



CNEWA Canada

*a papal agency for humanitarian and pastoral support • une agence papale pour l'aide humanitaire et pastorale*

1247, place Kilborn Place, Ottawa, Ontario K1H 6K9 • 1-613-738-9666 • canada@cnewa.org

## **CNEWA Canada launches emergency campaign for Lebanon**

**OTTAWA, August 6, 2020** – Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) has launched an emergency campaign to rally prayers and funds for Lebanon.

“The Lebanese people are going through a major crisis,” says Carl Héту, national director of CNEWA Canada. “The Beirut blast comes on the heels of a political crises, overwhelming debt, financial collapse, unemployment, the COVID-19 pandemic as well as successive waves of regional conflict. We direct our prayers to the people of this country with whom we Canadians have so many ties. We invite all to join us. The Lebanese people need our help.”

While the cause of the blast remains unknown, the impact has sent shockwaves throughout the country – and the world. The toll grows by the day. More than a 100 people are confirmed dead; thousands are injured; countless remain missing, presumably buried under rubble. Lebanon’s health care facilities have been overwhelmed. Three Christian hospitals close to the port, including the 600-bed St. George Hospital, have been severely damaged and evacuated. The injured are being rushed to medical centers miles from Beirut.

“Our staff, as with the entire city, is really shaken,” said Michel Constantin, CNEWA’s Beirut-based regional director. “Our building was damaged, our offices are filled with shattered glass that could have been deadly had we not left for the day. Lebanon is on the brink of economic, political and social collapse. This will not stop us from doing our work. More than ever, the people of Lebanon need our help and, most especially, the help of their local and universal church.”

CNEWA Canada will leverage most of its resources to support the campaign – social media, website, advertisements and personal and general appeals to its generous donor base. Funds raised will be directed to the CNEWA office in Beirut which, in turn, will share with local churches that offer essential health and emergency services and pastoral outreach.

“With all the major issues devastating Lebanon, this week’s horrific incident only deepens what many describe as an existential catastrophe not only for Lebanon as a nation, but for the existence of a culturally and religiously diverse Middle East,” said CNEWA president Msgr. Peter I. Vaccari. “CNEWA recalls the words of St. John Paul II, who reminded the world that Lebanon is not just a country, but a message.”

CNEWA has been at the service of the churches and peoples of Lebanon for decades, providing relief to all who are suffering and those who have fallen through the cracks, especially those facing homelessness and in need of medical care and food.



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Donations can be made online at [cnewa.org/ca/campaigns/lebanoncrisis](https://cnewa.org/ca/campaigns/lebanoncrisis) or by phone at 1-866-322-4441. Cheques can be made to “CNEWA Canada” and mailed to CNEWA Canada at 1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa, ON K1H 6K9, marked “Lebanon”. Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$10 or more.

### **About CNEWA**

An agency of the Holy See, CNEWA works for, through and with the Eastern churches throughout the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Ukraine. Founded by Pope Pius XI in 1926, CNEWA provides pastoral and humanitarian support to the churches and people of the East. CNEWA Canada was incorporated as a registered charity by Canada Revenue Agency in 2003.

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### **For more information, interviews or photos:**

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