



**REPORT ON BEHALF OF VICTIMS OF THE BEIRUT EXPLOSION OF 4  
AUGUST 2020 (VICTIMS OF THE BEIRUT AUGUST MASSACRE)**

**13 NOVEMBER 2020**

**LEGAL ACTION WORLDWIDE (LAW)**

**Legal Action Worldwide:** LAW is an independent, non-profit organisation comprised of human rights lawyers working in fragile and conflict affected areas in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. We have a particular focus on the rule of law and accountability; transformative justice; non-discrimination and gender equality, working to bring justice to those who need it most.

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out in stark detail the available facts and information; progress on Lebanese investigations to date and the severe restrictions on access to justice in Lebanon. It is clear that the human tragedy could have been avoided had action been taken by key individuals and institutions.

1. On 4 August 2020, a massive explosion ripped through the capital city of Lebanon, Beirut. The explosion is reportedly the most powerful non-nuclear explosion in history.<sup>i</sup> The cause of the explosion was the detonation of a large amount of ammonium nitrate which had been unloaded from The Rhosus, a vessel which originally sailed under the Moldovan flag; setting sail from Batumi Port, Georgia, and heading to Mozambique.<sup>ii</sup>
2. The Rhosus docked in Beirut port in September 2013 after technical/ financial problems. In December 2013, The Rhosus was impounded by a Lebanese judicial order 2013/1031,<sup>iii</sup> with sources citing the vessel's ill-repair. In October 2014, the cargo of approximately 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate was unloaded to Hangar 12, Beirut port by Court order. From 5 December 2014 until 27 October 2017, unnamed Customs officials sent at least six letters to the Urgent Matters Judge, reportedly alerting the judiciary to the dangers posed by the ammonium nitrate and requesting assistance. Public Works Minister Michel Najjar has stated that the Public Works Ministry sent 18 letters to the Urgent Matters Judge during this period.<sup>iv</sup> General Manager of the Port, Hassan Koraytem, has stated that he and the General Directorate of State Security also sent letters of warning.<sup>v</sup> Two investigations were also carried out during this period, with resulting reports which concluded that the cargo was hazardous. LAW has endeavoured to locate these reports but has not been successful.
3. In June 2020, according to several media sources, the head of State Security informed an advisor to the Prime Minister Diab about the existence of the ammonium nitrate in Hangar 12 and subsequently the Prime Minister decided to visit the port. However, the night before the Prime Minister's scheduled visit to the port, the State Security was informed that the Prime Minister had cancelled his visit because the matter 'was not worth it.'<sup>vi</sup>
4. On 20 July 2020, the conclusions of the January 2020 investigation were shared with Prime Minister Diab and President Aoun, warning that the ammonium nitrate stored in the port could destroy the capital, Beirut, if it exploded.<sup>vii</sup> The President reportedly gave orders to the Secretary General of the Supreme Defence Council, an umbrella group of security and military agencies chaired by the President, to do "what is necessary."<sup>viii</sup> Finally, the report was shared with Michel Najjar, Lebanon's Public Works Minister, on 24 July 2020 who reportedly contacted Hassan Koraytem, the Port General Manager, for more information on 3 August 2020, one day before the explosion.<sup>ix</sup>
5. The public was never warned about the danger posed by the ammonium nitrate at any stage. No evidence was found to suggest that the public was warned once the fire was reported, nor that there were any attempts to evacuate the area.
6. In the context of the 4 August Explosion, state or judicial institutions who were involved or aware of hazardous material include but are not limited to: Gestion et Exploitation du Port de Beyrouth (GEPB); General Directorate of State Security (GDSS) which is part of the Ministry of Interior; Lebanese Customs Administration; Lebanese Ministry of National Defence; Ministry of Public Works and Transport; Lebanese judiciary and the Consecutive Urgent Matters Judges (2014 - 2020).
7. The explosion killed over 200 persons<sup>x</sup> who were nationals of Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Bangladesh, Philippines, Australia, Pakistan, the Netherlands, Canada, Germany and France.<sup>xi</sup> This included

diplomats from the Netherlands and Germany.<sup>xiii</sup> As of 30 August 2020, three people were missing.<sup>xiii</sup> It wounded 7,000 persons, left 150 persons disabled and damaged 77,000 apartments displacing over 300,000 people.<sup>xiv</sup> At least three children between the ages of two and 15, lost their lives.<sup>xv</sup> 31 children required hospitalisation; 1,000 children were injured and 80,000 children were displaced.<sup>xvi</sup>

8. According to the World Bank the explosion caused an estimated US\$3.8-4.6 billion in material damage. The impact of the explosion goes far beyond Beirut. The blast also impacted people outside of Beirut, who have suffered material damage and/or are experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder by reliving the devastation caused by the civil war.<sup>xvii</sup> The explosion occurred in context of a country grappling with a political, economic and financial crisis resulting in unemployment, homelessness and rising food insecurity.<sup>xviii</sup>

9. The Government of Lebanon has established three investigations:

**First**, the Administrative Inquiry commenced on 5 August 2020 – no public statement was produced. **Second**, a military investigation which also commenced on 5 August 2020 – led by internal security forces and the military. The Cassation Court Prosecutor recommended that this investigation should be referred to the Judicial Council. This investigation ceased thereafter.

**Third**, the Judicial Council commenced its investigation on 13 August 2020. The Judicial Council was expected to release the investigation report around mid-November 2020.<sup>xix</sup> Unnamed 'Judicial sources' have stated that charges include "wilful negligence that led to the deaths of hundreds of innocent civilians and injury of others" and "causing massive destruction to public and private property."<sup>xx</sup> In the absence of dissemination of official information, the local media reported that 25 people were arrested, 20 had been charged and the appointed Judge Sawan has heard the testimony of around 47 witnesses.<sup>xxi</sup> Some of this information was later confirmed by the Higher Judicial Council's statement of 7 November 2020 that further reported on letters sent to the US, UK and French embassies seeking judicial cooperation on specific information and noting that the US FBI report was received by the Lebanese Judiciary. In fact, whilst the investigation was expected to reach some results by mid-November, instead on November 7, 2020 the Judicial Council issued a general statement on the investigation progress which mainly comprised of information already in the public domain.<sup>xxii</sup> It should be noted that decisions of the Judicial Council can not be appealed.

10. On 10 August 2020, the Prime Minister Diab admitted that the explosion was a result of endemic corruption confessing that 'the 'system of corruption is bigger than the state.'<sup>xxiii</sup> On the same day, the Lebanese Judges Association held a sit-in denouncing corruption and political interference.<sup>xxiv</sup>

11. For more than two decades the United Nations has raised concerns regarding the independence and impartiality of the justice system in Lebanon. As far back as 1997 the United Nations Human Rights Committee expressed its concerns. More recently the United Nations Human Rights Committee in its 2018 report stated, "The Committee is concerned about the political pressure reportedly exerted on the judiciary, particularly in the appointment of key prosecutors and investigating magistrates, and about allegations that politicians use their influence to protect supporters from prosecution." Decades of United Nations reporting on the justice system in Lebanon consistently highlight a lack of independence, inefficiency, a lack of necessary resources and weakness to corrupt practices. These factors have resulted in ineffective avenues of justice for victims.

12. Lack of accountability within Lebanon is compounded by a pattern of corruption, victim and witness harassment and intimidation. Back in 2005, the Report of the International Independent Investigation Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1595 (2005), stated that a number of witnesses were fearful that they would be harmed if it were known publicly that they were cooperating with the Commission. The victims that Legal Action Worldwide is supporting today have expressed the same concerns.
13. Furthermore, Lebanon has not recognised the competence of any United Nations individual complaints mechanisms under the international human rights frameworks. This leaves survivors, victims and their families with few, if any legal avenues for redress.
14. It is in this overall framework, that victims of the Beirut explosion, and Lebanese civilians are being asked to trust the Lebanese state administration and the justice system to provide an independent and fair investigation. There is no reason that victims and their families should trust a system which has not been reformed and hence be a ‘test’ case for a flawed justice system in order to show that ‘truth’ can be delivered whilst history has shown that this is not possible in the current circumstances.
15. This leads to the conclusion that there is no other avenue than an independent impartial fact find mission to establish the facts of the explosion as well as the root causes which include a vacuum of rule of law and lack of effective governance resulting in gross human rights violations which can (and often do) amount to serious crimes against vast numbers of Lebanese civilians. Since the 4 August Beirut 2020 explosion, LAW has identified **50 requests** for an impartial and independent investigation into the events that led to the explosion from a cross section of victims; organisations, Member States and individuals including; UN senior officials including Special Rapporteurs and independent experts, the Beirut Bar Association, Lebanese religious leaders, Lebanese members of parliament and prominent human rights organizations.
16. LAW would like to take this opportunity to express deepest thanks to those who assisted in the preparation of this report. In particular, to the incredible bravery of the victims' group and those who have provided victim statements. We continue to be in awe of these individuals and their willingness to come forward, which is truly remarkable, particularly in light of their loss. This submission aims to ensure that victims, their families, and their stories will not be forgotten.
17. *Victims supported by Legal Action Worldwide have previously held a press conference asking for international support in their quest for justice and they have submitted a letter to UN Security Council Member States’ representatives.*<sup>11</sup> *The victims’ five key requests and subject matter of this report are:*
  1. **To dispatch, without delay, an independent and impartial fact-finding mission**, leveraging global expertise, to establish the facts and circumstances, including the root causes of, the 4 August 2020 Beirut explosion with a view to establishing state and individual responsibility and supporting justice for victims.
  2. **That the Government of Lebanon do not destroy or render inaccessible any evidence** related to the 4 August 2020 Beirut explosion, and issue clear, public and unequivocal instructions to all government authorities and security forces that all evidence must be secured and preserved. Any investigation will be required to consider the destruction of evidence;

3. That **victims are ensured representation and participation in any proceedings arising from investigations**, including civil or criminal proceedings before a competent court or tribunal, or any public inquiry;

4. That **member states**, specifically: the United States of America and France or other members states **who have conducted investigations into the 4 August 2020 Beirut port explosion, should report publicly on all evidence gathered by their state agents**. As a minimum key findings should be released to victims as defined under the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, and their families;

5. That **the Government of Lebanon should acknowledge and provide a full, public apology to victims** and seek their views on the establishment of a memorial. It should also urgently adopt a comprehensive policy and package of measures regarding the fulfilment of the right to reparation of victims.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Mulvey', is written over a horizontal line.

Antonia Mulvey  
Executive Director  
**Legal Action Worldwide**

## II. CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS RELATING TO THE BEIRUT EXPLOSION OF 4 AUGUST 2020 FROM 2013 – NOVEMBER 2020

Date	Details
<b>23 September 2013</b>	The Rhosus, sailing under a Moldovan flag, sails from Batumi, Georgia, heading to Mozambique with 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate on board. <sup>xxv</sup> The cargo on board is extremely volatile: 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate in a highly concentrated variant, the kind used to make explosives, with a nitrogen enrichment level of almost 35 percent. The vessel docks in Beirut after technical/financial problems. <sup>xxvi</sup> The Bill of loading shows the chemicals were ordered by <i>Fabrica de Explosivos</i> , a Mozambican industrial explosives company. <sup>xxvii</sup>
<b>September 2013</b>	According to IHS Markit AISLive data, Rhosus was first berthed at Berth 14, Dock 4, before shifting to Berth 11, Dock 3 <sup>xxviii</sup> .
<b>October-December 2013</b>	Lebanese authorities did not let the vessel leave. Port authorities impound the ship by judicial order due to outstanding debts. <sup>xxix</sup> It was detained first by creditors seeking debts from its operator, and later by port officials who considered it unsafe to sail. <sup>xxx</sup>
<b>2013-2014</b>	Subsequent to legal disputes with the Lebanese authorities, the vessel's ship manager, Interfleet Shipmanagement, allegedly abandoned Rhosus and its eight crew, which later reduced to four as the others were repatriated. <sup>xxxi</sup> Captain Prokoshe, his chief engineer, third engineer and bosun, all Ukrainian, were ordered to remain on the vessel and were not allowed to disembark. <sup>xxxii</sup>
<b>2014</b>	Baroudi & associates engaged to represent creditors of the ship, have later acted "on compassionate grounds" assisting the remaining Master and crew to secure their right to disembark and return home. The successful appeal was based on "the imminent danger the crew was facing, given the 'dangerous' nature of the cargo still stored in the ship's holds". <sup>xxxiii</sup>
<b>May 2014</b>	Ship deemed unseaworthy. <sup>xxxiv</sup>
<b>27 June 2014</b>	Then-director of Lebanese Customs Shafik Merhi sent a letter addressed to an unnamed "Urgent Matters judge", asking for a solution to the cargo. <sup>xxxv</sup>
<b>October 2014</b>	Cargo unloaded to Hangar 12 by Court order. <sup>xxxvi</sup>
<b>5 December 2014</b>	Badri Daher, the current director of Lebanese Customs, has stated that 5 more letters were sent to the Judiciary, asking for guidance and warning that the material posed a danger [see below for timeline of letters]. <sup>xxxvii</sup> NB. Number of letters is disputed [see footnotes]. Counter argument that the letters did not follow proper procedure and were repeatedly resent despite Judge of Urgent Matters requesting more information. <sup>xxxviii</sup>
<b>February 2015</b>	Nadim Zwain, a judge from the Summary Affairs Court appointed an expert to inspect the cargo, who concluded that the material was hazardous and requested it be transferred to the army (rejected by the army). <sup>xxxix</sup>
<b>6 May 2015</b>	Customs officials sent a letter to the Judiciary, asking for guidance and warning that the material posed a danger. <sup>xl</sup>
<b>20 May 2016</b>	Customs officials sent a letter to the Judiciary, reiterating the need for guidance and warning that the material posed a danger. <sup>xli</sup>
<b>13 October 2016</b>	Customs officials sent a letter to the Judiciary, reiterating the need for guidance and warning that the material posed a danger. <sup>xlii</sup>
<b>27 October 2017</b>	Customs officials sent a letter to the Judiciary, reiterating the need for guidance and warning that the material posed a danger. <sup>xliii</sup>
<b>18 February 2018</b>	The Rhosus sinks in port of Beirut. <sup>xliv</sup>



<b>January 2020</b>	A judicial investigation is launched after reports that Hangar 12 was unguarded, had a hole in its southern wall and one of its doors dislodged, meaning the hazardous material was at risk of being stolen. In his final report following the investigation, Prosecutor General Oweidat “gave orders immediately” to secure the hangar. <sup>xliv</sup>
<b>June 2020</b>	According to three Lebanese media sources, the head of State Security informs an adviser to the Prime Minister about the existence of the ammonium nitrate in Hangar 12, explaining the huge danger it poses to the entire capital. The Prime Minister who was immediately informed, asks to visit the port accompanied by General Saliba, to examine the situation of the ammonium nitrate on site. On the eve of the scheduled visit, high ranking security officials of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the state security patrolled the site in preparation of the Prime Minister’s site visit. At around 11.30 pm, the State Security directorate is informed that the Prime Minister has cancelled his site visit, because the matter “is not worth it”. The real reasons behind the Prime Minister’s cancellation of his visit to the port and who dissuaded him from undertaking it, remain unclear. <sup>xlvi</sup>
<b>4 June 2020</b>	Following the January investigation, State Security instructed port authorities to provide guards at Hangar 12, appoint a director for the warehouse and secure all the doors and repair the hole in the southern wall. <sup>xlvii</sup>
<b>20 July 2020</b>	A private letter is sent by the General Directorate of State Security to the Prime Minister Hassan Diab and the President of the Republic Michel Aoun containing conclusions of the January 2020 report, warning the ammonium nitrate stored in Beirut’s port posed a security risk and could destroy the capital if it exploded. A representative for Prime Minister (PM) Hassan Diab said the PM received the letter on July 20 and it was sent to the Supreme Defence Council for advice within 48 hours. The President of the Republic gave orders to the military and security forces to ‘do what is necessary.’ <sup>xlviii</sup>
<b>24 July 2020</b>	The Supreme Defense Council sends the report to Lebanon's Public Works minister Michel Najjar. <sup>xliv</sup>
<b>4 August 2020, 12pm-6pm</b>	Contested start of fire: A fire broke out in Warehouse 9, which spread to Warehouse 12. <sup>i</sup> Welding work is conducted on Hangar 12, following January investigation, and a fire breaks out. <sup>ii</sup> Fireworks stored in Hangar 12 ignite. <sup>iii</sup>
<b>4 August 2020, 6pm</b>	Huge explosion in the port of Beirut.
<b>5 August 2020</b>	Melham Khalaf, The Head of the Beirut Bar Association Melhem Khalaf, filed a complaint with the Public Cassation Court Prosecutor Ghassan Oueidat, calling for him to seek the expertise of local and international experts to assess the cause of the Beirut explosion. <sup>liii</sup>
<b>5 August 2020</b>	Former Prime Ministers Najib Mikati, Fouad Siniora, Saad Hariri, and Tammam Salam, call for an international investigation into the explosion. <sup>liv</sup>
<b>5 August 2020</b>	Amnesty International call for international mechanism to investigate cause of explosion. <sup>lv</sup>
<b>5 August 2020</b>	An ‘administrative investigation committee’ is formed, consisting of Lebanon’s justice, defence, and interior ministers; the director general of the Internal Security Forces; Major General Abbas Ibrahim, the director general of General Directorate of General Security; and the director general of General Directorate of State Security. <sup>lvi</sup> The committee is tasked with submitting the results of its investigation to the cabinet within five days. The committee has not made any public statements, and it seems to have stopped work after the resignation of Prime Minister Diab’s government on August 11. <sup>lvii</sup>
<b>5 August 2020</b>	The Lebanese Judges Association calls for a clear investigation; they denounce the attempts of politicians at all levels to evade responsibility for this crime and to blame it on judges. <sup>lviii</sup>



<b>5 August 2020</b>	French prosecutors open a probe into “involuntary injury” under jurisdiction to investigate acts abroad where French people are among the victims. <sup>lix</sup>
<b>6 August 2020</b>	Human Rights Watch call for impartial expert probe of Beirut blast. <sup>lx</sup>
<b>6 August 2020</b>	President of France Emmanuel Macron calls for an international investigation into the explosion. <sup>lxi</sup>
<b>6 August 2020</b>	Lebanese Forces' leader, Samir Geagea calls for an international investigation into the explosion. <sup>lxii</sup>
<b>7 August 2020</b>	Lebanon’s leading Druze politician, Walid Jumblatt, calls for an “international investigation” into the Beirut port explosion. <sup>lxiii</sup>
<b>9 August 2020</b>	Saudi Arabia Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan calls for a transparent and independent investigation into the explosion. <sup>lxiv</sup>
<b>9 August 2020</b>	European Council President Charles Michel calls for an independent investigation into the explosion. <sup>lxv</sup>
<b>10 August 2020</b>	Queidat, the Public Cassation Court Prosecutor recommends that the Cabinet refer the case to the Judicial Council, which the Cabinet does. Justice Minister Marie-Claude Najm appoints Judge Fadi Sawan to serve as judicial investigator. <sup>lxvi</sup>
<b>10 August</b>	Queidat confirms the arrests of 19 individuals. <sup>lxvii</sup>
<b>10 August 2020</b>	Lebanon Prime Minister Hassan Diab blames the blast on endemic corruption and announces resignation of his government, saying ‘the ‘system of corruption is bigger than the state. The resigning government remains in caretaker capacity. <sup>lxviii</sup>
<b>10 August 2020</b>	The Lebanese Judges Association hold a sit-in denouncing corruption and political interference. <sup>lxix</sup>
<b>13 August 2020</b>	The Beirut Bar Association issues a statement denouncing the concerning tension between the Minister of Justice and the Higher Judicial Council on the appointment of the judicial investigator to look into the explosion. <sup>lxx</sup>
<b>13 August 2020</b>	30 independent experts of UN Human Rights Council Special Procedures call for a prompt, impartial, credible and independent investigation based on human rights principles. <sup>lxxi</sup>
<b>13 August 2020</b>	David Hale confirms USA Federal Bureau of Investigations will join Lebanon investigation into explosion. <sup>lxxii</sup>
<b>14 August 2020</b>	Press conference held by survivors and families of victims calling on the UN Security Council to launch an international investigation. <sup>lxxiii</sup>
<b>14 August 2020</b>	Investigating judge in the preliminary investigation under the State Prosecutor announces the suspension of a planned interrogation of former and current ministers of finance and public works; explaining that he anticipates the investigating judge under the Judicial Council would confirm it did not have jurisdiction to conduct such interrogations. <sup>lxxiv</sup>
<b>19 August 2020</b>	Lebanon’s top Sunni cleric, Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Latif Derian, urges international investigation into blast. <sup>lxxv</sup>
<b>1 September 2020</b>	By 1 September, a total of 25 individuals are arrested, including current and former customs chiefs Badri Daher and Shafik Merhi, former port director Hassan Koraytem, Abdel Hafiz Kaissi, director of land and maritime transport at the public works ministry, which nominally oversees the port, and Anthony Salloum, head of military intelligence at the port. <sup>lxxvi</sup>
<b>4 September 2020</b>	May Chidiac, Former Minister of Social Affairs then representing the Lebanese Forces political party in government, calls for independent international investigation into the explosion. <sup>lxxvii</sup>
<b>8 September 2020</b>	Fire breaks out in Beirut port, leading to allegations of crime scene interference. <sup>lxxviii</sup>
<b>10 September 2020</b>	Fire breaks out in Beirut port (second), leading to allegations of crime scene interference. <sup>lxxix</sup>
<b>13 September 2020</b>	Maronite Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, and head of the Maronite Church calls for an international investigation into the explosion. <sup>lxxx</sup>

<b>14 September 2020</b>	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bacheret, calls for an impartial, independent, thorough and transparent investigation. <sup>lxxxix</sup>
<b>13 October 2020</b>	As of 13 October, local media report that 25 people have been arrested in total in relation to the case, 30 have been charged, and Judge Sawan has heard the testimony of 47 witnesses. The evidence and charges against those arrested have not been made public. <sup>lxxxix</sup>
<b>13 October 2020</b>	The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation confirms it has reached no firm conclusion about what caused the August 4 explosion. <sup>lxxxix</sup>
<b>26 October 2020</b>	The Head of the Beirut Bar, Melhem Khalaf having filed a criminal complaint on August 6, 2020, remits to Mr. Jan Kubis a letter addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations, requesting access to all available satellite photos by member states on the day of the explosion, and other information relating to the vessel Rhosus that carried 2,750 metric tons of military grade ammonium nitrate <sup>lxxxix</sup>
<b>28 October 2020</b>	The Beirut Bar Association presents 681 criminal law suits on behalf of the victims and their families before the Judicial Council and the General prosecutor, and another significant number of lawsuits are to follow <sup>lxxxix</sup> .
<b>2 November 2020</b>	Fire Brigades Union call on the UK Government to press for a full international investigation into the explosion. <sup>lxxxix</sup>
<b>3 November 2020</b>	Judicial investigator Fadi Sawan is informed that French experts have so far reached no conclusion on the cause of the blast. <sup>lxxxix</sup>
<b>4 November 2020</b>	Lebanese MP Imad Wakim calls for independent investigation into explosion. <sup>lxxxix</sup>
<b>7 November 2020</b>	The Higher Judiciary Council issues a statement on some aspects of the investigation <sup>lxxxix</sup>
<b>7 November 2020</b>	The Head of the Beirut Bar issues a statement in the name of the Bar’s “accusation bureau” in charge of representing more than one thousand victims of the Beirut explosion, reiterating the Beirut Bar commitment to justice and stating that the local investigation faces “big challenges” and “numerous obstacles.” <sup>lxxxix</sup>

## II. PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

18. This submission has been prepared by Legal Action Worldwide (LAW) who are supporting the group Victims of the Beirut August Massacre assisted by the law firm ASAS Law. The purpose of the report is to hear the voices of the victims, set out the publicly available facts, the applicable legal framework, and restrictions on access to justice in Lebanon.
19. The report will be disseminated to the United Nations and Member States to advocate for the key requests of victims.
20. The information gathered for this submission has been obtained by LAW's national and international legal team, to gather publicly available material relating to the 4 August 2020 explosion in Lebanon, through:
  - One to one discussions with legal representatives of victims, victims, international non-governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, diplomats, the United Nations and journalists;
  - Interviews were conducted with victims and families of victims. As a representative sample of the victims group, nine victim statements are annexed to this submission, which have been redacted for protection of victim identity. These individuals were selected on the basis of those who had family members killed or who had suffered serious injury. It should be noted that many victims and witnesses were fearful to provide written statements, which limited the number available to be included in this report.
  - Considering all available material including United Nations reports, Non-governmental organisation reports and media coverage.
21. The information included here has come from publicly available sources and each fact is supported by at least three sources. Where three sources were not available, we have highlighted this in the footnotes. Sources and information are not intended to be exhaustive.
22. LAW would like to take this opportunity to express deepest thanks to those who assisted in the preparation of this report. In particular, to the incredible bravery of the victims' group and those who have provided victims statements. We continue to be in awe of these individuals and their willingness to come forward, which is truly remarkable, particularly in light of their loss. This submission aims to ensure that victims, their families, and their stories will not be forgotten.
23. The information herewith is correct as of 12 November 2020.

