

Beat: Politics

FRANCE AND THE U.N LAUNCHED AN INTERNATIONAL WEBCONFERENCE TO SUPPORT LEBANON

€ 253M PLEDGE OVER TRAGIC BEIRUT BLAS

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USPA NEWS - The "International conference on support to Beirut and the Lebanese people" met virtually on August 9th at the invitation of the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, convened in immediate response to and support in the aftermath of the August 4th explosion in Beirut, the (Source Elysee) "On behalf of the Secretary-General, I reiterate our appreciation to President Macron of France for co-convening this really important conference. I thank the leaders here today for your support to Lebanon, and I urge all other leaders to join us in solidarity. The city and people of Beirut have been devastated. » Secretary General of United Nations, Amina Mohamed Deputy Secretary General said.(Source: UN)

LEBANON SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE GATHERED UE & IMF, EIB, EBRD, WB & TOP STATES

The emergency Conference (Online), on support to Lebanon, after the double blast of the August 4th, in Beirut Port, that killed 154 people and wounded more than 5000, and left 300 000 people homeless has gathered more than thirty states and international institutions. The initiative launched by the French President Macron together with the United Nations, two days after the French Head of State visited Beirut, to express his fraternity and solidarity. -----

The countries that participated to this international rescue conference, on August 9, are Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United-Kingdom and the United-States of America, as well as the League of Arab States, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the World Bank (WB).

THE PARTICIPANTS PLEDGED A TOTAL OF€ 253 MILLION

The Beirut explosion on August 4th, which struck the city in its very heart, was a shock to all of Lebanon's people, friends and partners abroad. The participants to today's Conference stood in solidarity with Lebanon. They extended their most heartfelt condolences to the residents of Beirut, many of whom have lost family members and colleagues and friends. The participants to today's Conference also wished a swift recovery to the wounded and traumatized.

The participants have commended the remarkable courage of first-responders, medical teams, search and rescue teams and all Lebanese and international personnel dispatched in Beirut to assist the victims and provide emergency efforts, notably the Lebanese Red Cross and Lebanese civil defense teams.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY LEBANON'S CLOSEST FRIENDS & PARTNERS WILL NOT LET LEBANESE PEOPLE DOWN » (Elysee)

The participants decided to act resolutely in solidarity to help Beirut and the Lebanese people overcome the consequences of the August 4th tragedy. They agreed to put together in the coming days and weeks major resources in order to best answer the immediate needs of Beirut and the Lebanese people. As assessed by the United Nations, needs are particularly visible in the medical and health sector, education, food sector and urban rehabilitation, which will be prioritized in international emergency assistance programs. The participants agreed that their assistance should be timely, sufficient and consistent with the needs of the Lebanese people, well-coordinated under the leadership of the United Nations, and directly delivered to the Lebanese population, with utmost efficiency and transparency. Assistance for an impartial, credible and independent inquiry on the explosion of August 4th is immediately needed and available, upon request of Lebanon. Further to emergency assistance, partners stand ready to support the economic and financial recovery of Lebanon, which requires, as part of a stabilization strategy, that Lebanese authorities fully commit themselves to timely measures and reforms expected by the Lebanese people. In these horrendous times, Lebanon is not alone. The international community, including Lebanon's most crucial partners gathered together with France and the United Nations, standing alongside Beirut and the Lebanese people, and will continue to do their utmost to answer to their most urgent needs. (Source Elysee and United Nations)

U.N DEPUTY SG AMINA MOHAMED LAYS THE PLAN OF AID FINANCING TO REBUILD BEIRYYT AFTER THE TRAGIC BLAST OF AUGUST 4----

Several countries have joined in international efforts to provide humanitarian aid to Lebanon after last week's devastation of the Beirut port. French President Emmanuel Macron hosted a remote donor conference today attended by nearly 30 countries as well as the EU and Arab League. The total figure of "emergency aid pledged or that can be mobilised quickly" amounts to €252.7 million including €30 million from France, President Emmanuel Macron's office said.-----

The UN had earlier said some €100 million will be needed over the next three months for health services, emergency shelter, food distribution and programmes to prevent further spread of Covid-19, among other interventions. US President Donald Trump, without stating a figure, said Washington "stands ready and willing to continue providing aid to help the people of Lebanon in their recovery". The White House statement did not provide figures, but the US government has announced \$15 million in aid so far. The European Commission added another €30 million to the €33 million it had already announced.

"As needs rise we are providing humanitarian support to hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable people," commissioner for crisis management Janez Lenarcic said in a statement. Other donors include Britain (£20m) Norway (€6.5m), Denmark (€20m) and Switzerland with €3.7m.-----

"The objective today is to act quickly and effectively to coordinate our aid on the ground so that it goes as efficiently as possible to the Lebanese people," Mr Macron told the conference. Mr Macron was the first world leader to visit Beirut after Tuesday's devastating explosion which killed at least 158 people, wounded some 6,000 and left an estimated 300,000 homeless. The Lebanese army's Colonel Roger Khoury, who was leading a rescue team at the blast site, said today that "we have fading hopes of finding survivors". The catastrophe has revived the mass anti-government protests that had for months demanded the wholesale removal of Lebanon's political elite, until coronavirus lockdown measures brought an uneasy calm.

This afternoon, hundreds of demonstrators gathered again in and around Martyrs' Square, a short walk from the site of the blast. Police fired tear gas in an attempt to disperse protesters hurling stones and shooting fireworks near an access street to parliament, AFP correspondents reported. Protesters had briefly taken over several government ministries the previous night, while security forces scuffled with larger crowds converging on the epicentre of the protests. Human Rights Watch's Lebanon researcher Aya Majzoub said some security forces had responded by indiscriminately firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

"Instead of deploying the army to help residents clear rubble from their homes, businesses, and communities, the Lebanese authorities chose to deploy them and other security forces against protesters," she said.-----

Saturday's violence injured 65 people, according to the Lebanese Red Cross, while lawyers supporting protesters said security forces made 20 arrests. The August 4 explosion came as Lebanon was already reeling from an economic crisis that has seen its currency collapse, plunging swathes of its population into poverty. The fury on the streets of Beirut has further shaken the embattled government of Prime Minister Hassan Diab, which saw its first cabinet resignation when the information minister, Manal Abdel Samad, quit today. "After the enormous Beirut catastrophe, I announce my resignation from government," she said, apologising to citizens for having failed them. Last year, Ireland donated \$2.2m (approx €1.9m) to the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund." (Source : UN)

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