

UK medics fly to Beirut following deadly blast

A British team of specialist medics will fly out to Lebanon today (7 August) to assess health needs on the ground and identify what more the UK can do to help following the devastating explosion on Tuesday.

The five medics from the UK's Emergency Medical Team (UK EMT) will leave from London Heathrow and travel to Lebanon, at the request of the Lebanese Government, to determine the urgent needs in the Beirut health system and look at how the UK can support.

The team specialises in trauma, emergency nursing and rehabilitation and is funded by UK aid. Another medic from the UK EMT is already in Beirut.

Earlier this week the UK also sent a team of four humanitarian experts to Beirut, comprised of two logisticians, a security advisor and a field support specialist

This comes as the UK announces £3 million has been allocated to the British Red Cross for the emergency relief effort following Tuesday's devastating explosion, which has left over 200,000 people homeless.

International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

"The Lebanese people continue to be in our thoughts at this terrible time. The UK is sending these world-leading medics to use their expertise and to make sure the people of Lebanon get the help they need as quickly as possible.

"Today's field team comes on top of the UK's substantial military support and aid package. We will do everything we can to help the people of Lebanon in their hour of need."

The charity UK MED coordinates the deployment of medics from the UK's Emergency Medical Team.

CEO of UK MED David Wightwick, said:

"I've worked in and have friends in Beirut, so like everyone was shocked to see the devastation following the explosion in the city and so many people harmed.

"UK-Med and partners Humanity & Inclusion are supporting the UK Emergency Medical Team to make an assessment of how we might contribute to the health response, working alongside partners on the ground to support overstretched health facilities and provide specialist clinicians."

Once in Beirut, the medical experts will visit hospitals and clinics, both functioning and damaged, to gain an understanding of the severity of the

challenges and any further specialists that may be needed. They will also meet with the World Health Organisation, United Nations and NGOs to help coordinate the response.

The team, made up of volunteers from UK Med and Humanity and Inclusion, includes an orthopaedic surgeon and trauma consultant, senior health advisors, a paramedic and a rehabilitation specialist. They will join another team member who was already in Beirut at the time of the blast.

In addition to supporting the Lebanese Red Cross, UK aid is also supporting MapAction to provide specialist mapping services to help humanitarian experts understand the need on the ground at the port.

The damage caused by the blast is widespread and likely to have long-lasting consequences. Lebanon was already experiencing a major economic crisis and dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, as well as hosting over 1.5 million refugees from the war in neighbouring Syria.

The UK already works closely with Lebanon and this partnership is focused on managing the humanitarian, stability and security implications of the war in Syria.

- The £3 million for the British Red Cross is an allocation from the £5 million that the Foreign Secretary announced earlier this week.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-to-send-emergency-relief-to-lebanon>
- The Ministry of Defence announced yesterday that Royal Navy survey ship HMS Enterprise will sail to Lebanon to assess the damage of Beirut's port and help return it to normal operations.