

19 August 2020 - Just last week, the world witnessed the bravery of community volunteers, the humanitarian community and health workers in Lebanon following the Beirut port blast that killed almost 200 people and injured thousands.

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Working inside the damaged Karantina Hospital, surrounded by rubble and construction workers, pharmacy staff continue to report to work and provide patients with the medicines they urgently need.

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In a mobile health clinic set up by the Bekaa Youth Foundation in one of the poorest areas affected by the blast, health workers and volunteers receive more than 70 people a day seeking health care services, and offer food aid to more than 400 people a day.

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WHO youth volunteers (including children of WHO staff in Lebanon) sort and organize health supplies, such as trauma kits and personal protective equipment items, before they are distributed to hospitals across the country.

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Health workers at the Howard Karagheusian Centre receive more than 300 patients a day, mainly Syrian refugees, seeking medical and psychosocial services. Many workers continued to report to work at the centre despite their own homes being damaged or destroyed.

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Christine, a health worker at the Howard Karagheusian Centre, graduated from medical school just a few weeks ago, and helped to treat trauma patients after the port blast.

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A health worker at Rafik Al Hariri Hospital shows WHO the entrance to the emergency unit, where he treated tens of injured patients outdoors on the ground after the building was destroyed by the port blast.

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The director of the Hotel Dieu Hospital recalls the night of the blast, when a nurse saw her own mother admitted with major injuries. Soon after the blast and protests that followed, six health workers in the hospital tested positive for COVID-19.

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Despite ever-challenging conditions, humanitarians and health workers in Lebanon put the lives of others before all else. Many health workers were personally affected by the blast or had loved ones who were killed or injured. But they persevered in their mission to save lives and treated the injured anywhere they could – in the streets, on hospital floors, and even in health facilities that were without electricity.

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