

EVENTS IN LEBANON

GENERAL NEWS



In Beirut, the drones can be heard humming in the skies all day and night while the loud and continuous explosions from the deadly missiles, light up the night skies, destroying buildings in numerous areas.

Helplessly, we pray and ask God to help us - please, no more death, no more destruction. Yet, the loud sirens of the ambulances fill the empty streets while they transport men, women, and children who are now homeless and on the verge of death.

Sadly, our life in beautiful Lebanon has drastically changed in the last few weeks. More than a million and a half people have been displaced, killed or injured. Hundreds of towns and villages in the Southern and Eastern parts of the country have been reduced to dust. For the last 2 weeks, the thriving and heavily populated Southern part of Beirut has been the target of heavy bombardment. Thousands have fled as their homes became targets, and as the bombs intensified, many were caught in the explosions, resulting in their death. This includes aid workers who came to their rescue.

Friends and relatives welcomed many survivors, while others found shelter in government and private shelters. However, most remain on the streets, still searching for shelter and awaiting the approaching winter cold.



Itani, F. (2024). Israeli Airstrike In Beirut, Lebanon. [Photograph]. Getty Images via NurPhoto.



Goullamaki, L. (2024). Emergency personnel work at the site of an Israeli air strike, in central Beirut, Lebanon, Friday. [Photograph]. Reuters. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/10/11/live-israel-hits-centre-of-lebanons-beirut-intensifies-north-gaza-siege>.

EVENTS IN LEBANON



HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

Since the war in Gaza began in October 2023, Hezbollah and Israeli forces have not stopped exchanging fire between the borders of northern Israel and southern Lebanon.

On September 17, 2024, thousands of pagers supplied to Hezbollah members and carried as safer than carrying cellular phones, exploded in the hands of those carrying them. This caused severe damage to the faces of around 500 young people, including blowing out their eyes. The next day, at least 25 were killed and hundreds of others injured when walkie-talkies exploded across Lebanon targeting the Hezbollah community, once again. On September 23, a full-scale Israeli military assault escalated the violence with airstrikes which killed 569 people and wounded 1,850 persons marking it as one of the deadliest single-day airstrike casualties in the twenty-first century. Bombing did not stop then but continued targeting and destroying more towns and villages in the south and burning agricultural lands. The bombings targeted various areas of the country, concentrating on the East of Beirut, an area known as the Dahyeh, which is a heavily congested area and where most of its inhabitants are of the Moslem Shia sect. The intensive bombings targeted the hundreds of buildings in that neighborhood, disregarding the families who were still living within their homes.

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HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

This continued until September 28 when 10 huge explosives consecutively hit this area with one of them destroying the building where Hassan Nasrallah, the charismatic and greatly loved, revered and respected Hizbollah leader was holding a meeting. Everybody prayed that he had been spared but he was not. This was a devastating blow to his community and party especially after a number of this party's leaders had recently been assassinated.



The bombings continued, but spread to the Eastern part of Lebanon, to the Bika' valley, where the historical city of Ba'lback with its famous Roman temples still stands and where many international festivals have been held. Hundreds lost their homes and thousands were injured or killed as the many towns and villages in that area were bombed.

And the bombing continued.

On the evening of October 1, Iran launched a missile attack on Israel, but most of the missiles were intercepted by Israel's air defense system.

In the early hours of October 2, Israeli troops crossed into Southern Lebanon, beginning a ground offensive in the region as they simultaneously launched air strikes on targets in Beirut. Israel said that eight of its soldiers were killed during their ground invasion.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

At present, Israel continues to bombard Lebanon at an unbelievable intensity destroying towns and villages. Around 1 million and a half have sought safety inside areas of the country while more than 300 thousand have fled to Syria. On October 4, Israel targeted the border crossing between the two countries destroying the roads. But those determined to flee crossed on foot.

Lebanon was already in the midst of a dire humanitarian and economic crisis before this devastating aggression began. The country has been affected by a series of unrelenting crises in recent years, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and the massive Port of Beirut explosion. It is now in its fifth year of a crippling economic collapse that has sent poverty rates soaring. This aggression comes to the top of the already fragile situation where 86 percent of the families in Lebanon are under the poverty line. The escalation in recent days has killed and injured thousands, spurred mass displacement, caused extensive damage to infrastructure, and instilled great fear in the lives of people across the country.



