



International Council of Nurses offers condolences and support to Lebanon's nurses following devastating explosion

Geneva, Switzerland, 06 August 2020 – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) has sent a letter of support and condolence to the Order of Nurses in Lebanon, an ICN member national nursing association, following the horrific explosion in Beirut on 4 August, which killed at least 135 people, including nurses, and injured close to 5,000 persons.

Coming at a time when nurses and other healthcare workers are already under pressure from the COVID-19 pandemic, and when the country is dealing with a financial crisis, this terrible disaster has only added to the burden.

According to Dr Myrna Doumit, President of the Order of Nurses in Lebanon at least three hospitals have been destroyed by the blast. Speaking to [Al Jazeera](#), Dr Doumit said the disaster was a “big hit to the health system”: “It’s like we are living in a horror film,” she added.

In her letter to Dr Doumit, Annette Kennedy, ICN President, wrote: “We are deeply saddened by this terrible disaster and join you in mourning the lives of those who have been killed by this catastrophe. We acknowledge both the compassion and bravery of the nurses, first responders and all the healthcare staff who provided care immediately after the incident and continue to do so during a time of great pain and grief. Nurses will always provide care for patients whenever and wherever it is needed. Our sincerest sympathy and complete solidarity are with the Order and all the people of Lebanon at this time.”

[News reports](#) praised one nurse who rescued three new-born babies from the maternity ward of the Al Roum hospital when it was struck. Nurses are at the frontlines of healthcare at all times and in all settings, caring for others during pandemics, disasters, and conflicts. ICN has been actively raising awareness of the difficult conditions in which many nurses work and calling for adequate protection as well as investment in the nursing profession. The World Health Organization’s [State of the World’s Nurses](#) report, which was released in April this year, revealed a shortfall of six million nurses around the world and called for urgent investment in nurses.

ICN CEO, Howard Catton, appealed to national nursing associations and donors around the world, saying: “ICN is offering practical support to Order of Nurses in Lebanon. We would welcome any donations to the ICN Disaster Fund to help the nurses of Lebanon in this difficult time. The ICN Disaster Fund is overwhelmingly supported by our National Nurses Associations but is open to others to contribute if they so wish. The Fund is used for a range of purposes from supporting educational training in disaster response to the provision of equipment.”

Please contact ICN’s Director of Finance Geraldine Limborg to organise a donation to the ICN Disaster Fund: limborg@icn.ch

The ICN Disaster Fund provides disaster preparedness and relief training, as well as other support to nurses. Thanks to donations by many of ICN’s member organisations, ICN has provided training in Sri Lanka, following the bombings in 2019, and in the Bahamas, following the Hurricane Dorian, and helped to rebuild the nursing school in Haiti after the devastating earthquake of 2010.

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