

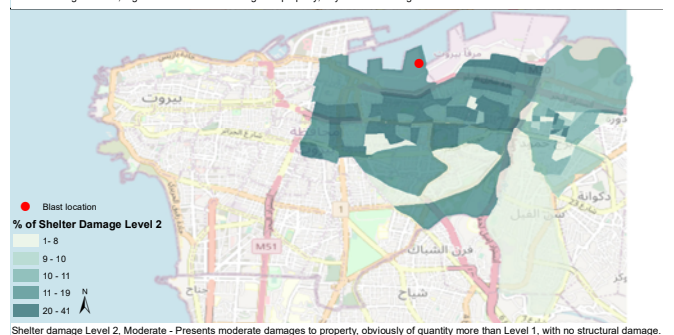
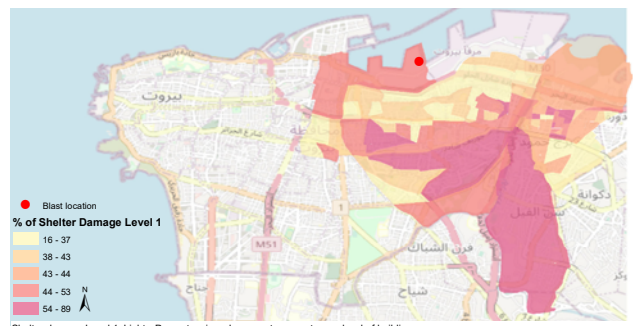
UNHCR Flash Update on Lebanon: Beirut Port Explosions

11 September 2020

Situation overview

Almost six weeks on from the Beirut port explosion, the humanitarian situation has started to stabilize on the ground. The impact of the 4 August explosion however remains very present, both in terms of the physical and economic consequences as well as in the minds of those affected. In the past week, people rallied around the hope of finding survivors in the rubble of a collapsed building during a three-day rescue operation. The huge fire at the port on 10 September also reignited the trauma and anxiety that people affected are still dealing with since the first explosion. The fire also produced huge plumes of smoke covering Beirut for many hours and entering houses that are still without windows.

The most immediate needs have largely been addressed, and while basic humanitarian assistance will continue, the overall coordinated response is shifting towards longer term support. There remains an urgency however in delivering more structured assistance to those who need it most.



*Beirut port explosion – shelter damage levels
Map by UNHCR*

Operational update

UNHCR is responding to needs in the shelter and protection sectors, appealing for **USD 35 million** (USD 32.5 million and USD 2.5 million respectively). In total, UNHCR aims to reach over 100,000 affected persons through all its interventions.

We are also leading the sectoral coordination in those two sectors to prevent gaps and overlaps, maximize efficiency of aid and ensure consistency in the response to affected populations.

Protection

Our protection activities have evolved towards medium-term interventions tailored to the needs that emerged from the emergency response and assessment phases. UNHCR and its partners are continuing to use structured assessments, community outreach and referrals to identify and reach out to men, women, girls and boys with specific needs. UNHCR mobile teams were deployed immediately to affected areas to exchange with and assess affected populations of all nationalities. They could talk with more than **500 persons**. This effort was complemented by the presence of **13 Outreach Volunteers** that UNHCR project partners deployed in affected areas. We also used our existing capacity to make over **10,000 calls** to every refugee and their families known to reside within a 5 km radius from the port, while leveraging well established mechanisms, such as through social media. Additionally, together with partners, a protection hotline has been set up, advertised through social media and our teams on the ground. As of 10 September, over **1,600 persons have been identified as in need of specific attention** and their situations have been referred to programmes funded by UNHCR and other agencies offering: mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS); individual support; emergency cash assistance (ECA); services for persons with specific needs, such as persons living with disabilities; individual rehabilitation services; and legal aid.

