

ISSUE 01 | QUARTER 01

# URBAN

# DIGEST

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2020 ROUNDUP WHILE  
LOOKING AHEAD



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Sodeco, Beirut ©UN-Habitat



## INTRODUCTION

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Over the past 18 months, Lebanon has faced and continues to face multiple crises. While turmoil and unrest is not new to the country, the deepening financial and economic crisis, the 2019 Civil Uprising and ensuing social and political unrest, coupled with the implications of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the Beirut Port explosion of 4 August 2020, is causing unprecedented difficulty on multiple human development fronts.

The consequences of these events have pushed more than one third of Lebanese (1.7 million) into poverty, including 9 out of 10 Syrian refugees into extreme poverty (World Bank & UNHCR, 2020). Similarly, more than 50 per cent of Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon were already unemployed before the explosion and it is expected that their living conditions have deteriorated further (Government of Lebanon & United Nations, 2021). Social tensions are increasing, and the plight of the most vulnerable, including refugees hosted in Lebanon, continues to worsen.

In this edition, UN-Habitat Lebanon's newsletter highlights the programme's efforts to play an active role in the overall international community's response to these multiple crises – in targeting and responding to the needs of those most affected, regardless of their nationality – **while maintaining a longer vision of how good urbanization can play a key role in supporting Lebanon steer towards sustainable, inclusive and just development** – in line with the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.



### MULTIPLE CRISES IMPLICATIONS IN LEBANON

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**1.7 million Lebanese**  
living in poverty

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**50% Palestinian refugees**  
unemployed

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**9/10 Syrian refugees**  
living in extreme poverty

