

UNHCR Flash Update on Lebanon: Beirut Port Explosions

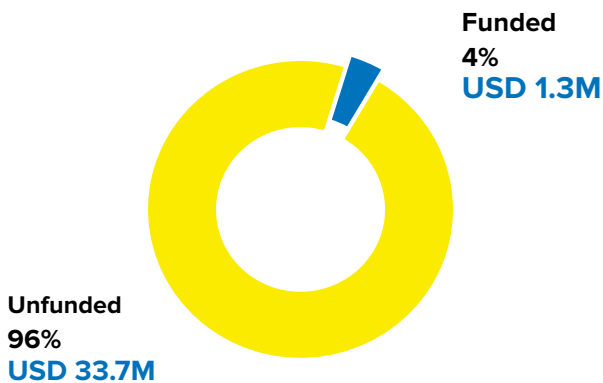
20 September 2020

Situation Overview

- The response to the Beirut port explosion is shifting gears. Humanitarian actors' immediate emergency activities, including UNHCR's, are clearly transitioning to the next phase. The focus is now on medium-term responses to support affected women, girls, men and boys that remain in the affected areas or that have moved away. The greatest needs expressed remain shelter, food and cash assistance. In parallel, development approaches and longer-term activities are being activated by the UN, World Bank and European Union.
- Despite a relative stabilization in the situation, the 4 August explosion is still very present, economically, psychologically and in terms of visible physical damage. The fire that erupted in the port on 10 September continued to burn at low levels for the following days, emitting fumes in the areas most affected by the explosion and entering homes that are still without windows. Repair and rehabilitation of dwellings is a clear priority, especially in view of the approaching winter. Affected persons will continue to need support to recover from the multiple consequences of the blast.

Operational update

- UNHCR is coordinating and responding directly 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.
- Our sector coordination aims to bring partners together and gain consensus on standards, prevent gaps and overlaps, maximize efficiency of aid, and encourage accountability to affected populations. For instance, repair and rehabilitation standards have been harmonized with partners, emergency cash assistance for Protection is consistent between partners, while prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) measures are being strengthened and mainstreamed throughout sector interventions. The shelter sector leadership has also been actively engaged with the Lebanese Armed Forces' Forward Emergency Room (FER) to ensure smooth collaboration.
- We are also supporting the overall coordination with expertise in information management and mapping, since the beginning of the response. In particular, the zoning system developed by UNHCR remains the key tool to prevent overlap and duplication. Beyond humanitarian actors, it has also been adopted by the Lebanese Armed Forces assigned by the Government to coordinate the emergency from the Government's side.



UNHCR has re-allocated flexible funding in order to assist affected populations in a timely manner. We however still require over USD 33.7 million.

Protection

- In order to address mental health and psychosocial issues, prevent sexual and gender violence and provide tailored support to particularly vulnerable persons, our specialized partners who had well-established and functioning projects have immediately expanded them to address the needs of persons affected by the 4 August explosion. UNHCR also maintains mobile teams on the ground who engage and work with communities to jointly assess and address protection, legal and psychological needs, monitor the possible emergence of new needs or risks and the evolution of social tensions between different groups in the community.
- Over 1,600 individuals have been identified as in need of specific support. Their situation has 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.
- UNHCR's mobile teams are currently supporting partners to manage the high number of urgent individual follow-up needed. They are notably conducting individual assessments to distribute cash support (ECA) to the most vulnerable families in the shortest time possible.
- How does Emergency Cash Assistance work? When a household or an individual are in a situation of vulnerability that can be helped by providing financial support, they will be considered for ECA. In the current context, one-time cash grant of USD 500 is provided to families to spend according to their immediate priorities, e.g., food, medication, everyday items, clothes, transport, etc. ECAs can be provided in the context of individualized support, in complement with other services such as MHPSS, or as a standalone form of assistance. ECA also helps prevent negative coping strategies that families may be forced to adopt to earn or save money, putting them into dangerous or harmful situations.
- As of 16 September, we have been able to support the following individuals:
 - **Over 5,400** exchanges with affected individuals through home visits and outreach activities;
 - **Over 420** persons were engaged in individual support with our partners to ensure they receive appropriate and tailored assistance;
 - **Over 140** households received ECA, reaching **over 470** individuals, helping them to pay for their most basic needs;
 - **Over 750** persons received specialized mental health and psychosocial support, in addition to the wider scale psychological first aid provided initially at community level;
 - **Over 200** persons were assisted with legal advice.

