



## Press Release

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#### **UNITED NATIONS AID COMMUNITY SEEKS \$149 MILLION FOR LEBANON**

NEW YORK/BEIRUT, 24 July (OCHA) – The United Nations today appealed for \$149 million for humanitarian aid for Lebanon to combat the worsening crisis gripping the country. The appeal covers an initial period of response of three months in priority areas including food, health care, logistics, water and sanitation, protection and common services. Of the \$149 million, \$5 million are being allocated from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) for logistics, water and sanitation, and health care.

“The aid community can help save lives in this region”, said Jan Egeland, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. “More supplies are on their way but we need safe access so that we can get the aid to those who need it most”, he stressed.

The appeal is intended to help meet humanitarian needs in Lebanon and Syria arising as a result of two weeks of conflict between the Israel Defense Forces and Lebanese group Hizbollah (‘Party of God’). Approximately 800,000 people are affected by the conflict, of whom some have become internally displaced persons or refugees. Many internally displaced persons have taken shelter with relatives and friends or in schools, mosques and public spaces. Those who have escaped the most heavily affected regions in the south have headed to larger populations centres such as Sidon, the capital of the south. The total number of affected people includes some 150,000 Lebanese, 1,000 Palestinians and 20,000 third country nationals who have reached Syria. In addition, 115,000 third country nationals from some 20 countries remain in Lebanon. Particularly vulnerable groups include the elderly and chronically ill – especially those confined to hospitals, women and children. Lack of access to water and sanitation, basic health care, and food is also affecting communities. Inside Lebanon, over 350 people have been killed, with over 1,500 wounded, while in Israel, over 34 people have been killed, with 200 more wounded.

While Israel Defense Forces operations initially targeted known Hizbollah sites, the bombing campaign has expanded to key infrastructure with power plants, bridges, seaports, fuel storage, bridges and road networks, among others, systematically targeted. Damage to infrastructure means that there is a real risk of a collapse of essential services that could lead to a humanitarian emergency of proportions well beyond the capacity of national authorities, even if supported by the international community, to respond.

There is a lack of essential goods, with needs particularly acute in villages along the Israeli-Lebanese border, which have been isolated by the conflict. There are reports that food supplies in some villages have been exhausted. The widespread destruction of public infrastructure, including roads and bridges, as well as the targeting of commercial trucks, has seriously hampered relief operations. Additionally, the ongoing hostilities continue to prevent access to affected populations and free movement of relief staff and goods.

Insecurity has made almost all of southern Lebanon inaccessible to humanitarian organizations. When combined with ongoing aerial attacks, the ability of humanitarian agencies to move relief convoys into Lebanon continues to be hampered. However, planning for the development of humanitarian supply access has already commenced with a common logistics service to provide air, land and sea routes to facilitate the delivery of United Nations resourced programmes, as well as Government and non-governmental organization relief supplies.

The number of refugees is expected to increase as the conflict continues to escalate. With neighbouring countries now feeling the human toll of ongoing hostilities, the humanitarian response to the crisis is now being planned at a regional level.

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