How does individual support work? When a man or a woman finds him or herself in a situation of vulnerability and faces multiple economic and protection challenges, a process of individual support is initiated through one of our specialized projects. A trained case worker will have one-on-one conversations with this person to evaluate their situation and needs. They will then determine together how best to respond to these needs. This will usually involve a combination of other protection services provided by UNHCR, such as MHPSS, ECA, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) response or legal aid. This process is centered around the individual and requires their consent and buy-in throughout, empowering them to make meaningful and sustainable changes to their situation.

UNHCR maintains a presence on the ground with two mobile teams to support protection efforts and engage with individuals in need. Following the port fire of 10 September, they started assessing new needs it may have created.

So far, with our project partners we have been able to achieve the following:



- **Over 4,400** exchanges with affected populations through home visits and outreach activities;
- **Over 650 persons** benefitted from Psychological First Aid (PFA), to help start the recovery process;
- **Over 390 persons** were engaged in individual support with our partners to ensure they receive appropriate and tailored assistance;
- **Over 120 households** received ECA, reaching **420** individuals, helping them to pay for their most basic needs;
- **Over 180 persons** were assisted with legal advice in order to replace or obtain official documentation such as IDs or legal residency.



*UNHCR and partners support Beirut residents affected by the blast.
Photo by UNHCR / Haidar Darwish*

Shelter

UNHCR and its partners concluded this week the distribution of weatherproofing shelter kits. In total, **6,554 kits** have been provided to meet immediate and urgent needs. These have helped restore a degree of privacy, dignity and safety for over **20,000 persons** still residing in the affected areas. Overall, 70% of recipients were Lebanese, 27% were Syrians and 3% were of different nationalities. UNHCR will keep weatherproofing kits ready for distribution to families who need it. A post-distribution monitoring survey for this activity has been finalized. Our partners will use it next week to engage in a qualitative two-way conversation with recipients to understand how kits were used and what impact they have had.

Implementation of activities related to minor repairs and rehabilitation will start next week for housing units that have damage of a light (some damaged windows and doors) or moderate level (many damaged windows and doors as well as compromised safety and services). An estimated 29,700 and 17,100 housing units respectively fall in these categories. As co-lead of the Shelter Sector together with UNHabitat and NRC, UNHCR works with all partners on a geographical division of labour and harmonization of criteria and standards of intervention to ensure optimal coverage and accountability to affected families. UNHCR's own interventions will follow two tracks.

1. Shelter cash grants worth USD 600 will be provided directly to households who need relatively straightforward and less costly repairs. UNHCR aims at providing cash grants to **11,500 households**, identified according to the damage level and their socioeconomic vulnerability. This will largely be based on information collected through the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) coordinated by the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) and supported by UNHCR. This activity will be conducted jointly with the LRC to ensure efficiency, complementarity and prevent gaps in aid. The use of cash grants will enable each household to choose and perform the repairs needed quickly and efficiently.

2. Support for more extensive minor repairs or rehabilitation will be provided to households and owners who need more numerous or more expensive repairs. UNHCR expects to reach **4,100 housing units** with interventions costing up to USD 1,500 and **2,400 housing units** for up to USD 4,500. The level of support provided will be based on expert technical assessments and the majority of repairs will be performed through contractors directly. Household level repairs will be linked to that of buildings and common areas, ensuring the human element and the community are placed at the center of each intervention.

UNHCR is already actively linking these interventions to development frameworks – including the World Bank, EU and UN Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction framework – a critical step in the transition from immediate humanitarian programmes to more sustainable support.

UNHCR Lebanon Operation



Funding:

USD 607.5 million requested for the UNHCR Lebanon operation in 2020

47% funded as of 8 September 2020
(USD 286.3 million received)

Additional links

- For further information, please visit – [UNHCR Lebanon website](#) or the [UNHCR data portal](#)
- Support UNHCR's emergency response in Lebanon:
<https://donate.unhcr.org/sg/stand-with-lebanon/~my-donation>

For more details, please contact:

UNHCR MENA Regional Office in Amman at MENAreporting@unhcr.org
Anna King, Senior External Relations Officer, UNHCR Lebanon, at kinga@unhcr.org