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onthehorizon Horizons International – April 2020 Newsletter

# LEBANON'S DOUBLE CRISIS



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"AND I WILL SHAKE ALL THE NATIONS..."

HAGGAI 2:7

## SPECIAL REPORT:

ECONOMIC AND  
HEALTH CRISES

IMPACT ON  
CHURCHES

EFFECTS ON  
THE COUNTRY

NEW GOSPEL  
OPPORTUNITIES

  
Horizons  
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proclaim. disciple. equip.



# LEBANON IN CRISIS!

Lebanon is currently experiencing the worst financial and political crisis since the country-wide civil war ended in 1990. The economy and the banking system are on the brink of collapse, and hundreds of thousands of Lebanese and Syrians have been pushed further into poverty.

Many of you have asked how you can be praying in light of current events. This newsletter will help you understand the context and history of the crisis, how the situation impacts the Lebanese people, and how Horizons continues to minister to the diverse Lebanese and refugee populations throughout the country.

## HOW THE PROTESTS STARTED

In the 30 years since Lebanon's bloody civil war, quality of life for Lebanese citizens has deteriorated due to rising costs, decreasing wages, crippled public services, corruption, embezzlement, and an ever-widening poverty gap.

A number of recent tax increase proposals from the Lebanese government, including one on WhatsApp video messages, proved to be the final straw. Already angered by years of widespread plutocratic corruption, the people could no longer stay silent.

On October 17th, 2019, protestors took to the streets in numbers never before seen. Peaking at 1.5 million, one third of Lebanon's population, protestors demanded the resignation of the entire national government.

## IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS

On February 21, 2020, Ministry of Health officials confirmed Lebanon's first coronavirus case. Schools, theaters, nightclubs, and public gatherings have been prohibited nationwide, and people are advised to stay home in order to minimize further spread. Lebanon's Hariri Airport is now closed to all travel, as coronavirus reports as of March 23 cite over 256 confirmed cases and 4 deaths.

## EFFECTS OF THE PROTESTS

On October 29th, Sunni Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri resigned and dissolved his entire cabinet. Protesters filled the streets for over 100 days to demand the additional removals of the President, the Speaker of the Parliament, and all 128 members of parliament—but to no avail.

Months of turmoil have affected almost every aspect of Lebanese life, shutting down roads and schools for days at a time. Largely peaceful protests have occasionally given way to violent rioting, and government security forces have used tear gas to disperse crowds. Clashes with Shiite Muslim counter-protesters have also stoked fears of larger-scale ethnic violence and even another civil war.

The Lebanese working class, and the Syrian refugees among them, has struggled with companies going out of business, job loss, many salaries being cut by 50%, banks restricting cash withdrawals, 60% inflation of local currency, and price increases on everyday foods. This hardship has caused frustration and loss of hope, even leading to a rise in the national suicide rate. The Syrian refugee crisis has also burdened the already-poor infrastructure with over 1.5 million people in significant need, further pushing the economy into a tailspin.

## HOW DOES THIS AFFECT MINISTRIES AND CHURCHES?

Local churches and ministries face significant difficulties in this crisis. Humanitarian aid has decreased, as funding has not kept pace with the rising cost of goods and the vastly increasing needs of refugees and poor Lebanese. Additionally, several international mission teams have had to cancel mission trips to Lebanon due to current health and security concerns.

Transportation and public gatherings have been restricted due to the protest and the coronavirus outbreak. Amidst ministry center closures, Horizons' Lebanon team has found creative online solutions to keep sharing Christ with millions of Muslims whose spiritual thirst is growing due to the instability. Field staff members have joined up with our Media Team to create compelling gospel videos, and others have joined the effort to respond to inquiries from thousands of Muslim seekers who write to Horizons' Arabic-language Facebook platform, *Pure Heart of the Middle East*.

Similarly, Horizons' discipleship group leaders have taken advantage of class cancellations due to the coronavirus outbreak, by using their time to further develop the Cubs to Lions curriculum for converts from Islam. They have also continued to disciple and care for refugees via WhatsApp groups.



"LEBANON SHALL BE TURNED INTO A FRUITFUL FIELD..."

ISAIAH 29:17

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The significant needs arising from the upheaval are also great opportunities for you to make a Kingdom impact.



