

# 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 the Syrian war, combined with economic and political turmoil inside Lebanon, has inevitably strained essential services, limiting**

**their access 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 main objective is to expand access to affordable healthcare services in Lebanon, ensuring that those in need can access high-quality care.



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

In response to the outbreak of armed conflict in Syria in 2011, we expanded our programming to provide basic medical and mental health services to Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Furthermore, the devastating port explosion in Beirut in August 2020 added to challenges faced by families already struggling with the health and economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and a recent cholera outbreak, creating a persistent need for our services.

Today, we continue to provide essential healthcare and GBV prevention and response programming to at-risk populations throughout the country, including refugees, migrants and vulnerable Lebanese in various regions, including Akkar, Beirut, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, greater Tripoli and other areas in the north and south.



## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

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



We design our programs to support women and girls, specifically those facing particular risks after exposure to conflict, displacement and socioeconomic 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 GBV incidents, we also work with communities to address protection risks, combat harmful practices and work toward social and behavioral change. Through our programs, we help develop 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 and focused-support services for GBV survivors 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 that respect and support gender equality and women's empowerment. International Medical Corps coordinates closely with the MoPH's National Mental Health Program on various activities and services. This program provides national guidelines and policies for mental health services in Lebanon, while our partnership enables the integration of mental health into primary healthcare.

## PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

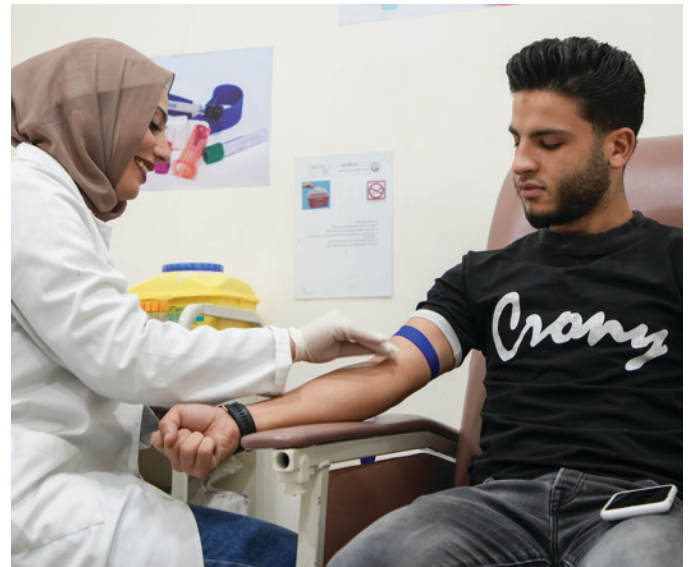
International Medical Corps ensures access to quality healthcare services for Syrian refugees, migrants, vulnerable Lebanese and other at-risk people. We do this by supporting a network of more than 50 primary healthcare clinics (PHCCs) and dispensaries across the country, focusing on prevention and health maintenance. Services include routine physical examinations and diagnostic testing, wellness exams for children and adults, malnutrition screening, immunizations, referrals, care and follow-up treatment for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), specialized health services for people with disabilities (PwDs) and children with Type 1 diabetes, homecare services for the elderly and PwDs, nutrition consultation for those with NCDs, antenatal and postnatal care, treatment of communicable diseases, and preventive care activities.

Enhancing national primary care capacity is a priority for International Medical Corps. We procure medications based on the official list of essential drugs from the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), and work closely with supported PHCCs to dispense and monitor the use of these medications. We also build PHCC capacity by working with the MoPH to provide structured training sessions, day-to-day coaching and support, as well as financial incentives through the Performance-based Financing scheme. This approach improves the quality of services at each facility, helping them maintain their status as members of the MoPH's Primary Health Care Network and preparing them to meet accreditation requirements in the future.

Awareness-raising and health education through community health clubs are key components of our 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 (HOVs).

HOVs serve as a vital link between PHCCs and residents. They provide referrals and follow-ups for refugees and vulnerable Lebanese in homes, 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.







## MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

Since starting its operations in Lebanon, International Medical Corps has played a leading role in delivering comprehensive mental health programming. We have expanded access to MHPSS services by providing training to primary healthcare providers on topics ranging from detection and referral to the Mental Health Gap Action Program. This enables providers to detect, refer, diagnose and treat mild to moderate mental disorders, integrating mental health into primary healthcare.

We support the implementation of a mental health integration model that strengthens the integration of mental health into primary healthcare while establishing an exit strategy for MHPSS case management support. This creates an opportunity to restructure how MHPSS services are provided at the community level.

Based in primary healthcare and community centers, multidisciplinary case management teams provide free treatment, including specialized psychotropic medications. We also refer cases when needed.

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

To mitigate the risk of inter- or intra-communal tensions, we hold focus group discussions with community members from different nationalities, genders and age groups, and including PwDs, to ensure that programs and activities are designed to respond to the needs of different populations while mainstreaming protection into social stability activities. Psychosocial support activities—such as community support group interventions like interpersonal psychotherapy and Problem Management Plus—are designed to raise awareness of mental health issues and provide individuals with the resources they need to help themselves and those around them.

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[www.InternationalMedicalCorps.org](http://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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