizations; referrals; care and follow-up treatment for non-communicable diseases; specialized health services for people with disabilities (PwDs); homecare services for the elderly and PwDs; dental care; nutrition consultation for non-communicable diseases (NCDs); antenatal and postnatal care; and preventive care activities through screening for breast, cervical and colon cancer. In areas with high rates of confirmed COVID-19 cases and where bed capacities are overwhelmed, International Medical Corps provides comprehensive management of mild and moderate COVID-19 cases with symptomatic treatment, infection prevention and control (IPC) supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) for patients and caregivers. In addition, we raise awareness about COVID-19, including isolation guidelines.

Enhancing national primary care capacity is a priority for International Medical Corps. We procure essential medications

based on the Ministry of Public Health's essential-drug lists, and work closely with supported PHCCs to dispense and monitor use of these medications. We also build PHCC capacity, aiming to improve the quality of services at each facility, helping them maintain their status as members of the Ministry of Public Health's PHC Network and preparing them to meet accreditation requirements in the future.

With more than one-third of health facilities damaged due to the Beirut port explosion and cases of COVID-19 continuing to rise, health facilities that remain open are often overwhelmed by patients. In addition, extensive damage to medical storage facilities caused acute shortages of vital medicines and supplies. International Medical provides PHCCs within the impacted areas with PPE, medical supplies (including bandages, gauze, alcohol swabs and syringes), medications (including psychotropic medications, antibiotics, anti-allergic drugs and antifungal medicines) and vitamins. We also are rehabilitating PHCCs that suffered structural damage, to render them accessible to people in need.

Awareness-raising and health education through community health clubs are key components of International Medical Corps plan to limit the spread of infectious diseases and minimize both primary and secondary healthcare costs. We identify volunteers from local areas and provide them with in-depth training and field coaching to expand outreach in communities, enabling them to become Health Outreach Volunteers (HoV). Training includes a range of health education topics, including infectious and non-infectious diseases, infant and young-child feeding, immunization, antenatal care and personal hygiene.

HoVs serve as a vital link between PHCCs and residents. They provide referrals, and follow up with refugees and vulnerable Lebanese at home, in informal settlements and shelters, as well as in schools and underserved neighborhoods. We also coordinate with local and international partners to organize health campaigns across the country, educating communities through interactive health and hygiene awareness sessions, and distributing hygiene and feminine kits.



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Women and girls in Lebanon continue to be disproportionately affected by GBV. Early marriage, domestic violence, sexual violence (rape and sexual assault), exploitation and survival sex are the most common forms of violence. Unfortunately, GBV mostly goes unreported, due to the fear, shame and stigma that beset many survivors.

Recognized as a leader in humanitarian GBV prevention and response programming, International Medical Corps' interventions span all regions of Lebanon. We design our programs to support and empower women and girls who face particular risks after being exposed to conflict, displacement and socio-economic instability. Our priority is to strengthen core services for GBV-survivors, particularly case management and psychosocial support services, as well as access to quality healthcare. To prevent future incidents of GBV, we also work with communities to address protection risks, combat harmful practices and work toward social and behavioral change. Through our programs, International Medical Corps contributes to the development of best practices and standards around GBV prevention and response.

We work with local organizations, community-based support workers and healthcare providers to address risks and deliver quality, focused support services for survivors of GBV through community centers and safe spaces for women and girls. We also work with communities to promote gender equality, and combat beliefs and practices that perpetuate different forms of GBV. In particular, we engage men and boys on concepts of gender equality, and help transform harmful attitudes into behaviors



respectful and supportive of gender equality and of women's empowerment.

International Medical Corps is a member of the GBV Information Management System, the Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) and relevant GBV task forces. We also co-chair the GBV working group in the Bekaa. Our programs are tailored to ensure that interventions are needs-driven and rights-based, adapted for cultural and security considerations and responsive to the nature and extent of GBV present in different contexts. International Medical Corps' key GBV prevention and response activities include individual GBV case management according to GBV guiding principles; organized safe spaces that enable women and adolescent girls to access information, seek help and establish support networks; and psychosocial support through focused and non-focused activities. We also run stress, anger-management and 'masculinity' workshops for men, and raise awareness about GBV using an adapted community-based approach.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

Since arriving in Lebanon, International Medical Corps has played a leading role in delivering comprehensive mental health programming. We have expanded access to services by training primary healthcare providers to detect, refer, diagnose and treat mild to moderate mental disorders, integrating mental health into primary healthcare. Based at primary healthcare and community centers, multidisciplinary case management teams comprising case managers, psychotherapists, child psychotherapists and psychiatrists provide free treatment and refer cases when needed.

As part of our efforts to promote health and well-being among refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, International Medical Corps also offers community-based activities for youth, caregivers and other at-risk people.

Psychosocial support activities, such as community support group interventions, are designed to raise awareness of mental health topics and provide individuals with the resources they need to help themselves and those around them. We also develop booklets about mental health disorders, such as depression, postpartum depression, enuresis, psychosomatic disorders, and loss and grief.

International Medical Corps coordinates closely with the Ministry of Public Health's National Mental Health Program on various activities and services. The National Mental Health Program provides national-level guidelines and policies for mental health services in Lebanon, while our partnership with the national program helps integrate mental health into primary healthcare, ensuring access to quality mental health care within the existing healthcare structure.



INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS IN THE REGION

International Medical Corps has been active in the Middle East since 2003, when it was one of the first international agencies to reengage in post-invasion Iraq. Since that time, we have built robust programming in Gaza, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Yemen. International Medical Corps' Middle East programs focus on humanitarian relief, community development and government capacity building.



www.InternationalMedicalCorps.org

A pre-eminent first responder since 1984, International Medical Corps delivers emergency medical and related services to those affected by conflict, disaster and disease, no matter where they are, no matter what the conditions. We also train people in their communities, providing them with the skills they need to recover, chart their own path to self-reliance and become effective first responders themselves.

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