



Situation Report

Lebanon- Beirut Port Explosion

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Situation overview

Experts say the massive explosion that shook Beirut's Port on 4 August 2020, devastating large parts of Beirut, was one of the biggest non-nuclear explosions in history. As a result, more than 300,000 people were displaced, including 81,000 women of reproductive age (15 - 49 years), 3,938 of whom were pregnant. These women required support to meet their health, protection and menstrual hygiene needs, along with their overall sanitation. UNFPA, as a direct response to the emergency, immediately initiated the distribution of dignity kits through its existing implementing partners. The kits contained several essential items including 2-3 months supply of sanitary pads, soap, towels, toothbrushes, toothpaste, reusable face masks, etc.

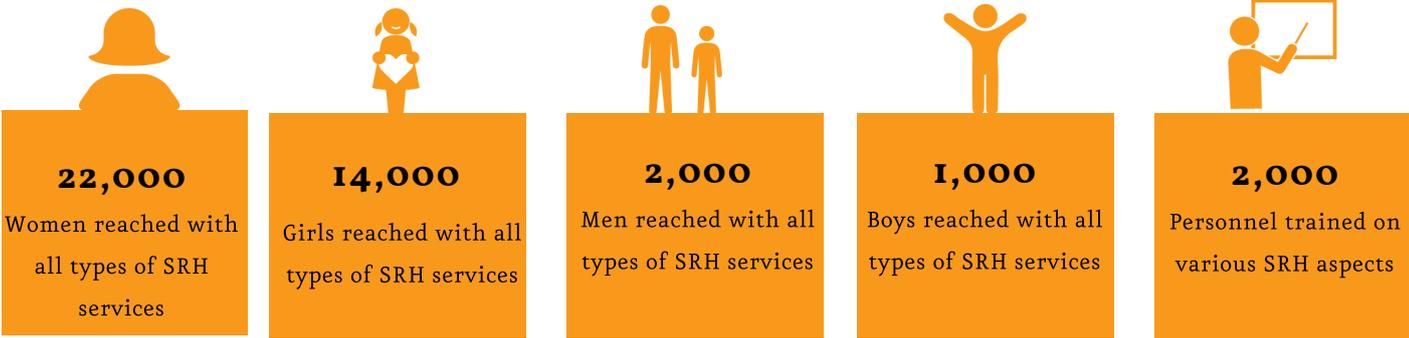
Throughout the emergency operation to the Beirut Port Explosion, UNFPA collaborated with 23 partners from diverse regions, who were entrusted with scaling up their efforts and switching many of their activities to respond to the emergency operation with the aim to reach those mostly affected through provision of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services as well as prevention and response to gender based violence (GBV) in the affected areas. In addition, eight mobile medical units were deployed to safeguard the need for first aid support and continuity of health care services for vulnerable people in the affected areas.

The explosion also subjected families and individuals of all ages to post-traumatic stress, with signs of trauma including nightmares, anxiety, anger, flashbacks, crying, exhaustion, etc. UNFPA strengthened actions to mainstream mental health in SRH and GBV services to help affected people cope as well as overcome the immense challenges they were facing. This included the development of an awareness package consisting of a short video targeting pregnant women and new mothers as they might experience a range of reactions after such a traumatic event along with a tip sheet for midwives and gynecologists aiming at providing information and tips on how to cope with the related trauma and distress. Support was not limited to individual psycho-social support and group sessions only, as UNFPA's partners also examined the affected neighborhoods of Beirut through door-to-door visits providing needed care and counselling where needed and referring affected people to the nearby primary health care centres and static mobile units as needed. Support was also given to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups whose access to SRH and GBV services can be impacted and/or denied including for people living with HIV, sex workers, members of the LGBTIQ community and migrant workers.