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WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

When the Israeli aggression had initially started, people fleeing were able to carry some clothes and other essential needs. But as the ferocity of the bombing increased, people only had time to seek safety leaving all possessions behind. As they sought refuge wherever they could, they need the essential items of existence.



They needed clothes, hygiene items, sanitation items mattresses, sleeping bags, blankets, medicines food, and many other essentials. The 892 government shelters reached their full capacity, leaving more needing a roof on top of their heads. Thousands are left stranded, sleeping in the open air with even more displaced people coming every day.

The situation in Lebanon is very bad. It has moved from crisis to catastrophe. It is essential that the suffering stop and the only way to do this is through an **immediate halt** to this aggression.

NEWS OF CENTERS

UPDATES ON TYRE FARM

With the escalated Israeli missiles and bombs in the South, residents of the three Palestinian camps began to worry. Will this extend to them?

Suddenly a prominent school director in one of the camps in the Tyre area received a targeted missile on his home killing him and his family. The next rocket fell near our farm next to another camp killing 2 farmers and starting a whole barrage of missiles and explosives. Our staff, like thousands of people in that area, gathered their families and fled seeking safety elsewhere. The newly planted crops were left to the care of the chickens and the bees.



NEWS OF CENTERS

UPDATES ON EIN EI HILWEH CENTER

Adjacent to the Center, a missile fell on the home of a Palestinian Liberation Organization retired leader killing him, and his family and injuring many neighbors. Scared for their lives, people ran to wherever they thought would be safer. Faithfully, the staff opened the Center after one week hoping their programs of music, art, literacy, and school support will continue. But no one came. Feeling the need to help, the art teachers along with their 16 students gathered whatever art supplies they could get and went out of the camp, to 2 schools that had been turned into shelters for hundreds of families. The children, badly traumatized after escaping from their destroyed homes and villages, were badly in need of help to overcome their fear. The art sessions occupied their time and created the happy atmosphere they badly needed.



NEWS OF CENTERS

UPDATES ON SAIDA CENTER

The scholastic year had started in Syria and our Syrian students of the higher classes, who follow the Syrian curriculum, were anxious to begin as well. They needed to be ready for their final exams which they will go to Syria to sit for. The Center opened its doors and the teachers came ready with their prepared curriculum and plans of implementation for the year.



It was hoped that it would be safe for all students to attend in person, but with the continued bombing, most are afraid to come and follow the classes online.

NEWS OF CENTERS

UPDATES ON SABRA CENTER *and a present from Heaven*

The well-decorated and equipped classrooms of the Kindergarten and the programs of Electronics, Computer, and Literacy for youth all stand empty awaiting their students anxiously. The only program that has some ladies trickling in is the Hairdressing program where the need for some cutting and grooming overcomes the fear.



But as fate dictates these rooms were put to good use for a few days. An owner of a well-known, well-stocked clothes store died willing all contents of the store to be sent to JCC to help people in need. This was a present from heaven as the teachers sorted out the huge amounts of the different clothing and sent them to the families who had escaped from their destroyed homes with only the clothing on their backs. It was indeed a present from heaven.



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NEWS OF CENTERS

UPDATES ON DBAYEH LIBRARY



Since this library was established, it became the center of all activities in the camp. At present it is even busier as more than 105 families, many of whom have lost their homes, have sought refuge in the Dbayeh camp. Most are staying with relatives and friends who are mostly poor themselves. The JCC and its volunteers are a hub of activity, working diligently to provide some of the needs of these families. At present and with the help of several local organizations, we have been serving hot meals for the last week and have distributed food boxes to help the host families care for their guests. We will soon begin programs that will help the youth and children cope with the difficulties they are facing at present.

As families struggle to cope with the catastrophe that has befallen them, JCC is committed to offering whatever assistance and support it can. This support is critical to these families who are trying to hold on as the whole country is ignorant of what the future holds.

Whatever help you can send us will be greatly appreciated

