

Joint Statement of the International Support Group for Lebanon

Beirut, 30 August 2020

The ISG expresses its solidarity with the Lebanese people after the explosion that caused numerous victims and severe damages to residential and commercial infrastructures and sites of cultural and religious heritage in Beirut on 4 August and extends its most heartfelt condolences to the residents of Beirut.

The ISG welcomes the International conference on assistance and support to Beirut and the Lebanese people, co-chaired by the United Nations and France on 9 August 2020 and commends the mobilization of the international community. The pledged support should be timely, sufficient, and consistent with the needs of the Lebanese people and delivered with utmost efficiency and transparency. The ISG calls upon the international community to reinforce its support to Lebanon and its people in that context.

The ISG takes note of the resignation of the Lebanese government. Recalling the statements of the ISG meeting in Paris on 11 December 2019 and in Beirut on 23 January 2020, including the commitments made in the framework of the CEDRE conference, the ISG underlines the importance of action to regain the trust of the Lebanese people and that of the international community. The ISG appeals to all political forces and leaders of Lebanon to take responsibility for the current situation and to prioritize the national interest for the benefit of the people and the country.

The Group calls for the swift formation of an effective and credible government able to meet the legitimate aspirations and needs expressed by the Lebanese people and the current main challenges Lebanon is facing, in particular the reconstruction of Beirut and meaningful urgent reforms, absolutely necessary to overcome and recover from the current and unprecedented acute social, economic, humanitarian and security challenges, as well as the impact of COVID-19. It takes due note of the approval by the Government of Lebanon of an economic plan, as well as of the Government's decision to request an IMF program, and reiterates, on the basis of necessary reforms, support to Lebanon to help it exit the current crisis.

We urge and expect all political forces to support the necessary reforms, especially to ensure a swift adoption in Parliament. The reform process should be as inclusive as possible in order to give expression to the legitimate demands of the people.

Consistent with earlier statements, the ISG also reaffirms its willingness to support credible efforts by government leaders to tackle corruption and combat tax evasion, including adoption and implementation of an anti-corruption national strategy, the anti-corruption agency law and judicial reform, and other measures that ensure concrete changes are made and guarantee both transparency and full accountability.

The next Government should focus on the response to Lebanon's immediate challenges, particularly in three major fields:

1. Implementing reforms to restore economic stability and credibility of the financial sector, as well as reforms to energy and other key sectors, and reforms of state-owned enterprises and government procurement laws;

2. Launching the reconstruction of Beirut, with a view to enabling the efficient and transparent distribution of aid to the affected population; and
3. Addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and the humanitarian situation all over the country.

The new government and all Lebanese parties should endorse Lebanon's longstanding policy of disassociation from regional conflict.

The ISG reaffirms the need for internal stability and the right to peaceful protest to be protected.

The ISG members reaffirm their continuous strong support for Lebanon and its people, for its stability, security, territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence.

Note to Editors

The International Support Group has brought together the United Nations and the governments of China, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, together with the European Union and the Arab League. It was launched in September 2013 by the UN Secretary-General with former President Michel Sleiman to help mobilize support and assistance for Lebanon's stability, sovereignty and state institutions and to specifically encourage assistance for the Lebanese Army, Syrian refugees in Lebanon and host communities and government programs and public services impacted by the Syrian crisis.