

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

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 support people and communities affected by crises 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.

Already experiencing economic difficulties and political instability, Lebanon's challenges were further exacerbated by the port explosion in Beirut in August 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and cross-border tensions. These intersecting crises have affected citizens' well-being and led to an increase in hostilities toward refugees, creating a persistent need for our services.

Today, we continue our mission to provide essential healthcare, mental health services and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response programming to at-risk populations across the country. Our reach extends to refugees, migrants, and vulnerable Lebanese in various regions, including Akkar, Beirut, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, greater Tripoli and other areas in the north and south of the country.



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) and sexual exploitation representing the most common forms of violence. Unfortunately, most GBV goes unreported, due to the fear, shame and stigma that burden many survivors.

International Medical Corps' programs take an integrated approach to supporting women and girls who are affected by or at risk of GBV, particularly those who face heightened vulnerabilities due to conflict, displacement and socioeconomic instability. Our priority is to strengthen core services for GBV survivors—particularly case management and psychosocial support services—and to provide 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 and female community leaders to address risks and deliver quality, 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 demonstrate respect and support for gender equality.

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. These health services include routine consultations for common diseases, diagnostic testing, immunizations, referrals, management and reporting of communicable diseases, antenatal care packages, non-communicable disease packages, and screening and assessment for malnutrition and for growth and development. The services we support also include wellness and preventive health benefit packages for children and adults, specialized health services for people with disabilities (PwDs), and homecare services for older people and PwDs.

Enhancing national primary-care capacity is a priority for International Medical Corps. We procure medications based on the essential medication list of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and work closely with PHCCs to ensure that medication is prescribed and dispensed safely and rationally. We also build the capacity of supported PHCCs by coordinating structured training sessions and day-to-day on-site coaching and support, as well as providing financial incentives through a performance-based financing arrangement. 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 improve community health-seeking behaviors, limit the spread of

infectious diseases, minimize both primary and secondary healthcare costs and improve health outcomes. 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, who serve as a vital link between PHCCs and the community. 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 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 World Health Organization's Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP). This enables primary healthcare providers to detect, refer, diagnose and treat mild to moderate mental disorders, integrating mental health into the services they offer.

With more than 20 partner PHCCs, we provide ongoing support to PHCC nurses and mhGAP-trained doctors to enhance screening and management of mild to moderate mental health cases in line with the packages developed by the MoPH's National Mental Health Program (NMHP).

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

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

International Medical Corps coordinates closely with the NMHP on various activities and services. This program provides national guidelines and policies for mental health services in Lebanon. Our partnership enables the integration of mental health into primary healthcare and improves the national supply chain of psychotropic medications to PHCCs.



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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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