### III. FACTS

#### 3.1 Background

24. On 23 September 2013, The Rhosus, a vessel sailing under the Moldovan flag, set sail from Batumi Port, Georgia with 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate on board,<sup>xcv</sup> a substance commonly used in agriculture as fertiliser, and in the production of explosives. The Rhosus' alleged intended destination was Biera, Mozambique, where the ammonium nitrate had been ordered by Fabrica de Explosivos, a Mozambican industrial explosives company.<sup>xcii</sup> The vessel was managed by Interfleet Shipmanagement,<sup>xciii</sup> but ownership of the vessel is less clear. Both Russian businessman Igor Grechushkin, and Panama based company Briarwood Corp. are reported owners.<sup>xciv</sup> The vessel made several stops on route: first in Zeytinburnu, Turkey, on 1 October 2013, before stopping at Tuzla, Turkey, a major ship repair port on 3 October 2013. The vessel then left the repair port on 16 October 2013 and stopped at Piraeus, Greece, on 21 October, before departing on 14 November and finally, on 20 November 2013,<sup>xcv</sup> due to difficulties, reportedly technical, financial, or a combination of the two, was forced to dock at Berth 14, Dock 4, before shifting to Berth 11, Dock 3, Beirut port, Lebanon.<sup>xcvi</sup>
25. The Rhosus, its cargo and its eight crew members remained in the port of Beirut. The vessel was impounded by judicial order 2013/1031,<sup>xcvii</sup> with sources citing the vessel's ill repair,<sup>xcviii</sup> outstanding debts owed by stakeholders of the vessel to two creditors represented by the Lebanese law firm Baroudi & associates,<sup>xcix</sup> and unpaid fees of \$100,000 owed to the Beirut port itself, as the reasons.<sup>c</sup> The vessel was then reportedly abandoned by its owner and manager, and four of the eight crew were able to disembark and returned home.<sup>ci</sup> The remaining four crew, Captain Prokoshev, his chief engineer, third engineer and bosun, all of Ukrainian nationality, were ordered to remain on the vessel by Lebanese authorities and were not allowed to disembark.<sup>cii</sup> It is not clear which authority prevented the crew from disembarking. The four crew remained on the vessel with dwindling supplies,<sup>ciii</sup> leaving them on 'the brink of survival' according to an inspection carried out in March 2014 by International Federation of Transport Workers inspector, Olga Ananyina.<sup>civ</sup> The four crew eventually engaged law firm Baroudi & associates, which secured their right to disembark and return home.<sup>cv</sup> Baroudi law firm lodged the successful appeal based on "the imminent danger the crew was facing, given the 'dangerous' nature of the cargo still stored in the ship's holds,"<sup>cvii</sup> and the remaining crew returned home in September 2014.<sup>cvii</sup>
26. On 27 June 2014, then Director of Lebanese Customs, Shafik Merhi, sent the first of a series of letters to the Urgent Matters Judge, alerting them to the dangerous cargo aboard the Rhosus and requesting a solution to the issue.<sup>cviii</sup> In October 2014 the ammonium nitrate was removed from the Rhosus and stored in Hangar 12, Beirut port. It is not clear who gave this order or whether it was related to Merhi's letter or Baroudi & associates' successful appeal.<sup>cix</sup> Responsibility for day-to-day operations and management of the essential infrastructure at the port of Beirut is spread across various public and private entities, including a number of governmental agencies.<sup>1</sup>
27. From 5 December 2014 until 27 October 2017, unnamed Customs officials sent at least five further letters to the Urgent Matters Judge, reportedly alerting the judiciary to the dangers posed by the ammonium nitrate and requesting assistance. Letters were sent on 5 December 2014, 6 May 2015, 20 May 2016, 13 October 2016 and by the new Customs Director, Badri Daher on 27 October 2017.<sup>cx</sup> Public Works Minister Michel Najjar has stated that the Public Works Ministry sent 18 letters to the Urgent Matters Judge during this period.<sup>cxii</sup> General Manager of the Port, Hassan Koraytem, has stated that he and the General Directorate of State Security also sent letters of warning.<sup>cxii</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 3.3 for more information on key institutions involved or aware of hazardous materials.

28. Two investigations were also carried out during this period, with resulting reports. LAW have endeavoured to locate these reports but have not been successful. In February 2015 Nadim Zwain, a judge from the Summary Affairs Court appointed an expert (whose name is not publicly available) to inspect the cargo. The report concluded that the material was hazardous and requested it be transferred to the Lebanese army, a request which was rejected by the army command according to Reuters.<sup>cxiii</sup> In January 2020, a judge launched an official investigation after it was discovered that Hangar 12 was unguarded and had damage to its door and roof, meaning the ammonium nitrate was at risk of being stolen.<sup>cxiv</sup> Again it is not clear who gave the order or the identity of the expert who conducted the investigation. The investigation took place and Prosecutor General Ghassan Oweidat prepared a final report and issued orders to repair the damage to the Hangar. The Lebanese General Directorate of State Security, which is under the authority of both the Prime Minister and the President and oversees Port security, then instructed port authorities to provide guards at Hangar 12, appointed a director for the warehouse, and ordered that repairs be made to the damage.<sup>cxv</sup> In June 2020, The Prime Minister after having decided to visit and personally inspect the ammonium nitrate storage site accompanied by the head of the state security, he later cancelled his visit for reasons that remain unclear.<sup>cxvi</sup> On 20 July 2020, the conclusions of the January investigation were shared with Prime Minister Diab and President Aoun, warning that the ammonium nitrate stored in the port could destroy the capital, Beirut, if it exploded.<sup>cxvii</sup> The President reportedly gave orders to the Secretary General of the Supreme Defence Council, an umbrella group of security and military agencies chaired by the president, to do 'what is necessary'.<sup>cxviii</sup>
29. Finally, the report was shared with Michel Najjar, Lebanon's Public Works Minister, on 24 July 2020 who reportedly contacted Hassan Koraytem, the Port General Manager, for more information on 3 August 2020, one day before the explosion.<sup>cxix</sup>
30. On 4 August, just after 6pm Beirut time, a colossal explosion tore through Lebanon's capital city. The epicentre of the explosion was Hangar 12 and the main cause was the ammonium nitrate that had been in the port since November 2013. The exact chain of events that lead to the explosion is not yet entirely clear from publicly available sources. Most sources suggest that a team of welders were sent at 12pm to repair the damaged door and roof of Hangar 12, where the ammonium nitrate was stored.<sup>30</sup> Later in the afternoon, reportedly 5.40pm, a fire was seen at Hangar 12.<sup>31</sup> The fire brigade was alerted, and ten fire fighters approached the Hangar to attempt to tackle it. No evidence was found to suggest that the public was warned about the danger posed by the ammonium nitrate neither before the fire nor once the fire was reported, nor that there were any attempts to evacuate the area. The fire grew and flashes were seen coming from Hangar 12. Some sources have suggested that fireworks were also stored in the same hangar.<sup>32</sup> Just after 6pm, the ammonium nitrate exploded.
31. The explosion is reportedly the most powerful in Lebanon's history.<sup>cxx</sup> The BBC report that a Sheffield University, UK, estimates the yield at the equivalent of 500 tons of TNT, with a reasonable upper limit of 1.1 kilotons, putting the explosion at around one-twentieth of the size of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945.<sup>cxxi</sup> The explosion was reportedly felt as far as Cyprus, 150 miles away.<sup>cxxii</sup> The port was obliterated, including the surrounding warehouses and the grain silos. A ship was thrown from the water onto the bank of the port nearby.<sup>cxxiii</sup>

### 3.2 Victims

32. The explosion of 4 August 2020 killed over 200 persons<sup>cxxiv</sup> who were nationals of Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Bangladesh, Philippines, Australia, Pakistan, the Netherlands, Germany and France.<sup>cxxv</sup> This included diplomats from the Netherlands and Germany.<sup>cxxvi</sup> As of 30 August 2020, three people were

missing.<sup>cxxvii</sup> It wounded 7,000 persons, left 150 persons disabled and damaged 77,000 apartments displacing over 300,000 people.<sup>cxxviii</sup> Of the people who lost their lives, 120 were male, 58 were female and 13 were unidentified.<sup>cxxix</sup> At least three children between the ages of two years and fifteen years lost their lives.<sup>cxxx</sup> 31 children required hospitalization; 1,000 children were injured and 80,000 children were displaced.<sup>cxxxi</sup> At least 43 refugees lost their lives, 124 were wounded and 20 were wounded seriously.<sup>cxxxii</sup>

33. The impact of the explosion is not a stand-alone event solely affecting the residents of Beirut. The blast impacted people outside of Beirut, who have experienced material damage and/or are experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder by reliving the devastation caused by the civil war.<sup>cxxxiii</sup>

*'Victims of the Beirut August Massacre'*

34. The 'Victims of the Beirut August Massacre,' comprising non-political persons who lost a beloved one, or suffered physical, material or mental harm.<sup>cxxxiv</sup> The survivor-group is taking action to demand justice and accountability on behalf of all the victims of the explosion through an independent investigation into the causes of the crime and subsequent prosecution.<sup>cxxxv</sup> The survivor-group demands an international investigation, prosecution and damages to the victims.<sup>cxxxvi</sup>

3.3 Key Institutions Involved or Aware of Hazardous Materials

35. Responsibility for day-to-day operations and management of the essential infrastructure at the port of Beirut is spread across various public and private entities, including a number of governmental agencies. The following key institutions were involved in the management and/or were made aware of 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate being stored in the port of Beirut, just over a kilometre away from the city centre, for over six years. They include, but are not limited to:

*Gestion et Exploitation du Port de Beyrouth (GEPB)*

36. The port of Beirut came under the direct ownership of the Lebanese government in 1990. However, GEPB, a private company registered in Lebanon, continued to manage and operate the port right up to the time of the explosion. Container operations were subcontracted to a company called Beirut Container Terminal Consortium (BCTC).

*General Directorate of State Security (GDSS),*

37. GDSS is the national security agency in Lebanon, and part of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities. It has responsibility for gathering information on internal state security, undertaking preliminary investigations of risks to internal security, and submitting regular reports on the security and political situation to the President and Prime Minister. GDSS was responsible for overseeing security at the port of Beirut at the time of the explosion. The State Security Office at the port was tasked with combatting corruption and, in discharging this function, identified a number of security gaps.<sup>cxxxvii</sup>

*Lebanese Customs Administration*

38. The Lebanese Customs Administration operates under the Ministry of Finance and has responsibility for collecting customs duties and controlling the flow of goods in and out of Lebanon. Customs officials



are stationed at all of the country's ports of entry, including Beirut Rafik Hariri airport, the five major land crossings with Syria and the seaports at Beirut, Sidon, Tyre, Tripoli and Jounieh. The administration enforces border controls alongside the General Directorate of General Security.

#### *Lebanese Ministry of National Defence*

39. The Ministry of National Defence is the service section of the Lebanese Armed Forces. It is comprised of four institutions: the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Directorate General of Administration, the Inspectorate General and the Military Council. The Lebanese Constitution provides that the President shall be the commander-in-chief of the Lebanese Armed Forces.
40. The division of work between the Directorate General and the Army Command is established by instructions issued by the Minister of National Defence on the advice of the Military Council. Broadly, the Directorate General is responsible for drafting the army budget and monitoring its implementation and ensuring that the service needs of the army are met. The Inspectorate General ensures that army rules and regulations are being followed. Finally, the Military Council is responsible for promotions and dismissals, as well as the awarding of military honours.<sup>[2]</sup>

#### *Ministry of Public Works and Transport*

41. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport is the governmental ministry responsible for road, air and maritime policies and general land use policies. The ministry is organized into four Directorates. The Directorate General of Land Maritime Transport creates and implement policies related to land and maritime transport. The Directorate General of Urban Planning is responsible for establishing land use policies and putting them into practice.

#### *Lebanese judiciary<sup>2</sup>*

42. The Lebanese judiciary is composed of courts of various degrees and jurisdictions. Article 20 of the Constitution of Lebanon provides that judges are independent in the exercise of their functions. The Court of Cassation, which sits in Beirut, is Lebanon's highest court. It is the Lebanese court of last instance, meaning cases from all courts can eventually be appealed to the Court of Cassation. First degree courts (which include judges of urgent matters looking into urgent matters that require imminent action), have jurisdiction over civil claims, with appeals to one of the six Court of Appeals for each district. Trial courts have jurisdiction over criminal cases involving felonies and misdemeanors, subject to review by the Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals also serves as a first degree or trial court for more serious criminal offences. The Judicial Council is a court of exception looking into matters of significant state magnitude; it is a one level jurisdiction of last resort meaning that its decisions are not subject to appeal. The military courts are also courts of exception looking into matters that involve a military aspect.

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<sup>2</sup> See Sections IV, V and VI for more details on the Lebanese judicial investigations.



### 3.4 Impact

#### *Political and Economic Background*

43. Lebanon has been grappling with a political, economic and financial crisis resulting in unemployment, homelessness and increasing food insecurity.<sup>cxviii</sup> In October 2019, chronic mismanagement, corruption and political stalemate boiled over into street protests. Protestors called for the removal of the entire political class with slogans “The people want the fall of the regime” and “All means all.”<sup>cxviii</sup> The protests turned violent in January 2020 resulting in arrests, shooting of protestors and vandalism of public property.<sup>cxl</sup> Combined data from the Lebanese Red Cross and Civil Defence authorities, suggested that at least 467 people – 142 of whom were law enforcement officers – were injured.<sup>cxli</sup> Amnesty International reported:

“The Lawyers’ Committee to Defend Protestors stated on social media that protestors had been beaten during arrest, during transfer to the police station and inside El Helou police station. The police reportedly beat them with hands and batons, insulted them and threatened them with physical and sexual violence.”<sup>cxlii</sup>

44. The sharp devaluation of the Lebanese currency and vulnerable socio-economic climate worsened with the onset of COVID-19. The World Food Programme reported that:

“The COVID-19 outbreak and related containment measures have pushed nearly one out of every three Lebanese into unemployment so far, while one in five respondents saw their salary being reduced. Lebanese respondents living in Akkar were among the highest to report either losing their jobs or having a reduced income due to COVID-19. Moreover, Lebanese women as well as young adults between 25-34 years of age have been particularly affected by reduced salaries. Drastic change in employment status was significantly felt more by Syrian women than men, as 61 percent reported losing their jobs due to COVID-19 compared to 46 percent of Syrian men. The latter proportions of women and men experienced salary reduction or have already been impacted by public unrest.

...

With food prices soaring in Lebanon, food is a major source of concern for a large proportion of respondents across all three groups. Fifty percent of Lebanese, 63 percent of Palestinians and 75 percent of Syrians felt worried they would not have enough food to eat over the past month. Those who have lost their jobs – either since or prior to the outbreak – have shown to be more distressed than others. Lebanese residents in Akkar have reported to be more worried than those living in other governorates.

...

Main concerns raised by all population groups revolved around the sharp deterioration of the economic situation and its associated impacts. Following the recent crises, including rising unemployment rates, the need for money to cover essential needs (incl. food, rent and medicine) have been strongly echoed by the population in Lebanon. Tensions and violence have also been reported to be on the rise, especially by the Lebanese population compared to other groups. More Lebanese women (56%) have perceived tensions than men (52%). In addition, Lebanese women are perceiving a greater increase in domestic violence compared to men, which raises important protection concerns.”<sup>cxliii</sup>

45. As of May 2020, an estimated 55 per cent of the population had fallen below the poverty line, almost double the rate a year earlier.<sup>cxliv</sup> Consumer prices skyrocketed, putting basic goods out of reach for many Lebanese, as well as others including Syrian and Palestinian refugees.

*Who held key positions from 2013-2020?*

Date (Year/Month)	President	Prime minister	Minister of Defence	Minister of Justice	Minister of Public Works
January 2013 - February 2014	Michel Suleiman	Najib Mikati	Fayez Ghosn	Shakib Qortbawi	Ghazi Aridi
February 2014 - May 2014	Michel Suleiman	Tammam Salam	Samir Mouqbel	Ashraf Rifi	Ghazi Zeaiter
May 2014 - October 2016	Power vacuum	Tammam Salam	Samir Mouqbel	Ashraf Rifi	Ghazi Zeaiter
December 2016 - January 2019	Michel Aoun	Saad Hariri	Yaacoub Sarraf	Salim Jreissati	Youssef Fenianos
January 2019 - January 2020	Michel Aoun	Saad Hariri	Elias Bou Saab	Albert Serhan	Youssef Fenianos
January 2020 - Incumbent	Michel Aoun	Hassan Diab	Zeina Akar	Marie-Claude Najm	Michel Najjar
Saad Hariri has again been named as Lebanon's prime minister and tasked with forming a government after Mustapha Adib, stepped down after failing to form a new government in light of internal political disputes.					

### *Economic impact of the explosion*

46. The Beirut port explosion marked a new low in Lebanon's political and economic decline. The weekend after the explosion, angry protestors were met with a harsh response by security forces, injuring hundreds and leaving one security officer dead.<sup>cxlv</sup> After multiple cabinet ministers including the Information Minister Manal Abdel-Samad and Environment Minister Demanios Kattar stepped down,<sup>cxlvi</sup> Prime Minister Diab announced his government's resignation on 10 August 2020.<sup>cxlvii</sup> He noted that the government had gone to great lengths to lay a roadmap to save the country from the 'long-ruling class corruption'.<sup>cxlviii</sup>
47. Almost three months after the blast, urgent needs for protection, food, health, shelter and WASH remain critical. The loss of livelihoods, compounded by the current COVID-19 outbreak, as well as the country's financial and economic crises, have raised the demand for substantial and long-term humanitarian assistance.<sup>cxlix</sup>
48. After the explosion, the World Bank estimated damages and losses of US\$6.6-US\$8.1 billion.<sup>cl</sup> The explosion brought down Lebanon's seven-month-old government and marked the lowest point yet in the steady decay of the country's public and political institutions since its civil war ended in 1990.<sup>cli</sup> The World Bank reported:

"The assessment found that the value of damage from the explosion was in the range of US\$3.8 to 4.6 billion, with losses to financial flows of US\$2.9 to US\$3.5 billion. The impact is particularly severe in key sectors vital for growth, including finance, housing, tourism, and commerce. Through to the end of 2021, the costs of recovery and reconstruction are expected to total US\$1.8 to \$2.2 billion."<sup>clii</sup>

49. The food crisis in the country worsened after the explosion. Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food observed that, “A hunger crisis to this degree is always caused by systemic national and international political failure, and this is definitely the case in Lebanon.”<sup>cliii</sup> CARE International released a status report in October 2020:

“...though the October 2019 protests, Eurobond default, and COVID-19 lockdown accelerated Lebanon’s current economic collapse, the present crisis is the result of decades of unsustainable governance and institutionalized clientalism.”<sup>cliv</sup>

50. The World Bank Group conducted a survey on the impact of the explosion and reported:

“For those who listed requiring assistance with needs, mental health services, food, and medical assistance were among the most pressing needs in the total sample and across zones. Among those who expressed other needs, those with a lower reported monthly income indicated needing financial and livelihood assistance.”<sup>clv</sup>

*Critical Infrastructure*

51. *The explosion destroyed much of the port and severely damaged dense residential and commercial areas within a 1- to 2-mile radius.*<sup>clvi</sup> *the world health organization (who) reported that three hospitals were non-functional, three hospitals were substantially damaged, 500 hospital bed equivalents were destroyed and 17 containers with essential medical supplies destroyed.*<sup>clvii</sup> *the ministry of public health (moph) central warehouse where who-supported essential medical supplies were stored has been severely damaged, necessitating immediate relocation to a different site.*<sup>clviii</sup> *moreover, a recently delivered shipment of personal protection equipment (ppe), stored at the beirut port warehouse, pending transfer to moph warehouse, was completely destroyed, leaving the nation in need of urgent trauma and ppe supplies.*<sup>clix</sup> *five out of seven unicef-supported vaccine cold rooms were destroyed in the blast, affecting critical vaccination programmes.*<sup>clx</sup> *120 schools, used by 55,000 lebanese and non-lebanese children, sustained various levels of damage. Humanitarian partners are conducting further damage assessments, in close coordination with relevant government authorities.*<sup>clxi</sup>

52. In total, UN-coordinated programs requested funding of US\$354.9 million to meet the immediate lifesaving and time-critical early recovery needs for three months.<sup>clxii</sup> The sectors seeking funding are: protection, education, food security, health, shelter, WASH and other multiple shared sectors.<sup>clxiii</sup>

53. Strategy & conducted an impact assessment survey and found the following infrastructure damages:<sup>clxiv</sup>

<i>Housing</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Businesses</i>	<i>Culture</i>
10,610 buildings with minimal damage (122,890 households)	120 damaged schools	26,560 businesses with low level of damage	eight historical areas
2,570 buildings with moderate damage (28980 households)	20 damaged technical and vocational education and training	3,870 businesses with medium level of damage	480 heritage buildings
240 buildings with severe damage (2310 households)	Eight damaged universities	505 businesses with high level damage	160 additional buildings with special features

US\$ 1,830 Million financial requirements	US\$ 60 Million financial requirements	US\$ 865 Million financial requirements	US\$ 285 Million financial requirements
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*Psychological impact*

54. According to the Protection Sector’s dashboard, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) related interventions constituted another key component of the response. The situation report states:

“Needs are great and likely to remain, even with the extensive support offered. Parents report their children expressing fear and experiencing nightmares, anxiety, interrupted sleep and flashbacks since the explosions. Children and caregivers could access tailored MHPSS care through community-based initiatives in newly established safe play spaces in tents and community centres. Group and individual-focused MHPSS interventions for different age groups have been implemented throughout the affected areas, starting with Psychological First Aid and increasingly shifting toward more specialized PSS, reaching particularly women and girls.”<sup>clxv</sup>

55. The situation has been particularly difficult for the refugee population who are experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>clxvi</sup> For many of them, the explosion was a distressing reminder of the conflict and instability they had fled, bringing flashbacks, nightmares and anxiety.<sup>clxvii</sup> In the days following the blast, NGOs set up hotlines and walk-in clinics to support people suffering from mental distress, trauma and anxiety because of the explosion.<sup>clxviii</sup> The collective trauma was not just restricted to residents of Beirut, but was also experienced by members of the refugee population outside the capital, bringing back memories from the civil war.<sup>clxix</sup> The increasing demand for psychological support is bringing added stress to psychologists, mental-health specialists and social workers.<sup>clxx</sup>

*Gendered impact*

56. Rachel Dore-Weeks, Head of United Nations Women Lebanon commented:

“The Beirut Port explosion is deepening the overall crisis the country is facing. In this, its impact is felt and experienced differently by people, and these different experiences are determined by people’s gender, access to capital and savings, social networks, safety needs, legal status, geographic location and other factors. In delivering our support, if we are to ‘build back better’ this needs to be understood and factored into all aspects of how we deliver and respond to both the port explosion and Lebanon’s compounded crisis”.<sup>clxxi</sup>

57. Approximately 81,000 women need support to meet their health, protection and menstrual hygiene needs and overall sanitation, among other things.<sup>clxxii</sup> Among the displaced persons, 150,000 were women with 81,000 women being of reproductive age and 24,000 adolescent girls. At the time of the explosion 3,938 women were pregnant, in need of pre-natal care, ante-natal care, and Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EmONC).<sup>clxxiii</sup>

58. Additionally, the risk of sexual and gender-based violence, especially for women and girls increased due to the explosion. Compromised shelter arrangements aggravated pre-existing threats of violence and exploitation, which were already heightened by COVID-19 related restrictions of movement and the deterioration of the economic situation.<sup>clxxiv</sup> NGOs working on gender-based violence scaled up

their initiatives to mitigate the risks in the affected areas including through outreach and consultations with women and girls about their safety and well-being.<sup>clxxv</sup>

59. Lebanon also suffers from deep and entrenched gender inequalities, which means that any crisis further exacerbates the risks and vulnerabilities that women face. Lebanon ranks 145 out of 153 on the global World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index,<sup>clxxvi</sup> and 139 on women's economic participation.<sup>clxxvii</sup> According to a rapid assessment that United Nations Women and ACTED produced immediately after the explosion, elderly women (chronically ill, persons with disability, elderly headed households) are among the most vulnerable.<sup>clxxviii</sup> One survey underlined how the role of women as the family caretaker had been reinforced following the explosion, particularly as now their family members were more likely to be injured, disabled and/or psychologically distraught.<sup>clxxix</sup> Dealing with the impact of the explosion on the family compounds women's emotional distress that had already increased as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdowns.<sup>clxxx</sup>
60. The explosion continues to have devastating effects on the political situation, the failing economy and the lives of its residents and will continue to do so for years to come.

