



## ICN supports Order of Nurses' Appeal for nurse victims of catastrophic explosion in Lebanon

**Geneva, 04 September 2020** - The International Council of Nurses (ICN) fully backs the Order of Nurses in Lebanon's appeal to assist the nurses who suffered trauma, loss and injury because of the devastating explosion in Beirut last month.

More than 250 people were killed and 5000 injured in the blast on August 4 which destroyed a huge part of the city, including four major hospitals. Six young nurses were among the dead and more than 200 were injured, some also lost their homes.

In the aftermath of the disaster, ICN contacted Dr Myrna Doumit, President of Order of Nurses in Lebanon and organized an [international press conference](#) in which she spoke movingly of the bravery and sacrifice of nurses and other healthcare workers who instead of running away from danger ran towards it to save the lives of those caught up in the blast.

This week in a [video message](#) and [letter](#), Dr Doumit has thanked individuals and organisations from around the world who have sent in donations to help the Lebanese nurses affected rebuild their lives, and appealed for more support.

ICN and its members made an initial donation of 10,000 CHF through its Disaster Fund and ICN is pleased to continue that support through the Fund, by accepting donations specifically earmarked for Lebanon which we will pass onto the Order of Nurses. If you wish to contribute please contact ICN Director of Finance, Geraldine Limborg – [limborg@icn.ch](mailto:limborg@icn.ch)

In her letter of thanks for the support Lebanese nurses have received since the disaster, Dr Doumit explained that the massive explosion, as well as COVID-19, had compounded an already fragile situation in the country for nurses.

Dr Doumit said,

“Since October 17, 2019 Lebanon has been living in an economic crisis that led to the loss of 80% of purchasing power. Which means that nurse's salary now is almost equal to \$120/month. Goods and services increased in price by 40-50%. The cost of living went up around 40-50%. In addition, many nurses were laid off and most of the remaining in the workforce are receiving half salary or obliged to take unpaid vacations. A failing economy, a virus, and an explosion have put a toll on nurses in Lebanon, financially and emotionally.”

ICN President Annette Kennedy said, “ICN fully endorses this appeal. Lebanon and Lebanese nurses are living through unimaginable grief and anguish as well as an impossible financial situation. However, the terrible events of August 4<sup>th</sup> in Beirut once again showed the incredible resilience and courage of our nurses. Our hearts go out to them, and the best we can do is to act practically and send our donations, however great or small it makes a difference.”

ICN CEO Howard Catton added, “There has been immense individual hardship, nurses have lost their homes and livelihoods and we are working with the Order of Nurses to ensure that those nurses who have been affected receive our direct support. We and the Order of Nurses are committed to making sure that the donations collected go directly to these individual nurses who are in greatest need.”

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