In view of the fact that young people were among the first category to volunteer and to help the affected population by the Beirut Port Explosion, a joint collaboration between UNESCO, UNFPA and UNODC was launched to support youth led initiatives for implementing innovative solutions within their respective communities that sustained damage. Out of the 15 selected local entities, UNFPA partnered with 5 that started to execute various interventions including development of an application for responding to various needs, upcycling material resulting from the explosion to help older persons, use drama for expressing feelings and reactions related to the explosion, etc. To reduce the likelihood of transmission of the COVID-19 infections, humanitarian first responders and health care providers responding to the Beirut Port explosion were equipped with personal protective equipment (PPEs) some of which provided by UNFPA. Nevertheless, the spread of the infection increased exponentially following the explosion, compelling UNFPA's partners to switch to remote implementation while others in addition to face to face activities with protection measures. This led to adopting different modalities and approaches for service delivery by UNFPA including development of modules, use of telehealth, use of digital technology, etc. As an agency that supports data collection in emergencies, UNFPA conducted several assessments as follows: a) a rapid assessment of 55 primary health care facilities in the affected regions by the explosion to investigate the level of damage and impact on continuity of care and particularly SRH, b) assessment of the maternity wards in the 5 field hospitals set up by donor countries to assess the level of maternal care services, c) in-depth assessment of the status of medical equipment among 8 social and health care development centers to assess gaps and requirements for ensuring continuity of care, d) assessment of the impact of the explosion (as well as COVID19 and deteriorating economic situation) on older persons residing in the regions affected by the Beirut Port explosion, and e) in-depth assessment of the impact of the explosion on selected women vulnerable groups including those with disabilities, migrant workers and LGBTIQ+. The findings of those assessments were very essential in determining immediate needs, tailoring some interventions and defining the medium term needs for UNFPA and the humanitarian community at large. It is also important to emphasize the support provided to Quarantina Hospital, namely through the procurement and provision of equipment for its maternity ward. In addition, UNFPA procured life-saving medications, contraceptives and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits to the health facilities. Meanwhile, UNFPA was operating in full coordination with the health and protection sectors and key stakeholders including the Ministry of Public Health (namely the National Mental Health programme, the primary health care departments and the hospitals and dispensaries department) as well as the Ministry of Social Affairs.

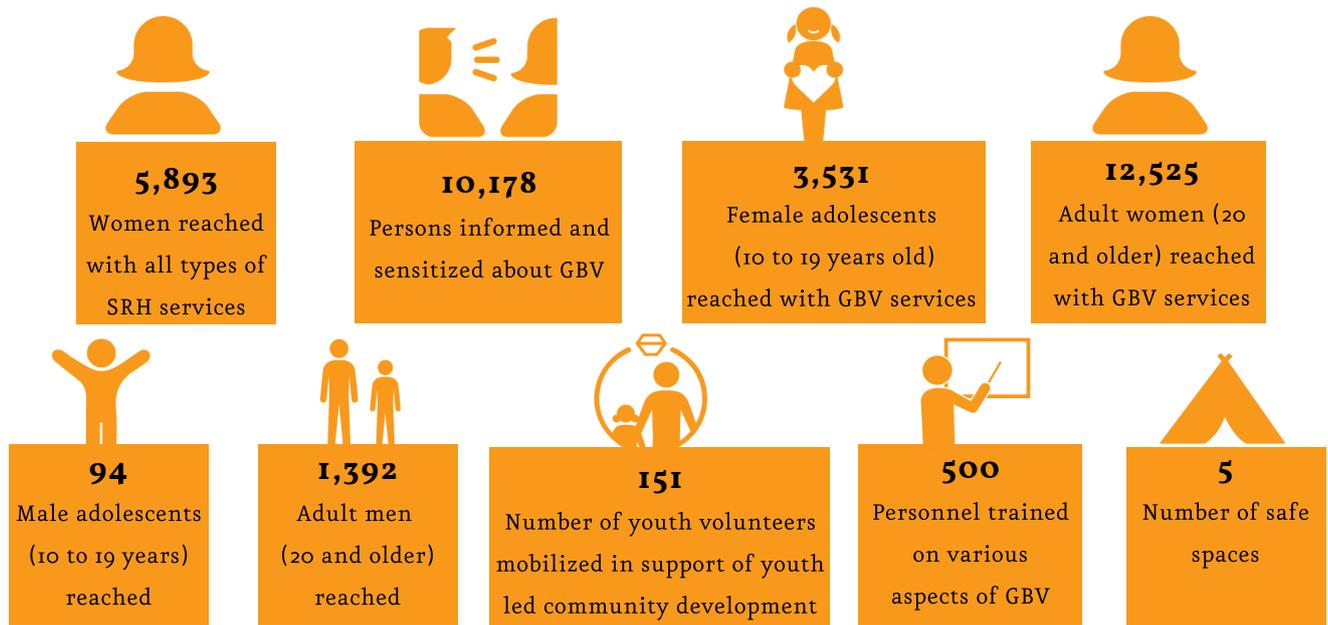
UNFPA Humanitarian Response in Lebanon, Beirut Explosion

Sexual and Reproductive Health services



UNFPA Humanitarian Response in Lebanon, Beirut Explosion

Gender-Based Violence services



Additional Services