#### IV. PROGRESS MADE IN ADDRESSING 'BEIRUT EXPLOSION'

##### 4.1 Investigation by Lebanon

61. Following the explosion, the Government of Lebanon established three separate investigation committees:
  1. *Administrative inquiry:* On 5 August 2020, the Government of Lebanon set up a committee headed by the Prime Minister and comprised of Lebanon's Justice, Defence, and Interior ministers; the Director General of the Internal Security Forces; Major General Abbas Ibrahim, the Director General of General Directorate of General Security; and the Director General of General Directorate of State Security,<sup>clxxxi</sup> to conduct a five-day administrative inquiry into the explosion.<sup>clxxxii</sup> The Cassation Court Prosecutor, Prosecutor Ghassan Ouidat, stated that the investigation focused on the direct and indirect causes of the explosion, the ship that brought the explosive materials to the port, and responsibilities that might be distributed over several other dimensions.<sup>clxxxiii</sup> The investigation is focused on port and customs officials, with at least 16 employees detained and others brought in for questioning.<sup>clxxxiv</sup> There is speculation about the willingness of the investigative committee to hold senior leaders accountable.<sup>clxxxv</sup> So far, the committee has not made any public announcements and has reportedly stopped working after the resignation of Prime Minister Diab's government on August 11 2020, although the Government continues to act as caretaker until a new government is in place.<sup>clxxxvi</sup>
  2. *Military investigation:* The Cassation Court Prosecutor, Ghassan Oueidat, ordered a separate investigation on 5 August 2020, led by the Internal Security Forces and the military,<sup>clxxxvii</sup> which led to the 10 August 2020 announcement of the arrest of 19 persons pursuant to this investigation.<sup>clxxxviii</sup> The Cassation Court Prosecutor recommended that the government refer the case either to a military court, considering that it fell under this jurisdiction, or, given the magnitude of the crime, to the Judicial Council, a court of exception.<sup>clxxxix</sup> In the same announcement, he then used his exceptional powers to remove the case from the military commissioner and refer it to the Judicial Council.<sup>cxc</sup> The decision of the Cassation Court Prosecutor to refer the case to the Judicial Council is in question for a possible conflict of interest for three reasons:<sup>cxc</sup>
    - a. First, the request to impound the ship and unload its cargo in 2014 came from the Ministry of Public Works and Transport while it was headed by Ghazi Zaiter, Oueidat's brother-in-law.
    - b. Secondly, Oueidat himself received warning letters from State Security and took no initiative to destroy the cargo under the 1978 Hamburg Rules to protect public safety.



- c. The Cassation Court Prosecutor is also the Vice President of the Judicial Council and therefore has great influence over its decisions. Oueidat is involved in the appointment of the judge who should examine and evaluate the correctness of his own actions in this case, which compounds possible conflict of interest.
3. *Judicial Council*: On 13 August, the Supreme Council of the Judiciary accepted the appointment of an investigating judge Fadi Sawan. The decision had been made by the caretaker Minister of Justice, Marie-Claude Najm, after contentions with the Higher Judicial Council.<sup>cxcii</sup> The Supreme Judicial Council handles crimes that infringe on the country’s national security, and crimes relating to the political and state security.<sup>cxci</sup> As of 1 September 2020, the judge had issued (in addition to three arrest warrants in absentia) arrest warrants against 25 suspects, including current and former customs chiefs Badri Daher and Shafik Merhi, former port director Hassan Koraytem, Abdel Hafiz Kaissi, director of land and maritime transport at the public works ministry, which nominally oversees the port, and Anthony Salloum, head of military intelligence at the port; all of them are in custody.<sup>cxci</sup> However, the mandate, composition, powers and functioning of the judicial council are under criticism for the following reasons:
- a. The selection process of the investigative judge lacks objectivity<sup>cxcv</sup> and transparency.<sup>cxvii</sup> The Higher Judicial Council, set up by the executive branch, appoints the investigating judge. Media reports suggest that three candidates were considered for the position. The first candidate, Samer Younes, who is considered largely independent from political pressure was rejected by the higher judicial council.<sup>cxvii</sup> The second candidate, Tarek Bitar was reportedly made to “bow out” of the process.<sup>cxviii</sup> Following this, Judge Fadi Sawan, an investigative judge at the military tribunal was appointed. The selection process also prioritised the religion of the investigating judge since most of the victims are Christian.<sup>cxix</sup>
  - b. The suitability of Judge Sawan as an investigating judge in the present case has been questioned, since he is considered to project authoritarian views and deal with people in a “brash, almost vicious manner if they are weak, poor or opposed to” the government.<sup>cc</sup> He is seen as close to the security establishment and accused of bowing to political interference.<sup>cci</sup> For instance, in the highly-politicised killing of Abou Fakher, a protestor, on 12 November 2019, Judge Sawan released Colonel Daou, who was accused of ordering the shooting at point-blank range.<sup>ccii</sup> This was recorded by protestors, who heard Colonel Daou issue an order to shoot.<sup>cciii</sup> The military court ordered the Colonel’s arrest. However, Judge Sawan released him within two weeks of the crime, pending investigation. The release caused protests and the military court annulled the order to release Colonel Daou based on witness testimony. Judge Sawan issued another release order on April 6 on a request of Colonel Daou’s lawyers.<sup>cciv</sup>
  - c. The investigating Judge Sawan reportedly stated that his investigation did not have jurisdiction to question ministers and the President as they enjoy legal immunity.<sup>ccv</sup> The Judicial Council recognises that public officials enjoy legal immunity, therefore, only the “Supreme Council for Trying Presidents and Ministers,” a body consisting of seven parliament members elected by parliament and eight judges appointed by the judiciary, can question public officials.<sup>ccvi</sup> The Supreme Council is empowered to try ministers and Presidents – including treason and failure to carry out professional duties - but has never held anyone accountable.<sup>ccvii</sup> In the present case, the Supreme Council for Trying Presidents and Ministers has not been appointed.<sup>ccviii</sup> Therefore, only persons at mid and low-level positions are being investigated.<sup>ccix</sup>
  - d. Verdicts issued by the Judicial Council are not subject to appeal.<sup>ccx</sup> This violates Lebanon’s international obligations to protect the fair trial rights of litigants.
  - e. The Judicial Council has not made any public announcements about the ongoing investigation. Civil society organisations reported that leaking of unofficial and unreliable information has undermined the efficiency and credibility of the inquiry.<sup>ccxi</sup>
62. The Judicial Council is expected to produce the investigation report around mid-November 2020.<sup>ccxii</sup> Instead, on 7 November 2020, the Higher Judicial Council issued a statement on the investigation progress mostly comprising information already in the public domain and reporting on letters sent to

the US, UK and French embassies inquiring about judicial cooperation on specific information and noting that the US FBI report was received by the Lebanese Judiciary.<sup>ccxiii</sup> Unnamed 'Judicial sources' have reportedly stated that charges include "willful negligence that led to the deaths of hundreds of innocent civilians and injury of others" and "causing massive destruction to public and private property."<sup>ccxiv</sup> In the absence of dissemination of official information, the local media reported that 25 people were arrested, 20 had been charged and Judge Sawan had heard the testimony of 47 witnesses.<sup>ccxv</sup> Human Rights Watch reported that:

"evidence and charges against those arrested have not been made public. However, more than two months into the investigation, not a single minister, former or sitting, has been questioned as a suspect. The judicial investigator has listened to testimony of current and former ministers as "witnesses" in cases against port and other administrative employees."<sup>ccxvi</sup>

63. Apart from these challenges, the two fires at the Beirut port since the explosion have also prompted allegations of tampering with the crime scene and the evidence.<sup>ccxvii</sup> Meanwhile, Beirut's State Prosecutor for Appeals charged an environmental consulting company and four individuals with negligence in relation with one of the fires.<sup>ccxviii</sup>
64. In summary, the domestic investigation is delayed, not insulated from the executive branch of the Government of Lebanon and does not meet the required fair trial standards.

#### 4.2 Investigations by Foreign Member States

65. The Lebanese government invited experts from France and the United States to join the investigations.<sup>ccxix</sup> Three days after the explosion, on 7 August 2020, the French and Russian rescue teams searched the port area.<sup>ccxx</sup> The French government sent a team of 22 investigators to assist the investigation.<sup>ccxxi</sup> One forensic police official, Dominique Abbenati observed on 7 August 2020 that the explosion "appears to be an accident" although he noted the premature nature of the speculation.
66. The investigating teams of the foreign member states completed their missions at Beirut port after extracting samples from the explosion site.<sup>ccxxii</sup> The Caretaker Minister of Justice informed the media that:

"Lebanese investigators were placing significant weight on the French expert report because it was expected to go into greater depth than the FBI's, and Lebanon had a limited technical to reach its own conclusions on the cause of the blast."<sup>ccxxiii</sup>
67. She added that Judge Sawan was awaiting reports from the foreign experts before writing his indictment since Lebanon did not have the technical and scientific means that foreign members states have.<sup>ccxxiv</sup> In addition to assisting the Lebanese government in its investigation, the French judiciary has also opened its own investigation into the explosion since French citizens were among those killed and injured.<sup>ccxxv</sup>
68. As of 3 November 2020, media reports suggested that initial remarks of the French technical and security experts had "not determined conclusively whether the explosion was the result of an intentional security operation or whether it was the result of negligence in storing the ammonium nitrate and shortcomings that led to the devastating explosion."<sup>ccxxvi</sup> The US' FBI reached similar inconclusive findings about the cause of the explosion.<sup>ccxxvii</sup>



## V. APPLICABLE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

### 5.1 National Legal Framework

69. Lebanon has a mixed legal order combining civil law based on the French civil code, Ottoman legal traditions, and religious laws covering personal status, marriage, divorce, and other family matters for the Islamic and Christian communities. The Constitution of Lebanon, adopted in 1926, with amendments made in 1990, provides in its Preamble that “Lebanon is also a founding and active member of the United Nations Organization and abides by its covenants and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”<sup>ccxxviii</sup> The Preamble is an integral part of the Constitution and enjoys the same status in the hierarchy of laws. The international conventions referred to in the Preamble of the Constitution or ratified by the Lebanese Parliament are also an integral part of domestic law.

#### *Lebanese Constitution*

70. Article 7 of the Lebanese Constitution states that all Lebanese shall enjoy civil and political rights equally. The constitution establishes explicit guarantees against arbitrary deprivations of liberty,<sup>ccxxix</sup> as well as interference with private property.<sup>ccxxx</sup> Article 9 of the Constitution enshrines the right to freedom of conscience and religion, while Article 13 establishes the right to freedom of speech and assembly.<sup>ccxxxi</sup> The Lebanese Constitution does not limit the enjoyment of civil and political rights referred to in Article 7 to those enumerated in the text of the constitution. Accordingly, Article 7 must be interpreted, in light of the Preamble, as incorporating the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and United Nations covenants.

71. As a founding and active member of the United Nations that abides by its covenants and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Lebanon cannot restrict the enjoyment of fundamental human rights to its own nationals. International law entitles all individuals to the rights and freedoms that exist as a matter of convention or custom, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political affiliation, national or social origin, birth or other status.<sup>ccxxxii</sup> Accordingly, states are obliged to secure recognition and respect for the human rights of all individuals within their territory or jurisdiction.

#### *Lebanese Penal Code and Corruption related laws*

72. The right to life is protected in Lebanese law by various provisions of the Lebanese Criminal Code establishing felonies and misdemeanors against human life and physical integrity.<sup>ccxxxiii</sup> Article 190 of the Lebanese Criminal Code establishes liability for harmful acts that result from negligence, reckless, or a failure to comply with laws and regulations.

73. The Lebanese legal framework guards against corruption through provisions of the Lebanese Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Law (active and passive bribery are criminalized under articles 351, 352 and 353 of the Lebanese Criminal Code ) the Civil Servants Regulations and the Labour law, as well as Law No. 318 of 20 April 2001 as amended by Law No 44 of November 24, 2015, on the fight against money-laundering and terrorist financing.<sup>ccxxxiv</sup>

74. Aforementioned Law no. 44/2015<sup>ccxxxv</sup> considers corruption a core crime in money laundering and terrorism. Lebanon ratified the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) on 22 April 2009.<sup>ccxxxvi</sup> The UNCAC has hence become part of the Lebanese legal framework. It is a comprehensive normative instrument and a legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument. It addresses a broad

range of issues such as prevention of corruption, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation, and for the first time in an international Convention, asset recovery.<sup>ccxxxvii</sup>

## 5.2 International Legal Frameworks

75. Lebanon is bound by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>ccxxxviii</sup> the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>ccxxxix</sup> the United Nations Convention against Corruption,<sup>ccxl</sup> and the United Nations Convention Against Torture<sup>ccxli</sup> all of which create state obligations and protect the rights of victims. Additionally, the General Assembly resolution on the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law contains authoritative guiding principles on conducting independent investigations to secure the victims' right to remedy and reparation.

### *Obligations of the state of Lebanon*

76. The right to life, as enshrined, *inter alia*, in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), Article 4 of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights (IACHR), and Article 5 of the Arab Charter on Human Rights, is recognised as the “supreme right” from which no derogation is permitted even in time of public emergency or war.<sup>ccxlii</sup>

77. Article 6 ICCPR establishes an absolute guarantee against arbitrary deprivations of life. This is to say that Article 6 protects individuals from acts or omissions that are intended, or may be expected to cause, their premature or unnatural death arbitrarily. Deprivation of life involves a life-terminating harm or injury. The deprivation can be intentional, or foreseeable and preventable.<sup>ccxliii</sup> It can be caused by an act or omission. Importantly, the guarantee extends beyond actual injury to encompass bodily and mental integrity and threats to life.<sup>ccxliv</sup>

78. States are bound to respect the right to life which means, at minimum, refraining from engaging in conduct that would result in an arbitrary deprivation of life. In addition, states must take appropriate steps to ensure that individuals within their jurisdiction enjoy the right to life, which means exercising due diligence to protect the lives of individuals against deprivations. As such, the right to life extends beyond the actions of the state to protect against deprivations of life caused by private persons or entities whose conduct is not attributable to the State. A failure to exercise due diligence to prevent, punish, investigate or redress the harms caused by private persons or entities gives rise to a violation of the right to life by the state.<sup>ccxlv</sup>

79. The obligation of States parties to respect and ensure the right to life extends to reasonably foreseeable threats and life-threatening situations that can result in loss of life. Accordingly, states may be in violation of article 6 even if such threats and situations do not result in loss of life.<sup>ccxlvii</sup>

80. A state is bound to prevent or deter arbitrary deprivations of life, such as unlawful killings, by enacting and enforcing provisions of criminal law to punish perpetrators. A necessary corollary to the duty to prevent deprivations of life, therefore, is the duty to investigate incidents involving loss of life in order to establish the facts leading to the loss of life, to ascertain whether an arbitrary deprivation of life has occurred, and to assign responsibility.<sup>ccxlviii</sup> International law recognises a number of circumstances which give rise to the duty to investigate, including loss of life that is the result of lethal use of force by state agents,<sup>ccxlviii</sup> suspicious deaths or disappearances,<sup>ccxlix</sup> cases involving domestic violence,<sup>cccl</sup> and high-profile assassinations.<sup>cccli</sup> More broadly, the duty to investigate arises when a loss of life occurs

that potentially engages the responsibility of the state. That includes incidents in which a loss of life may have occurred due to alleged negligence by the state.<sup>cclii</sup>

81. Investigations into arbitrary deprivations of liberty must be effective. Under international law, the effectiveness of an investigation depends on the extent to which it meets certain substantive and procedural standards. Firstly, the persons responsible for carrying out the investigation must be independent from the individuals or entities implicated in the events.<sup>ccliii</sup> Independence means not only a lack of institutional or hierarchical connection, but also practical independence.<sup>ccliv</sup>
82. Investigations into allegations of violation of article 6 must always be prompt.<sup>cclv</sup> The passage of time is liable not only to undermine an investigation but to definitively compromise its chances of being completed.<sup>cclvi</sup> Promptness is required to maintain public confidence in the investigation and to prevent any appearance of collusion in or tolerance of unlawful acts.<sup>cclvii</sup>
83. The purpose of an investigation must be to determine the nature and circumstances of the alleged acts leading to a deprivation of life and to establish the identity of any person who might have been involved.<sup>cclviii</sup> When there is evidence that the responsibility of the state may be engaged in an arbitrary deprivation of life, the investigation must be capable of leading to a determination about the nature and extent of the state's responsibility.<sup>cclix</sup> Accordingly, states need to take appropriate measures "to establish the truth relating to the events leading to the deprivation of life, including the procedures employed by State forces before, during and after the time in which the deprivation occurred, and identifying bodies of individuals who had lost their lives."<sup>cclx</sup>
84. International law prescribes the manner in which an investigation must be carried out to satisfy the procedural aspect of the right to life. Victims and next of kin must be able to participate in the investigation to the extent necessary to safeguard his or her legitimate interests.<sup>cclxi</sup> The state is under an obligation to disclose relevant details about the investigation to victims and next of kin, including information contained in case files.<sup>cclxii</sup> They should be afforded legal standing in the investigation, which allow them to present new evidence, suggest investigative steps that are necessary, and assert their interests and rights throughout the process.<sup>cclxiii</sup> To ensure effective participation by victims and next of kin, investigating authorities should take all necessary steps to ensure their physical and psychological wellbeing and privacy, and to protect them from intimidation and harassment.<sup>cclxiv</sup>
85. Public scrutiny over the investigation or its results is required to the degree necessary to secure accountability in practice as well as theory, to maintain public confidence, and to avoid the appearance of collusion.<sup>cclxv</sup> States are obliged to make public information about the investigative steps taken and the investigation's findings, conclusions and recommendations.<sup>cclxvi</sup> This is subject only to absolutely necessary redactions justified by a compelling need to protect the public interest or the privacy and other legal rights of directly affected individuals.<sup>cclxvii</sup>
86. Failure to ensure respect for the fundamental right to life, including by failing to discharge the duty to effectively investigate arbitrary deprivations of life, must be considered a particularly grave breach of Article 6 ICCPR if there is evidence that such failure arose from corruption. Article 5 of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) requires states parties to "maintain effective, coordinated anti-corruption policies that promote the participation of society and reflect the principles of the rule of law, proper management of public affairs and public property, integrity, transparency and accountability."
87. In addition, the Convention recommends the criminalisation of a number of acts that constitute corruption, including bribery, abuse of public functions, and obstruction of justice. Bribery involves the

promising, offering or giving of an undue advantage to a public official, or the solicitation or acceptance thereof by a public official. Abuse of functions or position is the performance of, or failure to perform, an act, in violation of laws, for the purpose of obtaining an undue advantage. Obstruction of justice is the use of force, intimidation, threats, or promises of an undue advantage to interfere in the giving of testimony or in the exercise of official duties by justice or law enforcement officials.

88. Where a failure to exercise due diligence in preventing arbitrary deprivations of life, contrary to Article 6 ICCPR and customary law, has resulted from corruption, the investigation into the events leading to the loss of life must be able to uncover the extent to which corruption influenced the outcome and to identify the persons responsible. This is necessary to maintain public confidence in adherence to the rule of law and to avoid the appearance of tolerance of illegal acts.
89. Lebanon is a member to the Organized Crime Convention. Article 8(1) of the said Convention requires the establishment of two corruption-related offences: active and passive bribery. Under article 8(1)(a), States parties are required to criminalize the promise, offering or giving to a public official, directly or indirectly, of an undue advantage in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her official duties. Directly or indirectly means that the undue advantage is for the official personally or another person or entity. Under article 8(1)(b), States parties are required to criminalize the solicitation or acceptance by a public official, directly or indirectly, of an undue advantage in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her official duties.<sup>cclxviii</sup>

#### *Rights of victims*

90. In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law (the “Basic Principles”), which summarises and crystallises the law in this area. In accordance with the Basic Principles, a state must provide reparations for any act attributable to it that constitutes a serious violation of international human rights law or international humanitarian law.
91. Reparations are measures taken to redress breaches of individual or state responsibility. Survivors can seek reparations from states that have breached fundamental human rights guarantees, non-state actors who have violated human rights law, or individual perpetrators of international crimes. Violations of negative as well as positive obligations give rise to a duty to make reparations.
92. A core principle in international law is that reparations must fully repair the harm caused to the injured party (the principle of “*resitutio in integrum*”)<sup>cclxix</sup>. The harm can be of a material or a moral nature.<sup>cclxx</sup> Material damage includes losses that can be easily subjected to valuation in financial terms, such as loss of property or livelihood. Moral damage, on the other hand, refers to consequences in terms of individual pain and suffering, such as the loss of loved ones or family members, or simply the invasion of a fundamental right.<sup>cclxxi</sup>
93. In international human rights law, moral damage includes emotional and mental harm.<sup>cclxxii</sup> The Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR), for example, has recognised that the principle of *restitutio in integrum* includes “the restoration of the prior situation, the reparation of the consequences of the violation, and indemnification for patrimonial and non-patrimonial damages, including emotional harm.”<sup>cclxxiii</sup> This understanding reflects a distinct principle in cases involving violations of human rights, namely the principle of due recognition of victimhood.

94. Various procedural norms have developed around the making of reparations. The first of these is a flexible approach towards the burden of proof. International tribunals have favoured flexibility in the weighing of evidence due to the practical difficulties that a victim may encounter in trying to prove his or her case. As the United Nations Human Rights Committee has recognised, “the [victim] and the State party do not always have equal access to the evidence and ... frequently the State party alone has access to relevant information.”<sup>cclxxiv</sup> The International Criminal Court (ICC) has expressed similar concerns, noting “the difficulty victims may face in obtaining evidence in support of their claim due to the destruction or unavailability of evidence.”<sup>cclxxv</sup> In practice, the flexible burden of proof has allowed tribunals to rely on assumptions and circumstantial evidence “when they lead to consistent conclusions as regards the facts of the case.”
95. A second procedural norm is the principle of victim participation. The General Assembly has stressed the importance of informing victims of their role and scope, the timing and progress of proceedings, and allowing their views to be presented and considered whenever their personal interests are at stake.<sup>cclxxvi</sup> Under Article 68 of the Rome Statute, the Court must permit victims to participate at all states of the proceedings “where the personal interests of the victim are concerned”.<sup>cclxxvii</sup> The Court has since confirmed the importance of victim participation at the reparations phase, stating “the Court is mainly concerned at this juncture with the victims.”<sup>cclxxviii</sup>
96. International law recognises at least four forms of reparatory measure for restoring the dignity of victims: restitution, compensation, satisfaction and rehabilitation.

#### *Restitution*

97. The purpose of restitution is to eliminate the effects of the harmful conduct, by returning the injured party to the condition they would have been in had the injury not occurred. Restitution is the purest expression of the principle of full reparation (“*restitutio in integrum*”). As such, it is the preferred form of reparation under international law.
98. When it comes to serious rights human rights violations and international crimes, restitution is often difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. The Basic Principles enumerate some clear-cut cases of restitution, such as the restoration of liberty, citizenship, employment and private property.<sup>cclxxix</sup> An example of restitution in human rights adjudication can be found in the IACtHR’s judgment in the *Loayza Tamayo* case, where the Court ordered the restoration of Tamayo’s liberty, as well as her former job and salary. For its part, the ICC has taken the view that restoration is aimed at the restoration of the individual’s life, and can include returning the victim to their family, returning their home or personal property to them, or providing continuing education.<sup>cclxxx</sup> It should be borne in mind, however, that the material loss remediable by restitution will only cover a part of the injury suffered by the victim. An arbitrary deprivation of liberty may be brought to an end through restitution, but that act alone does not address the mental anguish the victim has suffered, or the moral damage entailed by the infringement of the right to liberty.

#### *Compensation*

99. International law recognises that, in many cases, it may be materially impossible to return the injured party to their previous condition. In these circumstances, the injured party may be entitled to compensation instead. Compensation involves the payment of a sum that corresponds to what they have lost.<sup>cclxxxi</sup> Summarising the practice of regional human rights bodies, the International Law Commission (ILC) has noted that compensation includes “material losses (loss of earnings, pensions, medical



expenses, etc.) and non-material damage (pain and suffering, mental anguish, humiliation, loss of enjoyment of life and loss of companionship or consortium)”.<sup>cclxxxii</sup>

100. The Basic Principles suggest that an award for compensation can only be considered when the harm to the injured party is economically assessable. However, by going on to provide a list of assessable harm that includes mental suffering and moral damage, it would seem clear that the intention is not to subject compensation to a strict market rationality. The ICC has adopted the same criterion in its reparations framework. According to the ICC, an award of compensation should be considered only when the economic harm is sufficiently quantifiable, an award would be appropriate and proportionate, and the award is feasible given availability of funds.<sup>cclxxxiii</sup>

101. The ICC framework also establishes the importance of gender inclusivity in an award of compensation, with particular emphasis on the need to avoid “reinforcing previous structural inequalities and perpetuating prior discriminatory practices.”<sup>cclxxxiv</sup> Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice, who made submissions to the Court on the best approach to reparations, had argued that gender inclusivity required the Court to be sensitive to the fact that women and girls might be affected differently than men and boys by the same crime.

### *Satisfaction*

102. Satisfaction is a category of exceptional reparatory measures that becomes applicable when restitution and compensation are unable to fully address the harm that has been suffered by the injured party. Satisfaction may take the form of a simple acknowledgement of the breach of an obligation, a formal expression of regret, or an apology.<sup>cclxxxv</sup> There is no exhaustive list of measures that can be used to satisfy the injured party. In some instances, for example, the setting up of a trust fund or memorial has been regarded as sufficient. Breach of a peremptory norm is an example of harm that cannot be fully compensated. The ILC’s Draft Articles presuppose that such breaches cause non-material damage that warrants the making of an apology, or formal guarantees with regard to future conduct.

