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AUSTRALIA

End poverty  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE: Economic crisis in Lebanon plunges three-quarters of the population into poverty**

20 September 2021

Lebanon's financial crisis continues to worsen with 90 per cent wiped off the value of the local currency since 2019, food prices inflated by up to 1000 per cent in some cases, and three-quarters of the population plunged into poverty in less than 18 months.

The economic crisis is so severe that the World Bank says it may be one of the top three worst economic crises in the past 150 years. Rapid hyperinflation has left swathes of the population unable to afford housing, education, healthcare, clean water and transportation.

Many hospitals are struggling with a dire medicine and fuel shortage and are now unable to provide standard treatments including magnesium for women with eclampsia, or antibiotics for people with septic shock.

“What was happening in Lebanon was already bad, but now things are getting much worse. A catastrophe is unfolding,” said Melville Fernandez, Caritas Australia’s Humanitarian Emergencies Manager.

“It’s getting harder and harder for families to survive. Right now, for the vast majority of people it’s virtually impossible to buy fuel for cars or generators, which have now become even more important as the electricity supply has been cut to almost nothing.”

“Clean water, medicine and basic food items like sugar, eggs, meat and rice have all skyrocketed in price, leaving many Lebanese families unable to afford groceries.”

“I urge Australians to remember our long-standing and close relationship with Lebanon, a country that has enriched our own culture so much after the past decades, and stand up in support in these challenging times.”

Caritas Australia continues to support Caritas Lebanon with both emergency and long-term response.

Visit [caritas.org.au/lebanon](https://caritas.org.au/lebanon) or call 1800 024 413 toll free to provide much needed support.

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### **Note:**

**Kirsty Robertson, CEO of Caritas Australia is available for interview.**

**Melville Fernandez, Humanitarian Emergencies Manager at Caritas Australia is available for interview.**

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