



World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP News Video: WFP Ship Brings Desperately Needed Wheat Into Crippled Beirut Port as Lebanon Goes into Partial Lockdown

Shot: 13,22 August 2020

LEBANON - Beirut

TRT: 3:31

SHOTLIST:

:00-1:05

GVs of unloading shipment of wheat flour at Beirut Port. Various shots of WFP teams assembling temporary storage facilities. WFP has brought into Lebanon 12,500 metric tons of wheat flour to stabilize the price of bread across the country in September. Lebanon imports nearly 85 percent of its food, with the bulk of trade passing through the Port of Beirut. The severe damage to the port could put further upward pressure on staple food prices, that have skyrocketed over the past year

Shot: 22Aug

Beirut

1:05-1:52

SOT Amer Daoudi – WFP Sr. Director of Operations (English):

“All storage facilities have been destroyed. The grain silos have been destroyed. It is the only facility in the whole of Lebanon for the reception of bulk cargo, whether it is for bread-making or animal feed. That facility has been completely wiped out. All equipment to discharge bulk has been completely wiped out. What WFP did within days, diverted a vessel of 12,500 tons to support the Lebanese people, as well as mobilizing storage capacity, which is where I am standing you can see it behind being set up, and we are in the process of bringing equipment to augment and restore the capacity of Beirut port to handle bulk cargo.”

Shot: 22Aug

Beirut

**1:52-2:21**

GVs of destruction in Karantina neighborhood. Karantina is close to the port and was one of the hardest hit by the explosion, taking the brunt of the destruction and numbers of casualties. Includes shots of a local NGO offering first aid to people injured by the blast.

Shot: 13Aug**Beirut****2:21-2:30**

Omar Hussein, a day labourer, in front of his house in Karantina neighbourhood, showing where he was when the explosion happened. At the moment the shockwave hit, he was thrown to the ground and covered in broken glass from a window.

Shot: 13Aug**Beirut****2:30-2:53****SOT Omar Hussein – Day Labourer (Arabic):**

“Even before the explosion, the situation was extremely dire. My wife and I need medicine that costs up to 850,000 LBP and we have no one to support us but God. My children used to support us with 50-60-70 thousand LBP, but after the protests and spread of COVID-19, they no longer had jobs. This led us to stay without medication for almost 2 months.”

Shot: 13Aug**Beirut****2:53-3:31**

WFP food distribution to Omar Hussein and 200 other families affected by the blast in Karantina district. The food parcels contain 60kg – enough to feed a family of 5 for one month.

Shot: 13Aug**Beirut**



ENDS

WFP is on the ground responding to the immediate and longer term food needs of the most vulnerable people across Lebanon. The country has been hit hard by the triple shock of the blast, COVID-19, and the economic crisis, with severe consequences for lives and livelihoods.

- WFP has brought into Lebanon 12,500 metric tons of wheat flour to stabilize the price of bread across the country. The wheat flour shipment arrived in Beirut Port on 18 August. The agreement and distribution plan with the Ministry of Economy and Trade, millers, and bakeries is being finalized using existing mechanisms to avoid market disruptions.
- WFP has airlifted and delivered equipment to enable bulk grain handling and storage to ensure there is no disruption in the commercial food supply chain.
- WFP has also begun constructing mobile storage units at Beirut Port, which will be used to store the wheat flour if needed (a warehouse has also been contracted) and can be used as storage space for bagged food items and non-food items by other humanitarian partners or the private sector.
- Lebanon imports nearly 85 percent of its food, with the bulk of trade passing through the Port of Beirut. The severe damage to the port could put further upward pressure on staple food prices, that have skyrocketed over the past year due to the economic crisis, shortages of foreign currency and the devaluation of the Lebanese pound. Between October 2019 and June 2020, food prices increased by 245%, according to the Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics.
- A recent WFP survey on the impact of the economic crisis and COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown measures on livelihoods and food security revealed that food has become a major source of concern with fifty percent of Lebanese saying they felt worried they would not have enough food to eat.

WFP plans to gradually expand its existing cash assistance programme in Lebanon to reach more people across the country if resources are secured. This includes vulnerable Beirut residents who have been directly affected by the blasts as well as people across the country who are struggling due to the economic crisis and COVID-19 lockdown measures.

- WFP has also procured 150,000 food parcels to distribute to families impacted by the economic crisis and COVID-19 lockdown measures. The most vulnerable population is being identified in partnership with local and international NGOs who are engaged in the relief efforts, with the assistance of community leaders and WFP partners.



- As of 21 August, WFP has distributed 1003 family food parcels reaching 5416 people, and 200 parcels distributed to partners to support kitchens providing 3,000 meals per day in the Karantina, Bourj Hammoud, Gemmayze, Geitawi, and Khandaa El Ghamee neighborhoods of Beirut.
- WFP is also working with its local partners to provide food parcels to families impacted by the blast who have access to functioning kitchens. Each food parcel contains around 60kg of food items enough for a family of five for a month.
- This emergency assistance WFP is launching in Lebanon requires a total of US\$235 million for 6 months to provide food support to the most vulnerable as well as logistics and supply chain support to the country.