103. The Basic Principles set out a list of measures that can be undertaken in satisfaction of the harms suffered by the injury party.<sup>cclxxxvi</sup> Some of these measures directly address the dignity of survivors, such as the need to verify the truth of the injuries suffered as result of gross violations, and to make public disclosure of the same.<sup>cclxxxvii</sup> The right to truth “implies knowing the full and complete truth as to the events that transpired, their specific circumstances, and who participated in them, including knowing the circumstances in which the violations took place, as well as the reasons for them.”<sup>cclxxxviii</sup> Similar measures include the construction of a memorial or trust fund to the benefit of survivors, the making of a formal apology, or a public declaration restoring the survivor’s dignity and reputation.<sup>cclxxxix</sup> Other measures are more indirect, such as the need to include an accurate account of the violations that have been committed in future official training programmes.<sup>ccxc</sup>

104. Guarantees of non-repetition are one of the most far-reaching forms of reparative justice. According to the Basic Principles, the guarantee should include the adoption of specific measures intended to ensure that similar violations do not occur in the future, such as: ensuring effective civilian control over security forces, ensuring judicial and administrative procedures satisfy internationally-recognised standards of fairness and due process, strengthening the independence of the judiciary, and educating law enforcement and military officials on human rights and humanitarian standards. By requiring the state to undertake wide-ranging reform, a guarantee of non-repetition is intended to address the root causes of serious rights violations. It embodies the idea that, beyond the

particular harm suffered by the particular individual, transitional justice must have “an eye also on the preconditions of reconstructing the rule of law, an aim that has a public, collective dimension.”<sup>ccxcxi</sup>

### *Rehabilitation*

105. Rehabilitation is a crucially important form of reparations in international human rights law. Several human rights instruments establish rehabilitation as a right. For example, the Convention Against Torture establishes for victims of torture an enforceable right to fair and adequate compensation, including “the means for as full rehabilitation as possible.”<sup>ccxcii</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Rights to the Child places an obligation on states to promote the “physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim.”<sup>ccxciii</sup> Similarly, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires states to promote “physical, cognitive and psychological recovery” of persons with disabilities who fall victim to exploitation, violence or abuse. The Rome Statute explicitly required the ICC to develop principles relating to rehabilitation of victims.
106. The principle of *restitutio in integrum* requires a holistic approach to the concept of rehabilitation. This means rehabilitation should be understood to encompass all the various mechanisms of support that a victim might reasonably need to reconstruct his or her previous life. That *restitutio in integrum* favours a holistic approach to rehabilitation is implied in the Inter-American Court’s notion of a ‘life plan’. Damage to a ‘life plan’, according to the Court, “implies the loss or severe diminution, in a manner that is irreparable or reparable only with great difficulty, of a person’s prospects of self-development.”<sup>ccxciv</sup>
107. In the Basic Principles, rehabilitation is said to include medical and psychological care as well as legal and social services.<sup>ccxcv</sup> Moreover, in defining compensation, the principles suggest that an award should cover the cost of medicines and medical services, as well as psychological and social services. The ICC has enumerated a similar list of rehabilitative measures, including: the provision of medical services and healthcare; psychological, psychiatric and social assistance to support those suffering from trauma; and legal and social services.<sup>ccxcvi</sup>
108. Human rights bodies consistently called for effective rehabilitation for victims. The Committee Against Torture, for example has repeatedly called upon states to set up rehabilitation and assistance schemes for victims.<sup>ccxcvii</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women has, in the past, promulgated a list of measures that have some relevance to rehabilitation. The Committee has recommended that states provide appropriate protective and support services for victims, rehabilitation and counselling, and services to ensure the safety and security of victims.<sup>ccxcviii</sup>



## VI. RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN LEBANON

109. For more than two decades, the United Nations has raised concerns regarding the independence and impartiality of the justice system in Lebanon. The justice system can be summarised as lacking independence, inefficient, lacking in resources and prone to corrupt practices. These factors have resulted in ineffective avenues for justice for victims and no realistic options for accountability within Lebanon, particularly when state actors are involved. Furthermore, Lebanon has not recognised the competence of any United Nations individual complaints mechanisms under the international human rights framework. Leaving survivors, victims and their families with few, if any legal avenues for redress.

110. As early as 1997, the United Nations Human Rights Committee (Committee) expressed concerns about the justice system in Lebanon, including the wide range of powers given to military courts. The Concluding Observations of the Committee observed:<sup>ccxcix</sup>

“The Committee expresses concern about the independence and impartiality of the State party’s judiciary, and notes that the delegation itself conceded that the procedures governing the appointment of judges and in particular members of the Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature were far from satisfactory. The Committee is also concerned that the State party does not, in many instances, provide citizens with effective remedies and appeal procedures for their grievances. The Committee therefore recommends that the State party review, as a matter of urgency, the procedures governing the appointment of members of the judiciary, with a view to ensuring their full independence.”

111. In the Summary Record of the Human Rights Committee’s 59<sup>th</sup> session, the Lebanese representative replied:

“14. With regard to issue 8, Lebanese judges enjoyed full independence in passing sentence; the appointment of judges to the Higher Council of the Judiciary by executive decree left something to be desired, although in practice no reservations had been expressed about any appointments.”<sup>ccc</sup>

112. The Committee expressed that Lebanon had given insufficient information about the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, and the national procedure for appointment of the Judicial Council. They particularly asked the Lebanese representative if judges were appointed by the executive or by an independent body. To this, the Lebanese representative accepted the flaw within the system. The Summary Report said:

“58. He regretted that his outline of the Lebanese judicial system had been insufficiently detailed for the Committee's purposes, but assured the Committee that Lebanese judges were fully independent and were appointed on the recommendation of the Higher Council of the Judiciary. It was perhaps a flaw of the legal system that the Higher Council was itself appointed by the executive branch. Proposals had been put forward to make it an elected body, with appeal court judges and judges of courts of first instance making the appointments. However, those plans had yet to be carried out. The recent resignation of the President of the Constitutional Council could perhaps be interpreted as demonstrating the judiciary’s refusal to tolerate any interference in its work.”<sup>ccci</sup>

113. On 14 February 2005, the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafic Hariri was assassinated in Beirut. On 24 March 2005, a report of a three-week fact-finding mission to Lebanon was presented to the United Nations Security Council. “The fact-finding mission was of the opinion that, since the credibility of the Lebanese authorities conducting the investigation was questioned, an international

independent investigation should be set up to establish the truth.”<sup>cccii</sup> On 7 April 2005, under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1595, The United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIC) was established to investigate the killing of the former Prime Minister of Lebanon. The UNIIC stated, “Given a deep mistrust that has prevailed among the Lebanese people towards their security and judicial authorities, the Commission has become a source of great expectation and hope for change, as well as an “interface” between the Lebanese people and their authorities.”<sup>ccciii</sup>

114. Following the report of the UNIIC the Special Tribunal of Lebanon was established under United Nations Security Resolution 1664, in 2006. It should be noted that the Special Tribunal was established without the agreement of the Lebanese Parliament because the Speaker of Parliament at the time refused to convene Parliament, despite a majority of Lebanese MPs supporting the agreement for the Tribunal.<sup>ccciv</sup> Due to this political stalemate, the Agreement came into force on 10 June 2007, under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1757.

115. According to a UNDP evaluation report on its ‘Access to Justice’ programme in 2015 (page 12 see report I sent for footnote’) [UNDP, Improving Access to Justice in Lebanon Phase II – 2015-2015, External Evaluation, May-June 2015, p. 12]

“the general public...no longer regards the justice system, considered as non-transparent and inefficient, as a credible option to settle conflicts. The first main objective is to modernize the administration of justice and the courts through automation and new administrative systems. The other main objective is to build the capacity of Judges through training sessions and study tours, and through equipping them with expanded research tools.”

116. Unfortunately, the deep-rooted problems in the Lebanese justice system have not been addressed, despite multiple United Nations reports and millions of dollars of international aid being invested into the system within the last two decades. Examples of this investment include Phase 1 of the UNDP project to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Justice of Lebanon to administer justice in a more accountable, equitable, effective and human rights-based way, which was launched on March 2007 with a budget of US\$1,716,614.<sup>cccv</sup> Nevertheless, United Nations Human Rights Committee reports in 2017 and 2018 expressed concern about the lack of the independence of the judiciary and the obstruction to the right to a fair trial. United Nations reporting repeatedly highlights issues relating to fair trial and the independence of the judiciary in Lebanon. In 2015, one of the recommendations of the third Universal Periodic Review was:

“Improve the conditions for fair trial by introducing reforms to limit the Military Tribunal’s jurisdiction to members of the armed forces and enhance the independence of the judiciary. (Hungary)”<sup>cccvi</sup>

117. In relation to Lebanon’s report of the third Universal Periodic Review, the Human Rights Committee requested Lebanon to report on the independence of judiciary. It said:<sup>cccvii</sup>

“In reference to the previous concluding observations (see para. 15), please report on measures taken to ensure, in law and in practice, the full independence and impartiality of the judiciary, including information on the procedures and criteria for the selection, appointment, promotion, suspension, disciplining and removal of judges. Please also report on the status of bills aimed at ensuring the independence of the judiciary.

Please also report on measures taken to address: (a) the lack of independence and impartiality of military court judges; and (b) alleged violations of the rights of the accused, including torture and the use of

forced confessions as evidence, interrogations in the absence of a lawyer, arbitrary sentences and limited rights to appeal. Please also respond to reports that the overbroad jurisdiction of the military courts is used to suppress political speech or activism.”

118. Lebanon replied that the legislative authorities were examining bills aimed at ensuring the independence of the judiciary from the executive and legislature.<sup>cccviii</sup> Again, in 2018, the Human Rights Committee noted:

“The Committee is concerned about the political pressure reportedly exerted on the judiciary, particularly in the appointment of key prosecutors and investigating magistrates, and about allegations that politicians use their influence to protect supporters from prosecution. It regrets the lack of comprehensive information on the procedures and criteria for the selection, appointment, promotion, suspension, disciplining and removal of judges and notes that bills aimed at ensuring the independence of the judiciary are currently under discussion (arts. 2 and 14).

The State party should take all measures necessary to safeguard, in law and in practice, the full independence and impartiality of the judiciary, including by ensuring that the procedures for the selection, appointment, promotion, suspension, disciplining and removal of judges are in compliance with the principles of independence and impartiality, as set out in the Covenant. The State party should strengthen its efforts to guarantee that the judiciary can carry out its functions without any form of political interference.”<sup>cccix</sup>

119. In August 2020, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon issued the verdict on the assassination of the former Prime Minister. It observed that fair trial standards must be met according to international human rights law. The Declaration of Judge David Re stated that when there is a conflict of interest involving a statutory-decision maker, the decision-maker must recuse themselves. It read:

“28. Thus, a statutory decision-maker cannot make decisions on designated matters in which they have a potential or actual conflict of interest; they must recuse themselves. An example could be the decision-maker designating someone of their choice to inquire into their (the decisionmaker’s) professional conduct. Or, once the inquiry is complete, receiving a report and taking decisions about its content and recommendations into their own conduct. This point is further developed below.

29. Another, which is pertinent here, is of a decision-maker who is entrusted with monitoring the professional conduct of a defined category of persons—here of assigned Defence counsel— ending up monitoring their own professional conduct. This involves assessing whether they have conducted themselves according to professionally accepted standards. Or, as formally set out in Rule 57 (G), to ‘ensure that the representation of suspects and accused meets internationally recognised standards of practice.’<sup>cccix</sup>

120. Victims and families of victims have a right to access justice including the right to truth, fair trial and reparation. Based on the track record of Lebanon’s justice system to date, it is unlikely that the victims of the Beirut Explosion of 4 August 2020 will obtain a fair investigation, prosecution or conviction for crimes within Lebanon. Families of the dead and survivors have requested an international investigation seeking credible answers. The Lebanese President Michel Aoun rejected calls for an independent probe describing them as “a waste of time” leading to politicisation.<sup>cccxi</sup>
121. In the context of its verdict pertaining to the terrorist bombing which killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, the Special Tribunal of Lebanon indicated that the politicisation of the verdict cannot be a reason for non-investigation. It observed:

“The reason behind the Special Tribunal’s creation was that ‘all those responsible for the terrorist bombing that killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and others be identified and brought to justice’. Only to determine the issues necessary to find the case proved against the four named Accused would be ‘unforgivable’, especially to the victims. They want to know why they were injured or their loved ones were killed. The judgment must be comprehensive, say the whole truth and embrace the circumstances, ‘the whys and the wherefores.’ Lebanese people wait to hear this judgment to break the vicious circle of silence and indifference. Regardless of whether some findings are necessary for the conviction of the Accused, specific factual and contextual findings are necessary and intrinsic to justice and to the truth. The judgment cannot and should not take into account the political effect that it might or might not have.”<sup>cccxi</sup>

122. Following the reasoning of the Special Tribunal, potential politicisation of an investigation into the Beirut Explosion of 4 August 2020, cannot be, in itself, a reason not to undertake such an investigation, or indeed, future criminal or civil proceedings.

123. It should be noted that this report is not recommending that a new Special Tribunal be established. This report will recommend that an independent investigation is required due to the lack of independence within the justice system of Lebanon. An independent and impartial investigation (or fact-finding mission) is required to establish the facts of the explosion but equally the root causes which include a vacuum of rule of law, corruption and lack of effective governance resulting in gross human rights violations which can (and often do) amount to serious crimes against vast numbers of Lebanese civilians.

*Intimidation and fear of victims and witnesses*

124. Lack of accountability within Lebanon is compounded by a pattern of victim and witness harassment and intimidation. According to the UNIIC in October 2005 “a number of witnesses were fearful that they would be harmed if it were known publicly that they were cooperating with the Commission. For this reason, the Commission took great care to ensure that witness interviews were conducted in a confidential manner. Because the Commission credits the concern that these individuals have for their safety, this report will not reveal the identity of those interviewed.”<sup>cccxi</sup>

125. The Special Tribunal of Lebanon expressed that once the victim and witness protection is triggered, it continues until the order is varied or rescinded. It said:

“The Trial Chamber wants to stress that, once victims or witnesses are covered by a protection order, the protection mechanism is triggered. Until a protection order is rescinded or varied, the order remains in force. This is so even if no subsequent proceedings are pending, or after the Special Tribunal’s mandate is completed. Every person in the Special Tribunal to whom the protected information was disclosed has the continuous obligation to keep the protected identity confidential. Further, anyone who becomes aware of the protected information and of the victim’s or witness’s involvement in the proceedings can never disclose it, unless the relevant protective measure is rescinded. While this is not expressly provided in Rule 133 (G), protective measures continue to have effect also in any other proceedings, including before the Lebanese jurisdiction.”<sup>cccxi</sup>

126. This report was compiled on behalf of the “Victims of the Beirut Massacre” a group of more than one thousand individuals who are all in differing ways victims of the explosion. However, when compiling victim statements only a fraction of victims were prepared to provide victim statements due to fear of reprisals by state and non-state actors. Indeed, Legal Action Worldwide has redacted the

names of all the victims' statements in this report in order to protect the identity of those who were interviewed due to real fear of reprisals or intimidation.

## VII. REQUESTS FROM THE VICTIMS

127. The victims supported by Legal Action Worldwide and law firm ASAS Law have five key requests:

1. **To dispatch, without delay, an independent and impartial fact-finding mission**, leveraging global expertise, to establish the facts and circumstances, including the root causes of, the 4 August 2020 Beirut explosion with a view to establishing state and individual responsibility and supporting justice for victims.

2. **That the Government of Lebanon do not destroy or render inaccessible any evidence** related to the 4 August 2020 Beirut explosion, and issue clear, public and unequivocal instructions to all government authorities and security forces that all evidence must be secured and preserved. Any investigation will be required to consider the destruction of evidence;

3. **That victims are ensured representation and participation in any proceedings arising from investigations**, including civil or criminal proceedings before a competent court or tribunal, or any public inquiry;

4. That **member states**, specifically: the United States of America and France or other members states **who have conducted investigations into the 4 August 2020 Beirut port explosion, should report publicly on all evidence gathered by their state agents**. As a minimum key findings should be released to victims as defined under the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, and their families;

5. **That the Government of Lebanon should acknowledge and provide a full, public apology to victims** and seek their views on the establishment of a memorial. It should also urgently adopt a comprehensive policy and package of measures regarding the fulfilment of the right to reparation of victims.

### **Brief Summary of publicly made calls for an independent, impartial and international investigation**

128. Since the 4 August Beirut 2020 explosion, LAW has identified **50 requests** for an impartial and independent investigation into the events that led to the explosion from a cross section of victims; organisations, Member States and individuals including; UN senior officials including Special Rapporteurs and independent experts, the Beirut Bar Association, Lebanese religious leaders, Lebanese members of parliament and prominent human rights organizations. From publicly available sources LAW has determined the following (as of November 2020):

- **There have been 34 requests** from the key individuals from the United Nations; Foreign member states and the President of the Bar Association of Lebanon calling for an independent and impartial investigation into the cause of the explosion. These include Michelle Bachelet, High Commissioner for Human Rights; 30 independent human rights experts of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council; The President of the European Council, Charles Michel; Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia; Melham Khalaf, the President of the Beirut Bar Association in Lebanon, filed a complaint with the



Cassation Court Prosecutor Ghassan Oueidat, calling for him to seek the expertise of local and international experts to assess the cause of the Beirut explosion, and The International Centre for Transitional Justice (including 14 Lebanese civil society organisations).

- **There have been 16 requests** for an international investigation from President Emmanuel Macron, four former Lebanese Prime Ministers; three Lebanese politicians including Walid Jumblatt; Samir Geagea, May Chidiac and Imad Wakim. The Maronite Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, and head of the Maronite Church and Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Latif Derian, have also joined calls. Finally, Human Rights Watch; Amnesty International and the United Kingdom Fire Brigade Union have made this request.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

129. For more than two decades the United Nations has consistently raised concerns regarding the independence and impartiality of the justice system in Lebanon - the United Nations Human Rights Committee expressed concerns about the justice system as far back as 1997. More recently, the United Nations Human Rights Committee, in its 2018 report stated, “The Committee is concerned about the political pressure reportedly exerted on the judiciary, particularly in the appointment of key prosecutors and investigating magistrates, and about allegations that politicians use their influence to protect supporters from prosecution.” United Nations reporting consistently criticises the Lebanese justice system for its lack of independence, inefficiency, inadequate resources, and being prone to corrupt practices. As a result of these factors national avenues for justice for victims are ineffective and there are no realistic options for accountability within Lebanon, particularly when the state and state actors are involved. Furthermore, Lebanon has not recognised the competence of any United Nations individual complaints mechanisms under the international human rights framework. This leaves survivors, victims and their families with few, if any legal avenues for redress.
130. Lack of accountability within Lebanon is compounded by a pattern of victim and witness harassment and intimidation. Indeed, back in 2005, the Report of the International Independent Investigation Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1595 (2005), stated that a number of witnesses were fearful that they would be harmed if it were known publicly that they were cooperating with the Commission. The victims that Legal Action Worldwide is supporting today have expressed the same concerns. Therefore, it is not possible to state that the situation has improved.
131. It is in this overall framework, that victims of the Beirut explosion, and Lebanese civilians as a whole, are being asked to trust the Lebanese state administration and the justice system to provide an independent and fair investigation and justice. Victims and their families can and should not be a ‘test’ case for the justice system to show that it has changed and that ‘truth’ will prevail - history has shown that this is not possible.
132. This leads to the conclusion that an independent and impartial fact find mission is now required to establish the facts of the explosion but equally the root causes which include a vacuum of rule of law and lack of effective governance resulting in gross human rights violations which can (and often do) amount to serious crimes against vast numbers of Lebanese civilians.

- <sup>i</sup> BBC 'Beirut Blast was 'Historically' Powerful' (2020) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-54420033> Accessed 12 November 2020 The University of Sheffield 'Beirut explosion was one of the largest non-nuclear blasts in history, new analysis shows' <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/news/nr/beirut-explosion-what-happened-impact-force-analysis-investigation-engineering-blast-study-1.916971#:~:text=The%20new%20assessment%20by%20the,of%20the%20largest%20non%2Dnuclear> Accessed 13 November 2020. BBC 'Beirut Blast was 'Historically' Powerful' (2020) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-54420033> Accessed 12 November 2020; Reuters Graphics 'How powerful was the Beirut Blast?' <https://graphics.reuters.com/LEBANON-SECURITY/BLAST/yzdpnxmqbpx/> Accessed 13 November 2020.
- <sup>ii</sup> Ship Arrest 'The Arrest News' Issue 11 (2015) <https://shiparrested.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/The-Arrest-News-11th-issue.pdf> Accessed 8 November 2020; Note, the vessel left Georgia on 27 July according to Safety at Sea 'Abandoned ship Rhosus suspected as origin of explosive Beirut cargo' (2020) <https://safetyatsea.net/news/2020/abandoned-ship-rhosus-suspected-as-origin-of-explosive-beirut-cargo/> Accessed on 8 November 2020; Reuters, 'Initial investigations point to negligence as cause of Beirut blast', source says' (2020) [https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-security-blast-warehouse-idUSKCN2511G7?taid=5f2a9aba9139ad0001b9ca05&utm\\_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm\\_medium=trueAnthem&utm\\_source=twitter](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-security-blast-warehouse-idUSKCN2511G7?taid=5f2a9aba9139ad0001b9ca05&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter) (Accessed 8 November 2020).
- <sup>iii</sup> Reuters, 'Exclusive: Lebanon's leaders were warned in July about explosives at port – documents' (2020) <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-security-blast-documents-excl-idUSKCN2562L7> Accessed 8 November 2020; Al Jazeera, 'Beirut blast: Tracing the explosives that tore the capital apart' (2020) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/05/beirut-blast-tracing-the-explosives-that-tore-the-capital-apart/> (Accessed 8 November 2020); BBC 'Beirut explosion: How ship's deadly cargo ended up at port' (2020) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-53683082> Accessed 11 November 2020.
- <sup>iv</sup> Note this fact is supported by one source. Al Jazeera, 'Lebanese officials deflect blame as anger grows over Beirut blast' (2020) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/6/lebanese-officials-deflect-blame-as-anger-grows-over-beirut-blast> (Accessed 8 November 2020).
- <sup>v</sup> Note this fact is supported by one source. BBC 'Beirut explosion: How ship's deadly cargo ended up at port' (2020) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-53683082> Accessed 11 November 2020;
- <sup>vi</sup> Al Akhbar 'A preliminary allocation of responsibility for the harbor: they knew' (2020) <https://al-akhbar.com/Politics/292583> Accessed 12 November 2020; Al Jomhouria 'Was Diab Misled? How did the port visit' (2020) <https://www.aljomhouria.com/ar/news/549626/> Accessed 12 November 2020; Bloomberg 'Investigator Probes Outgoing Lebanon Premier Over Port Blast' (2020) <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-09-03/investigator-probes-outgoing-lebanon-premier-over-port-blast> Accessed 12 November 2020.
- <sup>vii</sup> Reuters, 'Exclusive: Lebanon's leaders were warned in July about explosives at port – documents' (2020) <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-security-blast-documents-excl-idUSKCN2562L7> (Accessed 8 November 2020); The Guardian 'Beirut blast timeline,: what we know and what we don't know' (2020) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/06/beirut-blast-timeline-what-we-know-and-what-we-dont-explosion-lebanon> Accessed on 9 November 2020; Spiegel International 'Questions Swirl around the Cargo that Destroyed Beirut' (2020) <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/ties-to-hezbollah-questions-swirl-around-the-cargo-that-destroyed-beirut-a-668b79f4-c4f1-49da-a764-172cc17f162b> Accessed 13 November 2020.
- <sup>viii</sup> Reuters, 'Exclusive: Lebanon's leaders were warned in July about explosives at port – documents' (2020) <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-security-blast-documents-excl-idUSKCN2562L7> (Accessed 8 November 2020). Amnesty International, 'Lebanon: Only an international investigation can ensure Beirut explosion victims' rights to truth, justice and remedy' (2020) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde18/2997/2020/en/> (Accessed 9 November 2020); BBC 'Beirut explosion: What we know so far' (2020) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-53668493> (Accessed 8 November 2020).
- <sup>ix</sup> Al Jazeera 'Lebanese officials deflect blame as anger grows over Beirut blast' (2020) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/6/lebanese-officials-deflect-blame-as-anger-grows-over-beirut-blast> Accessed 8 November 2020; The Guardian, 'Beirut blast timeline,: what we know and what we don't know' (2020) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/06/beirut-blast-timeline-what-we-know-and-what-we-dont-explosion-lebanon> (Accessed on 9 November 2020); BBC 'Beirut explosion: What we know so far' (2020) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-53668493> (Accessed 8 November 2020).



<sup>x</sup> Note, the number of deaths varies by source. We have found the quoted number to be the most corroborated. The UN Refugee Agency UK ‘Beirut blast death toll includes dozens of refugees, emergency response ramps up’ (2020) <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/briefing/2020/8/5f32469f4/beirut-blast-death-toll-includes-dozens-refugees-emergency-response-ramps.html> Accessed on 13 November 2020; UN News ‘UN rights experts call for accountability following Beirut’s ‘unprecedented’ lethal explosion’ (2020) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1070152> Accessed on 13 November 2020; BBC News ‘Beirut explosion: Lebanon’s government ‘to resign’ as death toll rises’ (2020) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-53720383> Accessed on 13 November 2020.

<sup>xi</sup> Republic of Lebanon Ministry of Public Health, List of Martyrs, 9 September 2020, <https://www.moph.gov.lb/userfiles/files/News/Final%20Death%20List%203-9-2020.pdf> (Accessed 11 November 2020); AA, ‘Foreigners among victims of Beirut explosion’, 5 August 2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/foreigners-among-victims-of-beirut-explosion/1932054>; Middle East Eye, ‘Beirut explosion: Who were the victims of the catastrophic blast?’, 11 August 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/beirut-explosion-names-and-faces-victims#:~:text=The%20firefighters%20are%20all%20presumed,Mithaal%20Hawa%3B%20and%20Joe%20Bussaab> (Accessed 10 November 2020); Al Jazeera, ‘French probe into Beirut blast so far inconclusive: Source’, 3 November 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/3/french-probe-into-beirut-blast-so-far-inconclusive-source> (Accessed 8 November 2020).

