



Lebanon: Beirut Port Explosions

Situation Report No. 6

21 August 2020

This report is produced by OCHA Lebanon in collaboration with humanitarian partners.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The number of people killed by the Beirut Port explosions of 4 August reached at least 180, with over 6,500 injured.
- The port is partially operational, with nearly 9,000 containers unloaded between 11-18 August. The Lebanese Armed Forces cleaned up the eastern area of the port.
- The Lebanese Red Cross coordinated a multi-sectoral needs assessment, surveying 6,000 households.
- Following further assessments, the number of affected schools increased to 159, with more than 85,000 children affected.
- More than 180,000 people are being reached with critical, life-saving humanitarian assistance, including through health, food assistance, and protection projects.
- On 21 August, 628 new COVID-19 cases were confirmed in Lebanon, bringing the country's total to 11,580.
- A two-week lockdown comes into effect on 21 August, in an effort to stem the surge in COVID-19 cases. Relief and aid work in the aftermath of the explosions will be permitted to continue.



UN personnel joined efforts with local residents in Beirut. United Nations personnel and humanitarian partners joined efforts with the local residents to clean up the streets in the most devastated areas close to the explosions that occurred Tuesday, 4 August, at Beirut port. Beirut, 8 August 2020. Photo by Pasqual Gorriz (UN).



Financial requirements

\$565M



Reported deaths

180+



Reported injured

6,500+

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The number of people killed by the Beirut Port explosions of 4 August has reached at least 180, with over 6,500 injured. The explosions came as Lebanon faces multiple and interlocking crises. These shocks reinforce the ongoing financial crisis that had already increased headcount poverty; exacerbated extreme poverty; and reduced the middle-income group, according to a study on poverty released by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) on 19 August. According to the study, the headcount poverty rate in Lebanon jumped from 28 per cent in 2019 to 55 per cent in May 2020. The corresponding increase in extreme poverty increased from 8 to 23 per cent, or 750,000 people.

The impact of the port explosions will require substantial resources to respond to increasing humanitarian needs, for which the humanitarian community is seeking \$565 million. According to the ESCWA study, headcount poverty and vulnerability rates are expected to increase further as a result of rising inflation and the impact of the explosions, particularly affecting incomes and food availability and prices.

Beirut Port is partially operational with 21 freighters and six international ships having docked between 11 and 18 August; nearly 9,000 containers were unloaded, and more than 1,000 tons of different goods, mostly iron and wheat, were imported through the port. Also, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) cleaned up the eastern area of the port, allowing quays 11, 12 and 13 and courtyard 3 to become fully operational again.

As work at the Beirut Port continues, the Environment Emergency Cell with the Lebanese Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Unit facilitated a joint visit to the port on 20 August for representatives from UNDP, the European Union, the World Bank and the Brazilian Civil Defense, all of whom are engaged in disaster waste management planning in support of the Ministry of Environment. To ensure adequate protection of all operators and volunteers, training continues for those NGOs dealing with asbestos and other hazardous waste during clean-up operations.

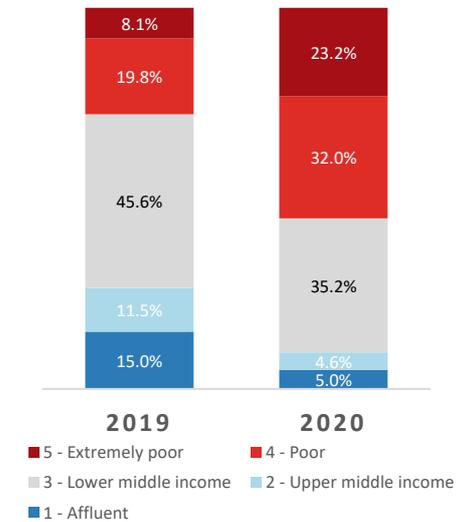
The Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) coordinated a multi-sectoral needs assessment, surveying 6,000 households, and the humanitarian community continues to deliver emergency assistance to those most in need. More than 180,000 people are being reached with critical, life-saving humanitarian assistance, including health, food assistance, and protection support.

