



# Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund In Lebanon

## The Issue

Humanitarian crises and threats to peace are more common than ever before. The numbers of people displaced due to conflict, crises, persecution and human rights violations are the highest on record and have more than doubled in a decade. Conflict is on the rise with tensions exacerbated by climate change, violent extremism and global pandemics. Unfolding crises and emergencies around the world pose new and ongoing threats to gender equality and international peace and security.

In Lebanon an unprecedented political and economic crisis compounded by multiple shocks has devastated the country since 2019, including the October 2019 Uprising, the COVID-19 outbreak in February 2020, and most recently the August 2020 Beirut Port Explosion. Resulting in a governmental vacuum, a steep depreciation of the Lebanese pound, inflation, and shortages; this multifaceted crisis threw millions of Lebanese into poverty. According to ESCWA, more than 82% of the country's population is now living in multidimensional poverty and struggling to access bare necessities like food, health, water and education and public utilities<sup>1</sup>. These challenges are exacerbated by a decade-long protracted Syrian refugee crisis that stretched public services and increased job competition between host and refugee communities. Lebanon is the host to the highest number of refugees per capita, with over one million Syrian refugees and more than 270,000 Palestinian refugees.

Already suffering from deep gender inequalities – with a ranking of 145 out of 153 countries in the 2020 World Economic Forum Gender Gap report – Lebanese women and girls have been among those most impacted by the current crisis with an expected push back in hard-earned gender equality gains. According to the Rapid Gender

Analysis of the August 2020 Beirut Port Explosion, the blast increased women's vulnerabilities, reduced their access to reproductive and health services, intensified their exposure to gender-based violence, narrowed their economic opportunities, and dramatically increased their food insecurity. As women remain excluded from decision-making, a majority of the responses from governmental agencies as well as local and international organizations remain gender blind.

Evidence shows that when women are empowered to meaningfully participate in conflict resolution, it undeniably results in more lasting peace. Women's inclusion in peace processes makes humanitarian assistance more effective, strengthens the efforts of peacekeepers, and accelerates the economic recovery of conflict-affected communities.

Despite this, women's participation in peacebuilding remains needlessly low and financial resources supporting the activities of women peacebuilders are dramatically underfunded.

## The Response

The United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) is a global partnership re-energizing action and accelerating support for women's participation, leadership, and empowerment in humanitarian response and peace and security settings. WPHF is a multi-partner trust fund mobilizing urgently needed financing for local organizations led by and working alongside women on the front lines to build lasting peace. Since its launch in 2016, WPHF has funded and supported the capacity of over 900 local women's organizations through 24 funding allocations in 32 countries.

1. UN ESCWA. 2021. POLICY BRIEF.2. Multidimensional poverty in Lebanon (2019-2021), Painful reality and uncertain prospects. Available at: [https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/news/docs/21-00634-multidimensional\\_poverty\\_in\\_lebanon\\_policy\\_brief\\_en.pdf](https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/news/docs/21-00634-multidimensional_poverty_in_lebanon_policy_brief_en.pdf)

WPHF's primary goal is to bring about peaceful and gender equal societies. To achieve this goal, WPHF supports local women-led and women's rights organizations working to:

- Support women's participation in decision-making processes and responses related to conflict prevention
- Increase women's engagement and leadership in humanitarian action
- Enhance women's representation and leadership in formal and informal peace negotiations
- Protect women and girls' human rights, particularly responding to sexual and gender-based violence
- Promote women's involvement in peacebuilding and economic recovery of their communities

## The WPHF in Lebanon

The WPHF in Lebanon provides an important opportunity to address structural funding gaps for women's participation in peacebuilding and decision-making and to complement the ongoing work and streams of funding in Lebanon. It focuses on small and newly emerging independent CSOs targeting women and girls who are working on issues of peace, security and representation.

WPHF also provides an opportunity to respond to the [demands of feminist and women's rights groups and activists](#), outlined in a charter of demands in response to the Beirut Port Explosion. WPHF responds to the demands by providing, 1) increased funding for women's rights organizations and women's rights issues, 2) support to the increased participation of women throughout Lebanon's transition and recovery, 3) focus on long term policy and legal reforms, and 4) increased focus on marginalized groups. It creates a platform for various women rights' organizations to jointly work and advocate for a recovery that takes into consideration the needs and demands of all women and other marginalized communities.

In Lebanon, WPHF focuses on local, independent, small and newly emerging civil society organizations targeting women and girls who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination – those organizations that specifically suffer from lack of funding and are excluded from decision making processes.

As of today, support has been made possible through the generous support of WPHF in partnership with the government of Germany and complementary funding from the government of Finland.

With the technical assistance of the UN Women Lebanon country office, organizations funded by the WPHF have achieved tangible and concrete results and impact through implementing a variety of recovery initiatives and responding to the different needs of diverse women and girls. These initiatives include developing and implementing disaster management plans with the Internal Security Forces and local stakeholders to increase the safety of women residing in crisis affected areas, establishing dialogue pathways between service providers and service recipients to build accountability into public service delivery, creating safe spaces for marginalized groups to meet, and rehabilitating infrastructure to ensure women's presence and safety in the public spaces.

In Lebanon, the WPHF National Steering Committee (NSC) is led by the Resident/ Humanitarian Coordinator with members from the national civil society (ABAAD and the Arab Institute of Women), donors (Germany, Canada, Finland and the EU), the Government (the National Commission for Lebanese Women) and the UN (UNHCR, UNOCHA, UNFPA and UNICEF). The NSC manages the country allocation and selects the projects to be funded by the WPHF. UN Women Lebanon acts as the Secretariat for the WPHF's National Steering Committee and as management entity is responsible for the implementation of the projects.

## For more information:

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