<sup>xii</sup> Note this fact is supported by two sources. The Washington Post, ‘Victims of the blasts in Beirut, a city beloved for its cosmopolitanism, span nationalities’, 6 August 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/08/06/victims-blasts-beirut-city-beloved-its-cosmopolitanism-span-nationalities/> (Accessed 11 November 2020); Government of the Netherlands, ‘Hedwig Waltmans-Molier has died in Beirut’, 8 August 2020, <https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2020/08/08/hedwig-waltmans-molier-has-died-in-beirut> (Accessed 11 November 2020).

<sup>xiii</sup> Reuters, ‘Beirut port blast death toll rises to 190’, 30 August 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-crisis-blast-casualties-idUSKBN25Q08H> (Accessed 11 November 2020); The UN Refugee Agency UK ‘Beirut blast death toll includes dozens of refugees, emergency response ramps up’ (2020) <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/briefing/2020/8/5f32469f4/beirut-blast-death-toll-includes-dozens-refugees-emergency-response-ramps.html> Accessed on 13 November 2020; UN News ‘UN rights experts call for accountability following Beirut’s ‘unprecedented’ lethal explosion’ (2020) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1070152> Accessed on 13 November 2020; BBC News ‘Beirut explosion: Lebanon’s government ‘to resign’ as death toll rises’ (2020) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-53720383> Accessed on 13 November 2020.

<sup>xiv</sup> Beirut Port Explosions: Protection Sector Dashboard, 9 October 2020, Accessed 10 November 2020; Al Jazeera, Scarred for life: Beirut blast victims and life-altering wounds, 25 August 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/08/25/scarred-for-life-beirut-blast-victims-and-life-altering-wounds/> (Accessed 11 November 2020); The UN Refugee Agency UK ‘Beirut blast death toll includes dozens of refugees, emergency response ramps up’ (2020) <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/briefing/2020/8/5f32469f4/beirut-blast-death-toll-includes-dozens-refugees-emergency-response-ramps.html> Accessed on 13 November 2020.

<sup>xv</sup> UN News, ‘Refugees also affected by Beirut blast as UN relief efforts continue’, 11 August 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1069982#:~:text=Refugees%20also%20affected%20by%20Beirut%20blast%20as%20UN%20relief%20efforts%20continue,-Houssam%20Yaacoub&text=So%20far%2C%20at%20least%2034,while%20seven%20are%20still%20missing> (Accessed 10 November 2020); UNICEF, ‘80,000 children displaced due to Beirut explosions – UNICEF’, 6 August 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/80000-children-displaced-due-beirut-explosions-unicef#:~:text=BEIRUT%2C%206%20AUGUST%202020%20%E2%80%93%20Some.in%20desperate%20need%20of%20support.&text=The%20port%20of%20Beirut%20%E2%80%93%20where.It%20is%20now%20totally%20destroyed> (Accessed 10 November 2020); Middle East Eye, ‘Beirut explosion: Who were the victims of the catastrophic blast?’, 11 August 2020, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/beirut-explosion-names-and-faces-victims#:~:text=The%20firefighters%20are%20all%20presumed,Mithaal%20Hawa%3B%20and%20Joe%20Bussaab> (Accessed 10 November 2020).

<sup>xvi</sup> UN News, ‘Refugees also affected by Beirut blast as UN relief efforts continue’, 11 August 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1069982#:~:text=Refugees%20also%20affected%20by%20Beirut%20blast%20as%20UN%20relief%20efforts%20continue,-Houssam%20Yaacoub&text=So%20far%2C%20at%20least%2034,while%20seven%20are%20still%20missing> (Accessed 10 November 2020); UNICEF, ‘80,000 children displaced due to Beirut explosions – UNICEF’, 6

August 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/80000-children-displaced-due-beirut-explosions-unicef#:~:text=BEIRUT%2C%20AUGUST%202020%20%E2%80%93%20Some,in%20desperate%20need%20of%20support.&text=The%20port%20of%20Beirut%20%E2%80%93%20where,It%20is%20now%20totally%20destroyed> (Accessed 10 November 2020); UN News ‘UN rights experts call for accountability following Beirut’s ‘unprecedented’ lethal explosion’ (2020) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1070152> Accessed on 13 November 2020.

<sup>xvii</sup> Reuters, ‘Nightmares, flashbacks, fatigue: Beirut faces mental health crisis after blast’, 24 August 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-security-blast-mentalhealth/nightmares-flashbacks-fatigue-beirut-faces-mental-health-crisis-after-blast-idUSKBN25K0T7> (Accessed 10 November 2020); ICRC, ‘Lebanon: Bruised by multiple blows, people risk “huge, hidden scars”’, 25 August 2020, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/lebanon-bruised-multiple-blows-people-risk-huge-hidden-scars> (Accessed 10 November 2020).; Al Jazeera, ‘We lost everything’: Syrian refugees caught up in Beirut blast’, 23 August 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/23/we-lost-everything-syrian-refugees-caught-up-in-beirut-blast> (Accessed 10 November 2020).

<sup>xviii</sup> UN News, ‘Lebanon ‘fast spiralling out of control’ leaving many destitute and facing starvation, warns Bachelet’, 10 July 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1068141> (Accessed 10 November 2020); Action against Hunger ‘60% of people in Lebanon struggle to get enough food’ <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/story/60-people-lebanon-struggle-get-enough-food> Accessed 13 November 2020; The New Humanitarian ‘In Post blast Lebanon, farmers struggle as food shortages feared’ (2020) <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2020/08/11/Lebanon-Beirut-explosion-food-security-shortages> Accessed 13 November 2020.

<sup>xix</sup> Al Jazeera, ‘No top officials to be indicted over Beirut blast: Sources’, 29 October 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/29/no-top-officials-to-be-indicted-over-beirut-blast-sources> (Accessed 8 November 2020); Human Rights Watch ‘Lebanon: Flawed domestic blast investigation’ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/22/lebanon-flawed-domestic-blast-investigation> Accessed 13 November 2020; Amnesty International, ‘Lebanon: Only an international investigation can ensure Beirut explosion victims’ rights to truth, justice and remedy’ (2020) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde18/2997/2020/en/> Accessed 9 November 2020.

<sup>xx</sup> Id.

<sup>xxi</sup> Human Rights Watch, ‘Lebanon: Flawed Domestic Blast Investigation’, 22 October 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/22/lebanon-flawed-domestic-blast-investigation> (Accessed 8 November 2020); Al Jazeera, ‘No top officials to be indicted over Beirut blast: Sources’, 29 October 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/29/no-top-officials-to-be-indicted-over-beirut-blast-sources> (Accessed 8 November 2020); Amnesty International, ‘Lebanon: Only an international investigation can ensure Beirut explosion victims’ rights to truth, justice and remedy’ (2020) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde18/2997/2020/en/> Accessed 9 November 2020.

<sup>xxii</sup> Note, this fact is supported by one source. LBC Group ‘Statement from the Supreme Judicial Council on the issue of the Beirut port explosion: The investigation is being carried out as soon as possible, but without haste’ (2020) <https://www.lbcgroup.tv/news/d/lebanon/558061/%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D9%82%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%81%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%A3-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1/ar> Accessed 12 November 2020.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/10/endemic-corruption-caused-beirut-blast-says-diab-live-updates> Accessed on November 12, 2020; BBC ‘Beirut explosion: What we know so far’ (2020) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-53668493> Accessed 8 November 2020. Amnesty International, ‘Lebanon: Only an international investigation can ensure Beirut explosion victims’ rights to truth, justice and remedy’ (2020) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde18/2997/2020/en/> Accessed 9 November 2020.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Note, this fact is supported by one source. Al Kalima online, <https://alkalimaonline.com/Newsdet.aspx?id=501067> accessed 12 November, 2020.

<sup>xxv</sup> The Guardian, “Beirut blast timeline: what we know and what we don’t know” (2020) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/06/beirut-blast-timeline-what-we-know-and-what-we-dont-explosion-lebanon> last accessed on 11 November 2020; Reuters ‘Exclusive: Lebanon’s leaders were warned in July about explosives at port – documents’ (2020) <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-security-blast-documents-excl-idUSKCN2562L7> Accessed 8 November 2020. Reuters ‘Initial investigations point to negligence

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- <sup>cccv</sup> Al Jazeera, ‘*French probe into Beirut blast so far inconclusive: Source*’, 3 November 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/3/french-probe-into-beirut-blast-so-far-inconclusive-source> (Accessed 8 November 2020). Note, this fact is supported by one source.
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- <sup>ccciix</sup> Al Jazeera, ‘*No top officials to be indicted over Beirut blast: Sources*’, 29 October 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/29/no-top-officials-to-be-indicted-over-beirut-blast-sources> (Accessed 8 November 2020). Note, this fact is supported by one source.
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<sup>ccxxvi</sup> Id.

<sup>ccxxvii</sup> Id.

<sup>ccxxviii</sup> Constitution of Lebanon, promulgated May 23, 1926 with its Amendments 1990, Preamble paragraph B, available at <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/lb/lb018en.pdf>.

<sup>ccxxix</sup> "Individual liberty is guaranteed and protected by law." Ibid. Article 8.

<sup>ccxxx</sup> Article 14 of the Constitution states that "The place of residence is inviolable", while Article 15 provides that "rights of ownership shall be protected by law". Ibid.

<sup>ccxxxi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>ccxxxii</sup> See Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 2; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 2; European Convention on Human Rights, Article 14; Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, Article 1; African Charter on Human and People's Rights, Article 2, and ; Arab Charter on Human Rights, Article 2.

<sup>ccxxxiii</sup> See e.g. Article 547, which criminalizes intentionally killing another person and Article 550 which establishes that anyone who causes the death of another person through beatings, violence, assault or any other intentional act without intending to kill him shall be punishable by hard labour for a term of at least five years.

<sup>ccxxxiv</sup> Lebanese Criminal Code

<sup>ccxxxv</sup> Antonios ABOU KASM, "نحو تنحُّل دولي لمحاربة الفساد في لبنان؟", Lebanon Files, July 15, 2018, Retrieved from: <https://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/1353036/>

<sup>ccxxxvi</sup> United Nations, *Signature and ratification status*, Retrieved from <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/ratification-status.html>

<sup>ccxxxvii</sup> UNODC, "Links between organized crime and corruption", retrieved from <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-4/key-issues/links-to-corruption.html>

<sup>ccxxxviii</sup> UN General Assembly, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html> [accessed 9 November 2020]

significance in the IHRL and IHL contexts by calling for "full and effective reparation" for survivors of violations. Basic Principles, para. 18.

<sup>ccxxxix</sup> UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 16 December 1966, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 999, p. 171, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3aa0.html> [accessed 9 November 2020]

<sup>ccxl</sup> UN General Assembly, United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 8 January 2001, A/RES/55/25, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f55b0.html> [accessed 9 November 2020]

<sup>ccxli</sup> UN General Assembly, United Nations Convention Against Corruption, 31 October 2003, A/58/422, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4374b9524.html> [accessed 9 November 2020]

<sup>ccxlii</sup> Human Rights Committee, *ICCPR General Comment No 6: Article 6 (Right to Life)*

<sup>ccxliii</sup> Human Rights Committee, *General comment No. 36 (2018) on article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the right to life*, UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/36 (30 October 2018) at 6

<sup>ccxliv</sup> Human Rights Committee, *ICCPR General Comment No 35: Article 9 (Liberty and security of the person)*, UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/35 (16 December 2014) at 9.

<sup>ccxlv</sup> Human Rights Committee, *ICCPR General Comment No. 31: The nature of the legal obligation imposed on States Parties to the Covenant*, UN Doc. CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add. 13 (26 May 2004) at 8. See also IACtHR, *Velasquez Rodriguez v Honduras*, *Judgement Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (Ser. C) No. 4 (29 July 1988)* at 172; European Court of Human Rights, *Osman v United Kingdom* (ECtHR) Reports 1998-VIII 3124, para. 116.

<sup>ccxlvii</sup> Human Rights Committee, *Chongwe v. Zambia*, *Views*, Communication No. 821/1998, UN Doc. CCPR/C/70/D/821/1998 (9 November 2000) at 5.3.

<sup>ccxlvii</sup> IACtHR, *Velasquez Rodriguez v Honduras*, Judgment Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. (Ser. C) No. 4 (29 July 1988) at 174.

<sup>ccxlviii</sup> See e.g., Human Rights Committee, *General comment No. 36 (2018) on article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the right to life*, UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/36 (30 October 2018) at 27; European Court of Human Rights, *McCann and Others v UK*, Application No. 18984/1 (27 September 1995).

<sup>ccclix</sup> See e.g. European Court of Human Rights, *Iorga v Moldova*, Application No. 12219/05 (23 March 2010).

<sup>cccl</sup> See e.g. European Court of Human Rights, *Opuz v Turkey*, Application No. 33401/02 (9 September 2009)

<sup>cccli</sup> See e.g. European Court of Human Rights, *Kolevi v Bulgaria*, Application No. 1108/02 (5 February 2010).

<sup>ccclii</sup> See e.g. European Court of Human Rights, *Lopes de Sousa Fernandez* Application No. 56080/13 (19 December 2017); European Court of Human Rights, *Anna Todorova v Bulgaria* Application No. 23302/03 (24 May 2011).

<sup>cccliii</sup> Human Rights Committee, *Concluding Observations: Cameroon*, UN Doc. CCPR/C/CMR/CO/4 (4 August 2010) at 15.

<sup>cccliv</sup> European Court of Human Rights, *Armani de Silva v United Kingdom*, Application No 5878/08 (30 March 2016) at 232.

<sup>ccclv</sup> Human Rights Committee, *Novakovic v Serbia*, Communication 1556/2007, UN Doc. CCPR/C/100/D/1556/2007 (2 November 2010) at 7.3.

<sup>ccclvi</sup> European Court of Human Rights, *Mocanu v Romania* Application No. [10865/09](#) (17 September 2014) at 337.

<sup>ccclvii</sup> European Court of Human Rights, *Al-skeini v United Kingdom*, Application No 55721/07 (7 July 2011) at 167.

<sup>ccclviii</sup> United Nations Committee Against Torture, *Blanco Abad v Spain*, Communication No 59/1996, UN Doc. CAT/C/20/D/59/1996 (14 May 1998) at 8.8.

<sup>ccclix</sup> This is implied in cases involving use of force by state agents, where courts have ruled that an investigation must be capable of determining whether the force was or was not justified in the circumstances. See e.g. European Court of Human Rights, *Armani de Silva v United Kingdom*, Application No 5878/08 (30 March 2016) at 243.

<sup>ccclx</sup> Human Rights Committee, *General comment No. 36 (2018) on article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on the right to life*, UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/36 (30 October 2018) at 28.

<sup>ccclxi</sup> European Court of Human Rights, *Al-skeini v United Kingdom*, Application No 55721/07 (7 July 2011) at 167.

<sup>ccclxii</sup> European Court of Human Rights, *Ogur v Turkey*, Application No. 21594/93 (20 May 1999) at 92.

<sup>ccclxiii</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death (2016)*, UN Doc. HR/PUB/17/4 (2017) para. 35.

<sup>ccclxiv</sup> *Ibid.*, para 36.

<sup>ccclxv</sup> European Court of Human Rights, *Anguelova v Bulgaria*, Application No.38361/97 (13 June 2002) at 140.

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<sup>ccclxvii</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>ccclxviii</sup> [https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=XVIII-12&chapter=18&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12&chapter=18&lang=en)

<sup>ccclxix</sup> The rule was established by the Permanent Court of Justice, which held that “reparation must, as far as possible, wipe-out all the consequences of the illegal act and re-establish the situation which would, in all probability, have existed if that act had not been committed.”, *Case concerning the Factory at Chorzów (Merits)* (hereafter “*Factory at Chorzów*”), PCIJ, Series A, No. 17, 1928, para. 125. The UN General Assembly has confirmed its significance in the IHRL and IHL contexts by calling for “full and effective reparation” for survivors of violations. Basic Principles, para. 18.

<sup>ccclxx</sup> International Law Commission, Draft Articles on State Responsibility for Internationally Wrongful Acts, Article 31(2).

<sup>ccclxxi</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 31, n. 5.

<sup>ccclxxii</sup> Basic Principles, para. 20.

<sup>ccclxxiii</sup> IACtHR, *Velásquez Rodríguez v. Honduras, Merits*, Judgment of July 29, 1988, Series C No. 4, para. 26



<sup>celxxiv</sup> United Nations Human Rights Committee, *Hiber Conteris v. Uruguay*, Communication No. 139/1983 (17 July 1985), U.N. Doc. Supp. No. 40 (A/40/40) para. 7.2.

<sup>celxxv</sup> International Criminal Court, *Decision establishing the principles and procedures to be applied to reparations* (hereafter “Reparations Decision”), Case No. ICC-01/04-01/06 (7 August 2012) para. 22.

<sup>celxxvi</sup> General Assembly Resolution, *Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power*, A/RES/40/34 (20 November 1985), Article 6.

<sup>celxxvii</sup> Rome Statute, Article 68(3).

<sup>celxxviii</sup> Reparations Decision, para. 267.

<sup>celxxix</sup> Basic Principles, para. 19.

<sup>celxxx</sup> Reparations Decision, para. 224

<sup>celxxxi</sup> *Factory at Chorzów*, para. 125.

<sup>celxxxii</sup> Draft Articles, Article 36, para. 19.

<sup>celxxxiii</sup> Reparations Decision, para. 226.

<sup>celxxxiv</sup> *Ibid.* para. 227.

<sup>celxxxv</sup> Draft Articles, Article 37.

<sup>celxxxvi</sup> Basic Principles, para. 22.

<sup>celxxxvii</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>celxxxviii</sup> *Id.*, paragraph 59.

<sup>celxxxix</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>ccxc</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>ccxci</sup> Pablo de Greiff, “Justice and Reparations”, in P. de Greiff (ed.), *The Handbook of Reparations*, (OUP 2006), p. 257.

<sup>ccxcii</sup> Convention Against Torture, Article 14(1).

<sup>ccxciii</sup> United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 39.

<sup>ccxciv</sup> IACtHR, *Loayza Tamayo v. Peru, Judgment on Reparations and Costs*, 27 November 1998, para. 150.

<sup>ccxcv</sup> Basic Principles, para. 21.

<sup>ccxcvi</sup> Reparations Decision, para. 233.

<sup>ccxcvii</sup> See e.g. Conclusions and Recommendations of the Committee against Torture, CAT/C/ECU/CO/3, 8 February 2006, Conclusions and Recommendations of the Committee against Torture: Sri Lanka, CAT/C/LKA/CO/2, 15 December 2005; Concluding Observations of the Committee against Torture: Chad, CAT/C/TCD/CO/1, 4 June 2009.

<sup>ccxcviii</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), *CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19: Violence against women*, 1992, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/52d920c54.html>.

<sup>ccxcix</sup> UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), UN Human Rights Committee: Concluding Observations: Lebanon, 5 May 1997, CCPR/C/79/Add.78, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b03214.html> [accessed 9 November 2020], pp. 14-15.

<sup>ccc</sup> Human Rights Committee, fifty-ninth session, Summary Record of the 1578th meeting, CCPR/C/SR.1578, 11 June 1999, paragraph 14 (Accessed 11 November 2020).

<sup>ccci</sup> Human Rights Committee, fifty-ninth session, Summary Record of the 1578th meeting, CCPR/C/SR.1578, 11 June 1999, paragraph 58 (Accessed 11 November 2020).

<sup>cccii</sup> Report of the Fact-finding Mission to Lebanon inquiring into the causes, circumstances and consequences of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, S/2005/203 of 24 March 2005.

<sup>ccciii</sup> United Nations Security Council, Letter dated 20 October 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2005/662, 20 October 2005, [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/2005/662](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2005/662)

<sup>ccciv</sup> Agreement between the United Nations and the Lebanese Republic on the establishment of a Special Tribunal for Lebanon, Procedural History, <https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/abunal/abunal.html>

<sup>cccv</sup> UNDP, Improving Access to Justice in Lebanon Phase II – 2015-2015, External Evaluation, May-June 2015, p. 12

<sup>cccvii</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (Lebanon), A/HRC/31/5, 22 December 2015, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/289/55/PDF/G1528955.pdf?OpenElement>, p. 23

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- <sup>cccxiv</sup> Special Tribunal for Lebanon, *The Prosecutor v Salim Jammal Ayyash, Hassan Habib Merhi, Hussein Hassan Oneissi, Assad Hassan Sabra*, The Trial Chamber, 18 August 2020, <https://www.stl-tsl.org/crs/assets/Uploads/20200818-F3839-PUBLIC-Full-Judgement-Annexes-FILED-EN-WEB-Version-v0.2.pdf>, pp. 306-307



Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

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WITNESS INFORMATION

Family name: [REDACTED]	First name(s): [REDACTED]
Citizenship (s): Lebanese	Gender: Male
Father's name: [REDACTED]	Mother's name: [REDACTED]
Date of birth: 14/4/1984	Place of birth: Lebanon
Marital Status: Married	Name of Spouse: [REDACTED]
Address: Beirut, Lebanon	Telephone
Current Occupation: [REDACTED]	Former occupation: [REDACTED]
Languages spoken: Arabic, English, French	Languages written: Arabic, English, French

**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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**INTERVIEW INFORMATION**

Date(s) of interview: Wednesday, November 11, 2020	Place and time of interview: Beit Mery, Mount-Lebanon, Lebanon; 5pm
Name of Interviewer(s): Michel El Meouchi	Name of Interpreter(s): N/A
Other persons present during the interview(s): N/A	Language(s) used in interview: English, French, Arabic
Number of Pages of this Witness Statement:	

Signature witness \_\_\_\_\_

Signature interviewer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_

## DRAFT

Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

### STATEMENT

1. I am giving this statement voluntarily and I am aware that this statement may be used in international instances and/or in legal proceedings before the United Nations and its bodies.
2. I have not been threatened or forced to give this statement, nor have I been offered any promises or inducements to do so.
3. I will describe everything I know to the best of my knowledge and recollection.
4. My name is [REDACTED]. I live in [REDACTED] Lebanon, since my home in Beirut was destroyed in the Beirut Blast.

On August 4, 2020, myself, my wife [REDACTED], a close friend [REDACTED], and another close friend, [REDACTED] were at the our home, along with our three year old daughter, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] two children, who were playing with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was a sweet, warm, sociable and very aware three year-old angel. Because she spent most of her time with us, as both [REDACTED] and myself work from home for our [REDACTED] company, she was very conversant, and would love spending time with her friends and with ours.

[REDACTED] favourite thing was the Disney universe – the princesses, the movies, the characters... this is why we chose to bury her in her Snow White dress – something that made her so happy in her lifetime.

She also loved to call our friends to chat, and would often take [REDACTED] phone and call them

up. So often, friends would call and say they were returning our call, at which point we would all realise that it was [REDACTED] who had called them.



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████████ loved going down to the street with her Lebanese flag to protest against the Government, and would always ask us when we would go “thawra”<sup>1</sup>.

Shortly before 6pm, ██████ left to go home. ██████ was leaving but ██████ invited him to stay longer for a coffee, which he did.

████████ was playing in the middle of the living room, on the floor.

We sat at the dining room table drinking coffee, when I received a work call and went to the other side of the living room to take it.

From there, I saw a plume of smoke emanating from Beirut Port and called for ██████ and ██████ to come over and see, which they did.

When ██████ got there, she heard “low-flying planes” and yelled at everyone to get away from the windows and take cover, shouting “they are bombing some more”.

We all started running away from the windows, through the living room towards the back of the house, just as the first explosion rocked the house.

Seconds, later, a second explosion followed quickly, destroying everything and flinging us like dolls across the room.

Immediately prior to the explosion ██████ was running towards the NW corner of the house, i.e. towards the ante-room/hall that led to the bedrooms. ██████ was ahead of her, as she was closer and had already responded to her mother’s screams to get to the bedroom. I was behind them, heading in the same direction, and ██████ was heading to the SW corner of the living room, i.e. towards the kitchen.

When the blast hit and we all started flying in our respective directions, ██████ did her best to protect ██████ and in fact managed to land on top of her to protect her, which saved ██████ from the falling gypsum false-ceiling, three large wooden doors and the A/C unit, all of which fell on them.

What ██████ did not know is that ██████ had already hit her head, likely on the door or on a piano, as she was flung across the house.

████████ herself, we later found out, suffered from numerous injuries, including - among others - three broken ribs, three fractured cervicae, a broken finger, a fracture to her cheek; she had to have numerous stitches.

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<sup>1</sup> “revolution”

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I, likewise, suffered numerous injuries and had to have stitches. I was in the same vicinity as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], but further behind them, and was flung to the corner of the living room, rather than towards the ante-room to the bedrooms where [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were flung.

[REDACTED] was miraculously unscathed, perhaps because had run to another part of the home. It is in large part thanks to him, and the fact that he was able to function, that the death toll was no higher in my family on that day.

Immediately after the explosion, I called to [REDACTED] to help me : [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were covered in debris and the aforementioned door and A/C unit. Together, we uncovered them, and found [REDACTED] just regaining consciousness, having passed out. [REDACTED] protected by her mother's body, was not alert, but awake.

