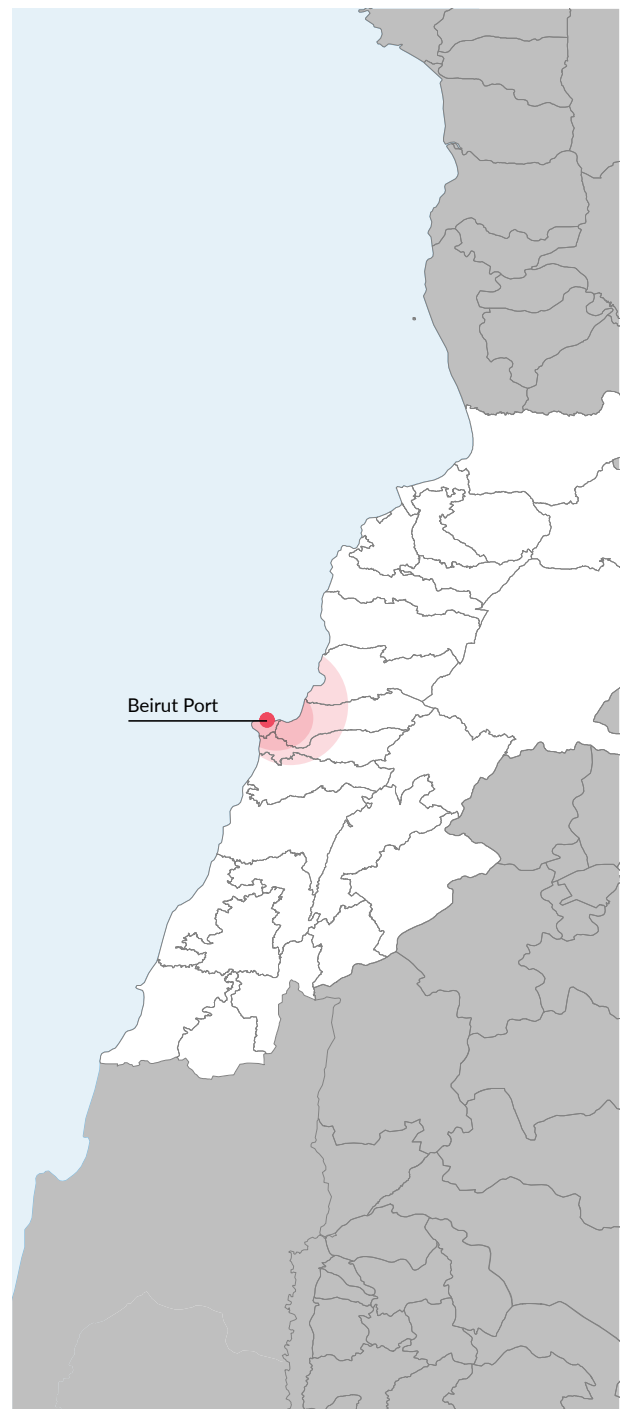


# UNHCR Flash Update on Lebanon: Beirut Port Explosions

7 August 2020

## Situation Overview: Highlights

- On 4 August, two large explosions hit the city of Beirut, reportedly caused by large quantities of ammonium nitrate being stored in a warehouse in Beirut Port. The explosions and ensuing fires reportedly released toxic materials in the environment. The country is observing an official period of mourning, and the government has declared a two-week state of emergency.
- On 5 August, UNHCR issued a [statement](#) attributable to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, expressing heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. UNHCR stands in solidarity with the people of Beirut and Lebanon in these tragic and testing times.
- All UNHCR personnel in Beirut have been accounted for. Several staff and family members as well as refugee outreach volunteers were injured, but no one was seriously harmed.
- UNHCR is mobilizing, together with other humanitarian partners, to respond to the immediate needs in coordination with the concerned ministries.
- The explosions come as Lebanon faces a multi-faceted crisis. In recent months, the socio-economic situation of refugees has continued to deteriorate, with the cost of basic needs exponentially rising as a result of the deep economic and financial crisis, exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19.



## UNHCR Response

- UNHCR is mobilizing assistance to support the ongoing emergency response in coordination with partners. Our efforts focus particularly on shelter assistance, protection interventions and stepping up our current interventions to expand hospital capacity.
- While areas hosting refugees have been affected by the explosions on 4 August, UNHCR does not yet have confirmation of the extent of any fatalities or injuries among the refugee community; new calls are received everyday. The crisis has impacted everyone, regardless of nationalities and status. The humanitarian response is aimed at all those affected, particularly the most destitute.
- UNHCR has convened shelter actors to reinforce and complement the government-led response. We are working closely with the Lebanese Red Cross to establish temporarily shelters as required and support relocation efforts. In addition, UNHCR will support a rapid humanitarian shelter needs assessment, prioritising the most affected areas, mobilise emergency weatherproofing materials and support repair and rehabilitation efforts. We are making available our in-country stocks of shelter kits, plastic sheets, rubhalls, and tens of thousands of other core relief items including blankets and mattresses for immediate distribution and use. Additional stockpiles in the region will come in reinforcement.
- Our ongoing health response for COVID-19 is equally pertinent for the current emergency. A first phase of expanding hospital bed and ICU capacity including with medical supplies and equipment, ventilators, and patient beds was completed, and a second phase is being expedited in light of the saturation of hospitals. The completed hospital expansions were recently [inaugurated](#) together with the Ministry of Public Health on 29 July adding hundreds of beds and tens of intensive care unit spaces in public hospitals available to all in need.
- We are deploying all efforts to accompany affected populations as much as possible. Protection, in particular mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), is a critical area of intervention in the current emergency response due to the trauma caused by the explosion and loss of loved ones. UNHCR's reception centres across the country, including in Beirut, are open for critical/emergency cases and the national call centre as well as regional hotlines are fully manned to respond to refugee queries and make referrals to assistance and services.

## UNHCR Lebanon Operation



### Funding:

**USD 607.5 M** requested for the  
UNHCR Lebanon operation in 2020

**39%** funded as of 4 August 2020  
(USD 239.5 M received)

## Additional Links

- [Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on the explosions in Beirut, Lebanon](#) (4 August 2020)
- [Statement attributable to UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on the explosions in Beirut, Lebanon](#) (5 August 2020)

### For more details, please contact:

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