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# RESPONDING TO THE BEIRUT PORT EXPLOSION: **WHY URBAN MATTERS**

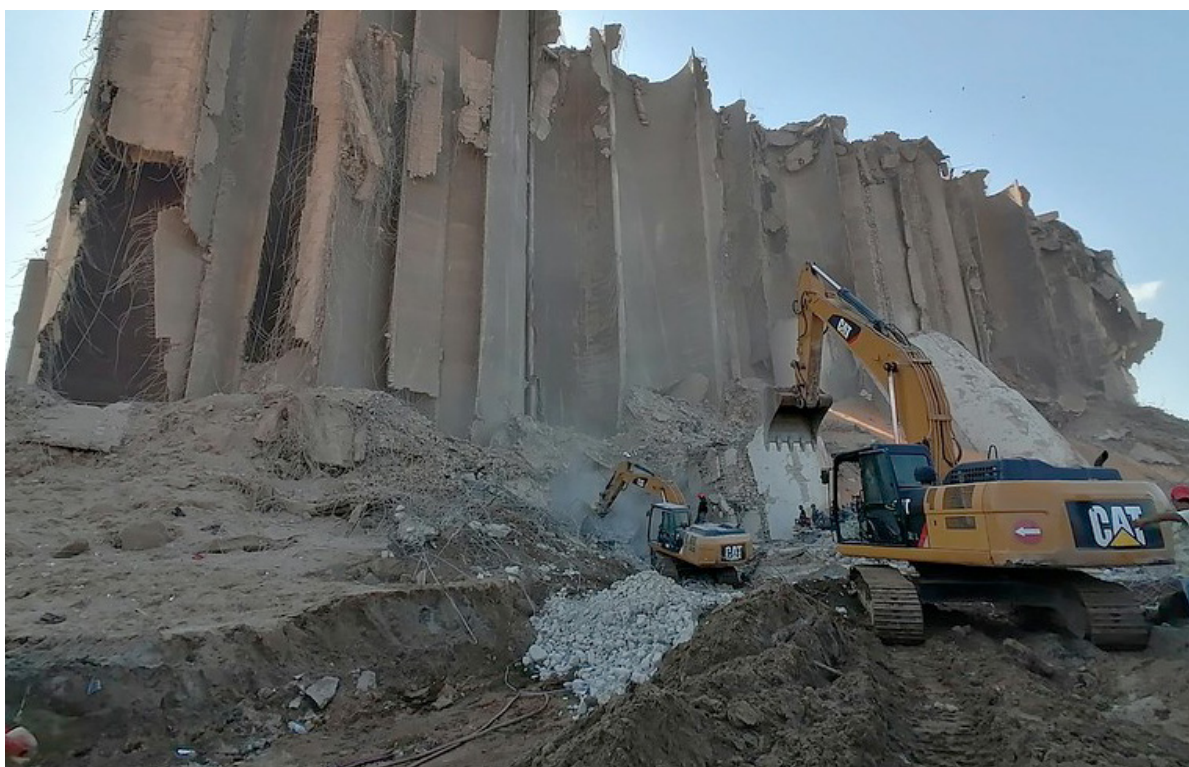


In what manifested itself as an urban crisis, the response to the devastating Beirut Port explosion beckoned a multi-sectoral and faceted area-based approach. With this in mind, UN-Habitat embarked upon identifying key entry points in complementarity to the wider immediate humanitarian response, while keeping in mind the nexus of a transition to longer-term recovery and reconstruction.

In order to establish baselines to identify immediate assistance, UN-Habitat either led or actively engaged in multiple assessment exercises. These included undertaking two Rapid Building-level Damage Assessments (**Beirut** and **Bourj Hammoud**), a **Private School Damage Assessment**, a more detailed Structurally Damaged Building-level Assessment and as a co-lead and partner of the **Shelter Sector** – contributed to field work of the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment. Underpinning these assessments, included the rapid deployment of UN-Habitat teams to the municipalities of Beirut and Bourj Hammoud,

who assisted in providing technical expertise to undertake assessments, mapping and provided an electronic database to capture the needs of the city. Seconded by NORCAP, UN-Habitat was also able to avail timely critical surge capacity, through co-leadership of the Shelter Sector and expertise on housing, land and property rights.

In parallel, UN-Habitat embarked upon immediate and medium-term humanitarian assistance through funding from the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund, the International Islamic Charity Organization, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and in partnership with UNESCO and UNICEF. In line with UN-Habitat's approach to green urban recovery and reconstruction, together with a number of partners, we launched an initiative – Rubble to Mountains – aimed at contributing to the collection and management of debris resulting from the explosion in an environmentally sustainable way.



Leaving at least 200 dead, the aftermath of the Beirut Port explosion is still felt in the city, and in Lebanon more than 8 months later. ©UN-Habitat



"Thanks to critical and timely **cash-for-rent** support from the UN, I have been able to offset my monthly expenses, ensuring my family and I can continue to **live in dignity**"

**Etaferahu**

Resident of Rmeil neighbourhood, Beirut, Lebanon

### Providing shelter assistance to the most vulnerable through cash-for-rent and minor repairs and partnering with the private sector

In two of the neighbourhoods most affected by the explosion, Karantina and Mar Mikhael, a total of 80 to 100 buildings were reportedly evacuated, leaving hundreds of households temporarily displaced. To support these families, including those unable to temporarily relocate, UN-Habitat provided cash-for-rent to tenants. The funds – provided by the United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund (UN CERF) – will cover a rental period of four months for a total of 810 eligible households – or 4,000 individuals.

Read more about the project [here](#).

Complementing the wider Shelter Sector strategy and partner efforts, UN-Habitat, through funding provided by the International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) is undertaking repairs in **at least 100 households** in Bourj Hammoud. Priority was given to vulnerable groups including women, children, the elderly and disabled and chronically ill. In Rmeil, Mdawar and Achrafieh areas, other rehabilitation work is being done with the support of the Real Estate Syndicate of Lebanon.

### Rehabilitating Lebanon's only HIV and Tuberculosis medical centre

One of the many healthcare facilities severely impacted by the explosion, includes the National HIV and Tuberculosis Centre located in Karantina, Beirut. It is the only centre of its kind in Lebanon, which provides lifesaving medicines, and supplies for testing and treatment of HIV and TB. UN-Habitat through funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is rehabilitating the Centre, allowing for continuity of care and providing existing patients the treatment they require and those seeking testing opportunity to access it. The rehabilitation of the Centre comes at a pressing time when COVID-19 cases have soared and people with underlying health conditions and auto-immune disorders such as HIV/AIDS are more susceptible to the disease. UN-Habitat is applying a build back better approach, by mainstreaming eco-friendly building technology as an entry point for urban regeneration in the neighbourhood. Complementing the rehabilitation of the Centre, will include targeted interventions in the adjacent community, through urban gardening for the elderly, public space regeneration and COVID-19 hygiene kit distribution.