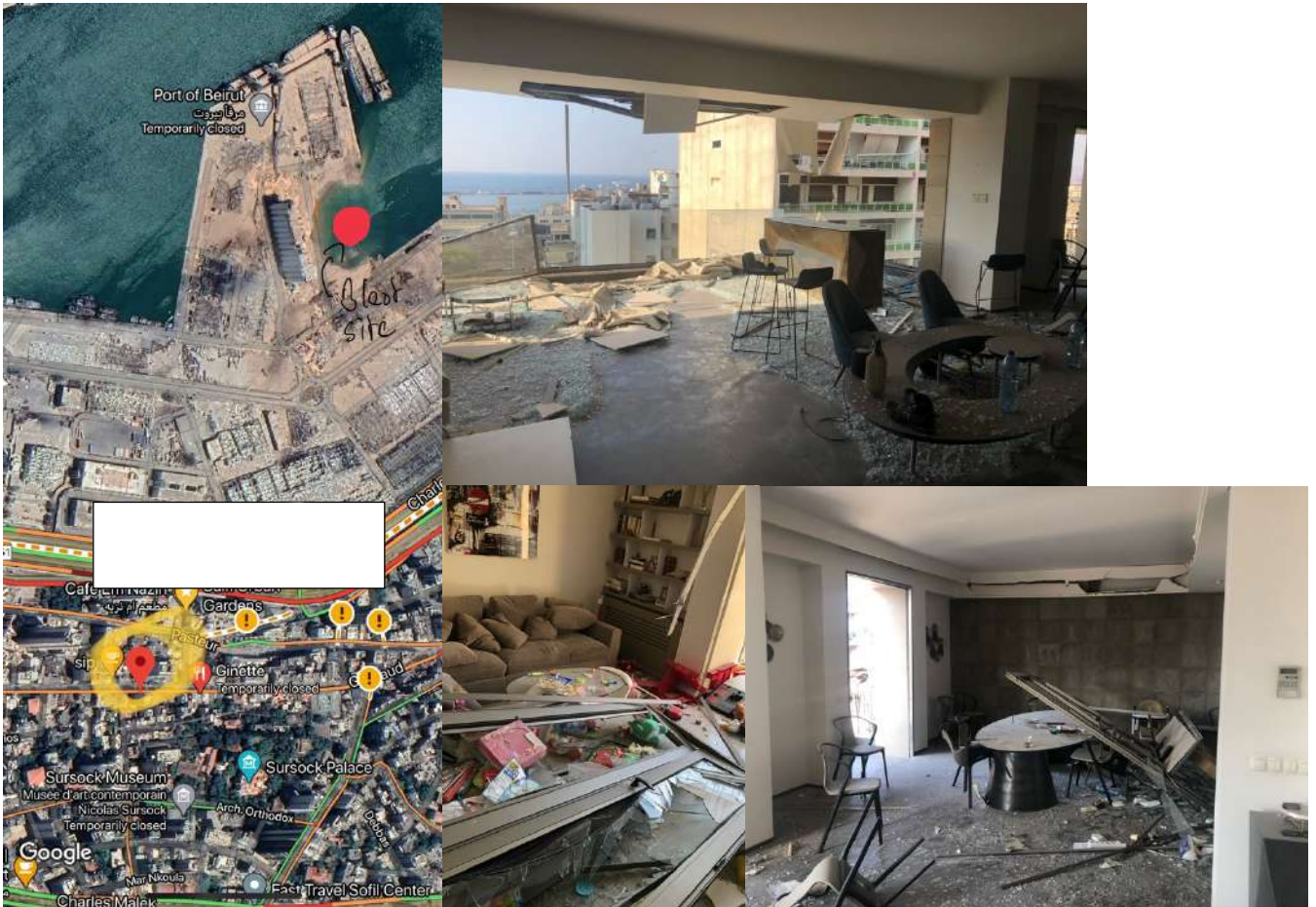
Our home, in the [REDACTED] district of Beirut, a mere 750m from the epicentre of the blast, was devastated, as were the homes of 300,000 people on that fateful day.

Below is an image indicating the location of the our home, and one photo that is representative of the damage caused :



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As if the trauma of the explosion was not enough, we then struggled for hours to try to get to medical help.

Such was the sheer force of the blast that our initial reaction was that something in our home had exploded, so, upon seeing that phones were non-functional, [REDACTED] went down to get someone from the Red Cross' Gemmayze HQ, which is nearby, while I tended to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

He had to walk down the stairs from our 6<sup>th</sup> floor apartment, as the elevators were blown out.

He found his shoes, left outside our front door prior to the blast, between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors in the staircase: our front door had blown off its hinges and split in two, the door to the emergency stairs had likewise blown off its hinges and locks, and the shoes had flown 1.5 floors down the stairs.

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He came back up to our home, informed me that he was shocked by the scenes he saw on the street. It was like a war zone, with debris everywhere, dead, dying and injured everywhere, and total chaos.

We concluded that we had to go to help, as help could not come to us.

We struggled to get my wife and daughter down to the ground floor via the stairs.

We walked to the Rosary Hospital (Hôpital Rosaire), nearby, and found it completely destroyed and unable to tend to anyone.

Unsure what to do, we went again to the Red Cross hoping that they had managed to get things in order, but they were still unable to help, having seen their Gemmayze HQ destroyed and suffered casualties of their own.

The Government, by that stage, had not even thought of informing the public that two of Beirut's major hospitals were down and unable to help. In fact, through the ordeal I will describe below, uniformed police officers sat and watched, unflinching.

Countless lives, including our daughter [REDACTED] could have been saved if we had been informed by the authorities which hospital were able to assist.

It was impossible for ambulances to reach the site due to the debris on the streets, and emergency numbers were anyway completely overwhelmed.

Still unaware of the amplitude of the crisis (who can imagine that half of the city was devastated), [REDACTED] convinced me that she was slowing me down, and that I should take [REDACTED] and run to St Georges Hospital to save our daughter.

I agreed to do so, leaving [REDACTED] in the hands of [REDACTED], and found a Good Samaritan willing to take me and my daughter to St Georges' on his moped.

As soon as we left, [REDACTED] collapsed in pain and exhaustion, and informed [REDACTED] she could no longer move.

[REDACTED] managed, over a long period of time, to get [REDACTED] a few hundred meters closer to the hospital.

Meanwhile, [REDACTED] and I arrived at St Georges Hospital to find it had been gutted – the ER was completely destroyed, and the staff informed me that the hospital had lost doctors, nurses and patients to the explosion.

Staff was attempting to administer care as much as possible in a school yard across the street from the hospital, but were not accepting patients in the ER or elsewhere.

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It was clear that I would be unable to get treatment for ██████ here. The hospital promised to put her in an ambulance to another hospital as soon as possible.

While we waited, I kept trying to wake ██████ up, sitting on a ledge outside the hospital: “Réveille toi Lexou... réveille toi...”<sup>2</sup>

After around 40 minutes of waiting, we were eventually put in an ambulance headed, we thought, to Mount Lebanon Hospital.

I managed to get a message to ██████ to that effect via the staff of Saint Georges Hospital when they had arrived there.

However, as we were riding, ██████ an ER paediatrician who accompanied us given how critical ██████ condition was, determined that ██████ would not make it to Mount Lebanon Hospital, as she violently vomited blood twice in the ambulance, was already under respiratory assistance, and was exhibiting spasms. ██████ asked for the ambulance to be rerouted to Hotel Dieu hospital, which was closer<sup>3</sup>.

During this time, ██████, now on an intersection halfway between the ██████ home and St Georges hospital, was attempting to get ██████ moving again, but she informed him she was simply unable to continue, and to just leave her here.

He tried to flag down some moped drivers, one of which finally agreed to take ██████.

However she wasn't able to move and there was no way she could make the trip on a moped.

██████ then managed to convince a young man to take them to Saint Georges Hospital in his car, which was badly damaged by the blast. He was reluctant, but agreed.

They managed, with the help of bystanders, to load ██████ into the car, but were unable to move the car due to the debris.

So ██████ walked in front of the car, clearing debris as they went. During this trip, he understood that the young man's parents lived across from the Beirut Port, and he had been heading towards them. The young man was able to contact them shortly after, and found out that they had survived the blast. To this day, despite ██████ giving him his number and asking him to reach out, the young man has not contacted us; we remain forever grateful for his role in saving my wife ██████ life.

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<sup>2</sup> “Wake up ██████ ... wake up”

<sup>3</sup> In a cruel twist of fate ██████ mother, ██████ passed away in Hotel Dieu Hospital, from complications following a [brain aneurism] she suffered [during] ██████ and my wedding day celebrations. ██████ had vowed never to set foot in this hospital again.

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During their entire journey and, indeed, during [REDACTED] and mine, there was no help, assistance or succour from the State and its agents (police, army, firefighters, etc.); we were completely abandoned.

Indeed, [REDACTED] recounted to me that one of the few times he encountered the authorities that day was when a police officer who was manning an intersection chuckled at the sight of [REDACTED] clearing debris out of the car's path.

Our lives were falling apart around us, and the very State that had failed to prevent it, failed to help mitigate the loss and failed in every one of its duties found amusement in our plight. As they were approaching St Georges, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] saw that the car could not arrive due to checkpoints. [REDACTED] instructed the driver to ignore them and proceed, which he did. On arrival, they found out that [REDACTED] and myself were no longer there, and thus tried to head to Mount Lebanon hospital.

It was clear that the young man would not be able to take them there as it was outside the city and too far for him as he had to get to his Parents to help them, so [REDACTED] settled for Rizk Hospital (aka the Lebanese American University Medical Centre, or LAUMC), in the nearby Achrafieh district.

After a painstaking journey full of obstacles, they arrived in Rizk Hospital, where they would not have been admitted were it not for a close friend and doctor who, with the help of [REDACTED], placed [REDACTED] on a desk-chair, each carried a side and they bypass the ER, going straight to the imaging department.

[REDACTED] was admitted to Rizk Hospital, where she was consigned to her hospital bed. It was hours later that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were able to track me down and found out that I was in Hotel Dieu Hospital with [REDACTED], a few hundred meters away. However, [REDACTED] condition made it impossible for her to be moved to be by our now unconscious daughter. Indeed, by the time I was able to get medical care for [REDACTED] the bleeding and swelling in her brain had reached critical levels, and I was informed that an emergency procedure was required, which I authorised.

The doctors were able to operate on [REDACTED], and the surgery itself, a craniectomy, went well : they were able to remove the blood, relieve the pressure and patch up her skull.

However, there was no brain activity and the doctors decided the best course of action was to maintain [REDACTED] in an induced coma in the hope that her situation would improve.

I stayed by her side, while [REDACTED] was in a hospital bed at the nearby LAUMC.

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In this, the deepest crisis any parent can imagine, we were enduring the nightmare apart. In the morning of August 6, ██████ refused to remain in her bed, insisting that she had to see her daughter, and, against medical advice, checked herself out of LAUMC hospital and, with the help of friends, came over to Hotel Dieu Hospital, where I was able to arrange a bed for her.

There, we ██████ grandparents and our closest friends and relatives would take it in turns to stand vigil by ██████ crib in the paediatric intensive care unit, hoping against all odds for a miraculous recovery.

We would talk to her, try to will her back to life.

On the night of August 6-7 when, for the first time ██████ was able to get more than 2 hours of sleep, we were awoken at around 12h30am, and informed that ██████ was going into a critical state and that we should come to say goodbye, as this is the end.

We went to our daughter and spent one hour or so by her side while doctors did their best to stabilise ██████

While ██████ went into cardiac arrest twice, ██████ sat by her side, telling her to wake up, to fight and come back, to stay with them.

████████ left us in the early hours of August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

We lost our daughter not because of a natural disaster, a flood or tsunami, or an earthquake which we always fear in Lebanon.

No. ██████ was taken from us by greed, corruption and politics.

Whether the ammonium nitrate that we are told was in the Port of Beirut created such a huge blast was there to fuel the war in Syria, to arm Hezbollah or to farm is irrelevant. Whether the trigger to the explosion was incompetent soldering by repair crews or criminal soldiering by Hezbollah (arms manufacturing) or Israel (air strike) is less relevant to us than the fact that it is our leaders that allowed this to happen.

Our President and Prime Minister and many others were aware that dangerous explosives in huge quantities had been stored in Beirut Port for years.

They knew of the corruption at Beirut Port, and many say they were complicit.

When the fire broke out, they knew the danger this posed to us and millions of people around Beirut, yet for 40 minutes there was no warning to flee, no warning to take cover, and no action whatsoever taken to mitigate the huge human tragedy that would inevitably follow.



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And in the hours that followed, they did nothing to try to save lives.

A simple SMS from our Politicians who never fail to bombard us with inane self-serving content could have saved [REDACTED]... a simple message telling us to take cover before the blast they knew was coming... or a simple SMS after the blast telling us which Hospitals were down... yet, nothing.

The main reason our daughter died is that endemic corruption, greed and cheap politics allowed for the deadliest bomb in modern history to be stored 750m from our home.

We believe that the people in charge of the country are responsible for the murder or manslaughter of [REDACTED] They knew the danger, they possibly profited from the danger, and they said nothing as a fire raged meters from this mega-bomb for over 40 minutes.

And in the moments following the blast, they did nothing of the countless things they could have done to help save lives.

We believe that the same people are still in charge, and that they are subverting the investigation.

We believe that they will also subvert any eventual judiciary proceedings, and that obtaining justice for this crime in Lebanon is impossible.

All senior Lebanese politicians, all senior port employees and leaders, are guilty of this crime, as is every member of every Lebanese Government since 2013.

We therefore call upon the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations Secretary General and all bodies of the United Nations to:

- Take all necessary steps to ensure that an international, independent fact-finding mission led by a neutral country is launched and takes full control of all evidence, evidence gathering and investigative steps;
- Bring proceedings, by reference by the United Nations Security Council, before the International Criminal Court against all individuals and institutions against whom the aforementioned independent investigation finds there are grounds for a charge;
- Ensure that proper oversight of all investigations and related issues in Lebanon is provided by the international community to ensure that endemic corruption in Lebanon does not prevent the truth from coming out, and to ensure that such a catastrophe is not allowed to happen again.

**ANNEX B: VICTIM STATEMENT 2**  
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**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

**WITNESS INFORMATION**

Family name: [REDACTED]	First name(s): [REDACTED]
Citizenship: Lebanese	Gender: Female
Father's name: [REDACTED]	Mother's name: [REDACTED]
Date of birth: [REDACTED]	Place of birth: Beirut
Marital Status: Married	Name of spouse: [REDACTED]
Address: Beirut	Telephone
Occupation: [REDACTED]	Former occupation:
Languages spoken: Arabic, English	Languages written: Arabic, English



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**INTERVIEW INFORMATION**

Date(s) of interview: October 24, 2020	Place and time of interview: ASAS Law, Badaro
Name of Interviewer(s): Nada Abdelsater, Esq.	Name of Interpreter(s): N/A
Other persons present during the interview(s): [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	Language(s) used in interview: Arabic, English
Number of Pages of this Witness Statement: 9	PoA registration number:

Signature witness \_\_\_\_\_

Signature interviewer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_

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Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

STATEMENT

1. I am giving this statement voluntarily and I am aware that this statement may be used in international instances and/or in legal proceedings outside Lebanon or inside Lebanon.
2. I have not been threatened or forced to give this statement, nor have I been offered any promises or inducements to do so.
3. I will describe everything I know to the best of my knowledge and recollection.
4. My name is [REDACTED] I have two children [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is my only son. He was killed by the Beirut criminal explosion of August 4, 2020. Our house was completely destroyed and I was personally injured as well as my daughter and my husband. At the date of this statement, my daughter is still undergoing one surgery after the other.
5. [REDACTED] and I lost everything. As a matter of fact, my husband told me that his own life stopped, that he is not living anymore, but only counting days. [REDACTED] was so precious.
6. As a result, the material and psychological harm I suffered and continue to suffer, are huge.
7. They are criminals; all "Lebanese officials who knew about the explosives". Do they know what it means a mother who longs for her child? And who keeps smelling his clothes? The only meaning for my life is to smell and inhale his clothes. But the problem is that the smell is fading with time ...
8. On August 4, 2020 around 6pm, I was home (in my room) and [REDACTED] was playing in his room. My daughter [REDACTED] called me saying: "mom come and see there is a boat on fire". I went to the window with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and we saw the fire. Also we saw some kind of white lines coming down from the sky. Our home faces the Beirut port and it happens sometimes that a boat takes fire, but it was the first time I see this kind of smoke. We started hearing fire-fighter sirens. Someone said there was a fire on one of the boats. I told the kids to get away from the window. And [REDACTED] went back to his room.
9. The next thing I know is that I lost conscience. I didn't hear the explosion. Rubbles fell on me.
10. My parents live on the same floor. My brother [REDACTED] later told me that they rushed in our house and found [REDACTED] in his room under the rubbles. They tried to pull him out, he waived



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- his hand at them in a sign of "No" as if he was experiencing too much pain. Two walls fell on him from both sides of the room. My brother and [REDACTED] tried to carry off the rubbles but they couldn't. Then, people from the area came and pushed off the rubbles to carry him out.
11. When I woke up and went outside the house on the door steps [REDACTED] was laying there: I felt he was in extreme pain. I couldn't move easily although I wasn't feeling direct pain but it turned out I had broken ribs and fractures in my backbone, in addition to various other injuries. I thought [REDACTED] will get better once at the hospital and will be rescued. I thought "he will be fine". Then B [REDACTED] my husband arrived. He walked back to the house from his office despite his injuries.
12. When the port exploded, I [REDACTED] was at his office and the windows and glasses fell on him, he had various injuries. He immediately sent me a message telling me that an explosion happened next to his office and that he is safe. Of course, I didn't see this message until later when I woke up and called him to tell him that the explosion happened next to our house and everything is destroyed and all of us are injured. He immediately headed to our home by foot. [REDACTED] s journey to reach the house was itself a nightmare; he can't describe the destruction and misery he saw. The closer he was getting to the house, the worse the situation and destruction. Then, he reached our building. And as he puts it: it was a devastated building. All floors had lost all the windows and most of the walls. He went up the stairs. He saw us there, my daughter, my parents and everyone else, all sitting or laying on the door steps. [REDACTED] was there laying on the floor, in his underwear, and head and all his body were covered with blood. He was barely breathing (breathing with difficulty). [REDACTED] carried him with difficulty (he is a big guy 175cm, beautiful handsome young man). He went down the stairs carrying him.
13. [REDACTED] and I followed as well with great difficulty with help from others; and we were bare foot.
14. When we arrived at the ground floor level, we all sat on the street. [REDACTED] asked my brother [REDACTED] to just find someone to take [REDACTED] to the hospital. They couldn't find an ambulance. Then a car (an unknown passer-by) offered to take them to the hospital. There was no place in the car to take [REDACTED] and me. [REDACTED] carefully carried [REDACTED] into the car and sat with him. At that moment, an ambulance came by, but it had more than ten injured persons stacked one on top of the other. The car taking [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] followed the ambulance to get to the hospital Hotel Dieu de France. It didn't cross my mind that I will never see him again.



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Otherwise, I would have gone with him to the hospital. I would have never left him go alone with his father, even if I was dying myself.

15. A lot of small motorcycles started to be seen in the neighbourhood. A motorcycle took me to the hospital while another took [REDACTED], my daughter. We didn't immediately understand why this many motorcycles were roaming around. But later on, it turned out that a large number of motorcycles came to the neighbourhood in the first 30 mins following the explosion; some would offer to take the injured to the hospitals while others would rob their homes. And indeed, our home was robbed, they took jewellery, money and other belongings.
16. Throughout [REDACTED]' trip to the hospital, he was in [REDACTED]'s lap and [REDACTED] was talking to him, saying: *take it easy, be calm, you are strong.*
17. When remembering the scene [REDACTED] said: *"It was the longest 10 minutes of my life; my son covered with wounds and blood in my arms, his lip cut and falling; he who had the most beautiful smile in the world غنود ضحكي يتأخذ العقل... I was continuously talking telling him be careful, don't swallow blood, spit them, I am next to you, I am your father, don't be scared. And at the same time, I was looking at him and I was being torn into pieces... for me as a dad, seeing my son like this... it's the most difficult moment of my life. The longest ten minutes of my life. He was in pain, however, I held him. But I had to keep his head up, so I even grabbed him by the hair in the end in order not to hurt him. The driver was also talking to him all the time. Helping me as I was starting to get physically tired."*
18. As he later told me and as he just explained to me, [REDACTED] felt that [REDACTED] wasn't very much awake, but he was hearing him and giving signs that conveyed to him he was responding to him. His breathing was very difficult and he was moving with extreme difficulty. He was slipping from his father's arms and he was very heavy متلائشي . When his father would lift his head (so he doesn't suffocate), he was giving signs of pain. They were amongst the first fifty victims to arrive to the hospital. None of the injured persons inside the ambulance - that was leading the way, and which they followed - needed a stretcher, unlike [REDACTED] who was transported on the stretcher into the Emergency Room and then the Operation Room. In the ER, [REDACTED] tried to cover his parts as he was in underwear. So, [REDACTED] thought this meant he is conscious and this gave him a lot of hope. They took him into the Operation Room and everyone disappeared. At that time, [REDACTED] fell on the ground, lacking energy.

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19. Then, [REDACTED] went home to bring a phone charger since his battery was dead as he also needed to check on N [REDACTED] and me; we were scattered in different hospitals. When he got to what used to be our home, he found out that many things were robbed. The drawers were open etc... He went back to the hospital to stay close to [REDACTED]. At around 2-3 am, the Doctor went out from the Operation Room with a "closed face", he wasn't happy. [REDACTED] started thinking that [REDACTED] must have sustained a damage in the brain, that maybe [REDACTED] will be handicapped and he started asking the doctor (Dr. Tony Rizk) a series of questions. But the Doctor answered: what is important now, is that "he makes it" المهم يرمط.
20. Guilt feeling is killing us. My husband sometimes thinks he is guilty for having been late to arrive to the house following the blast; he sometimes tells me: *"maybe if I had run to the house immediately after the blast, maybe I could have saved him" ...*
21. After the surgery, they moved [REDACTED] to the ICU. Every single day for 13 days, morning and evening, [REDACTED] would come and stay with him. The staff were kind and would let him in, whenever he wished, but his visits were overwhelmed with sadness and pain. [REDACTED] was also at HDF also at that time with her left-hand fingers damaged, face scarred and nerves badly affected. I was myself at another hospital receiving care for my broken ribs, back fractures and other injuries.
22. At that time, I was hospitalised at LAUMC - Rizk Hospital and they told me that my son had a surgery. I was worried but I thought he will get better, just like us (N [REDACTED] and me). I was sending him voice messages from the hospital and my husband would put the phone next to him so he can hear my voice.
23. As I insisted to see him, they took me twice from the hospital where I was being treated in the ambulance to visit him in the other hospital where he was. Dr. Sfeir told me that the first time I came and he heard my voice, his pulse got better. His friends were praying for him every day holding a mass for him. I received messages from people all over the world that they are praying for him. I was praying all the time and I believed that God will perform a miracle and that [REDACTED] will be saved. The first day I went out of the hospital after 2 weeks, I went immediately to see him. The next day, the hospital called us and told us his blood pressure was dropping and his life was in danger, they asked us to come quickly. A while after from our arrival, they told me that he passed away and they have to remove the machines. I didn't want to. I told them not to stop the machines. I went crazy.



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24. I feel [REDACTED] wants justice to be made. At whatever cost, even if I have to go personally speak to Mr. Guterres. Why are they hiding? Why are they keeping everything in the dark? And everything secret? Why don't they want the truth to be unveiled?
25. It's a human rights issue, a child rights issue. [REDACTED] was a child. A 15-year old child. It is his right to be protected and safe in his own house, in his own room.
26. The explosives were near our house for six years. The bomb was so close to our house and they didn't tell us. They knew. If they did not want to move them for whatever reason, they should have told us. It was their duty. We would have moved out. My son wanted us to move to our other house, if we did, he would have been alive now.
27. Fifteen days before the explosion, the highest Lebanese authorities were informed about the explosives. This was mentioned in the news after the explosion. Why didn't they tell us? Why didn't they remove the explosives? Why didn't they send the army? They all knew it was very dangerous. I heard on the news that a report was sent to the prosecutor a while ago and also to Lebanese officials informing them that the stored products are "very dangerous".
28. I ask these officials, if it were your children, how would you have acted? What would you have done? My son is gone, and also our entire family is destroyed, completely destroyed.
29. How will I live without my 15 year old son? He is the sweetest young man on earth. I found out after his passing that he had made rap songs singing them with his own voice. He had dreams and wanted to become an architect, he could have become someone who would have improved Lebanon and the world.
30. Where are the mothers? Do they not have mothers and wives? Why don't they think of their own mothers if they lose their 15 year old sons like that, what would they do?
31. Our children have the right to live, equally like their children.
32. I am personally dead. My life is over.
33. I ask for an international court and independent investigation. I don't trust the current investigation. The State/Government officials didn't do their job as far as we know. I think that some people were covering for a big crime. Covering for the storage of these explosives and their use in terrorist acts. These are very expensive and dangerous substance. Who brought them here? Someone brought them and was using them. I ask that all the information regarding the ship that carried the Ammonium Nitrate back in 2013, be made public.

