

THE JOURNEY TO RECOVERY

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND
IN BEIRUT'S **KARANTINA**



UN
DP



THE BEIRUT BLAST'S IMPACT ON THE **PEOPLE OF KARANTINA**

The devastating explosion that originated at the Beirut Port on August 4th 2020 severely damaged entire neighborhoods and left almost 200 dead, 7,000 injured and nearly 300,000 homeless. It caused major trauma across all social groups, especially the most vulnerable, including children, youth, the elderly, refugees, and persons with disabilities. Due to its proximity to the explosion site, the area of **Karantina sustained the highest level of damage in terms of human losses and physical destruction.**

Assessments carried out by UNDP placed a special focus on Karantina, known to be historically marginalized and home to an already vulnerable population of diverse nationalities, ethnicities, and religions. More than 700 households resided in the neighborhood at the time of the blast, including migrant workers, refugees, as well as impoverished Lebanese families.

Considerable damage was inflicted on the public hospital that served the impoverished populations in the area, leaving them with no access to healthcare. In a context of a deep economic and financial crisis, devaluation of the local currency and increased spread of the COVID19- pandemic, the explosion came to further affect the lives and livelihoods of the people of karantina. The already vulnerable dwellers are now left with no means to rebuild and restore their livelihoods.

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SHOP OWNER IN KARANTINA.

A PEOPLE-CENTRED APPROACH TO RECOVERY

Following the explosion, UNDP issued a flagship report focused on [“Leaving No One Behind and the importance of an inclusive and just recovery process in Beirut”](#). Experience has shown that in most recovery and reconstruction plans, the overarching approach is one focused on physical reconstruction. UNDP is advocating for a people-centered recovery process, and as such is compelled to work towards an inclusive and just recovery that preserves human dignity and rights, and that leaves no one behind. Given the overlapping and pre-existing vulnerabilities, an integrated response that caters to the immediate recovery needs of the people while ensuring longer term development and sustainability is crucial. **UNDP is addressing post-blast recovery in Karantina as part of a larger area-based, urban recovery approach, in close coordination with the Municipality of Beirut and in partnership with other UN agencies and civil society organizations, drawing on shared technical expertise and know-how.** This approach goes beyond the physical reconstruction to address livelihoods, access to services, an improved environment, as well as social, cultural, and legal support. It would provide UNDP with a pilot case for learning and replication in other affected areas.

Our response takes into consideration the social networks that links people to their neighbourhoods, restore their shared memories and address the vulnerabilities and risks that have long existed in the area in addition to those that emerged following the blast.

Building on our “Leave no one Behind” report and completed assessments of the impact of the blast on socio-economic conditions; damaged houses and small businesses; and debris management, UNDP is planning a two-phased response strategy in Karantina:

An **immediate response** over a period of 6 months which aims at addressing the immediate impact of the explosion on the affected population; including the rehabilitation of shelters, access to legal aid, support to small businesses, a new point of service at the Beirut Public Hospital in Karantina, psycho-social support, removal of construction and demolition waste, and introduction of energy efficient solutions.

A **medium to longer-term response** that extends over 12 months and addresses remaining needs and priorities in the area based on the vision and aspirations of the local community; including economic empowerment and job creation, neighbourhood improvement and community initiatives, and environmental solutions for sustainable waste management and a focus on trauma healing through documentation, commemoration, and social engagement.



THE JOURNEY TO RECOVERY HAS BEGUN

Informed by people’s needs, we have started our intervention in Karantina, focusing on immediate support:



Restoring and repairing damaged buildings, including historical buildings, and residential houses.



Supporting small businesses through renovation, replacing lost items, and assisting in rebuilding stocks.



Establishing a new point of service at the Beirut Public Hospital in Karantina to meet the health needs of vulnerable groups, particularly persons with disabilities. This includes setting-up a physiotherapy unit and providing medical equipment and supplies.



Access to legal aid through the establishment of a legal helpdesk.



Psycho-social support to the youth, women, and the elderly from diverse backgrounds, engaging them in trauma healing activities



Supporting waste and rubble removal and providing households and public institutions with sustainable energy systems.