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## **ICN Disaster Fund supports nurses in Lebanon following catastrophic explosion**

**Geneva, Switzerland; 18 November 2020** – As winter approaches, our thoughts go to those in Beirut who are rebuilding their city and their lives. Many are still living unsheltered, or in damaged homes; many are still suffering from physical and mental wounds. And many of these are nurses who ran straight into the heart of the disaster to care for the wounded and dying. It is now our turn to care for them.

On 4 August 2020, a devastating explosion rocked the city of Beirut, killing over 200 people, including four nurses, injuring thousands, and leaving over an estimated 300,000 people homeless. Three hospitals were completely destroyed, and two others damaged. The International Council of Nurses (ICN) immediately contacted our member, the Order of Nurses in Lebanon, to ask what support they needed.

Dr Myrna Doumit, President of Order of Nurses in Lebanon, recounted the bravery and sacrifice of nurses and other healthcare workers who despite injuries continued to work to save the lives of those caught up in the blast. Recently, she shared a very moving [video](#) in which Lebanese nurses tell their stories of their experiences during this tragic event. Their incredible heroism and self-sacrifice demonstrate the amazing strength, compassion, and dedication of nurses.

ICN, as a global federation of over 130 national nursing associations (NNAs), serves to support nurses at all times. In times of disaster, ICN serves as a hub for NNAs and individual nurses who want to help their colleagues. Through the ICN Disaster Fund, ICN, its members and individuals raised 25,000 CHF (approx. USD 27,340) which was sent to the Order of Nurses in Lebanon to support the most urgent needs of nurses affected by the disaster.

ICN President Annette Kennedy said, “ICN’s Disaster Fund aims to support our colleagues working in areas struck by disaster – whether they be natural or manmade. We thank our members and the individual nurses who generously donated to the Fund in order to support nurses in Lebanon, a country which was already suffering an economic crisis, and coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, before this devastating tragedy occurred.”

Dr Doumit wrote to ICN saying, “I am writing this letter to express our gratitude for your instrumental support during the time of crisis when Lebanese nurses needed the most this help. We appreciate your sincere and heartfelt efforts which were highly needed. Your compassion, concern and kindness made the difference at a time of tragedy and real distress.”

ICN CEO Howard Catton said, “We are grateful to be able to give some small amount of support to these nurses who have suffered so much from this tragedy. We cannot thank them enough for their selfless acts which saved the lives of so many injured in this disaster. We

particularly want to thank the nursing associations and individual nurses who generously donated to the Fund. This is a powerful demonstration of the solidarity between nurses across the world who come together through ICN to support each other in both good times and bad.”

The ICN Disaster Fund was created in 2010 following the earthquake in Haiti which killed and injured hundreds of thousands of people and completely destroyed the National School of Nursing in Port-au Prince. The Fund helped assisted nurses in their personal needs (blankets, food, temporary housing); supported volunteer nurses in the fight against the cholera outbreak; rebuilt the physical structure of the Haitian national nursing association; and supported a nationwide meeting of nurses in Haiti on how to rebuild nursing service in the country. Since then, ICN’s Disaster Fund has gone on to support nurses affected by a variety of disasters, including the 2019 bombings in Sri Lanka and the devastation caused by Hurricane Dorian in the Caribbean. The Fund has supported disaster workshops and training in disaster preparedness for nurses, as well as physical and material rehabilitation and rehousing.

Click [here](#) to watch the testimonials from the Lebanese nurses.

Read our other stories on the Lebanon disaster from [6 August](#), [13 August](#) and [4 September](#).

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#### **Note to Editors**

The **International Council of Nurses** (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses’ associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

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