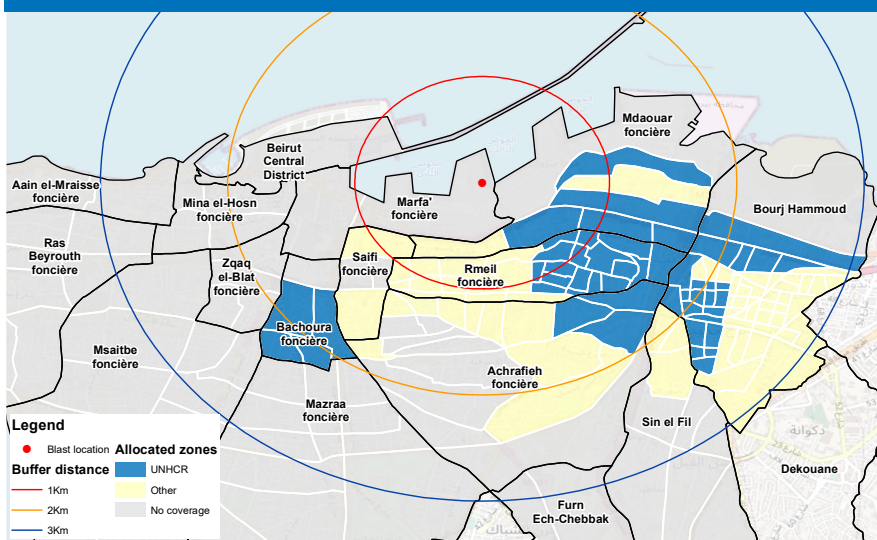


Lebanese and non-Lebanese families receive core relief items in Karantina, near the location of the Beirut port explosion.

Shelter

- Household level technical assessments are well underway for minor repairs and rehabilitation up to USD 1,500 and USD 4,500 respectively. These assessments validate the need for and feasibility of repairs, and result in a list of quantified interventions to bring homes to a similar or better state than they were before the blast. Repairs are to be implemented directly through a contractor or through the tenant/owner of the apartment should they choose so. In all cases, cash will be disbursed in installments with close monitoring from our partners to ensure works progress as planned and are up to agreed quality.
- UNHCR started Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) for the 6,500 weatherproofing shelter kits that have already been distributed to assess their impact. A large sample of recipients of these kits are being contacted to understand how they used the materials provided, how the distribution process was evaluated and whether there are any lessons to be learnt.
- In addition, UNHCR is distributing targeted core relief items (CRI) to 350 families, comprising over 1,500 individuals that were identified since the end of August in Karantina. New mattresses, blankets and kitchen sets will replace those that were damaged at the time of the explosion or support families who could otherwise not afford them. Around 71% of recipient families are Lebanese and 27% are Syrian. Close to a third of these families have received their CRIs at the time of writing.
- While the emergency response is critical before winter, the impact of the blast will have a long-lasting effect of affected individuals and communities. 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. We are notably taking a leadership role shaping work for the Housing sector, in line with our leadership role in the humanitarian shelter response, and are also co-leading the Social Sustainability and Inclusion sector.

UNHCR's role in minor repair and rehabilitation



Areas allocated to UNHCR and our partners for minor repairs and rehabilitation activities are highlighted in blue. Areas allocated to other actors are highlighted in yellow.

UNHCR Lebanon is grateful for the support of its donors to our response to the Beirut Explosions, including donors of flexible funds and private donors.

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UNHCR Lebanon Operation



Funding:

USD 607.5 million requested for the UNHCR Lebanon operation in 2020

47% funded as of 14 Septemebr 2020
(USD 285.2 million received)

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Beirut Port Explosions: Shelter Sector Dashboard (September 2020)

Background

On August 4th, a warehouse at the Beirut Port exploded, causing widespread casualties and material damage. It is estimated that the explosions directly impacted around 300,000 individuals living in an estimated 77,000 apartments located across 10,000 buildings within three kilometres of the epicentre. This has led to the displacement of households to areas within and outside of the immediately impacted area. However, a majority of affected households continue to reside within their damaged buildings.

Needs

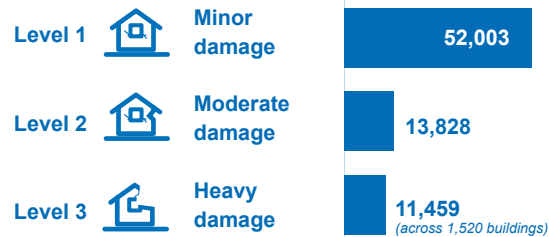
The initial rapid shelter assessment is based on key informant interviews and rapid field surveillance of damage levels across 12,305 apartments (12% of total in affected area) in 2,833 buildings (21% of total in affected area).

Apartments considered in level 1 have minor damages to property such as broken glass, doors, locks, collapse of false ceiling. There are no structural damages at this level. The shelter remains habitable with no or minor compromises on safety, security and access to services, including water, sanitation and electricity.

