

Lebanon – Explosions

AUGUST 12, 2020

SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- August 4 explosions result in 220 deaths, injure 6,000 people, and generate food, health care, and shelter needs.
- USAID/BHA provides \$15.1 million to support populations affected by the August 4 explosions in Lebanon, including through food and health assistance.
- USAID deploys DART to coordinate USG response, assess humanitarian needs, and identify response priorities.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING For the Lebanon Response in FY 2020	USAID/BHA ^{1, 2}	\$15,100,000
	DoD ³	\$3,000,000
	Total	\$18,100,000

¹USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA). Figure reflects announced funding as of August 12, 2020.

²Total USAID/BHA funding includes non-food humanitarian assistance from the former Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and emergency food assistance from the former Office of Food for Peace.

³U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)

TIMELINE

Aug. 4, 2020

Concurrent explosions occur at a warehouse near Lebanon's Port of Beirut.

Aug. 5, 2020

U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy Shea declares a disaster in Lebanon due to the humanitarian impacts of the explosions.

Aug. 7, 2020

USAID activates a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and a Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team (RMT). USAID/BHA also announces \$15.1 million to support emergency food and health response activities in Beirut.

Aug. 8, 2020

DART staff arrive in Beirut.

August 9, 2020

Urban search and rescue operations cease and response efforts shift to providing immediate humanitarian assistance to those affected by the explosions, per GoL request.

Aug. 9, 2020

U.S. President Donald J. Trump attends virtual donor conference, during which 30 countries pledge \$298 million in assistance.

Aug. 10, 2020

Acting USAID Administrator John Barsa arrives in Beirut to highlight USG's commitment to addressing the needs of the Lebanese people.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Explosions at Port of Beirut Result in 220 Deaths, Generate Humanitarian Needs

At approximately 6:10 p.m. local time on August 4, concurrent explosions occurred at a warehouse near Lebanon's Port of Beirut, resulting in at least 220 deaths and injuring an estimated 6,000 people as of August 10, according to the Government of Lebanon (GoL). More than 110 people remained missing as of August 10, and an estimated 300,000 people are experiencing homelessness due to the explosions; some of those displaced are sheltering with friends and relatives, according to humanitarian actors. The GoL estimates that the explosions destroyed at least 30 buildings and rendered at least 2,500 houses uninhabitable in the capital city of Beirut.

The explosions generated broken glass and debris at least two miles away from the explosion site, encompassing an area with an estimated population of 778,000 people. Many vulnerable Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian households resided in the densely populated neighborhoods surrounding the port, according to non-governmental organization ACTED. The ability of many affected households to recover is further strained due to the ongoing economic crisis in the country.

Damage from Explosions Raises Health Care Capacity Concerns

The August 4 explosions damaged at least 15 medical facilities in Beirut, including three major hospitals that remain nonoperational, according to the UN. Moreover, nearly 40 percent of the 55 primary health care centers assessed in Beirut sustained moderate-to-serious damage and only 50 percent maintain full capacity to provide services, the UN reports. Nearly 60 percent of facilities also noted a need for additional medical equipment to continue meeting the urgent health needs of affected individuals.

The incident also destroyed 17 containers of medical supplies—including health equipment, vaccines, and medicine for acute and chronic conditions—and 10 containers of personal protective equipment (PPE), according to relief actors. Humanitarian organizations continue to conduct damage assessments in close coordination with relevant authorities and provide urgent health assistance. As of August 11, medical actors recommended that relief organizations support existing health facilities rather than deploy emergency medical teams or surgical care professionals.

WFP Announces Plan to Send Additional Grain to Lebanon to Address Food Security Concerns

The destruction of the Port of Beirut—Lebanon's largest port, responsible for at least 70 percent of the country's import and export activities—has raised concerns regarding the risk of deteriorating food security conditions,

as Lebanon imports approximately 80 percent of its food. The GoL has redirected port operations to smaller ports in the Lebanese cities of Sidon, Tripoli, and Tyre. The explosions and subsequent fire also destroyed approximately 15,000 metric tons (MT) of wheat grain stored in silos at the port, according to the UN World Food Program (WFP). In response to food security concerns, WFP plans to send 50,000 MT of wheat flour—sufficient to feed 3.3 million people for one month—to Lebanon in the coming weeks. Additionally, three cargo ships containing 25,000 MT of wheat—adequate to meet the food needs of approximately 1.6 million people for one month—had been rerouted from the Port of Beirut to the Port of Tripoli for offloading and transportation as of August 9, local media report.