These devastating events come as Lebanon faces its worst ever financial crisis - at a time of soaring unemployment and salary cuts with many families struggling to make ends meet.

- Currently more than one million people in Lebanon are living below the poverty line according to the World Bank. For 2020, the World Bank estimates that 1.7 million people will be living in poverty while 841,000 living in extreme poverty.
- The pandemic and subsequent lockdown measures have resulted in food becoming a major concern for many people due to rising prices and the devaluation of the Lebanese currency which has lost 80 percent of its value since last October.
- Wealthy neighbourhoods that have been affected by the blasts also have pockets of poverty with many elderly people residing across this area who may require support and middle-class residents are becoming increasingly impoverished due to the impact of the economic crisis.

WFP Response

- Within 48 hours of the port blast, WFP allocated food parcels for 5,000 highly vulnerable households and is preparing to scale up as needed.
- WFP is working with selected partners including SHEILD, Caritas, CARE and Lebanese Food Bank to provide food parcels for communal kitchens and to vulnerable families. At a first step, WFP has provided parcels to communal kitchens run by our partners who are cooking hot meals to frontline responders and those affected by the blast, including elderly who remained in their homes but no longer have functioning kitchens/stoves. Following that, WFP has begun providing



food parcels and dry monthly ration to vulnerable families. In Beirut, 3,000 meals are being cooked per day between local NGOs.

- WFP has started distributing emergency food assistance to up to 270,000 vulnerable people across Lebanon to help them to cope with the effects of the economic crisis and COVID-19. This food distribution will now be followed by 3-months of cash support to help families cope with the additional livelihood strain that will result from the impact of the blast
- WFP currently assists 105,000 Lebanese with WFP food e-cards through the government's National Poverty Targeting Programme.
- Prior to the blasts, WFP distributed food packages to the families of 13,000 students who were enrolled in WFP's school feeding programme before schools closed due to the pandemic.
- To address the impact of rampant inflation in Lebanon, since WFP adjusted the value of the food assistance it provides via e-cards - from 40,500 in April to 70,000 Lebanese pounds in July and August so beneficiaries are able to meet their food needs.

WFP Safety and Security

- All WFP employees have been accounted for, including those working on the Syria Corridor from Beirut. Nine WFP staff members were injured but all have been discharged from the hospital.
- The WFP Office, which is about 1-2 km away from the blasts, sustained major damage, as did the homes of several employees. All UN/WFP personnel have been instructed to work from home or alternative locations. UNDSS is assessing the reports of toxic fumes and other potential impacts on UN personnel and restricted movement of all UN personnel until further notice.

Situation on the ground following the blasts

- Beirut port is confirmed to be operating at 30% capacity. The Container Terminal was only partially affected by the blasts and is operational as of 8 August.
- An estimated 300,000 people have been displaced across the Greater Beirut area, including up to 100,000 children. In some neighbourhoods, people are forced to sleep on the streets or in unsafe buildings.
- Three hospitals closed due to widespread destruction after the blast and two reported severe damage losing an equivalent of 500 hospital beds.
- The number of available health personnel is reduced as several were injured and killed in the blast and hundreds had already been laid off due to economic



constraints (IMC 05/08/2020). Due to the economic crisis, underfunded hospitals had closed wards.

- A surge in COVID-19 cases has further exacerbated the healthcare system. The Minister of Public Health warned that most beds in public hospitals are occupied due to the sudden increase in coronavirus cases.

Food, fuel and electricity, as well as other non-food items were already expensive before the explosion, due to hyperinflation and the loss in value of the local currency. There are reports that Central Bank could only continue subsidizing fuel, wheat and medicine imports for another three months (until November) due to the drop in its US dollar reserves, which will result in an inflation of prices and impact the purchasing power of Lebanese households.

Number of Lebanese receiving WFP cash transfer through National Poverty Targeting Programme	105,000
Number of refugees WFP is supporting in Lebanon	829,000
WFP requirements to provide food and logistics assistance in Lebanon over the coming 6 months	US\$114 million
Poverty figures	356,000 households living in poverty 156,000 households living in extreme poverty
Inflation – food prices	245% increase between September 2019 – June 2020
Number of people directly affected by the explosion who are estimated to be in need of assistance	150,000

#

#

#

The United Nations World Food Programme is the world's largest humanitarian organization, saving lives in emergencies, building prosperity and supporting a sustainable future for people recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change.



Follow us on Twitter @wfp_syria @wfp_mena

For more information please contact (email address: firstname.lastname@wfp.org):

Abeer Etefa, WFP/Cairo, Mob. +2010 6663 4352

Malak Jaafar, WFP/Beirut, Mob. +961 76 320 761

Martin Penner WFP/Rome, +39 345 614 2074

Jane Howard WFP/ London, Mob. +44 7968 008474

Steve Taravella, WFP/ Washington, Mob. +1 202 770 5993