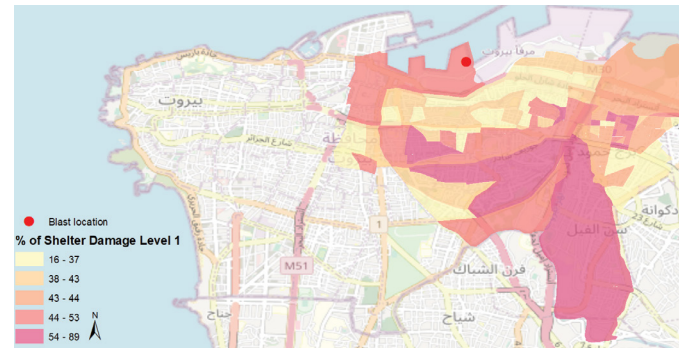
Apartments considered in level 2 have moderate damages to property, more than level 1, though still with no apparent structural damage. At this level the apartment is either not habitable or habitable with safety and security of the premises compromised. Services including water, sanitation and electricity are not or may be only partly accessible.

Apartments and buildings within level 3 show heavy damages of structural (load-bearing) and/or architectural elements, with possible collapse presenting acute risk at both resident household and community/street level. Several buildings have collapsed either immediately or within days after the explosion.

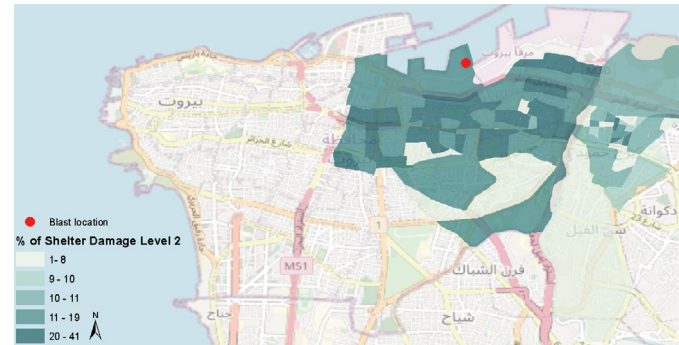
Estimated number of damaged apartments (MSNA)



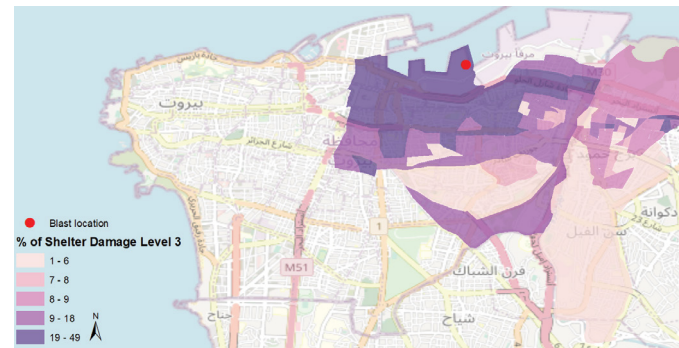
Level 1: minor damage to property (by zone)



Level 2: moderate damage to property (by zone)



Level 3: heavy damage to property (by zone)



Response

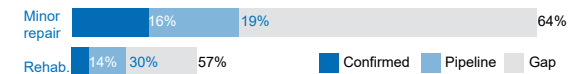
The sector worked with OCHA, the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Lebanese Red Cross to divide the affected area into operational zones for coordinating assessments and assistance. It also categorised the zones by pre-blast socio-economic status to guide targeting based on vulnerability.

Based on the MSNA, the most urgent needs have been addressed through the distribution of 7,062 shelter weatherproofing kits (benefitting more than 21,000 people) and cash for rent (115 HH to date). Shelter partners are moving forward with support for minor repairs (1,207 HH to date) and rehabilitation (95 HH to date), reflecting a transition from the immediate to the medium-term response.

Partners have assisted the municipalities of Beirut and Bourj Hammoud with early recovery-oriented building-level assessments of damage that has already informed evacuation notices by the authorities (over 200 buildings in Beirut alone) and will help guide support to responding to unsound buildings.

Gaps

Against an estimated total need of 65,831 units, partners have confirmed funding for 10,487 minor repairs and rehabilitations. Funding is in the pipeline for a further 14,270 units, should these funds be secured, a gap of 41,074 units remains.



Shelter sector appealing partners (in Flash Appeal)

ACTED, AVSI, Care, Caritas, CISP, Concern Worldwide, CRS, Dorcas Lebanon, Esri Lebanon, Habitat for Humanity, ILO, INTERSOS, IOM, Islamic Relief, Leb Relief, Makhzoumi Foundation, Medair, Mercy-USA, NRC, Nusaned, PCPM, PUAMI, Save the Children, Solidarites, SOS Children's Villages Lebanon, UNDP, UN-Habitat, UNHCR

