

Beirut Blast

MECC, ACT Alliance and WCC Joint Statement

The World Council of Churches (WCC), ACT Alliance and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) present their condolences to all Lebanese people who lost their loved ones in the catastrophic explosion that ripped through the heart of Beirut on 4 August 2020. We stand in solidarity with the bereaved, the injured, the displaced and the suffering.

On behalf of the international ecumenical community, ACT Alliance is launching an appeal as part of the international humanitarian response to this disaster, and we join in calling on the international community for a comprehensive humanitarian mechanism of coordination and collaboration with Lebanese civil society.

We recognize and lift up the swift and effective actions taken by Lebanese civil society to respond and to alleviate the suffering of those affected. The civil society response to the disaster is a significant sign of hope, strengthening people's capacity to overcome this enormous crisis and to restore hope in the society for the future of the nation.

Together, WCC ACT Alliance and MECC emphasize the following elements as crucial for a sustainable recovery:

1. There must be real accountability for this disaster, through an independent investigation. We call on the international community, through the UN, to ensure that the causes of this disaster are investigated and established by a credible independent process, that those responsible are brought to justice, and that impunity is avoided.
2. While immediate humanitarian assistance is essential and fundamental, ensuring long-term resilience is crucial for Lebanon's sustainable recovery from multiple shocks – bringing together humanitarian, development and peace and human security components in a comprehensive systemic approach. The explosion and its consequences compound a deep pre-existing economic and social crisis, with 50% of Lebanese people living under the poverty line and 400,000 suffering displacement. A comprehensive, detailed and sustained engagement is required to ensure lasting positive impact.
3. WCC, ACT Alliance and MECC join in calling on all their members and partners to galvanize their resources - human, financial, communication/technical and spiritual - to support the Lebanese people to overcome this profound crisis.
4. WCC and ACT Alliance affirm and support the role and response of the Middle East Council of Churches, the Lebanon ACT Appeal, and all initiatives faith-based organizations and churches take to respond to not only to the humanitarian needs of the Lebanese people but also spiritual needs through trauma-healing interventions and counseling.

This is a critical and historical existential moment for Lebanon - a haven for religious and social diversity in the Middle East - and as such, we are all concerned and called upon to help ensure Lebanon's survival. With all the tragedies and challenges of its past and present, Lebanon stands as a sign and symbol of living together in diversity. The people of Lebanon deserve our support to survive and endure, and to regain hope for their future.

Middle East Council of Churches

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