

Lebanon Emergency Appeal

Providing essential medical equipment to Beirut
Governmental Hospital in Karantina



August 2020

On 4th August 2020, a warehouse containing large quantities of ammonium nitrate exploded at the Beirut Port. After an initial explosion, a subsequent blast caused widespread devastation, with reports of damage more than 20 kilometers from the port area. In addition, the explosions and ensuing fires released toxic materials into the environment. As of 8th August 2020, a total of 137 people are reported dead, a further 80 people are missing, and more than 5,000 are being treated in hospitals in Beirut. In addition, it is estimated that over 300,000 people have been left homeless. The estimated cost of the destruction is over US\$ 3 billion.

The catastrophic explosion (widely reported as of the most powerful in history)¹ destroyed several hospitals in the vicinity of the port, which has forced some hospitals to turn away patients and overwhelmed the rest. In addition, as reported by the Order of Nurses of Lebanon, a total of 5 medical staff lost their lives as a result of the explosion.

One of the most badly affected hospitals is the Beirut Governmental Hospital in Karantina, which is located **only 400 meters from the blast site**. This hospital is the central hub for the provision of medicine for patients who do not have health insurance. Most of the **physical structure of this hospital is severely damaged** including broken windows, damaged walls and roof, **and the equipment is destroyed**.



Location of Beirut Governmental Hospital – Karantina

All patients, including children and new-born babies from the “neonatal intensive care unit – NICU” had to be evacuated. The hospital, as well as its regular departments, also has a special department for the treatment of **children diagnosed with COVID-19, who also had to be evacuated**. It has five storage units for medical supplies, vaccines and medicine for chronic diseases. As a result of the explosion, three of these five storage units were destroyed (along with all of their essential medicines and supplies) impacting the very urgent and much needed emergency provision now.

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east53670839>. Specialists at the University of Sheffield in the UK estimate that the blast at the Beirut port had about one tenth of the explosive power of **the atomic bomb dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima** during World War Two and was «unquestionably one of the biggest non-nuclear explosions in history».



The level of destruction at the hospital

"Yesterday was not like any other day. There was an element of chaos, even though we often have drills and simulations to respond to crises on time. I've dealt with lots of catastrophes, tragedies, assassinations, and blasts with multiple casualties, but nothing even coming close to yesterday..." Said Dr. Zeineldine, a resident doctor at AUB Medical Center. 5th August 2020

Taawon is deeply concerned by the condition of the hospital, taking into account that it serves **one of the most impoverished communities in Beirut**. The hospital is located within an area of high deprivation, hosting some of the poorest foreign workers, refugees and Lebanese families mostly displaced during the civil war. The Karantina hospital is basically the refuge for the most marginalized requiring medical care.

Therefore, based on observations from the ground, and in coordination with the hospital management and the Ministry of Public Health, Taawon aims to provide essential equipment for the hospital in order to make it operational as soon as possible and help those most badly affected. The provision of equipment will also ensure the sustainability of services for years to come and will enable the hospital to serve many of the most vulnerable children and adults in Beirut who have nowhere else to turn.