### Rehabilitating vulnerable private schools

According to an initial assessment by Lebanon's Ministry of Education and Higher Education, at least 163 public and private schools were damaged by the explosion – affecting more than 85,000 students and 7,600 teachers. Such extensive damages have not only impacted the commencement of the new academic year, in addition to COVID-19, but will further exacerbate the pre-existing socio-economic crisis in the country, including depriving students enrolled in these schools of their right to education. To complement the initial assessment and following the Ministry's tasking of UNESCO in coordinating the assessment and rehabilitation of schools with education partners, UN-Habitat was requested by UNESCO to complete a detailed physical damage and cost estimate assessment of 113 private schools affected by the explosion. The assessment's findings have informed the UN-Habitat led rehabilitation works, funded through UNESCO, of 16 schools in Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

Explore the findings of the UN-Habitat Physical Damage Assessment of Private Schools [here](#).



Rubble left by the  
Beirut Port explosion  
©UN-Habitat



### Redirecting rubble from landfills to mountains in an eco-friendly way

The Beirut Port explosion damaged thousands of buildings and vast amounts of housing and public infrastructure, leaving behind an enormous amount of rubble and debris. For weeks following the explosion, people came out in droves to sweep the city's rubble-littered streets, leaving piles of waste that were likely destined for Beirut's nearly saturated landfills. To prevent the filling of rubble into landfills, UN-Habitat in coordination with several partners established the Rubble to Mountains initiative.

Through its three-pronged approach, the initiative will transform rubble and glass into a biodegradable, sand-like material that will be used to fill holes left by mining in Lebanon's mountains, build furniture for Beirut's public spaces and establish a permanent site for processing waste left by construction and demolition. Through partnering with UNICEF, the initiative will be able to accelerate site operations in a safe and well protected environment. It will also initiate the environmental assessments and studies needed for the final quarry disposal site and will produce cityscape furniture to be installed in public spaces affected by the explosion.

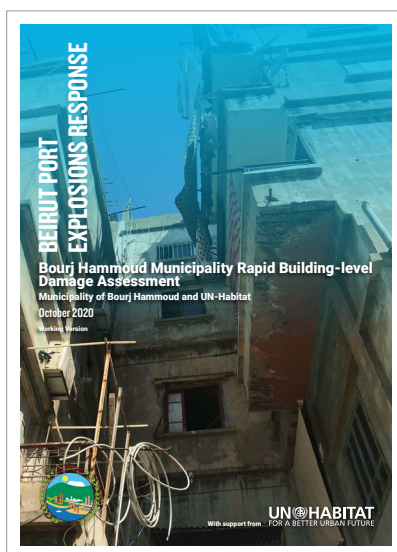
Watch **this video** to find out more about the initiative.

### Development of an Urban Recovery Framework

UN-Habitat's long-term vision of multi-sector engagement within the recovery efforts following the Beirut explosion is holistic, evidence-based, multisectoral and city-wide. The approach UN-Habitat envisions recognizes the need for both immediate response and longer-term adaptive and transformative measures for a crisis, considering pre-existing vulnerabilities, current needs, gaps, and priorities. Building on regional experiences in developing Urban Recovery Frameworks in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, this participatory approach to crises response and planning efforts by national and decentralized governments, can help localize and operationalize existing relevant frameworks. In the case of Lebanon, the soon to be launched Beirut City Profile will act as a diagnostic tool and common foundation for longer-term recovery for Beirut at scale.

### Engagement under the Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework

As projects under the Flash Appeal are being wrapped up, they have set the stage for longer-term recovery and reconstruction – principally captured under a **Lebanon Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework**



Read the reports for **Beirut** and **Bourj Hammoud**.

(3RF) – jointly prepared by the World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations. The 3RF is part of a comprehensive response to the explosion. It is a people-centred recovery and reconstruction framework aimed at bridging the immediate humanitarian response and the medium-term recovery and reconstruction efforts. UN-Habitat is leading and co-leading the housing, culture, and municipal services sectors, providing tangible guidance and inputs to the framework based on the agency's first-hand experience.

