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AUSTRALIA
Be love. End poverty.

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For immediate release.

Christian partner impacted by huge explosion that devastated Beirut on Tuesday.

The team at Merath, is safe despite reporting property damage and distress in the wake of the shocking explosion in Beirut on Tuesday.

Baptist World Aid has been in contact with Merath since the explosion. Staff in Beirut are safe, but describe the distress and devastation that the people of Beirut are experiencing in “this darkest time”. Property damage to the Beirut Baptist School (just over 5 km from the blast) has been assessed by field staff on the ground as they come to terms with the impact of this latest blow in what was “already a difficult year” for the school.

“We will continue to respond to this catastrophe with local Church Partners as they respond by providing food, providing hygiene supplies, providing water and shelter for families that are devastated by this disaster,” Merath said, yesterday.

We will keep you updated as this tragedy unfolds in a country already deep in economic crisis and battling the Coronavirus pandemic.

Nabil Costa, the Executive Director of our partner in Lebanon, shared these thoughts:

Until this, we thought we had been through it all. Since September, forest fires, a financial crisis, bankruptcies, unemployment, refugee crisis, revolution in Lebanon, COVID-19. But again, over all this, we were surprised by this explosion. 2,700 tonnes of ammonium nitrate. 135 are dead, many are lost, thousands and thousands of injured people who don't have a place to go to the hospital.

I feel now, we are as if on a ship, caught by a storm. I don't know how, I don't know when, but I trust that the Lord will lead us to land on a safe shore. Meanwhile, during this difficult trip, we are burdened. We promised Him to take care of the people who are with us on this ship. Our eyes are on Him. Our hands are on the plough. Our team is doing great and creative work.

A personal note from John Hickey:

“We are very conscious that this huge disaster will have a massive knock-on effect on the people of Lebanon, and particularly the most vulnerable, including the refugee groups we have focussed on over the past several years. The health system is now in a critical state, food supplies are badly impacted, essential infrastructure is destroyed or badly damaged – meaning supply chains for important items will be completely disrupted. There will be significant and growing needs to address in the coming weeks, and we are thankful we have such strong local partners to collaborate with to bring direct assistance to people suffering in Lebanon.”

We are responding to this disaster through our Middle East Crisis partners. You can find more information about our response at www.baptistworldaid.org.au/beirut-explosion.

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