

## Urgent Call for Ceasefire: Humanitarian Organizations in Lebanon Call for Immediate Action

September 26, 2024

The past few days saw unprecedented escalation of Israeli airstrikes across Lebanon including the South, southern suburb of Beirut and the Bekaa, with attacks increasing in number and the scope expanding to additional areas across the country, such as Mount Lebanon and North Lebanon. Israeli forces stated that they conducted over 1,500 strikes between September 23-24.<sup>1</sup> The destruction of civilian infrastructure and the level of damage in residential areas has caused massive civilian casualties and displacement.

The human toll is already staggering, with the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health reporting 558 people killed including 50 children, and 1,835 people wounded on Monday September 23rd alone.<sup>2</sup> This was the deadliest attack since the beginning of the conflict, and the deadliest on Lebanon since the 2006 war, signifying a major escalation in the region.

The attacks have led to a large wave of displacement, with many civilians forced to flee with only a few belongings.<sup>3</sup> Data from the Government of Lebanon reports an estimated 104,130 displaced on September 24-25.<sup>4</sup> This comes on top of the 111,696 people who had already been displaced since the start of the conflict, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).<sup>5</sup> Further, 347 public institutions including schools, education centers, and vocational institutes have been transformed into emergency shelters to welcome displaced individuals.<sup>6</sup>

Last week, a number of attacks on communication devices were recorded across Lebanon, causing them to explode and ultimately affect civilians in public spaces, including children. These attacks were deemed to be against international human rights law by the United Nations Human Rights Office.<sup>7</sup>

The protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure and the delivery of aid to all vulnerable communities remains our highest priority. Needs are growing daily, particularly after the

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<sup>1</sup> [Hundreds dead in Lebanon as Israel vows to continue 'striking hard'](#), Washington Post, September 24, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> [وزير الصحة اللبناني: ارتفاع حصيلة الاعتداءات الاسرائيلية الى 558 شهيدا بينهم 50 طفلا و 1835 جرحا](#), Al Seyassa, 24 September 2024.

<sup>3</sup> [Lebanese official media: Israel sending phone warnings to evacuate](#), September 23, 2024, France 24.

<sup>4</sup> Israeli Hostilities in Lebanon - Situation Report. Presidency of the council of Ministers, General Secretariat of the Supreme Defense Council. 25 September 2024 - Hour 16:00.

<sup>5</sup> MOBILITY SNAPSHOT – Round 47 New Displacement Update - Data collected up till 3 pm on 24 September 2024

<sup>6</sup> Israeli Hostilities in Lebanon - Situation Report. Presidency of the council of Ministers, General Secretariat of the Supreme Defense Council. 25 September 2024 - Hour 16:00.

<sup>7</sup> UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk [stated](#), "Simultaneous targeting of thousands of individuals, whether civilians or members of armed groups, without knowledge as to who was in possession of the targeted devices, their location and their surroundings at the time of the attack, violates international human rights law and, to the extent applicable, international humanitarian law".

increased attacks the past few days. The international community must urgently demonstrate support by funding the emergency relief operations. Stakeholders with influence are urged to use their leverage to contain and prevent further escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, end the war in Gaza, and prevent a regional escalation of the conflict.

Specifically, we call for:

- Respect for the principles of International Humanitarian Law, which include the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure <sup>8</sup>
- Protection of humanitarian workers, medical teams, and humanitarian sites, including first responders, and the facilitation of humanitarian operations <sup>9</sup>
- Provision of increased, flexible, and timely disbursement of emergency funding to enable humanitarians to respond to growing needs
- Prioritization of key interventions in the case of further escalation, including shelter, health, food and water

The Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum reiterates our call for an immediate ceasefire across Lebanon and in Gaza. The toll on civilian lives is immense, and without swift action towards a ceasefire, the situation will continue to worsen. As hostilities intensify, the risk of a broader regional escalation increases.

*The Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum (LHIF) is an informal and independent coordinating body comprised of 69 international NGOs (INGOs) who are working to address the needs of vulnerable individuals, families and communities throughout Lebanon.*

*For inquiries, please contact Suzanne Takkenberg at [sbensalem@lb.acfspain.org](mailto:sbensalem@lb.acfspain.org)*

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<sup>8</sup> [Practice relating to Rule 54: Attacks against Objects Indispensable to the Survival of the Civilian Population](#). ICRC.

<sup>9</sup> [International Humanitarian Law: Rule 31 Humanitarian Relief Personnel](#) - ICRC.