As communities start rebuilding their home and lives, recovering from the psychological impact of the blast is expected to take a long time, as people affected are going through multiple traumas. Health and protection partners continue to work closely with national health authorities to enhance trauma care; coordinate assessments and response; mitigate the impact of COVID-19; address psycho-social needs; and facilitate the rapid restoration of damaged health facilities.

COVID-19 cases have almost doubled in the two and a half weeks since the explosions. Health partners highlight that the AUBMC and Rafic Hariri University hospitals are stretched to capacity to provide medical services for new patients. On 21 August, 628 new COVID-19 cases were confirmed in the country, yet another record increase. Of the reported cases, 8 were among healthcare workers, raising the total of those who contracted the viral illness to 514. The total caseload in Lebanon stands at 11,580, including 116 deaths and 3,204 recoveries.

To stem the surge of COVID-19 cases, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities approved a two-week lockdown starting on 21 August, with a curfew from 6pm to 6am. All relief and aid work in response to the explosions will however be exempted from the lockdown and will continue.

Headcount ratio for poor, middle, and affluent income groups, 2019 and 2020



Credit: ESCWA, E/ESCWA/2020/Policy Brief.15

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Protection

Needs:

- The right to safety and physical integrity was seriously affected by the explosions. Families were separated, lives were lost and remaining members may find themselves without protection, and/or at risk of sexual and gender based-violence (SGBV) or trafficking. Also, the right to privacy has been seriously compromised in many affected homes, and restoring doors, windows and locks is a basic necessity to provide dignity and protection against SGBV and/or other harm.
- Individuals and families living closest to the explosions lost all their possessions, including their identity cards, residency permits and civil documents that are key to access services. Support in receiving new documents will be needed.
- People living in the affected neighbourhoods are going through multiple traumas. The fear of the explosions and its impact generated a constant feeling of insecurity and loss of self-confidence for many. The loss of loved ones, and serious injuries or disabilities, along with the destruction of belongings, are major contributors to trauma and anxiety.
- On 17 and 18 August, UNHCR protection teams met with 85 households in Quarantina, Mar Mikhael, and Bourj Hammoud. (55 per cent of respondents were Lebanese). In Mar Mikhael, respondents emphasized the need for reconstruction materials over temporary shelter interventions and further expressed greater need to repair businesses over homes. Many residents have temporarily relocated to areas outside of Mar Mikhael with neighbourhood watch in place to keep an eye on their homes. Residents also reported an increase in tensions among communities, with the level varying between areas according to the level of destruction, socio-economic vulnerabilities and population dynamics. In Quarantina, for example, rising tensions were reported between communities, due to home-owners who strongly expressed a desire to prioritize the assistance to home owners over non-Lebanese renters.

Response:

- Protection sector' interventions under the Flash Appeal are targeting 152,200 among the most affected and vulnerable Lebanese, refugees and migrant workers.
- As part of a holistic protection response, UNHCR and partners engaged with all communities affected by the explosions, identified men, women, girls and boys in need, and provided protection services, including psychological first aid (PFA) and referrals, together with immediate assistance interventions.
- UNHCR and partners engaged through outreach volunteers (Makhzoumi in Quarantina and other affected areas); and case management for affected populations (Caritas in Bourj Hammoud, Makhzoumi in Quarantina and other affected areas).
- Immediate assistance interventions included emergency cash and food distribution (Amel, Caritas, Helem, Intersos, Makhzoumi, Restart); clearance of debris for Lebanese houses or businesses (Makhzoumi in Quarantina and other affected areas); provision of health kits and assistance (Makhzoumi in Quarantina), and provision of dignity kits to migrant workers (Intersos in Quarantina, Badaro and Hazmieh).
- PFA, medical and psychosocial support services were provided by NGO Restart, together with food and hygiene kits, in Mar Mikhael and Al Makassed school.
- UN Women and ABAAD are maintaining a dedicated safe line for women and girls at risk/experiencing gender-based violence in affected areas. Since 10 August, over 165 calls were received (95 of those since 18 August), and more than 163 on-site psychological first aid sessions were provided to affected families (63 of those since 18 August).
- Helem, which also works with LGBTI communities, has outreach volunteers engaged in cases referral for food assistance. Helem also provided rent assistance of LBP300,000 to two beneficiaries, out of 24 beneficiaries identified. Assistance for relocation, fixing and repair of houses for LBP500,000 was also provided to 30 beneficiaries out of 70 identified. Helem case workers, funded by UNHCR, are assisting in the identification of cases to benefit from Emergency Cash Assistance. Helem is operating despite their community center in Mar Mikhael was severely damaged by the explosions.
- Refugees who were living in areas impacted by the explosions were severely affected. As of 18 August, 13 refugees are confirmed dead as a result of the blast. A higher number of refugees (88 individuals) were initially reported deceased,