**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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34. I also ask that the satellite pictures and the reports and findings of the foreign expert teams that were sent by the various states be made public or accessible to us.
35. I ask to be granted the opportunity to address the United Nations in person or speak directly to the UN Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres. The victims should have the right to be heard on this crime.
36. Corruption, money and terrorism. That is the real situation. So how can the Lebanese authorities be the judge and the accused?
37. It is he who kept silent for six years without saying a word, covering for these explosives. It is he who brought the explosives. It is he who used the explosives. He who covered up; he who hid the matter from the people and didn't give notice about the presence of the bomb. The Lebanese authorities remain a primary suspect in light of publicly displayed evidence of the Government's pre-existing knowledge and contradictory versions concerning this matter.

Witness signature \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer(s) signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Statement of \_\_\_\_\_


**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**


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**WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My statement made on October 24, 2020 to my lawyer Nada Abdelsater has been read by me in English, and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this statement voluntarily and am aware that it may be used in submissions made to the United Nations, international and local organizations, and in the course of international and or national legal proceedings.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature witness 

Signature interviewer(s) 

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_



**ANNEX C: VICTIM STATEMENT**  
**3**  
**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  

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**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**  

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**WITNESS INFORMATION**

Family name: [REDACTED]	First name(s): [REDACTED]
Citizenship (s): Lebanese	Gender: [REDACTED]
Father's name: [REDACTED]	Mother's name: [REDACTED]
Date of birth: [REDACTED]	Place of birth: [REDACTED]
Marital Status: Single	Name of Spouse:
Address: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	Telephone [REDACTED]
Current Occupation: [REDACTED]	Former occupation:
Languages spoken: Arabic – French – English	Languages written: French – English

**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

**INTERVIEW INFORMATION**

Date(s) of interview: 2 <sup>nd</sup> of November 2020	Place and time of interview: Lawfirm of Me. Mirna Gemayel at 10.00 a.m
Name of Interviewer(s): Lawyer Mirna Gemayel POA nbre# [REDACTED]	Name of Interpreter(s): N/A
Other persons present during the interview(s):	Language(s) used in interview: English
Number of Pages of this Witness Statement: 4	

Signature witness

Signature interviewer(s)

Signature interpreter(s)

Signature others present

## VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

### STATEMENT

1. I am giving this statement voluntarily and I am aware that this statement may be used in international instances and/or in legal proceedings outside Lebanon or inside Lebanon.
2. I have not been threatened or forced to give this statement, nor have I been offered any promises or inducements to do so.
3. I will describe everything I know to the best of my knowledge and recollection.
4. My name is [REDACTED], I used to live in [REDACTED] Mar Mkhayel, Beirut, and on August 4, 2020, my whole life changed; I was injured and I lost my home, my workspace, my belongings and a lot of irreplaceable objects and photographs that had an emotional value. In the situation we're in I'm one of the "lucky ones". The "lucky ones", in case you're wondering, are the ones who only lost their homes and belongings. No limbs or lives. The "lucky ones" don't feel lucky at all. They cannot just brush off the dust and do not want to call themselves resilient and rebuild. In a country with no accountability we are constantly rebuilding at the site of the next massacre hoping we survive to call ourselves the "lucky ones" again.
5. I ask for an international investigation and an independent tribunal to hold the people responsible for this crime against humanity liable. I do not trust the Lebanese authorities to reveal the truth as they were aware of the presence of these explosives for years and did nothing. I don't expect people to judge themselves especially given the high level of corruption present in the highest official ranks. There are still missing bodies and they are doing nothing to recover them. This is not incompetence of the state but complete absence. Moreover There is a moral and legal liability as well as financial since we were not compensated in any way.

Witness Signature

[REDACTED]

Interviewer(s) signature

[REDACTED]

Signature interpreter(s)

Signature third person present

VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My statement made on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2020 to my lawyer Me. Mirna Gemayel has been read by me, and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this statement voluntarily and am aware that it may be used in submissions made to the United Nations, international and local organizations, international and or national legal proceedings.

Dated: 03.11.2020

Signature Witness

[REDACTED]

Signature interviewer(s)

[REDACTED]

Signature interpreter(s)

Signature third person present

ANNEX D: VICTIM STATEMENT 4

Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION

Family name: [REDACTED]	First name(s): [REDACTED] (under the Lebanese nationality) [REDACTED] (under the French nationality)
Citizenship (s): French and Lebanese	Gender: Male
Father's name: [REDACTED]	Mother's name: [REDACTED]
Date of birth: [REDACTED]	Place of birth: Jieh
Marital Status: Married	Name of Spouse:
Number of Children: Two	
Address: Ashrafieh, Beirut	Telephone
Current Occupation: [REDACTED]	Former occupation:
Languages spoken: French, Arabic, English	Languages written: French, Arabic, English

[REDACTED]



**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

**INTERVIEW INFORMATION**

Date(s) of interview: <b>29 Oct 2020</b>	Place and time of interview: <b>Ashrafiéh, Witness residence, at 5'30 pm</b>
Name of Interviewer(s): <b>Nada Abdelsater, Esq.</b>	Name of Interpreter(s): <b>N/A</b>
Other persons present during the interview(s): <b>[REDACTED]</b>	Language(s) used in interview: <b>French, English and Arabic</b>
Number of Pages of this Witness Statement:	

Signature Witness

**[REDACTED]**

Signature interviewer(s)

**[REDACTED]**

Signature interpreter(s)

*N/A*

Signature others present

**[REDACTED]**

Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

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Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

STATEMENT

1. I am giving this statement voluntarily and I am aware that this statement may be used in international instances and/or in legal proceedings outside Lebanon or inside Lebanon.
2. I have not been threatened or forced to give this statement, nor have I been offered any promises or inducements to do so.
3. I will describe everything I know to the best of my knowledge and recollection.
4. My name is [REDACTED] under my Lebanese nationality and [REDACTED] under my French nationality.
5. I live in Beirut, Ashrafieh. I am an [REDACTED] profession. On August 4, 2020 in the afternoon, I was home communicating and interacting with my group on Whatsapp. I was then receiving messages that Lebanese activists had entered the ministry of energy and the security forces were beating them. I left my phone for a couple of minutes and came back to find out sixty messages or more!! I was shocked: pictures of the Beirut port on fire; messages reporting that Ashrafieh and other Beirut residents heard an explosion. I was surprised as I didn't hear anything myself.
6. Then I heard an explosion, so I tried to share it on Whatsapp but there was suddenly no connection.
7. Suddenly I felt a huge gale, like a cyclone crossing the house. Nothing but wind blow/gale and pressure. Like I have never heard before. It was so scaring. The cyclone crossed the street. I have never seen anything of the like in my life. I stood up and walked away from the windows and hid in the corridor. I held my phone to write a message to the group to share this with them. At that point, everything exploded. The pressure of the blast passed through me but I stood firm. Suddenly, the door of my daughter's room was dislocated and projected on me hitting me right on the front. The blast started from my daughter's window through the corridor and up to the entrance door that was completely dislocated and destroyed.
8. The glass inundated the house. Everything fell down and was broken, doors, windows, paintings on the walls etc. It took me few seconds to realise that I had blood dripping from my back. But at that moment I wasn't feeling any pain. I touched my back at the level of my waist and realised there was a big whole in my back and blood dripping all over.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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Realising that the house was now totally “open” without a main door. I rushed to hide the passports and some money that was kept at home.

9. At that moment, strangely so I didn't feel that I was that severely wounded. I had some pain here and there. I saw I was dripping blood as I was moving around. I came back to the living room to take my laptop which has all my work and again blood was dripping everywhere. Then, I remembered my phone. I went back to the corridor where I was standing when the second explosion happened. I searched for my phone under the debris. I found it unbroken. I tried to call my wife but there was no network. I was hearing people screaming in the building, on the streets and I was dripping blood. People screaming, in pain, afraid...
10. I thought I should now join my neighbours gathered on the door steps to wait for rescue. So I remembered Covid-19 and searched for my mask. It was a hot day and I was bear chested. Then I smoked a cigarette. But the taste was different. I wasn't feeling the smoke. I thought the cigarette was bad (I didn't know I had six broken ribs and collapsed lungs).
11. My neighbour Desiree was yelling on the door steps. Another one was crying. I went on the door steps. All neighbours of my floor (4<sup>th</sup> floor) were screaming, panicking and trembling... Raymond my neighbour was the first one to see my wounds, he was shocked by the blood and the gravity of the wound and told me to stop moving and that I needed to go to the hospital and he will call an ambulance. His old mother was shocked by the blood and she started examining my head to see if I had an injury in my head. The neighbours told me that there was like a blood ball protruding out from my back skin tissue. Everyone thought it was one of my organs coming out from my skin. My other neighbour Sami was wounded and stuck inside his house as his entrance door was stuck. So people were also helping open his door to save him as he was hit on his head. It was a war scene.
12. I was standing there, waiting for Raymond to get hold of an ambulance. Time was passing like ages and the ambulance wasn't arriving and I was still losing blood. The red -cross ambulances passing in our street were full of wounded people. In the end, a red- crescent ambulance came. The rescuers put a bandage around my wound and laid me down on a stretcher, which caused me severe pain. They took me 4 stairs down, and it became extremely painful, my thorax ribs were hurting like hell, and the stretcher was swinging over the stairs. By then, I still didn't know that I had six broken ribs and my lungs were severely damaged. There was glass and rubbles all over the streets. The ambulance first took me to St George Hospital. Arriving there, I heard the rescuers saying that there was



**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
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no hospital anymore! St George Hospital was completely demolished. I asked to take me to Hotel Dieu De France Hospital. But they said that it was already full with injured persons all over the place. At this point the rescuers were lost and didn't know where else to go, so they decided to leave Beirut area. So they drove me to Hayek hospital in Sin el Fil where I stayed few hours sitting on the floor with no care. Hundreds of victims were coming in heavily wounded and blood all over. Every now and then a doctor would notice me and say in shock: Oh this wound is huge, it is very deep! Then another victim would arrive screaming in pain with a lost eye or arm or leg or another organ, so the doctor would rush rescue them, leaving me alone on the floor. It was like that for hours.

13. Having lost lots of blood by then, I became pale, yellow and weak. I felt I was going to faint or die. I started feeling really cold and my voice became weak. I managed to enter a room and saw a doctor actually operating an open wound to a woman. I was shocked, freezing and shaking and couldn't stand on my feet. It was apocalyptic "une ambiance de fin du monde".
14. My Whatsapp was not working so I wrote a post on Facebook saying that I was at the hospital in need of help. My friend the journalist [REDACTED] calls me and shares the information on my large Whatsapp group. Having seen this, our friend [REDACTED] who lives near by the hospital rushed in and came to my rescue. She was shouting at everyone, ordering them to help me and save me. My Facebook and Whatsapp group actually saved my life.
15. Thanks to [REDACTED], they took me to another floor, a doctor came and gave me a needle shot of cocaine and immediately started sewing up my wound... [REDACTED] stayed with me. When they finished sewing up my wound, the doctor showed me a big piece of glass that was in my back which I didn't know of. Then doctors noticed I was spitting blood from my mouth. A doctor said a scanner is needed in less than 2 hours as there is a serious risk of pneumothorax which could lead to death; then he left. However time passed and no one was doing anything. So [REDACTED] had to scream and yell again to take me to the scanner room. I had an undescribed pain when they were doing me the scanner as I had to stretch my broken ribs and the wound in my back was freshly sewed up. It was horrible. Then I heard the doctors saying: 6 ribs broken plus pneumothorax, and that I should be taken to the intensive care immediately.
16. So they rushed me to the Intensive Care Unit. There were some 15 medical personal now gathered around me. They started operating me and doing a new surgery; however despite



**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
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anaesthesia I was feeling all their actions on me. It was horrible. They cut me again to insert 4 tubes in my body to drain out the blood then they left one tube in to remove the blood and the air from my lungs and my body.

17. Doctors told me that I need to stay at the hospital for at least 6 days to monitor the draining of the blood and the state of my lungs.
18. Two days later, I was still unable to go to the bathroom. So they had to insert me a urinary catheter. I can't describe the pain I had tubes everywhere in my body. I stayed six days in the ICU. Everyday radiology, tests... Eventually I went out from the hospital. But the damage and pain is continuous.
19. I wasn't the only injured in the family. My daughter was also injured. Ten minutes before the explosion, she left the house and went to her friend's place. Had she been in her room, she would have certainly been killed God forbid. Her room, which is facing the port center of explosion, was entirely destroyed. She had arrived to her friend's place when the explosion blasted. Most of the glass at her friend's home was also shattered and my daughter was injured in her leg. She needed twelve stich points.
20. To date my ribs have not yet healed and I continue to have pain at the level of my back and my waist.
21. The explosion traumatized me and caused various psychological consequences such as insomnia, flash backs, anxiety and fear. When the second fire erupted at the port 40 days after the explosions, I was sitting in the same place, alone at home, and the same thing was happening again. I had an uncontrollable and severe panic attack seizure. I was trembling and shaking like a leaf. I remembered that our cat had hid in the closet during the August 4 blast and that he was intact. So I rushed to the closet and hid there. I put a pillow on my face fearing that my face would be hit by glass. I took the first Xanax pill but it had no effect so I had to take a second then a Third one. After two hours my children came home, they searched for me and called me. I looked ridiculous hiding in the closet in front of my 6 year old child, so I went out of the closet and the kids were shocked. But few minutes later, I heard on TV that the fire was reaching a dangerous peak which is out of control and the situation is escalating so I couldn't help it. I was scared again and panicked and went back to hide in the closet. It was awful...
22. I think that the 4<sup>th</sup> of August chemical explosion is caused by a criminal terrorist behaviour; I think Hezbollah has stocked his nitrate ammonium chemical weapons between civilian populations in the heart of the Capital Beirut. I think that intimidation, negligence and





**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
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corruption are part of this terrorist scheme. I find it insulting to say that it's mere negligence. There are people who knew what they were doing. And what they did is criminal. Stocking two thousand tons of Ammonium Nitrate and other explosives in the populated capital, is an act of terrorism; it's a crime, a massacre. It's an act of terror. It's not about a case of expired chicken unlawfully stocked, what was actually hidden there is highly powerful explosive material; a factory to produce explosive chemical bombs.

23. I denounce the Lebanese justice system. It doesn't exist. The explosion had the magnitude of an atomic bomb ranked among the fourth biggest explosions in the world. The Lebanese President Michel Aoun said on TV that he was aware of the existence of the Ammonium Nitrate at the Port but he doesn't have the power to interfere in this matter. Also the Prime Minister Hassan Diab confirmed that he was aware of the presence of these material and was planning to visit the port but had to cancel it at the last minute further to political pressure exercised on him. The minister of interior promised on TV to complete the investigation in five days. Then, nothing. And today, three months have passed and still nothing. Every week victims and family of victims gather peacefully in front of the house of the judge in charge of the investigation to demand justice, but no one hears them
24. They arrested port key officials but we hear regularly that the authorities are trying to release the top official and put him in a comfortable detention place...
25. The Lebanese judiciary is enslaved to the political powers. It doesn't function.
26. I was shocked by the behaviour of our Lebanese national army who left the population of the destroyed areas of the Capital alone and didn't take part in the rescue operation like armies do in all other countries of the world.
27. The Government and authorities and the political powers behind them must be held accountable. Even at the symbolic level, the behaviour of the authorities was a failure: no tribute to the victims, no ceremony. Nothing! What does it cost to put the flag at half-mast?
28. I feel that the authorities want us to forget that a chemical bomb destroyed the capital of Lebanon. Every day we feel that they want people to continue their life pretending that nothing has ever happened.
29. I would like to add that during my stay at the hospital, two policemen came and took my testimony. They asked me if I wanted to file a lawsuit and I said yes. However, I am shocked because since then, I wasn't able to know anything on the fate of that lawsuit.



**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
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30. However, I note that a person from the ministry of health came to the hospital and told me that the ministry was going to pay for my hospitalization which they did.
31. One month after the blast, the Lebanese army visited our house and two months thereafter the police came and took note of the material damage for compensation. However no compensation occurred to date.
32. My children and my wife join me in my request for justice. I ask for an international independent fact-finding and/or investigation and prosecution. I definitely don't trust the current Lebanese investigation. The Lebanese justice system doesn't exist, does not function. The Lebanese judiciary is enslaved to the political powers and failed to uncover any of the multiple major terrorist crimes in Lebanon and failed to hold any high ranked person accountable since 15 years.
33. Also, I ask that all reports and findings made by foreign expert teams that were sent by the UK, France, USA, Russia, Germany and any other country or authority, be made public or accessible to me and to all the victims; in addition to all satellite pictures and the information regarding the ship that carried the Ammonium Nitrate charge and entered the Lebanese waters in November 2013 (more than 2,500 tons of military grade Ammonium Nitrate).
34. To date, we still don't know anything about the 4<sup>th</sup> of August Beirut chemical blast. Clearly this crime was covered by high political powers and authorities in Lebanon; they know that these chemical explosives are highly powerful and can produce bombs and kill people; they knew they were stocked there for years and kept silent. And those who tried to know more about the matter were subject to intimidation as this was shared on local news. For years no one felt the duty to protect the population.
35. This is terrorism melt with corruption, negligence and intimidation. The covering for the storage of these chemical explosives and their use is a terrorist act. These are very expensive and dangerous substance. Who brought them here? What for? Why here? Someone brought them and was using them. The Lebanese authorities are suspected to have played a role in this crime and hence cannot be the judge and the accused. The responsible of this crime must tried before international courts.

Witness signature



Interviewer(s) signature



Signature interpreter(s)

Signature others present




**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**


Witness Statement of 

**WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**


My statement made on 29/10/2020 to my lawyer Me. Nada Abdelsater has been read by me, and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this statement voluntarily and am aware that it may be used in submissions made to the United Nations, international and local organizations, international and or national legal proceedings and fora.

Dated: 29 October 2020

Signature witness 

Signature interviewer(s) 

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature others present 



VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION

Family name: [REDACTED]	First name(s): [REDACTED]
Citizenship (s): Lebanese	Gender: Female
Father's name: [REDACTED]	Mother's name: [REDACTED]
Date of birth: [REDACTED]	Place of birth: Beirut
Marital Status: Single	Name of Spouse:
Address: [REDACTED]	Telephone: [REDACTED]
Current Occupation: [REDACTED] S [REDACTED]	Former occupation: D [REDACTED]
Languages spoken: Arabic, English	Languages written: Arabic, English



Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Date(s) of interview: 5-11-2020	Place and time of interview: Achrafieh 11.30 -12.30
Name of Interviewer(s): [REDACTED]	Name of Interpreter(s):
Other persons present during the interview(s):	Language(s) used in interview:
Number of Pages of this Witness Statement: 6	Name of Lawyer(s) and POA registration number: [REDACTED]

Signature witness [REDACTED] Signature interviewer(s) [REDACTED]

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_



Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

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Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

STATEMENT

1. I am giving this statement voluntarily and I am aware that this statement may be used in international instances and/or in legal proceedings outside Lebanon or inside Lebanon.
2. I have not been threatened or forced to give this statement, nor have I been offered any promises or inducements to do so.
3. I will describe everything I know to the best of my knowledge and recollection.
4. My name is [REDACTED]. I live in Beirut.
5. On August 4, 2020, I was in Mar Mikhael (Ashrafieh) in a coffee shop with a friend, discussing plans for a weekend camping trip. The shop directly faces the port.
6. While we were talking, we heard the sound of a sonic boom. We assumed the sound came from an Israeli aircraft, especially that for some time now, there were Israeli warplanes flying at low altitudes above Beirut and we could clearly hear them, every night.
7. After a few minutes, the first explosion resounded, the glass shook, and my friend ran outside to try to see the planes. I screamed at her to return inside, and within minutes we heard a powerful sound like a wave or storm approaching us. We stood near the table which we had been sitting on, and then I no longer remember anything until I woke up and found myself laying on the ground: the café was destroyed and shattered glass was blown out a distance of two to three meters.
8. As a result of the explosion, the façade of the store had collapsed on my head and my body, and I could not stand. I tried calling my friend. I asked her if she was alright and she asked me what had happened.
9. I told her that it was possibly an Israeli attack on the electricity company.
10. I looked outside and saw a girl, all covered in blood. I asked her for help and she helped me to get out from under the façade.
11. I stood up and went outside with my friend. I found my car completely destroyed, the air was white, with no visibility, and the sounds of alarms resonating all around.
12. I looked around and saw destruction and blood everywhere, so my friend and I made a decision to leave Mar Mikhael, fearing a second Israeli strike, as this is what we thought caused the attack at that moment.

Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

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13. I tried to leave the area but I couldn't, since there was complete destruction and debris everywhere. I went to the opposite street and saw people screaming and covered in blood, asking for help.
14. My friend was in shock and lost her memory, she did not remember what happened that day.
15. I called my parents to reassure them that we were still alive, and until that moment I still was not aware that I was wounded nor what actually happened.
16. I headed to the highway on my feet, thinking that it was the only way out, and I found the road destroyed. I saw a policeman and asked him to help me get to the hospital.
17. He told me that there was no one to help me get to the hospital and I had to think of a way out myself.
18. I asked someone who was driving by to take me and my friend to Hotel Dieu Hospital by car.
19. The road was destroyed, blood was everywhere, and upon our arrival to the hospital, they refused to receive us because of the hospital was full and severely damaged.
20. Then we took a cab and asked him to take us to Sacre Coeur Hospital in Hazmieh. There were many people and corpses. Until that moment, I had not realized the extent of the destruction and that it has ravaged other areas beyond Mar Mikhael.
21. We entered Sacre Coeur Hospital and started looking for any doctor to help, but we were asked to wait for our turn. During this time, my friend's health condition worsened, so I started screaming for help. The medical staff asked me for her identity card which she did not have with her. I called her family and they sent me her identity card via Whatsapp.
22. While preparing the admission papers, I started to feel dizzy, so the doctors told me that I was injured which I did not notice due to the trauma I suffered. They requested an X-Ray of my head given that I was covered in blood.
23. I asked my family not to come to the hospital, fearing they won't be able to handle the shock given their old age. We waited for about 4 hours and the doctors placed my friend under surveillance in the care unit. As for me, the doctor told me that I needed stitches.
24. In fact, and as a result of the explosion, I suffered from wounds on my left shoulder, my lips were cut open, I was injured in my neck, I lost a tooth, and my ears were damaged and the left ear lobe was perforated and required surgery. In addition, my car was completely destroyed.

**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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25. Before the explosion, I heard the sound of a sonic boom. I think it was an Israeli airstrike, given that I know very well the sound of warplanes and sonic booms.
26. I think that a missile or an airstrike hit the port. According to scientific opinions, materials do not explode without being ignited, which I think was done by a missile. I also compared it to the shape of explosions that happen in Syria.
27. Lebanon has formed a commission to investigate the explosion. Personally, I have no confidence in the Lebanese investigation and the Lebanese judiciary; because any person may be subject to political pressures which could derail the investigation.
28. I ask for an international independent fact-finding and/or investigation and prosecution.
29. The Lebanese people should have the right to review all reports and findings made by foreign expert teams that were sent by the UK, France, USA, Russia, Germany and any other country, be made public or accessible to all the victims; in addition to all satellite pictures and to periodic reports.
30. I want my voice as victim to be heard on the international level; this is why I ask to be given the chance to address the United Nations in person or speak directly to the UN Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres.

Witness signature

Interviewer(s) signature

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_



Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

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Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My statement made on 05/11/2020 to Me. Hady Nakhoul has been read by me, and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this statement voluntarily and am aware that it may be used by my lawyers Me. Nada Abdelsater and/or Me Serena Ghanimeh in submissions made to the United Nations, international and local organizations, international and or national legal proceedings.

