



SITUATION

135 deaths 5000 people suffering from injuries and burns - 100+ people reported missing

Severe damage to critical health infrastructure:

- **3** hospitals non-functional
- **2 hospitals with substantial damage**
- **500** hospital bed equivalents lost
- **17** containers with essential medical supplies destroyed

WHO PRIORITIES

- Meeting emergency trauma & medical needs
- Ongoing assessments of health system and humanitarian impact
- Coordinating the international response, including EMTs
- Ensuring continuity of COVID care
- Addressing humanitarian health needs of displaced persons
- Undertaking environmental impact and providing health guidance

FUNDING NEEDS

USD 15 million to cover emergency trauma and humanitarian health needs and continuity of COVID 19 response

Current Situation and Impact on Health Sector

The recent explosion near the main port in Beirut on 4th August 2020 has caused widespread damage and resulted in over 135 dead and 5000+ people injured. These casualties have significantly overwhelmed the health system that was already reeling from a socio-economic crisis and the ongoing COVID pandemic. Although needs assessments and search and rescue operations are still ongoing, WHO is deeply concerned about the hospital and health workforce capacity, supplies of medicine, and chemical fumes which might have a harmful impact on the health of people with underlying conditions.



Heavily damaged central drug warehouse, WHO Lebanon

Furthermore, the MOPH central warehouse where WHO-supported essential medical supplies were stored has been severely damaged, necessitating immediate relocation to a different warehouse. Moreover, a recently delivered shipment of PPE, stored at the Beirut port warehouse pending transfer to MOPH warehouse was completely destroyed, leaving the nation in need of urgent trauma and PPE supplies.

While initial assessments indicate that three major hospitals are now non-functioning and two others are functioning well below capacity, a more thorough assessment of the impact on the health system is required. Early reports indicate that many health centers and primary care facilities are also damaged and/or out of action. WHO proposes to support the MOH in a detailed assessment of the damage to and functioning of health facilities.

International emergency medical teams (EMT) are already arriving in-country to support the government's response. WHO proposes to assist the MOH by establishing an EMT Coordination Cell and deploying an experienced EMT Coordinator. The Coordination Cell will be responsible for overseeing the reception and tasking of EMTs, promoting adherence to international EMT standards, and ensuring appropriate monitoring of and reporting by EMTs.

While the immediate response must address trauma and emergency medical needs, it is clear that a major humanitarian crisis is also evolving. Up to 300,000 people have been displaced from their homes and need urgent support for shelter and food assistance. But the acute displacement of so many people also risks accelerating the spread of COVID-19 and the outbreak of other diseases, including other respiratory and water-borne diseases.



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WHO will work with MOH to strengthen disease surveillance and ensure disease control measures are in place, especially among the displaced communities. We will work with other sectors to ensure that humanitarian needs are addressed.

Continuity of COVID-19 response activities is also vital. Prior to the explosion, the number of COVID cases in the country was increasing. WHO's aim is to avoid any reduction in the COVID response efforts, ensuring that all pillars of the response remain active and that there is a reliable supply of PPE and other supplies to replace the lost and damaged materials

Finally, it is not too early to consider the needs to urgently rehabilitate and "build back better" hospitals and health facilities that were damaged. WHO will support the initial priority rehabilitation of health facilities, with a view to longer term reconstruction of health

WHO Response

WHO is focusing its capacities on meeting immediate trauma, public health and humanitarian health needs, and will take initial first steps to support the health system to respond to the crisis, and then rapidly transition to rehabilitation and strengthening the resilience of the health infrastructure, with an ultimate view to "building back better." In so doing, the most vulnerable Lebanese and refugee communities will be prioritized. Major activities include:

- **Meeting urgent trauma and emergency medical needs:** Within 24 hours, WHO has rapidly deployed 10 Trauma A & Trauma B kits, and 10 Surgical Supply kits to meet the needs of 1000 trauma cases and 1,000 surgical cases. These supplies, generously transported by the Government of the United Arab Emirates, were dispatched to Lebanon by late evening August 5th via WHO's Logistics Hub in Dubai. Further supplies and equipment are urgently required, including for hospital emergency departments (ED) and intensive care units (ICU).
- **Fully assessing the health impact of the explosion:** Undertaking a full assessment of the impact of the explosion and the resulting trauma and humanitarian health needs will be vital as well as identifying gaps and immediate lifesaving needs in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and local authorities, including conducting a health facility damage and needs assessment in the affected area and the access to health services of displaced persons.
- **Supporting the MOH to establish an EMT Coordination Cell and deploying an EMT Coordinator:** This will ensure that international teams are most effectively integrated into the national response and work according to international standards.
- **Ensuring the continuity of COVID-19 services,** including the deployment of PPE supplies to replace those lost through the explosion. WHO will assist the MOH in strengthening all pillars of the response and will rapidly deploy supplies of PPE to replace those that were lost as a result of the explosion.
- **Coordinating the humanitarian health response for those displaced by the explosion:** This will include ensuring access to essential health services, strengthening disease surveillance, and collaborating with other sectors to ensure disease control measures are in place.
- **Initiating an environmental impact assessment and guidance:** Together with the American University of Beirut, WHO will conduct this assessment and develop guidance for people on how to protect themselves from potentially harmful smoke and polluted air (e.g. wearing masks and staying away from blast area).

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