but UNHCR managed to locate over 30 of them through community engagement and outreach. Similarly, of 21 persons reported as missing, UNHCR and partners found 5 persons. As of 18 August, 245 refugees have been confirmed as injured, 54 with severe injuries. UNHCR continues to identify refugees affected through multiple channels to ensure that none of them is left behind in the response.

- UNHCR Protection monitor and registration staff contacted 1,140 refugees on 17 and 18 August. Nearly 60 per cent were reachable and, of those, 50 per cent reported damages in their dwellings. Concerns expressed included physical injuries (9 per cent) and psychological distress or anxiety (4 per cent). No homeless cases were reported, with those affected staying with friends or relatives. Across all areas, affected populations highlighted shelter repair, cash for rent/food and household basic items as their main needs.

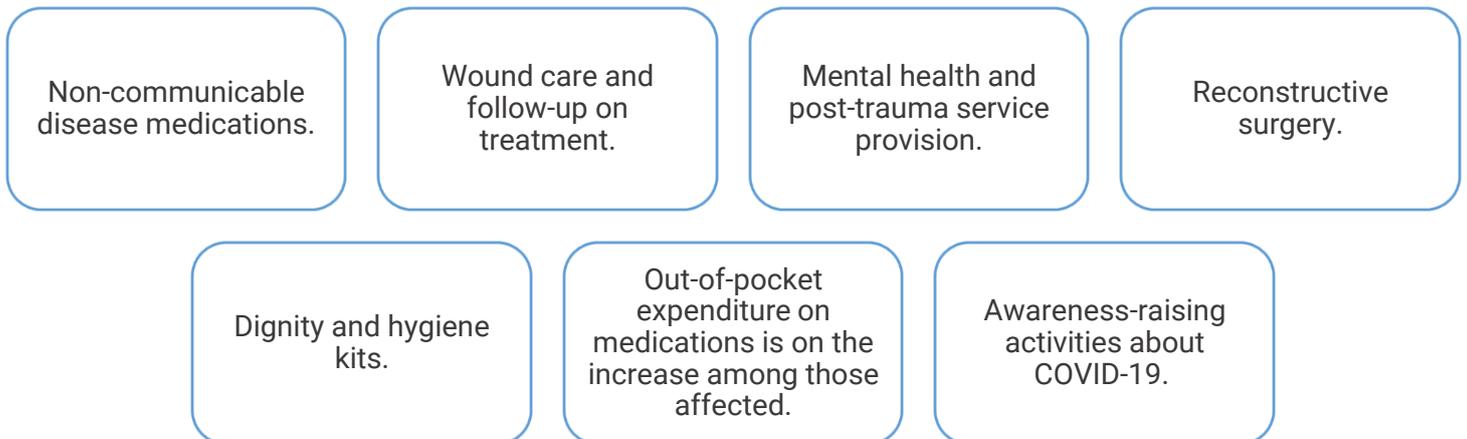
Food Security

Response:

- As of 19 August, WFP distributed 729 family food parcels, reaching 3,645 beneficiaries. 200 parcels were distributed to partners to support kitchens, providing up to 3,000 meals per day in the Quarantina, Bourj Hammoud, Gemmayzeh, Geitawi, and Khandaa El Ghamee neighbourhoods of Beirut.
- The first WFP shipment of 12,500 metric tons of wheat flour arrived at the Beirut Port on 18 August and will begin discharge on 21 August. The shipment aims to stabilize the price of bread across Lebanon, as well as ensure the continuity of national bread supply.

