

Caritas Australia warns of escalating humanitarian emergency in Lebanon.

Caritas Australia is urgently calling for support as a rapid escalation in hostilities has triggered a major humanitarian crisis across Lebanon, forcing tens of thousands of people from their homes in a matter of hours.

On 2 March, widespread airstrikes hit multiple regions including Baalbek-Hermel, Bekaa, Beirut's Southern Border, South Lebanon, Nabatiyeh, Saida and Tyre. The sudden escalation has caused mass displacement, following evacuation orders across 56 villages. More than 32,000 people have sought safety in 191 activated shelters, many of which are already at or beyond capacity. It is estimated that over one million people are likely to be displaced as the conflict continues.

In a statement **Caritas Lebanon** said "The humanitarian consequences of this escalation are severe. Thousands of civilians have been forced to flee their homes, essential services are disrupted, and many communities are cut off from basic assistance. The resulting fear, trauma, and uncertainty have a deep impact across entire communities already strained by years of hardship."

Official reports continue to indicate rising civilian casualties, with more than 50 people killed and over 150 wounded in the initial waves of bombardment. Roads out of conflict-affected areas are severely congested, complicating both evacuations and the delivery of aid.

Caritas Lebanon has begun operating under a state of emergency and mobilised teams across the country. Community kitchens have begun providing hot meals, medical mobile clinics are operating in areas hosting displaced families, and preparations are underway to expand shelter support, health coverage, and distribution of essential items including mattresses, blankets, and ready to eat food. However, with Lebanon already facing deep funding cuts to humanitarian operations, resources are being rapidly outpaced by need.

Caritas Australia's Humanitarian Manager Sally Thomas said, "Thousands of families fled with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. Our partners at Caritas Lebanon are doing everything they can, but shelters are overflowing and urgent essentials are running out. We need to act now to protect lives."

Caritas Australia is standing in solidarity with Caritas Lebanon and supporting efforts to scale up life-saving humanitarian assistance. Australians are urged to contribute to help deliver urgent medical care, food, and emergency shelter to families in crisis.

To support Caritas Australia's Lebanon Crisis Appeal, visit www.caritas.org.au/lebanon or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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