Acting USAID Administrator Barsa Visits Beirut

On August 10, Acting USAID Administrator John Barsa arrived in Beirut to meet with USAID partners and highlight the U.S. Government (USG)’s commitment to addressing the needs of communities affected by the August 4 explosions. Acting Administrator Barsa and U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy Shea visited with individuals affected by the explosions, as well as relief workers and volunteers—many of whom were also affected by the incident—to assess the level of need and monitor ongoing recovery and assistance.

NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL, AND U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

KEY FIGURES



300,000

People targeted to receive USAID/BHA food assistance



6

IEHKs deployed to Lebanon

FOOD SECURITY

Thousands of people affected by the August 4 explosions—particularly displaced households and individuals whose livelihoods were disrupted—are in need of emergency food assistance, the UN reports. In response, USAID/BHA has provided \$10.5 million to WFP, aiming to reach 300,000 people affected by the explosions with emergency food assistance.

HEALTH

On August 11, DoD airlifted six USAID/BHA-procured interagency emergency health kits (IEHKs)—containing critical medical commodities sufficient to support up to 60,000 people for three months—to Beirut. The kits were distributed to the American University of Beirut (AUB) and Lebanese American University to support life-saving health interventions.

On August 5, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) airlifted 20 tons of medical supplies—sufficient to conduct 2,000 surgical and trauma interventions—to Lebanon following a GoL request for assistance. The same day, the Government of France sent 15 tons of equipment, 55 response personnel, and a mobile health clinic with the capacity to assist 500 people to Beirut. Many other donors have also deployed health care workers and medical supplies following the explosions.

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has mobilized two cargo flights to transport medical commodities to the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC), which maintains operations at 36 health centers, as well as nine mobile medical units, in Lebanon, including Beirut. Meanwhile, the International Medical Corps has deployed three mobile

medical units to support relief operations and implement mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) interventions, and is providing medical supplies and equipment to health facilities. Additionally, ACTED is providing MHPSS and distributing sanitary kits to women, and Relief International has donated PPE and medical supplies to the Middle East Health Institute Hospital in Beirut.



2,500

Houses rendered uninhabitable due to August 4 explosions

SHELTER

Relief actors have identified shelter rehabilitation as an essential need following the August 4 explosions, particularly in Beirut's districts of Ashrafieh, Gemmayzeh, Karantina, and Mar Mikhael. In response, humanitarian organizations are conducting rapid needs assessments, distributing shelter kits, mobilizing emergency shelter materials, and supporting repair and rehabilitation efforts, according to the UN. Additionally, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is mobilizing up to 300 youth volunteers to remove debris and facilitate returns. The LRC has also established multiple temporary shelters, with the capacity to receive 1,000 households displaced by the explosions; individuals staying at the shelters will receive food and hygiene kits. The LRC, UN Human Settlement Program (UN-Habitat), and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are coordinating shelter response activities.



80

Hygiene kits distributed to affected individuals by the LRC and other relief organizations

WASH

As the August 4 explosions interrupted basic water and sanitation services in many neighborhoods, affected households are in need of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) supplies. With USAID/BHA support, the AUB is distributing emergency hygiene kits to those affected by the disaster. As of August 10, the LRC and other relief actors had distributed 80 hygiene kits and a local UNICEF partner had provided water trucking and sanitation services at three LRC response sites. Relief actors continue to conduct assessments to determine the effects of the explosions on WASH infrastructure, including water supply networks.



5

Flights of DoD-procured relief commodities delivered to Beirut

LOGISTICS AND RELIEF COMMODITIES

From August 6 to 9, DoD delivered five flights of relief commodities, including food assistance, medical supplies, and safe drinking water, to Beirut as part of the USG's disaster response efforts.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making monetary contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting monetary support for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages monetary contributions because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)