

Over one million dollars donated to Beirut recovery efforts through global Caritas network

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Following the massive explosion which killed over 200 people and wounded 6500, Caritas Australia, part of the global Caritas network, is responding to the immediate needs of blast survivors in Beirut with an international solidarity effort.



Shireen's doors and windows were destroyed in the explosion but the Caritas network is on the ground working to repair homes. Photo: Stefanie Glinski, Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

The Caritas Internationalis network, a confederation of 169 global Caritas partners, is donating over \$1,200,000 to Caritas Lebanon. The Australian community has already donated \$117,000 through Caritas Australia.

Though Lebanon is still emerging from a two-week Government enforced coronavirus lockdown, the Caritas network has been given the 'green light' to continue working closely with communities at this fraught time.

The appeal response commences at the end of August and will continue for 18 months. It includes food, hygiene materials, like soap and water, and emergency cash assistance to renovate houses for those who cannot afford essential shelter, as winter approaches. In the long-term, the response also offers mental health consultations with blast survivors, assessment of shelter damage so that engineers can be involved in repair efforts and online education support for students who cannot make it into schools or whose schools were destroyed in the blast.

"We must not lose sight of the fact that the effects of economic sanctions and political violence have weakened this country and are weighing heavily on Lebanon, which is facing a food shortage," said Dr Rita Rhayem, the Director of Caritas Lebanon.

"It is vital that the international community acts decisively to alleviate the suffering of poor Lebanese, immediately removing economic sanctions."

Dr Rita will be one of three speakers at a virtual briefing for Australian Parliamentarians, which includes Caritas Australia. It will be held on September 7, shortly after the one-month anniversary of the blast.

Caritas Australia has committed to providing emergency support to Lebanon, in the form of crucial financial aid, as part of its already established Middle East Regional Appeal. The Appeal remains open in anticipation of long-term need.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Beirut and the Lebanese community here in Australia at this time of enormous heartbreak and loss. The Lebanese community is a valued part of the Caritas Australia network.

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