



**JOINT STATEMENT BY
The Lebanese Red Cross (LRC)
and
The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
and
The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent National
Societies (IFRC)
on the**

**INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT
RESPONSE TO THE ONGOING CRISIS IN LEBANON**

BACKGROUND & NEEDS

Since 8 October 2023, the escalation of hostilities in Lebanon has torn at the fabric of daily life. People in Southern Lebanon are facing increased tension and relentless cross-border hostilities. What began as localized clashes has spread, with the conflict now reaching as far as the North Bekaa Valley, Baalbek-Hermel Governorate and Beirut. After the intense bombardments and incidents of the last week, killing hundreds, injuring thousands and displacing hundreds of thousands, it is not clear how the situation will evolve. The latest flare-up of violence threatens to worsen a humanitarian crisis in a country that has suffered from years of conflict, instability, and economic hardship.

At this stage, the humanitarian needs are being assessed, but the escalating hostilities are making it increasingly difficult for humanitarian organizations to deliver critical aid. Civilians are being directly affected and it is crucial that first responders are granted access to those in need. The healthcare system in Lebanon is stretched, with hospitals operating at high capacity and running out of medical supplies. Medical facilities can therefore no longer provide the most essential services.

Families are being forced to leave their homes quickly, often without time to carry their belongings. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands have fled seeking refuge elsewhere in the country and abroad, adding to the 113,000 individuals that were already internally displaced due to the ongoing hostilities since October 2023. They are leaving behind their jobs and everything they know. Fear is everywhere, with rockets, airstrikes and the sounds of fighting all around them.

The LRC, the ICRC and the IFRC are extremely concerned by the intensification of ongoing hostilities that have caused significant casualties, injuries and large-scale displacement of affected people. It is an urgent priority for the Movement to assist people affected by the escalation of the conflict and to scale up our wide range of humanitarian interventions.

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IMMEDIATE ACTIONS BY THE MOVEMENT

The LRC is a well-established actor in the country with an outstanding reputation and unique access across the country, notably due to their neutrality and impartiality. Their core services (Emergency Medical Services, Blood Transfusion Services and Medical Social Services) are available to any person in need, free of charge. All Movement partners present in the country benefit from the positive perception and trust that LRC has when operating in communities or interacting with authorities. This provides a good basis for a successful Red Pillar response.

Through its network of 465 staff and 15,000 volunteers across the country, Lebanese Red Cross rapidly scaled up its services in response to the recent attacks. EMS teams transported injured and deceased people, while also providing on-site treatment and facilitating inter-hospital transfers. The BTS team continued its vital support by providing blood components to hospitals. LRC also mobilized its Mobile Medical Units, USAR team, logistics support, and Disaster Management volunteers who arranged large-scale relief distributions for displaced people.

In response to the escalation, the ICRC focusses on ensuring that population affected by conflict have access to essential services including health, water, sanitation, as well as economic and food security. To achieve this, the ICRC is coordinating with different actors in close cooperation with LRC, and also other Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners, the Government of Lebanon, ministries, public authorities, governors, municipalities and other humanitarian actors. As per its mandate, IFRC quickly mobilized international solidarity for LRC's response plan, including shipment of prepositioned stock, coordination of in-kind donations, and an immediate release of funds from the IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF). IFRC also continues to coordinate the Membership in-country in support of the LRC's response.

MOVEMENT RESPONSE

The escalation of the crisis in September 2024 triggered the need for a collective Movement response according to Seville Agreement 2.0. Already since October 2023, LRC, ICRC and IFRC have coordinated and aligned their contingency and response plans. Coordination between LRC, ICRC, IFRC and PNS is well-established, which allows for a swift response by the Movement with strong complementary activities.

LRC, ICRC and IFRC now commit to leverage their capacities to reach hundreds of thousands of people in Lebanon who are currently affected by providing lifesaving health assistance (primarily pre-hospital care, blood services, primary healthcare and medical/surgical care), protection and essential services. The Movement aims to deliver assistance to people who still reside in conflict-affected areas, people who were forced to flee their homes, families across Lebanon that host displaced people and other population groups who are affected by the conflict. All Movement partners will abide by the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and the principle of "do no harm".

