



## Lebanon situation overview

Number of people wounded

**25**

Number of people killed

**16**

*As reported by MoPH on 18 October 2023*

- As of today 18th October, a total of 25 people were wounded and 16 died within or outside the referral hospitals due to the ongoing clashes (MOPH sources).
- The fighting between Israel, Hezbollah forces, and other factions has become more frequent and intense in recent days, and the local communities living along the border are being affected by these clashes.
- The three shelters (schools turned to shelters) are housing 2500 (over 500 children) Lebanese who left their villages along the southern border that are being bombed by Israel according to the Disaster Management Unit in Tyre.
- Social tension among Lebanese host communities and Syrians displaced and refugee communities is on the rise, with evictions, deportation, and aggressions frequently reported across the country.
- Demonstrations are taking place all over the country, in solidarity with the latest bombing of one of the hospitals in Gaza where over 450 civilians died. Some of these protests turned violent leading to the destruction of property.
- Two meetings of the “caretaker cabinet” were held on October 13th and 17th 2023, to discuss the current situation and possible escalation of military actions in Lebanon.
- In recent days, Lebanon has been visited by the French Foreign Minister and the Iranian Foreign Minister to discuss separately the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ways to prevent its spillover.
- The Minister of Public Health, Dr. Firass Abiad has activated the Public Health Emergency Operation Center (PHEOC), located at the MoPH, and it’s fully supported by WHO. PHEOC will coordinate the preparations and response for health emergencies in coordination with other relevant entities within the Government. The Prime Minister visited the PHEOC and was given a brief on its functions in coordinating and supporting emergency preparedness and response.
- HCT (Humanitarian Country Team) meeting was held on October 11th, and 16th 2023: The HCT recommended a new mechanism to improve the overall coordination for the ongoing emergency preparedness and response based on IASC principles. HCT is planning for a worst-case scenario similar to 2006 and involving over 1 million displaced persons.
- Swiss Air and Lufthansa suspended their flights to and from Beirut.
- The US, France and German embassies in Beirut advised their nationals against traveling to Lebanon while US urged its citizens in Lebanon to make plans to depart as soon as possible. Canada has asked its nationals to avoid any “non-essential” travel to Lebanon while Australia and Sweden have asked citizens present in Lebanon to consider whether their presence is essential. British Embassy in Lebanon cautioned that the situation could deteriorate without warning.

## WHO preparedness and response support

### Public Health Emergency Operation Center (PHEOC) at the MoPH support ongoing in terms of:

- Improving casualty and trauma management capacities have been prioritized through the identification of referral hospitals and undertaking thorough assessments to identify and fill the gaps.
- Supporting critical staff incentives/surge capacities (manager, coordinator, data analyst, health facility preparedness trainer, and logistics) at PHEOC and hospitals.
- Installation of the electronic Public Health Emergency Response Management (e-PHEM) - and linkages with DHIS2 for data import/export. Additional linkages are currently being explored as well for coordination and collaboration during emergencies (Disaster Risk Management, Lebanese Red Cross, etc).
- Technical support for SOPs, line listing for casualties using DHIS2 form, and coordination and kick-starting the operationalization of PHEOC.

## WHO preparedness and response support *continued*

- Technical support to conduct Rapid Hospital Assessment by the PHEOC hospitals team for potential hospitals to be designated referral hospitals for trauma care and mass casualties' management. The initial assessment will cover 10 hospitals in high-risk areas. Further support is planned for Mass Casualty Management (MCM) training which is under preparation. Referral hospitals are being prioritized based on their capacity to receive mass casualties, availability of triage area (physical capacity), operation theatre capacity, accessibility as well as availability of critical HR capacity. Strengthening coordination between MoPH and partners through the PHEOC and Health Sector Coordination team including the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) unit at the PM office and Lebanese Red Cross (Link the LRC dispatch center to the PHEOC, for real-time information on available hospital beds).
- Engaged with senior experts to support PHEOC operationalization and capacity building of the staff.

