

***An update from our colleagues in Beirut
on the port explosion***



One of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history decimated Beirut on 4 August 2020. In a few seconds, this beautiful city's landscape was transformed into a desolate crater where distress, fear and death ensued. Parts of the city were declared a disaster zone. More than 200 people died, and over 7,000 were injured, leaving 300,000 homeless, and causing billions of dollars' worth of damages.

At the Regional Representation, we are thankfully all safe, but shocked and afraid, and feelings of disappointment and regret linger. Dr Yehia's apartment in Beirut was hit by the blast and all the windows, doors and shutters were broken or damaged. When asked about it, he remarked, 'Thank God we were not in the house at that moment'. Even though it is relatively far from the port, the entrance to the building that houses the RR was also damaged.

The animal sector has been absent from media reports of the incident, whether through disinterest or oversight, but it has also suffered enormous losses from the blast's impact. Within the first hour after the explosion, veterinarians rushed to their clinics, sometimes welcoming animals affected by the disaster between two shaken walls. Some even took in injured people to relieve completely overwhelmed or demolished hospitals. Thus, the blast has not just affected doctors' ability to function in a disaster situation, veterinary activity too has been affected, with the lifelong efforts of dozens of city veterinarians almost being wiped out.

Today, Beirut's veterinary clinics need help from responsive countries, agencies and organisations. Since the financial crisis of October 2019, which plunged Lebanon into a brutal recession, these clinics have been struggling to meet their needs and to obtain the drugs and tools necessary for the proper functioning of veterinary activity, added to this precarious situation are the consequences of this unbelievable disaster. The devastating material damage has reduced the number of veterinary clinics, and the gaps in services is being severely felt. While the whole world came to the aid of the Lebanese people, few mobilised to rescue animals and those who take care of them.

Our thoughts are with everyone, from animal owners who were injured, lost their homes or businesses, to the animals who lost shelter and care, or were injured or died.

The Beirut port explosion in photos



We wish to thank our colleagues from our Beirut office for submitting this article to the OIE News Team.

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