

365 days later, every day counts

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We commemorate today the tragedy that took place on August 4, 2020, in Beirut. A man-made disaster, one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in history, that killed 214 people, left more than 6,000 injured, and shattered the lives and livelihoods of thousands across Lebanon.

365 days later, the people of Lebanon are still waiting for the justice promised by the country's decision makers.

365 days later, the investigation continues to stall, without a truly independent judiciary able to block political intervention.

365 days later, we reiterate our call for an effective, independent and transparent investigation that can bring justice for the victims and peace for their families. In a country notorious for its culture of impunity, accountability could demonstrate that change is possible.

As we look back on this year, another tragedy unfolds before our eyes: an economic implosion with severe implications on Lebanon's social fabric and human capital, which could be an irreversible loss for Lebanon. It is time for the country's decision makers, who are entrusted with the safety, security and well-being of their people, to live up to their responsibilities.

We continue to stress to Lebanese counterparts the need to adopt urgent measures to get out of the crisis. Following the blast, the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank presented a people-centred plan for the recovery and reconstruction of Beirut. At the heart of this plan are reforms. Meaningful socio-economic reforms that the Lebanese authorities should urgently undertake to stabilise the dramatic situation and put Lebanon on the path of economic recovery. Unfortunately, too little has been done.

We remain committed to assist the people of Lebanon. But without a real transformation in the way the country is governed, our efforts mean little. The forthcoming elections offer a unique opportunity for people to make their voices heard and start the change they are calling for. But change must begin now. The country critically needs a Government capable of managing the crisis, working together with a Parliament to make progress on reforms. It is time to act now. Every day counts.

We lend a hand to those who still believe in this country. Let us work together for a better Lebanon. A country worthy of its great people.

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