Health

Needs:



Response:

Health services

- INARA provided basic and advanced first aid; wound care management; dressing changes; and tetanus vaccination to 58 patients, bringing the total to 751 patients treated since the explosions. Humanitarian International also provided relief to injured persons in the form of physical rehabilitation care (32 patients), assistive devices to increase beneficiaries' functional independence (28 patients) and wound kits (10 patients). Caritas in turn provided 738 medications to 200 patients; conducted 60 medical consultations; covered the cost of 10 patients' diagnostic exams; conducted home visits for wound care and injury treatment.
- The Order of Malta medical mobile unit (MMU) team treated 1,621 patients since the explosions, and the Amel MMU stationed in Quarantina provided medical consultations and medications for 166 persons, and wound care for 25 injured persons over the last days. Since the start of the response, the MMU provided 628 consultations with medication, and 235 wound care sessions for injured people. Cases in need for specialized services were referred to Karagheusian primary health care center in Bourj Hammoud.

- Makhzoumi also provided health services and wound management through an MMU. The organization also supported breastfeeding mothers and provided infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counseling at the UNICEF tent in Geitawi and through phone calls. Since the start of the response, Makhzoumi has offered medical support (e.g. wound cleaning and consultations) to around 250 individuals; 50 of whom were provided with acute medications. Also, 80 affected individuals were attended to with primary health care, and 139 lactating women were supported through IYCF counseling.
- UNFPA's implementing partners provided sexual reproductive health consultations for 15 women and girls.

Hospital support

- UNICEF provided maintenance of the generator at Rafic Hariri University Hospital to ensure safe storage of vaccines and other critical health supplies and machines; the Swiss Humanitarian Aid supported the partial rehabilitation of St. George and Quarantina hospitals.
- WHO distributed 25 tonnes of personal protective equipment (PPE) to 25 hospitals receiving trauma cases in Beirut and COVID-19 cases inside and outside Beirut. WHO also received in kind donation of PPEs from DfID and Irish Aid for distribution to NGOs and health facilities.

Medicines, Supplies and Distributions

- UNFPA's implementing partners distributed 1,335 dignity kits to women and girls.
- ANERA received a shipment of medical supplies and consumer hygiene products donated by Johnson & Johnson, and PU-AMI received a donation of six kits of acute and chronic medications.
- INARA distributed 7,800 liters of drinking water, 550 face masks, 900 gloves, and 300 hand-gel sanitizers.

Mental Health and psycho-social support

- Psychological First Aid (PFA) continues with Dorcas/Tabitha having provided PFA to 851 households (380 female, 431 male) and Humanitarian International to 244 individuals. MDM also provided PFA, as well as other health services (psychosocial support services, home visit, outreach, awareness session) to 45 persons in Quarantina, reaching 152 persons since the explosions. Caritas offered mental health consultations for 15 persons.
- The Order of Malta established a hotline for mental health support and the Chabrouh Center provided affected families mental health support; children activities; and full board accommodation, as well as PCR testing for COVID-19.
- The National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) launched a call for mental health professionals to volunteer at the national directory of mental health professionals as part of comprehensive mental health and psychosocial support services in response to the explosions (applications via [English](#) / [Arabic](#)).

Awareness raising

- IOCC provided IYCF counseling and awareness to 64 pregnant and lactating women and caregivers of children under 5 at the UNICEF tent in Quarantina. IOCC teams are also conducting awareness raising on the importance of breastfeeding and preventive measures for COVID-19. Since the start of the response, IOCC has reached 257 caregivers.
- WHO and NMHP developed awareness material addressing "When should you seek support from a mental health professional following a traumatic event" ([English](#) / [Arabic](#)), "Tips for volunteering in the blast clean-up (to respect and preserve privacy of affected person)" ([English](#) / [Arabic](#)), as well as Insomnia ([English](#) / [Arabic](#)).
- The Risk Communication and Community Engagement RCCE Taskforce is conducting focus group discussions to better understand non-compliance with preventive measures; the findings will be used to develop key messages.