Responding to the rapidly evolving needs of the affected population is being prioritized above all else. The LRC with its well-established services and its defined response plan is at the center of the Movement response. Building on long-term engagement with the LRC on preparedness and crisis response, the ICRC and IFRC are scaling up their operational, technical, and financial support to the National Society. This involves areas such as joint relief operations, Restoring Family Links, Health Care in Danger, supply chain support, prepositioning and mobilization of essential in-kind items, HR support, and capacity strengthening.

To achieve the overall objectives of the Movement response, LRC, ICRC and IFRC will focus on the below priorities, in line with the respective mandates:

The LRC will focus on:

- **Priority 1:** Provide life-saving health assistance through the sustained delivery of emergency medical services, blood transfusions, primary healthcare, and mental health support.
- **Priority 2:** Protect vulnerable populations by ensuring their dignified access to essential services, including shelter, water, sanitation, and hygiene alongside multi-purpose cash assistance.
- **Priority 3:** Strengthen resilience by supporting communities to rebuild their lives and livelihoods, address long-term consequences of the crisis, and foster community engagement and accountability.

The ICRC will focus on:

- **Priority 1:** Ensure war-wounded individuals have access to high quality medical and surgical care.
- **Priority 2:** Ensure protection through dialogue, neutral intermediary role and PFL.
- **Priority 3:** Ensure people affected by conflict, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), have access to essential basic needs.

The IFRC will focus on:

- **Priority 1:** Coordinate the Movement actions around capacity strengthening and NSD to ensure that LRC will be able to sustain humanitarian services in alignment with their operational priorities.
- **Priority 2:** Coordinate the Membership to ensure an effective and coherent approach in support of LRC services, including resource mobilization efforts, in line with the directions of the Movement response.
- **Priority 3:** Provide support to LRC to address the needs of the displaced population and host families, and to maintain its core services.

MOVEMENT COORDINATION

The leadership of LRC, ICRC and IFRC conducted a Mini-Summit on 25 September 2024 following the dramatic escalation of the crisis. The Movement partners committed to continue working in the spirit of, and in full alignment with, the Seville Agreement 2.0 (SA 2.0) to ensure a well-coordinated and impactful response, with the LRC acting as convener. The support of the ICRC as co-convener in a context of conflict, together with the support of the IFRC, will allow a more efficient use of the Movement's resources at hand.

This response is driven by a strong will for pragmatic coordination. Movement coordination mechanisms exist at three levels: strategic, operational and technical. **Strategic tripartite meetings** were already being conducted weekly, and ad hoc strategic meetings will take place as required. LRC, ICRC and IFRC will also cooperate daily at operational level in a **Movement Operational Forum** to align assessments of needs, to define complementary activities and to engage in problem solving. To provide expert support, LRC, ICRC and IFRC will create **technical working groups** based on needs, for example on Movement communications and security, with specialists from LRC, ICRC, IFRC and PNSs.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Even with the challenges and unpredictability of the ongoing hostilities, all components of the Movement agree to ensure an aligned and coherent internal and external communication approach. Any sensitive language or sensitive humanitarian issues requiring collective reflections will be jointly agreed, while respecting and protecting confidentiality of ICRC closed dialogues with parties to the conflict at all times.

There will be a regular Movement update for partners engaged in the country and regular briefings for the diplomatic community and donors. It has also been agreed that all partners must strive to highlight and support the role of the Lebanese Red Cross, as this is an opportunity to strengthen the perception of the Movement in- and outside the country.

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While it is commendable that many partners express their interest to support the humanitarian response, it is vital that no uncoordinated shipments or surge support take place. LRC, ICRC and IFRC will inform the other components of the Movement about the needs and gaps on a regular basis.

OUR COMMITMENT

The Movement components are committed to its call for restraint, dialogue and de-escalation. All actors must take concrete actions to uphold International Humanitarian Law, to guarantee protection for civilians, health workers and health facilities, and to recognize our protective emblems. It is critical that the Movement components maintains access to all areas affected by the conflict to be able to maintain its life-saving services. The Movement components also continues to warn that a broader regional conflict would have even more devastating consequences for communities across the region.

Lebanese Red Cross' financial resources and stock of essential supplies are quickly depleting. The Movement components urgently asks for solidarity and donations from partners to collectively meet the increasing demand for life-saving health services, protection and essential assistance.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is committed to use all possible resources to react to the needs of the affected population. We thank all partners for their current and future engagement in this joint endeavor.



Beirut, Lebanon, 17 October 2024