We encourage you to pray for peace and protection in Lebanon, and for Christians to lead the way in spreading hope through bold acts of kindness and love.



Send financial support to the Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund (see back page), which allows Horizons' Lebanon team to continue serving at-risk Muslim communities.

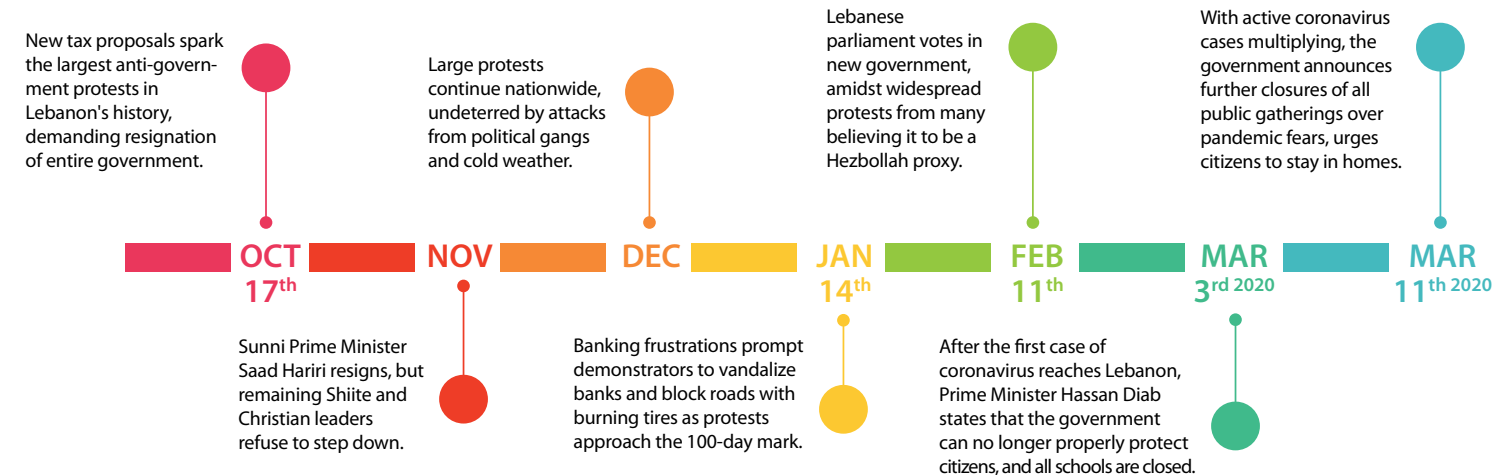


Stay in touch about developing opportunities to help by following @HorizonsPDE on Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter.

Email us at [connect@horizonsinternational.org](mailto:connect@horizonsinternational.org)



## CRISIS TIMELINE



# CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND

## OUTBREAK IN LEBANON

As Horizons continues to monitor the coronavirus outbreak in Lebanon, the Lord has led us to respond immediately to the ongoing challenges faced by underprivileged Lebanese families. Horizons has initiated a clear emergency plan to support the many refugees we serve, but we need your help to make it a reality.

In this dire time, your support will allow us to provide poor Lebanese and Syrian refugee families with the following emergency services:

- **Coronavirus disinfection service and supplies for low-income homes and neighborhoods**
- **Food supplies, since costs have risen and many cannot afford even basic dry goods**
- **Emergency medical aid**
- **Video-conferencing technology/services to enable Lebanese churches to meet online, and enable refugees to join.**



Many refugees face bare subsistence-level living conditions. They live in small, damp, and moldy apartments due to heavy rainfalls. Out of work and unable to afford basic food, they are unable to purchase the cleaning and disinfectant supplies they need to keep their families safe from coronavirus. Basic supplies for hygiene, disinfecting, food, and medical care save the lives of refugees and others in this crucial time.

Jesus works miracles in the lives of those who need help the most. Today, you can connect with and touch the lives of refugee families by supporting Horizons' Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund:

[horizonsinternational.org/coronavirus](https://horizonsinternational.org/coronavirus)



Photos: Living conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon

# YES! I WANT TO REACH THE WORLD FOR CHRIST!

Enclosed is my  one-time  monthly gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support missionary/project: \_\_\_\_\_

Plus a  one-time

monthly gift to the Coronavirus Emergency Relief Fund:



**CLICK HERE TO GIVE**