Assessments

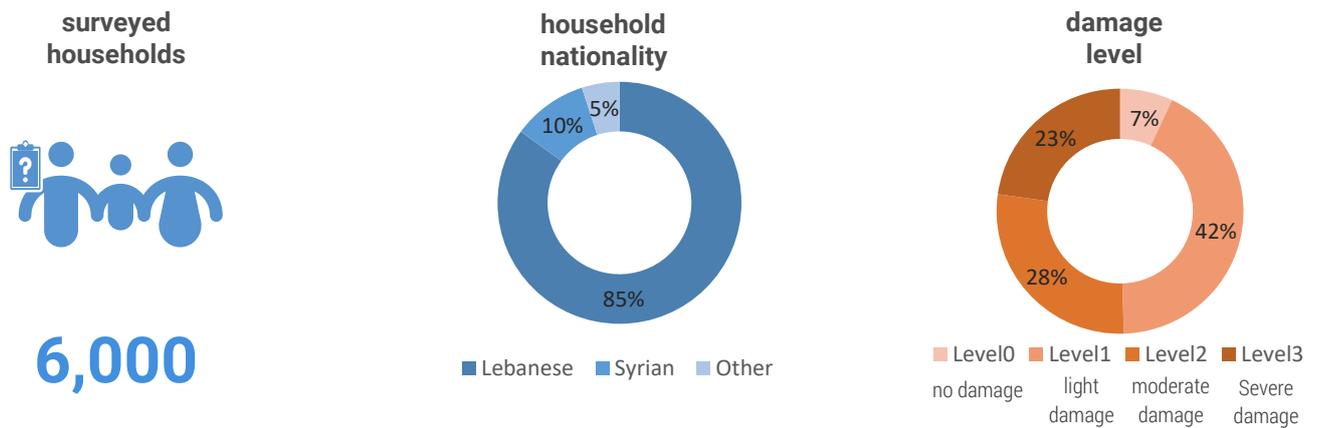
- UNFPA completed a Minimum Initial Service Package Facility Rapid Assessment was completed for four field hospitals; an assessment to 56 primary health care centers is ongoing to identify needs and capacity.
- WHO completed a damage assessment of five hospitals, while an additional four hospitals are currently being assessed.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Lack of institutional funding for reconstructive surgery.
- Fears about high rate of transmission of COVID-19 decreasing health-seeking behaviors.
- Economic crisis and bank restrictions delaying procurement procedures.

Shelter**Needs:**

- Through the LRC's coordinated multi-sectoral needs assessment, 6,000 households were surveyed. The zoning system established by UNHCR, in collaboration with the LRC, provided the backbone for both assessment planning and coordination of the shelter partners' responses.



- In terms of shelter needs, 63 per cent of households sustained a degree of damage to external doors, 52 per cent experienced shattered glass of windows and/or doors, 23 per cent of households reported damage to key structural components, such as columns (13 per cent) and beams (10 per cent).

Response:

- The Shelter sector response started with the assessment and determination of eligibility for shelter assistance, as well as the distribution of emergency weather-proofing kits to allow households to reinstate a level of safety, security, privacy, dignity and protection from the elements.
- UNHCR and partners have assisted about 9,000 individuals with the distribution of shelter kits in Geitawi, Mar Mikhael, Gemmayzeh and Quarantina. A total of 2,587 UNHCR shelter kits were distributed with 85 per cent of beneficiaries being Lebanese; 12 per cent Syrian; and 3 per cent other nationalities.
- Ten shelter partners are distributing shelter kits. UNHCR implementing partners (including Medair, Save the Children International, ACTED, Intersos, Concern Worldwide) distributed 89 per cent of all kits, with the remaining 11 per cent distributed by sector partners ACTED, LebRelief, PU-AMI and Solidarités International.
- UNICEF and partners are engaging over 1,170 youths, including Palestinian volunteers, through a community-based response, focusing on cleaning and minor rehabilitation of households. During the reporting period, UNICEF equipped 76 youths with material and equipment to support minor rehabilitation for 34 sites. Through a cash-for-work programme 15 youth also installed 31 water tanks for 28 buildings.
- UNHCR met with Impact Lebanon, a non-profit organization involved in the mobilization of civil-society actors, to discuss potential joint efforts in the shelter response. Impact Lebanon is working with over 40 local NGOs and stakeholders and supporting local communities on the response to the explosion.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Needs:

- The Water Establishment of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, with technical support from the WASH sector, is assessing potential damages to the water network, starting downstream of the Sassine reservoir. While preliminary findings indicate no visible damage, the structural part of the network may have been damaged by the underground shakes caused by the explosions.

Response:

- Of the 2,761 buildings assessed in the affected areas, 2,577 were deemed accessible, and 124 were deemed safe, but with no water points. The immediate response by LebRelief, DPNA and GVC ensured that the plumbing systems in at least 26 buildings were repaired, and 109 water tanks were distributed to the same number of households in 34 buildings in Gemmayzeh and Mar Mikhael.
- UNICEF and partners distributed a total of 1,600 hygiene kits and 350 baby kits to the most in-need families in Bachoura foncière (distribution by the LRC), Rmeil (distribution by Concern and Medair), and Quarantina (distribution by ACTED).
- Ten water tanks were installed at Quarantina hospital and connected to the network to secure water services for the hospital.

Logistics

Needs:

- Since 17 August, 13 bilateral interviews were conducted with the Logistics sector's partners, indicating that the majority of humanitarian partners procure locally and already have established and functioning, supply chains, logistics departments and processes.

Response:

- Partners planning to receive airfreight shipments in the coming days and week should share their Airway Bill with Lebanon-logs@logcluster.org 48 hours prior shipments' arrival to ensure that the sector provide liaison with the LAF, and ensure a swift follow-up upon cargo reception.
- The Logistics sector continues to work on customs' procedures. A survey was circulated to partners and questions to address to Customs Authority, covering topics and issues such as tax exemptions, publication of official standard operating procedures on customs procedures, and the establishment of a fast-track shop for speedy clearance of cargo.
- The Customs Authority reportedly sent a letter sent to several ministries, including Public Health, Agriculture, and Commerce, requesting them to waive all customs procedures on goods meant to support these ministries, with the aim to expedite both clearance processes and the timely release of cargo/goods upon arrival to continue to enable a timely humanitarian response.
- A Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA) of services and infrastructure relevant from a logistics perspective is underway. Ongoing assessments at warehouses, mills and the ports continue to inform the LCA.

Emergency Telecommunications (ETC)

Needs:

- With data connectivity confirmed available at the Beirut Port, the ETC sector does not foresee the need to proceed with the provision of connectivity, as originally planned and reported.
- As the situation evolves rapidly, the ETC is re-assessing immediate requirements and its funding outlook, working closely with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) on defining the way forward.

