16 August 2020 – Ten days after the Beirut blast killed hundreds, injured thousands, and devastated homes, businesses, and other infrastructure, Sister Nicolas Akiki, general director, sits in her office on the ground floor of the destroyed Rosary Sisters Hospital. The private, non-profit facility is located Wardiyah, just a few hundred meters away from the blast site.

"It was terrible. We will never forget that night," said Sister Akiki.

“I was on the 9th floor when the blast happened,” she recalls. “I was trapped between two walls and I heard nurses crying. Some had broken bones and others were bleeding. I managed to move and we took the stairs down to help those on the other floors. On the 7th floor, we found more injured nurses and patients. In the intensive care unit, the ceiling had collapsed and one of the nurses had a serious head injury. I found a nurse dead on the floor. I couldn’t help her.”

As a result of the blast, one nurse was killed and 8 more were severely wounded. Others sustained minor injuries.

“We immediately started putting an escape plan into action to evacuate 300 patients who were inside the hospital. At the same time, hundreds of people were arriving to the hospital for treatment, not knowing it had been destroyed. But we had no hospital. We moved our supplies out into the street so we could treat the injured and send them to other hospitals,” said Sister Akiki.

“It was the end of the world,” she sobbed.

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