

Order of Malta provide medical and psychological assistance in Beirut following blast

Following the devastating explosion that shook the core of Beirut City on August 4, 2020 the Order of Malta was able to initiate a rapid response, due to the Lebanese Association's existing strong presence in the city undertaking significant healthcare and social welfare projects.

Over the last month, members and volunteers of the Order of Malta Lebanon have been working relentlessly to provide free healthcare assistance in the most affected areas at 12 primary health care centres, 5 major hospitals and the main state drugs warehouse which were severely damaged by the explosion.

The Order of Malta in Lebanon also opened its centre in Chabrouh as a shelter for families who have lost their homes and who need a safe place to stay. It has also developed a mental health and psychosocial support programme at the Ain el Remmaneh centre, offering telephone consultations as well.

An established network of more than 300 volunteers quickly mobilised. They are in the field every day, cleaning houses, providing ready-to-eat food and meals, evaluating damage in certain dedicated areas for refurbishment. They are also distributing hygiene packs following a spike in Covid-19 infections.

In the meantime all other projects of the Order of Malta in the country dedicated to the vulnerable, the sick, the elderly and the differently-abled persons, are still very active as the crisis deepens all over the country and needs keep growing by the day.

Order of Malta organisations around the world quickly rallied to provide support following the blast. The Australian Association of the Order of Malta made an initial donation of 10,000 euros to support the emergency relief effort and, following an appeal to members and donors, a further \$20,000 has been raised to assist their projects for the longer-term recovery efforts.

Meanwhile Malteser International is supporting the work of the Lebanese Association's mobile medical units. It is focusing on restocking medical supplies, strengthening measures against Covid-19 and providing psychosocial support. *"Physical wounds have been treated, but the catastrophe and the sudden loss of basic security have done extensive damage to the mental health of people affected,"* said Clemens Mirbach, Malteser International's Country Coordinator for Lebanon. *"Many patients have asked for sedatives to cope with the trauma experienced"*.

Donations of \$2 and more to the Order of Malta Emergency Relief fund to support the work in Lebanon can be made at www.orderofmalta.org.au



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