



158

reported deaths

6,014

reported casualties

300,000

estimated number
of people homeless

8

International EMT
deployed

15m

US\$ required by
WHO to support
health needs across
the country



One of the ten beneficiary hospitals to receive urgently needed trauma and surgical supplies from WHO is the Bellevue Medical Center, which was one of the first hospitals to receive wounded people after the devastating blast of 4 August.

“We were relieved to receive the WHO donations, especially during this critical time. Unfortunately, Lebanon has been struggling economically since October 2019 and we were running out of supplies, so these donations are a great support to the Lebanese healthcare system,” said N. Maalouf, CEO of Bellevue Medical Center.

SITUATION

- The death toll from the Beirut Port explosion rose to 158 people, as search teams continue their rescue efforts for the people still missing in and around the blast site.
- The Lebanese Red Cross announced that a policeman died and 238 protesters were injured in the clashes in central Beirut today during demonstrations demanding justice for victims of the Beirut blast. It added that 63 of those injured had been taken to hospital, while 175 were treated onsite.
- There is a critical need to continue COVID-19 response efforts while responding to the blast emergency needs, given the recent upward epidemiological trend. Lebanon confirmed 272 new cases of COVID-19 and 4 news deaths today. Of the new cases, 248 cases were detected locally and 24 found among incoming travellers. Total cases recorded is 6,225. Total 7,105 PCR tests were carried out in the last 24 hours.
- Major concerns regarding the resurgent spread of COVID-19 are due to many factors: high risk of exposure for health workers due to crowding of emergency departments and shortages of PPEs; high risk of accelerated community transmission due to crowding; increased population vulnerability coupled with poor compliance to preventive measures and anxiety; and reduced number of beds and ICU capacity for COVID-19 care due to the blast casualties.

HEALTH NEEDS

- Ongoing trauma care through provision of medical, surgical supplies and equipment to hospitals and primary healthcare centers, and deployment and coordination of emergency medical teams.
- Assessment and management of the environmental impact of the explosion associated with potential chemical or radiological contamination.

- Health facility functionality assessment is under preparation with WHO support to estimate the damage and needs of the most affected hospitals and PHCs.
- Addressing humanitarian needs and public health risks associated with the displacement of 300,000 left homeless by the blast.

WHO RESPONSE

- Coordination with the national health authorities, UN agencies and INGOs is ongoing to mobilize resources and organize relief. Coordination mechanisms are kept as lean as possible as to allow partners to carry out implementation on the ground. A preliminary emergency response coordination structure has been created to rapidly proceed with a well-coordinated, inclusive and effective response to the blast.
- Preparations for the damage assessment of the 5 most affected hospitals by the blast have been initiated by WHO in close coordination with MOPH. The assessment is due to start on Sunday 8 August, and be completed by Wednesday 11 August.
- An EMT coordinator deployed by WHO to support MOPH arrived today to coordinate the EMT teams, compile information related to casualties and health services provided through EMTs.
- As the COVID-19 situation remains very concerning with an increase in cases among healthcare workers, extensive efforts are being undertaken to link the response of COVID-19 to the blast emergency response in order to promote awareness and preventive measures.
- Efforts are underway to reinforce and promote continuation of essential care including primary healthcare services which remains a key life-saving priority for WHO and the health sector partners. The health sector has prioritized three areas of support in response to Beirut blast: Primary Health Care, Mental Health and Mobile Medical Units (MMUs). Priority goes to the early rehabilitation at the primary health care centers and to provide mental health support to first responders and affected population. Two MMUs will be running in affected areas, they will be linked to fixed primary healthcare centers and acting as an outreach to target people with specific needs and older people mainly.
- A rapid health assessment of 55 primary healthcare centers in Beirut affected zone has been conducted on a voluntary basis by Connecting Research to Development (CRD) in consultation with WHO. Main findings reflected the following: 37.3% suffered moderate to serious damages, 12.7% had health workers injured during the blast, 47.3% only are presently capable of providing fully routine health services, and 54.6% expressed the need for equipments.
- WHO and the National Mental Health Programme at the MOPH initiated coordination for the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) response activities. A mapping of available specialized and non-specialized MHPSS services is ongoing. This mapping will serve to direct people in need of specialized services. A roster of specialized mental health professionals is being established and will be available to respond to the needs that arise, especially for bereaved persons, persons who have relatives missing, parents of/children who were exposed, as well as frontline responders. People are also directed towards the National Hotline for Emotional Support, or Embrace lifeline **1564**.
- NGOs are being mobilized to provide MHPSS services, starting with Psychological First Aid (PFA). Deployment of PFA trained frontliners will be done as needed to priority locations (e.g. tents in place in the affected area; in hospitals, etc.).
- Information dissemination has been taking place on how to assist people in coping with the traumatic event, including specific considerations for children as well as tips for media professionals. A set of IEC material has been developed to this effect based on PFA, and disseminated through social media, TV channels, and to NGOs working on MHPSS.
- A rapid assessment is taking place to assess functionality of the secondary mental health services. As mental health medications were damaged due to the destruction of the central drug warehouse, mobilizing funds for medications procurement is currently taking place.
- The relocation of all medicines and supplies from the damaged MOPH warehouse in Qarantina near the blast site has completed. Stockpiling has been ensured in a safe and adapted location inside the Rafik Hariri University Hospital premises and rehabilitation work is underway.