### Hospital/casualty support

- Ninety sets of Kits (basic trauma kits for adults and children) are in the pipeline for 30 public hospitals, expected to be delivered within 10 days.
- Ten advanced trauma and surgical kits were received from WHO Dubai Hub and delivered to MoPH warehouses, to be prepositioned in designated public hospitals.
- Advanced life support training re-initiated.
- The GIS database for different health facilities is being updated.
- Ongoing project for lifesaving/limb-saving hospital admissions.
- Ongoing discussions on hospital reimbursement schemes between UNHCR, UNRWA, WHO, and the MoPH.
- Ongoing support to nursing staff for a critical number of ICU beds in 12 public hospitals.
- Accelerate training on casualty management in selected public hospitals and emergency departments. The MoPH has already assigned ten hospitals as casualty referral hospitals, based on their geographical location (red zone identified as high risk for armed conflict), and their capacity to provide trauma services. These hospitals will be assessed further for the actual needs to be further supported.

### Psychosocial support

- Establish a cell for psychosocial support for MoPH and WHO CO team.
- Build the capacity of Emergency Medical Teams in providing MHPSS as part of EMT response activities.
- Support the continuity of the e-mental health application "Step-by-Step" for depression and anxiety in adults.
- Support the continuity of the 1564 Lifeline run by Embrace NGO for emotional support and suicide prevention.
- Conduct PRSEAH awareness activities for teams working in response coordination and implementation (MoPH/partners).

### Medications/stock

- Updated list of critical medications available in the local market (from MediTrack, focus on anesthesia and injectable antibiotics). The current local market stock for all medications is estimated to be sufficient for around two months of regular consumption.
- Updated the Warehouse stock for Essential Drug List (EDL), with the list of medications for the potential stock from local market. PHC centers are already experiencing shortages in selected medications, both acute and chronic.

### Health information and surveillance

- Enhanced early warning surveillance to detect and respond to any potential disease outbreaks across the country.
- Repurposed surveillance staff to support the data collection and analysis for casualty and trauma management.

## Health Sector Coordination

- The Public Health Emergency Operation Centre (PHEOC) at MoPH is activated, and the Minister has convened emergency meetings to ensure timely and efficient coordination, preparedness, and response plans among the health sector partners and different stakeholders in the case of oPT crisis spills over to Lebanon.
- The health sector coordination team in close collaboration with the PHEOC is updating the partners' emergency contingency stocks, and coordinating the capacity assessments among the partners across national and sub-national levels for pre-hospital, hospital care, and continuation of essential health services. All the partners are advised to ensure maintaining the essential health services while enhancing their preparedness capacity.

## Health Sector Coordination *continued*

- PHEOC and the health sector coordination team with technical support from WHO are compiling a comprehensive assessment report together with the supplementary documents to develop a detailed actor mapping with geographical and technical areas of work, identified areas of gaps and in need of urgent scale-up. Multiple dashboards are developed linking the updates from the first responders, hospitals managing casualties and blood transfusion stock to support the partners for efficient decision-making.

## Gaps

- Due to the ongoing unprecedented socio-economic, and political challenges and chronic underfunding, the health sector is already going through a critical shortage of human resources, medicine, medical supplies, and equipment, which would eventually worsen in case of mass displacements, surge of wounded patients, and mass casualties.
- Despite the presence of numerous partners, only a handful of partners are supporting secondary health care (due to the complexity, and lack of resources- HR, funds) which puts disproportionate pressure on the MoPH to provide life and limb-saving hospital care.
- Lack of flexible funding limits the partners to maintain a higher contingency stock of emergency medicine and medical supplies.

## Priority areas

- Distribution of emergency medical supplies and prepositions of the referral hospitals.
- Assisting the MoPH in identifying the referral hospitals and conducting thorough assessments of these hospitals.
- Enhancing the capacity of PHEOC to better coordinate emergency preparedness and response.
- Strengthening health sector coordination in collaboration with PHEOC.
- Ensuring early warning surveillance is enhanced to detect and respond to infectious diseases in a timely manner.
- Timely information sharing through SitReps or short briefs.
- Engaging with donors and other international partners.
- Mobilizing more resources to support the emergency response.
- Finalizing the WCO contingency plan and resource mobilization appeal.
- Surge capacity for key functions at WCO and follow up with RO and HQ.
- Ensuring access to safe water and water quality monitoring for hospitals and community (supplies, reagents, chlorine).
- Support MoPH to establish ICT backup site at the Karantina Central Drug Warehouse. Ogero (the national ITC company) will activate the Fiber connection and WHO will support the reconfiguration of the existing network.



*PHEOC meeting at MoPH on Tuesday October 17th to operationalize the electronic Public Health Emergency Management Software (e-PHEM)*



*The Prime Minister visited the PHEOC to get acquainted with the operation center, and the Minister of Public Health explained the functions of the PHEOC*

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