



Lebanon Situation Report

January 13, 2022

Background

The immediate background to the crises and increasingly dire humanitarian situation in Lebanon is summarized in Anera's last [Situation Report \(October 2022\)](#).

Overview

Lebanon continues to face the hardships of their economic crisis, water and food shortages, and electricity cuts. The emergence of cholera, a waterborne illness, however, is further deteriorating the humanitarian situation.

Health

Lebanon faces its first outbreak of cholera — a diarrheal disease that can lead to dehydration, kidney failure, and even death if not treated quickly — in nearly three decades. Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health reported that the first case was discovered in early October,¹ but by December 20th, the disease had reportedly spread to 5,328 people and killed 23 — a 0.43% fatality ratio — prompting fears that the disease could become endemic in the country. Of those cases, an alarming 48% are among children less than 15 years old.² Seven percent of cases reported by December 9th were discovered in people older than 65.³ Females represent 53% of confirmed cases. Additionally, 21% of those confirmed or suspected to be infected had to be hospitalized because of their symptoms.⁴

The cholera outbreak was initially discovered in neighboring Syria, but due to the frequent traffic across the border between these two nations, the disease quickly spread throughout Lebanon. After the discovery of the outbreak in Lebanon, the World Health Organization deemed the risk of spreading to be high. A significant lack of access to clean water safe for consumption has fueled the disease's outbreak.⁵ A sample of 1,141 stools of sewage water was sent to the American University of Beirut for examination, and 440 water sewage samples tested positive for cholera.⁶

Lebanon's water crisis is helping fuel the outbreak of this disease. The shortage of clean water in Lebanon is forcing some people to use the water from the polluted Litani River in the Bekaa valley for their households and for irrigation. In recent years, this river has become a dumping ground for garbage and chemical waste, making it entirely unsafe for

¹ [Lebanon water crisis fuels cholera outbreak: 'Things are coming to a head' | Financial Times](#)

² [Cholera Outbreak In Lebanon Situation Report #11 | WHO](#)

³ [Lebanon water crisis fuels cholera outbreak: 'Things are coming to a head' | Financial Times](#)

⁴ [Cholera Outbreak In Lebanon Situation Report #11 | WHO](#)

⁵ [Cholera – Lebanon | WHO](#)

⁶ [Lebanon Cholera Outbreak Situation Report No 7, 10 December 2022 | UNOCHA](#)

use or consumption.⁷ These unsafe water sources help spread cholera in addition to other waterborne illnesses. In addition, electricity cuts exacerbate the problem because of the inability to pump and treat water contaminated with cholera.

Lebanon's economy has been crumbling for the past two years, which has put immense strain on its healthcare system, and the spread of cholera further deteriorates the situation. There is not enough medication to meet Lebanon's needs because of the worldwide surge in demand for cholera medication, as Lebanon is not the only nation experiencing this catastrophe. There is an oral medication highly effective in treating cholera, however, its supply is not sufficient.⁸ In addition, there is a shortage of healthcare workers in hospitals; Lebanon has lost 30% of nurses since 2019 due to immigration. As a result of these challenges, the healthcare system is not operating at its full capacity.⁹

Currency

Riad Salamah, the governor of Lebanon's Central Bank, announced on November 21 that the Central Bank will be adopting a more accurate exchange rate for the withdrawal of US dollars. Lebanon's economy has been experiencing one of the worst economic crises in modern history, with its currency losing more than 95% of its value in just a few years.¹⁰ From February 1st, the Lebanese will be able to access their funds. However, the exchange rate is now at 15,000 Lebanese pounds to the US dollar. Although this change in policy does not match the unofficial black market rate, it represents a step towards the list of reforms the International Monetary Fund (IMF) laid out for Lebanon, which they must achieve in order to receive help for their paralyzed financial institutions and economic deterioration.¹¹ At the time of publication, the unofficial black market rate for the Lebanese Pound is 49,000 Lebanese pounds to the US dollar.¹²