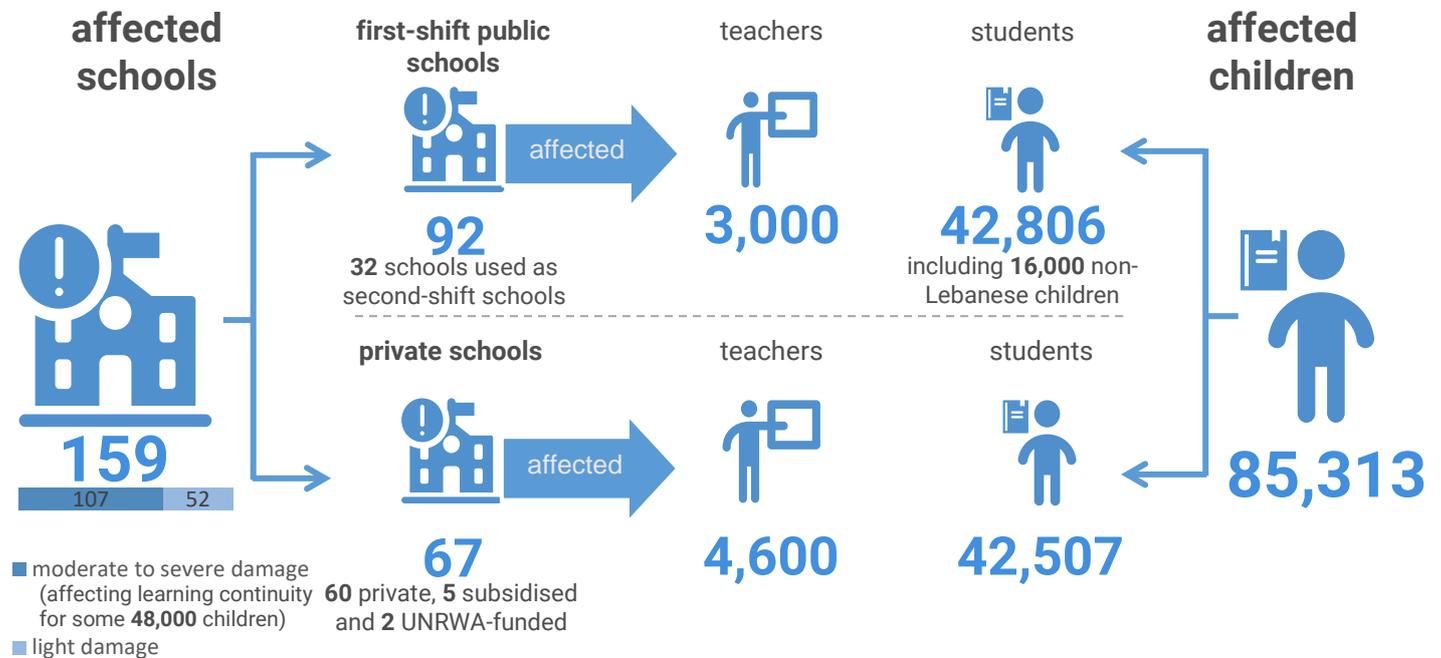
Response:

- A Telecommunications Security Standards assessment mission is being proposed for early September, in collaboration with UNDSS, to identify gaps in the security communication systems in Beirut and the rest of Lebanon. The mission will provide recommendations to UNDSS and the HCT on ways to strengthen the security communications network and procedures, as well as ensure humanitarian staff can continue operating safely in the country.

Education

Needs:

- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) released the results of the rapid needs assessment, recently conducted with the technical support of UNICEF. Findings indicate that 159 schools were affected by the explosions, affecting the learning of some 85,313 children.



- An estimated \$22.6 million is required to rehabilitate the damaged schools, including almost \$10.5 million for public schools.
- Five Technical and Vocational Education compounds in the Beirut and Mount Lebanon area, comprised of 20 schools and buildings, were also damaged and are in need of urgent rehabilitation, including through the provision of equipment; at least 8,000 adolescents and youths are affected.
- A needs assessment on the Lebanese University is being carried out, alongside data compilation from private higher education institutes. Assessments on the needs of adolescents and youths with a focus on livelihoods, education and mental health are also ongoing.

Response:

- UNICEF launched sports-for-development sessions for 50 adolescents and youths, with four coaches conducting activities at child-friendly spaces set up in the most affected areas.
- MEHE set up the MEHE Beirut Blast Response Committee, and UNESCO is coordinating partners engaged in the rehabilitation works.

GENERAL COORDINATION

The Humanitarian Coordinator and the HCT are responsible for the implementation of the humanitarian response to the Beirut Port explosions, also in line with the Flash Appeal issued on 14 August 2020. At the operational level, the HCT is supported by an Emergency Operations Cell (EOC). As part of the response, humanitarian sectors were established to ensure optimal coordination. A flexible coordination structure is facilitating and enabling the principled delivery of emergency assistance to the most vulnerable and will support the transition towards subsequent phases of the response. In order to enhance the emergency response, considering the increasingly complex operational environment, including the COVID-19 outbreak, many sectors and partners are scaling up their presence through surge deployments.

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