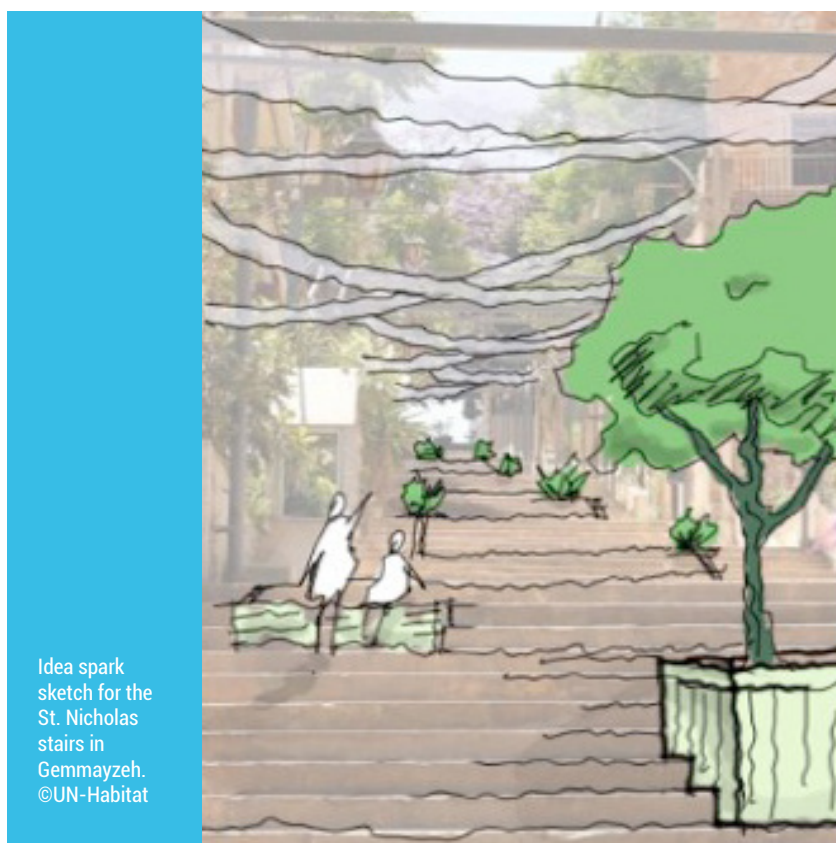
## Rapid Building-Level Damage Assessments: Beirut and Bourj Hammoud

Immediately after the explosion, UN-Habitat together with respective municipalities in Beirut and Bourj Hammoud, and local partners, undertook two rapid building-level damage assessments – assessments at the level of the buildings' exterior, providing a basis on which to formulate recovery and reconstruction measures, with regards to building damage rehabilitation.

## Community-Driven Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines for Gemmayzeh, Rmeil and Mar Mikhael

Through joint collaboration between the Shelter Programme at Arcadis Global and UN-Habitat, Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines are under development to provide guidance on how to create climate resilient, safe, and inclusive communal spaces for Beirut's most affected neighbourhoods following the explosion.

The Guidelines contain seven idea sparks that envision the revitalization of public spaces and water infrastructure impacted by the explosion, by incorporating innovative ways to mitigating stormwater run off and flooding while creating a water cycle that not only improves drainage and waste and stormwater management, but also improves living conditions of residents and well-being through public spaces.





# Shifting from Reactive to Proactive: A Glimpse of UN-Habitat's Urban Crisis Response Interventions

Starting in 2007 in response to the War of July 2006, and in direct response to the Syrian refugee crisis and its impact on Lebanese host communities and services, UN-Habitat developed an urban crisis response to address urban vulnerabilities.

This has included interventions addressing a variety of needs including urban basic services, shelter rehabilitation and city and neighbourhood profiling to provide an evidence-base for projects by urban development stakeholders. While activities under the urban crisis response umbrella respond to humanitarian needs, UN-Habitat through its multi-sectoral and area-based approach, is laying the ground for longer-term and sustainable urban development that is people-centred, holistic and tangible.

## Revitalization without gentrification – preserving cultural heritage in the old cities of Saida and Tripoli

Historic cities across Lebanon are blessed with irreplaceable heritage, providing both an important identity to the communities and a source of income through tourism. Unfortunately, due to economic hardship, neglect and multiple wars, significant parts of the heritage fabric that exists across Lebanon is in danger of disappearing.



*"Before, my family's house was really run-down. Now I have a place where I can read and study comfortably!"*

**Fatima**  
Resident of Haddadine



预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_17485](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_17485)