Economy

Inflation and the surge in the consumer price index is not slowing down. In October, the consumer price index rose to 1847.45 points. However, food inflation is now at 203.21 points, a rate which has been steadily decreasing since January 2022.¹³ This does not mean the situation is rectified. The food inflation rate was sixteen times higher in October 2022 than it was in October 2019, before the onset of the economic crisis.¹⁴ Families' incomes are not high enough to purchase food at these prices, which can lead to malnutrition and diseases, and are in need of international assistance in order to obtain an adequate diet. Displaced women and girls are bearing the brunt of the economic hardships and food insecurities.¹⁵

⁷ [Lebanon water crisis fuels cholera outbreak: 'Things are coming to a head' | Financial Times](#)

⁸ [Amid vaccine shortages, Lebanon faces its first Cholera Outbreak in Three Decades | NPR](#)

⁹ [Lebanon hospitals forced to turn away sick children amid exodus of health workers | L'Orient Today](#)

¹⁰ [Factbox: Just how bad is Lebanon's economic crisis? | Reuters](#)

¹¹ [Lebanon to adopt exchange rate closer to currency's real value | The National News](#)

¹² [Lebanon Market Rates Today January 13, 2023 | Lira Rate](#)

¹³ [Lebanon Food Inflation - November 2022 Data - 2009-2021 Historical - December Forecast | Trading Economics](#)

¹⁴ [UN boosts food aid budget to feed a third of Lebanon | Associated Press](#)

¹⁵ [Food shortages and aid cuts put more displaced women at risk of gender-based violence | UNHCR](#)

Anera's Response

Cholera

With support from Americares, Anera is launching a cholera response program. Anera will provide 30 chlorinators for communal water wells and UNRWA schools in five refugee camps in Lebanon to ensure access to safe drinking water for 102,000 community members. The members of these communities will also benefit from a mobilization campaign to teach them how to prevent cholera at the household level. The campaign will spread information through social media, posters and flyers, 10 awareness sessions in each of the five camps, and outreach to influential members of the targeted communities.

In addition, Anera will distribute cholera hygiene kits containing chlorine solution and liquid soap to households who attend the awareness sessions, distributing an estimated 1,000 kits. Finally, Anera will support at least 17 health centers in the regions most affected by the cholera outbreak (Akkar, Bekaa, and Baalbeck) by providing in-kind support for cholera treatment, such as oral rehydration salts solution, antibiotics, and other medications. Anera will coordinate with the recipient centers to address their most pressing needs to combat the outbreak in these areas.

During December, Anera's medical donations team distributed more than 3,000 bags of IV solution to a hospital in Halba (North Lebanon), where the cholera outbreak is at its highest. The IV solution will support the treatment of cholera cases that require hospitalization.

Livelihoods and Winterization

In collaboration with Forward MENA, Anera is providing digital core skills training for 137 students in Lebanon. Anera will utilize the curriculum developed by its career accelerator programs director to provide 50 hours of instruction to the students, who are distributed as follows: 35 in Akkar, 50 in Tripoli, and 52 in Bekaa. The targeted students are Syrian refugees who will benefit from improved livelihoods as a result of Anera's core skills training.

In order to respond to the needs created by Lebanon's economic collapse and COVID-19, Anera has refocused its youth cash-for-work programs to provide short-term paid employment opportunities (directly, if no paid employer-based internships are available) through programs that address humanitarian needs. Anera will target 2,500 out-of-school youth in formal and informal education through outreach activities; target an additional 10,253 through vocational training, non-formal education, and employability training; and provide cash-for-work opportunities for around 800 through February 2023.

On August 15, Anera launched its 2022 Winterization Project in Lebanon. With support from IRUSA, Anera is providing core relief items to enable vulnerable families to face the winter season. The project employed youth trained in Anera's sewing courses to produce items such as blankets, track suits, jackets, hoodies, and socks. Anera's team is delivering the items to 7,400 children and youth in Akkar and Bekaa using reusable bags.