Dated: Nov 12 2020

[REDACTED]  
Signature witness [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Signature interviewer(s)

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNEX F: VICTIM STATEMENT 6**  
**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

**WITNESS INFORMATION**

Family name: [REDACTED]	First name(s): [REDACTED]
Citizenship (s): Lebanese	Gender: Male
Father's name: [REDACTED]	Mother's name: [REDACTED]
Date of birth: [REDACTED]	Place of birth: El Msharrafeh
Marital Status: Single	Name of Spouse:
Address: Aley	Telephone: [REDACTED]
Current Occupation: I [REDACTED] S [REDACTED]	Former occupation [REDACTED]
Languages spoken: Arabic, English	Languages written: Arabic, English





Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Date(s) of interview: 5-11-2020	Place and time of interview: Achrafieh 10h30 -11h30
Name of Interviewer(s): Me. Hady Nakhoul	Name of Interpreter(s):
Other persons present during the interview(s):	Language(s) used in interview:
Number of Pages of this Witness Statement: 6	Name of Lawyer(s) and POA registration number: Attorneys Nada Abdelsater and/or Serena Ghanimeh POA No: [REDACTED]

Signature witness [REDACTED] Signature interviewer(s) [REDACTED]  
Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_

Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

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Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

STATEMENT

1. I am giving this statement voluntarily and I am aware that this statement may be used in international instances and/or in legal proceedings outside Lebanon or inside Lebanon.
2. I have not been threatened or forced to give this statement, nor have I been offered any promises or inducements to do so.
3. I will describe everything I know to the best of my knowledge and recollection.
4. My name is [REDACTED]. I live in [REDACTED].
5. On August 4, 2020, I was in my office in Gemmayze, working as usual. At six o'clock in the afternoon, I heard a strange sound that resembled the sound of an explosion. I went out to the door to see what was happening and considered leaving the office and going home, but before I was able to do that, the second explosion resounded, propelling me in the air about three and a half meters and hit a marbled console which stopped my movement.
6. At first, I thought it was an airstrike caused by a warplane, especially that I heard a sound similar to the sound of a warplane and sonic boom right before the explosion.
7. As a result of the force of the explosion, I lost my glasses. I could not see well without them but I still managed to see the great damage caused in the office. I also heard screams and calls for help from people in the street.
8. I looked for my glasses and found them, and I was set to save myself and leave the area alive and go directly to the nearest hospital, especially as I had suffered many injuries and fractures and was feeling pain.
9. When I stepped out from the office, I saw a person stuck under sheets of iron and could not get out. I was unable to help get him out as I was also injured and looking for help.
10. I search for my car. It was completely damaged and could not be used. The roads were completely destroyed anyway, so I had to continue walking.
11. When I reached the main street, I realized the extent of the destruction that had befallen the area. I began to see people running on the damaged roads all covered in blood and asking for help. The scene was terrifying.
12. I started my difficult journey walking from Gemmayze, the area most affected by the explosion, towards Spinneys Ashrafieh and heading to Hotel Dieu Hospital. I did not

Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

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- even consider going to Al Roum Hospital, as I was sure it was destroyed by the explosion.
13. On my way to the hospital, I was watching the severe devastation that hit the area, it felt as if a nuclear bomb had been thrown on the area. All the people in the streets were injured and covered in blood, screaming and crying for help. I was horrified and frightened by the scene.
14. The buildings were also collapsing; their foundations were shaken. As such, I had to be very careful to avoid the dangers on my way before I could even reach the hospital.
15. I was not able to help any of the injured because I was unable to breathe and was experiencing great difficulty in moving.
16. I was later told by the doctors that I suffered from an air leakage in the lung in addition to 3 or 4 rib fractures and damage to the right shoulder which was dislocated, and my clavicle bone was also dislocated and required surgery. However the surgery could not be undertaken because of the air leakage in the lung. I had to wait for one month to the surgery of clavicle bone.
17. The journey that I crossed on foot would usually take about twenty minutes, but because of my deteriorating health state and the fractures and injuries, it took me about an hour. During that time, I was focused on my one and only goal, which is to get to the hospital for help.
18. When I reached the area around Spinneys, I saw my sister, who was searching for me. At that point, I gave up as I no longer had the energy to continue, entrusting her with myself completely to save me or reach out for help. Then we ride the car of a stranger who took us towards Hotel Dieu; but the traffic was too heavy and my pain was increasing so we left the car and went with another stranger on his motorcycle.
19. Throughout that period, I was not aware of what was happening. I only know it was a period of complete and utter terror.
20. I continued with my sister towards Hotel Dieu hospital, but they refused to receive me as there was a heavy demand for care and they had exceeded their capacity to receive patients.
21. Then, a stranger offered to give us a car ride to Mount Lebanon Hospital, where they received me despite the heavy demand they were also experiencing.
22. I spent three days in the care unit and four days in a normal room; they stitched my had, removed the glass from my body, and they relocated my shoulder. Then they monitored



**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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they air leakage in mu lung. The air was not increasing which allowed me to leave the hospital on the seventh day and wait a little before doing the clavicle bone surgery. My right arm is still not full functioning.

23. I personally believe that the presence of explosive materials in the port is a criminal act melt with corruption and negligence which were exploited to carry out a terrorist operation that claimed the lives of many victims and injured many people, in addition to causing total destruction to the area.
24. Lebanon has set up a committee to investigate the explosion. Personally, I have no problem with the committee members, but I would not trust the results because any person in Lebanon including judges may be subject to political pressure which could divert the purpose and results of the investigation.
25. I think that there was ammunition in addition to the nitrate stored at the port which explains the massive explosion and the sonic sound.
26. I call for an international independent fact-finding and/or investigation and prosecution; whereby the victims participate to the proceedings either directly or through the presence of human rights institutions.
27. The Lebanese people should have the right to review all reports and findings made by foreign expert teams that were sent by the UK, France, USA, Russia, Germany and any other country, be made public or accessible to all the victims; in addition to all satellite pictures.
28. I want my voice as victim to be heard on the international level; this is why I ask to be given the chance to address the United Nations in person or speak directly to the UN Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres.

Witness signature \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer(s) signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_



**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

**WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My statement made on 10 November 2020 to Me. Hady Nakhoul has been read by me and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this statement voluntarily and am aware that it may be used by my lawyers Me. Nada Abdelsater and/or Me Serena Ghanimeh in submissions made to the United Nations, international and local organizations, international and or national legal proceedings.

Dated: 12/11/2020

Signature witness [REDACTED]

Signature interviewer(s) [REDACTED]

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_

**ANNEX G: VICTIM STATEMENT 7**  
**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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**WITNESS INFORMATION**

Family name: [REDACTED]	First name(s): [REDACTED]
Citizenship (s): Lebanese; French	Gender: Male
Father's name: [REDACTED]	Mother's name: [REDACTED]
Date of birth: 26-5-1961	Place of birth: Damascus
Marital Status: Married	Name of Spouse:
Address: Beirut	Telephone:
Current Occupation: [REDACTED]	Former occupation:
Languages spoken: French, English, Arabic.	Languages written:

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Date(s) of interview: 10 November 2020	Place and time of interview:
Name of Interviewer(s): Me. Hady Nakhoul	Name of Interpreter(s):
Other persons present during the interview(s): Me. Serena Ghanimeh	Language(s) used in interview: Arabic, French
Number of Pages of this Witness Statement: 6	Name of Lawyer(s) and POA registration number: Attorneys Nada Abdelsater and/or Serena Ghanimeh POA No: [REDACTED]

Signature witness \*

Signature interpreter(s)

Signature interviewer(s)

Signature others present

Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

STATEMENT

1. I am giving this statement voluntarily and I am aware that this statement may be used in international instances and/or in legal proceedings outside Lebanon or inside Lebanon.
2. I have not been threatened or forced to give this statement, nor have I been offered any promises or inducements to do so.
3. I will describe everything I know to the best of my knowledge and recollection.
4. My name is [REDACTED] I am an A [REDACTED]
5. I live in Beirut, Sky Line Building right across from the port. On August 4, 2020 a fire started at the port, then around 17:55, I remember that I heard the sound of planes, then the first explosion happened and the house and all windows shook. I had a friend over at my place, he got up and left and around 18:05 I got up to open the windows in case another explosion happens and after few seconds the big blast happened, and I lost consciousness. I don't know if I woke up few minutes or half an hour later as I lost the sense of time and place. All I remember at this moment is that I started screaming and I had blood covering my entire body.
6. My house was completely destroyed. I had two Philippine domestic workers [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at the house, I called for them and no one responded. The phone was ringing non-stop. After a few moments [REDACTED] came out she was injured in the head and in a state of total shock. I asked her if her husband was with her, but she didn't respond.
7. I walked over the debris of my destroyed house, which caused further injuries in my feet, and found Dan motionless on the ground and bleeding from his head. I placed my finger under his nose to see if he was still alive. I couldn't feel anything. I was about to announce his death to [REDACTED] when I decided to slap him on the face, at that moment his leg moved.
8. My wife later told me that I spoke with her on the phone during these moments and asked her to come home because our house workers needed help, but I don't remember the call. Also other persons told me that they spoke with me on the phone during this period but I have no recollection of that.
9. A family friend arrived at our house and wanted to take me to the hospital but I refused to go and leave [REDACTED] behind. At this very moment my wife and my daughter arrived home, I asked my wife to take care of [REDACTED] while I go to the hospital with our friend. I didn't want my young down syndrome daughter to see [REDACTED] and the blood and the destroyed house so I took her with me and we had to walk over dead bodies, blood and debris to get to the car; we saw scenes that I cannot describe...
10. I was without a shirt as I had put it on the wound of [REDACTED] and I was barefoot.
11. I had a big injury in my left arm and the bone was visible from outside my skin and injuries all over my body.





**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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12. We deposited my young daughter to her grandparent's house and continued to the Emergency of Rizk Hospital in Ashrafieh,
13. The situation at the hospital was horrifying, the damage was impossible to describe (screaming, injured people everywhere, blood...). As soon as I arrived, I saw a nurse who took me to the operating room. Next to me were many people and I could hear talk that some people had died.
14. I was still without a shirt and without shoes hearing all kind of horrific things; I started getting very cold. I asked the nurse for a sheet and a pain killer and I asked them to take care of others who were in a more dire situation than myself. I believe that they hooked me to an IV drip, and I saw that my sister had arrived.
15. Then a nurse came with a medical stapler and began stitching me up. I felt extreme pain I almost fainted out of pain. It appeared that I had a big injury in my left leg as well. Then I saw a doctor who I knew, and asked him why I was being stitched so painfully. So he asked the nurse to put anaesthesia and do the proper work. After a while I found myself on the stairs of Rizk Hospital waiting for someone to bring me shoes and I left walking to my sister's house near the hospital.
16. I don't know who operated me and I don't know what kind of operation they did, no one was aware of anything. When I returned to the hospital the next day, it appeared that they had missed many wounds without stitching them.
17. During this time, my family arrived to Beirut and went to the house to retrieve important documents as the house was totally open; and indeed someone tried to rob the house that evening.
18. Also, while I was in the hospital, my wife found three guys near our building and asked them to come up with her to help [REDACTED]. They took him to the highway, where they found an ambulance and transported him to Rizk Hospital. He was admitted into the ICU to receive help, and stayed in a coma for 21 days. He is currently at Bhannes hospital for rehabilitation he is still paralyzed we don't know what will happen to him.
19. The house was completely destroyed. The army came to do an assessment of the damage. I have completed all necessary paperwork they asked and submitted it to the Mokhtar. I have no update in this respect since then.
20. I feel anger and sadness. I cried when I returned to the house for the first time and saw the blood of [REDACTED].
21. I think that the police and army institutions fell short in responding to the blast. On the other hand, I applaud the response of healthcare workers, NGO workers and volunteers.
22. I think that it is unacceptable that three months after this horrific crime we still don't know anything; I am sceptical as to the outcome of the judicial proceedings in Lebanon.
23. I want to know what has exploded? What caused this explosion? Who brought them? Why they were kept there? Everyone who knew and kept silent and everyone who should have known but turned his eyes should be held accountable.
24. I ask for an international independent fact-finding and/or investigation and prosecution.
25. Also, I ask that all reports and findings made by foreign expert teams that were sent by the UK, France, USA, Russia, Germany and any other country, be made public or

**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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accessible to all the victims and to the entire population; in addition to all satellite pictures and the information regarding the vessel that carried the Ammonium Nitrate charge and entered the Lebanese waters in 2013.

Witness signature *x*



Interviewer(s) signature



Signature interpreter(s)

Signature others pres



**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

**WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My statement made on 10 November 2020 to Me. Hady Nakhoul has been read by me and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this statement voluntarily and am aware that it may be used by my lawyers Me. Nada Abdelsater and/or Me Serena Ghanimeh in submissions made to the United Nations, international and local organizations, international and or national legal proceedings.

✓ Dated: 12.11.2020

✓ Signature witness [REDACTED] Signature interviewer(s) [REDACTED]

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature others present [REDACTED]

Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

WITNESS INFORMATION

Family name: [REDACTED]	First name(s): [REDACTED]
Citizenship (s): Lebanese	Gender: Male
Father's name: [REDACTED]	Mother's name: [REDACTED]
Date of birth: [REDACTED]	Place of birth: [REDACTED]
Marital Status: Married	Name of Spouse:
Address: Beirut	Telephone: [REDACTED]
Current Occupation: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	Former :
Languages spoken: Arabic, English, French and Portuguese	Languages written: Arabic, English, French





Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Date(s) of interview: 10 November 2020	Place and time of interview:
Name of Interviewer(s): Me. Hady Nakhoul	Name of Interpreter(s):
Other persons present during the interview(s): Me. Serena Ghanimeh	Language(s) used in interview: Arabic, French and English
Number of Pages of this Witness Statement: 6	Name of Lawyer(s) and POA registration number: Attorneys Nada Abdelsater and/or Serena Ghanimeh POA No: [REDACTED]

Signature witness

[REDACTED]

Signature interviewer(s)

[REDACTED]

Signature interpreter(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature others present

[REDACTED]

Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

---

Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

STATEMENT

1. I am giving this statement voluntarily and I am aware that this statement may be used in international instances and/or in legal proceedings outside Lebanon or inside Lebanon.
2. I have not been threatened or forced to give this statement, nor have I been offered any promises or inducements to do so.
3. I will describe everything I know to the best of my knowledge and recollection.
4. My name is [REDACTED] I live in Beirut. On August 4, 2020 I was in Faraya where we usually spend the summer. During this period I usually go down to Beirut on Mondays and Wednesdays, but that week I had exceptionally gone down on Tuesday August 4<sup>th</sup>. My house is located right across from Beirut port.
5. I spent a normal day at work. In the afternoon I usually play table tennis from five to six o'clock in the Medawar area. The person I was playing with asked me to extend our game for another 15 minutes, and I agreed. At about 6:07 pm, I heard the first explosion.
6. The concierge of the building came and told me that an explosion had happened at the port. My friend opened the curtains of the window facing the port to see what had happened, and it was only moments before the second explosion took place and I stopped seeing anything and got projected outside the room with blood all over my body.
7. At the time, my wife was in the gym not far from where I was. Two persons next to her fell unconscious then one of them died. She came with the coach to help me. I was mentally alert despite my injuries and the blood dripping from me, and I was giving them instructions about how to make a tourniquet and a stretcher with the goal of transporting me to Wardieh Hospital as I was unable to use my feet.
8. At that moment, I picked up the phone and made a video message to my kids and grandkids to say goodbye and express my will on things I want them to do after I die as I felt that I will die very soon. But my wife was always near me, giving me a motive to continue and not give up and constantly reminding me of my grandsons.
9. We took a van from the street and arrived to Wardieh hospital but it was completely destroyed.
10. The van couldn't move anymore because of all the debris on the streets so we left the van and took a stretcher from the hospital. They put me on the stretcher and they pushed it on

Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

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the street, it was very painful as I was moving from side to side. We arrived to the Red Cross in Gemayze who had lost their location and operating from the parking, we asked them for medical supply they had one tourniquet left so I took it and the rescuer put it for me. My wife was holding my neck all the time as it was severely injured and constantly bleeding (I lost 2.5 litres of blood). The rescuers told us that Roum hospital was completely destroyed, and Hotel Dieu Hospital was completely full.

11. Then a man in the parking of the Red Cross offered his help so I got into the truck of his SUV and the challenge was to find me a hospital. They took me to St Joseph Hospital, then Haroun Hospital, then Abou Jaoude Hospital but none had a place. I was starting to lose lots of blood and feeling very cold; at that moment I saw death in my eyes, and there was no more energy in my body.
12. During the transportation my wife was seeing corpses and heavily injured people thrown on the streets, it was traumatizing.
13. Then they took me to Serhal Hospital in the Maten area. At that moment, my children arrived at the hospital; I asked them to look for Dr Michael Serhal, who I knew from my basketball activities, so that I could be admitted as the hospital was also full.
14. Dr Serhal saw that my situation is critical and I should be stabilized before the surgeries. When I arrived to Serhal I had lost about 2.5 litres of blood and my blood pressure was 4/7.
15. The next day I underwent various surgeries from eight o'clock until four o'clock. I had damages in my hands (left and right), my head, my fingers, my face, my back, my legs, also my muscles all over my body were disrupted as the glass reached all parts of my body. I got 857 stitches all over my body (after that they stopped counting).
16. I spent six days in Serhal Hospital, then I was moved to Clemenceau Hospital, where I underwent a delicate operation in my right hand.
17. Despite all surgeries I still had lots of water coming out from my head above my right ear, and we did not know its source. Later on it appeared that it was coming from the salivary gland.
18. I was discharged from hospital 6 days later; I was still unable to walk.
19. I had a caregiver at the house for 1 month and a half as I had lost the functionality of my hands and feet and was unable to take care of myself. One month after the explosions they were still removing glass from my body.



**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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20. After that I got the plaster removed and started re-education; today my right hand and fingers are still not functioning properly.
21. In terms of material damage, my office in Ashrafiyh was destroyed, as were my cars and my house. The Lebanese Army conducted a comprehensive survey of the damage at my house; but things stopped there.
22. I am angry, they destroyed our cultural capital Beirut; they destroyed my childhood home and environment. No one said sorry, no one came to say how are you.
23. I want to know the origin of these material (the Ammonium Nitrate). How can they don't know who brought the vessel? Three months of investigation and they still don't know anything! who brought these material? How they stored them? Where they used to take them?
24. We have the right to know we are the victims of what? Why we died?
25. During my time at the hospital policeman came from Bikfaya police station and I filed a complaint against Hezbollah; I don't know what happened with it.
26. I have no confidence in the Lebanese investigation; I have no confidence in the Lebanese judiciary.
27. I ask for an international independent fact-finding and/or investigation and prosecution.
28. Also, I ask that all reports and findings made by foreign expert teams that were sent by the UK, France, USA, Russia, Germany and any other country, be made public or accessible to all the victims; in addition to all satellite pictures and the information regarding the vessel that carried the Ammonium Nitrate charge and entered the Lebanese waters in 2013.
29. I want my voice as victim to be heard on the international level; this is why I ask to be given the chance to address the United Nations in person or speak directly to the UN Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres.

Witness signature



Interviewer(s) signature



Signature interpreter(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature others present





Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

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Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My statement made on 10 November 2020 to Me. Hady Nakhoul has been read by me and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this statement voluntarily and am aware that it may be used by my lawyers Me. Nada Abdelsater and/or Me Serena Ghanimeh in submissions made to the United Nations, international and local organizations, international and or national legal proceedings.

Dated: 11/12/2020 NOV 12/2020

Signature witness [REDACTED]

Signature interviewer(s) [REDACTED]

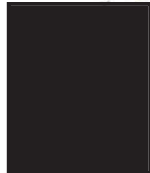
Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature others present [REDACTED]

## VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

## WITNESS INFORMATION

Family name: [REDACTED]	First name(s): [REDACTED]
Citizenship (s): Lebanese	Gender: Female
Father's name: [REDACTED]	Mother's name: [REDACTED]
Date of birth: [REDACTED]	Place of birth: Beirut
Marital Status: Single	Name of Spouse: N/A
Address: Gemmayze, Achrafieh, Beirut	Telephone [REDACTED]
Current Occupation: [REDACTED]	Former occupation:
Languages spoken: French – English - Arabic	Languages written: French – English - Arabic



**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

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**INTERVIEW INFORMATION**

Date(s) of interview: 03/11/2020	Place and time of interview: Residence [REDACTED]
Name of Interviewer(s): Maitre Marie Abi Antoun	Name of Interpreter(s): N/A
Other persons present during the interview(s): [REDACTED]	Language(s) used in interview: French – English - Arabic
Number of Pages of this Witness Statement: 7	Name of Lawyer(s) and POA registration number: Attorneys Nada Abdelsater and/or Serena Ghanimeh POA [REDACTED]

Signature witness \_\_\_\_\_

Signature interviewer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_

Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre  
VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT

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Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

STATEMENT

1. I am giving this statement voluntarily and I am aware that this statement may be used in international instances and/or in legal proceedings outside Lebanon or inside Lebanon.
2. I have not been threatened or forced to give this statement, nor have I been offered any promises or inducements to do so.
3. I will describe everything I know to the best of my knowledge and recollection.
4. My name is [REDACTED]. I live in Gemmayze and I am currently staying at Bois de Boulogne at my aunt's house with my family given the situation of my mother and also given that my house was completely destroyed.
5. On August 4, 2020, I was with my mom at the house. My dad and sister were in Mar Mikhayel and came back minutes before the blast. My dad was sending us by whatsapp videos of the fire that erupted at the port minutes ago. We could see everything from the window. Our house faces the port and is 300 meters away. We saw the first blast at 6:07 pm. The sound was very loud.
6. My dad immediately asked us to open the windows and get away from them.
7. I saw everything: a huge ball.
8. I do not remember what happened after that for 3 minutes.
9. Nothing remained from our house. Everything was destroyed and shattered.
10. My father, sister and myself were all fine. By the time all of Ashrafieh was feeling the impact of the second blast, we were actually inside it. It was surreal, just like the movies, we were disoriented and couldn't hear anything and we could only feel the impact. By the second blast, we were inside the mushroom.
11. We started calling my mom who was in her room. She wasn't responding. We thought she was propelled out of the house which is on the 7th floor. My dad went into the room looking for my mom; he couldn't find her until he stepped on her hand. She was under the rubble. She was all covered in blood but was still breathing.
12. We carried her and took her down the stairs; we went seven floors down and were horrified by what we saw. Once in the street, a guy on a motorbike agreed to take my



**Beirut August 4<sup>th</sup> Massacre**  
**VICTIM WITNESS STATEMENT**

---

mom to Hotel Dieu. My sister [REDACTED] accompanied her there. I had to stay home to guard it as we were afraid of theft.

13. It was then that I realized that I was covered in blood, my eye was hurt and my head was fractured. My father followed my sister to the hospital. By that time, electricity was cut and I was throwing water on me to stay awake.
14. It took my mom and sister 1h30 min to get to the hospital, the ride usually takes 10 min.
15. When my mom arrived to the hospital, a lot of injured and dead people were laying on the floor in front of the building and doctors were administering first aid in the parking and outside.
16. I managed to call a friend to help me gather all valuables and I joined my family at the hospital around 11 pm. The doctors treated my wounds once at the hospital.
17. I stayed at Hotel Dieu until 4 am, then I had to leave.
18. They took care of my mom's wounds, but then she vomited blood which alerted the medical staff, her condition was serious and they told my father that they had to take her to the Operation Room immediately. They asked my father to come inside to identify my mother before her operation. My dad did not recognize her at first. Eventually, he managed to recognize her from her nails. She was admitted into the OR around 7 am. She underwent 2 emergency surgeries: One for her eyes, to ease the swelling and the second to her head and brain.
19. After that, she was in a coma for 22 days.
20. After 3 days of the blast, the doctor told us that my mother wasn't doing well, and that our last chance was to open her brain, with only a 10% chance she would get better. That was on Friday.
21. The operation was successful. However the doctor told us that there was a 99% chance she will not wake up and only a 1% chance the operation would be successful.
22. 22 days later, she moved her hand. This was a good sign, that meant she wasn't paralyzed.
23. Three days later, the nurse called us, my mom was awake.
24. We went to the hospital immediately.
25. One-week later, she was extubated.
26. Two months later, she was able to speak and this is when she told us she cannot see.
27. All the doctors said she is a miracle! They couldn't believe she survived [REDACTED]

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28. The eye doctors told us that the optic nerve in her right eye was severely damaged but not cut but the optic nerve in her left eye was not functional anymore and therefore she would never be able to see again.
29. The family contacted doctors abroad and we are reaching out to eye doctors and conducting researches every day.
30. The doctors also told us that it would usually take up to 6 months to determine her final state.
31. All our family is doing research for any new technology or any potential new research to help my mom see again. We know that such technologies aren't available in Lebanon and we are sure she will be able to see again.
32. She had an operation this week to close her head as her brain was still exposed.
33. We had to incur costs at the hospital.
34. This crime impacted us a lot and changed our lives forever. For other people, August 4 is a horrible day and that's it. For us, this is our new reality and we are living it over and over again everyday. It is still August 4 to us.
35. In addition to everything that happened to my mom, we lost our home, our two cars, all our belongings. My father and sister stopped working for two months. Since the blast, I only went once to our house and couldn't stand to stay more than 5 minutes. Our family is traumatized. I think we need to see psychologists. I am currently taking pills. I am only 22 years old. I couldn't remember what happened on that day for one month. I now get flashbacks. My mom was hit by the wooden window shutter, this is why she was severely wounded, this could have also happened to me but it missed me by 2 cm.
36. My mother was very independent and lively. Now she depends on us for everything. Someone should be with her 24 hours a day. She doesn't want people to see her anymore. She was a very beautiful lady before the explosion. She used to take care of her appearance and that's why she wouldn't want people to see how she looks now.
37. We are currently staying at my aunt's house (the sister of my mom). My mom wants to go back home, she doesn't know that there is nothing left of it.
38. My father told us that they saw arms residues all over Ashrafieh after the blast. We are sure that there is something weird and abnormal behind all this.
39. We think that they stopped the searches on the first night because they were busy removing things from the crime scene. We want to know what happened. It is our right to



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- know. Why didn't they ask us to evacuate when they knew about the explosives? Why did it take them so long to call the firefighters?
40. We want the criminals to pay for their crime and be held accountable.
41. We don't trust the state and the politicians, nobody told us anything, they didn't even check on us once. We perform all our duties towards the state, they never do anything to us in return. They treat us like "mosquitoes".
42. We are not searching for money, we want to help my mom see again. We want experts to reach out to us and help us find a solution.
43. The state has forgotten all about us. We were sitting in our home, they killed us in our homes, we didn't do anything to deserve this. We weren't expecting it, there was no war. War conditions would have been easier for us than this.
44. It is my mother's right as a citizen to know what caused this. She doesn't want to stay in Lebanon anymore. She could live a normal life abroad.
45. I have nothing else to lose, family is my red limit and they crossed it and hurt us.
46. What happened was not an accident and we refuse this allegation. Our lives changed forever.
47. We don't trust any of them and we want an independent external investigation and prosecution. How can we trust the politicians to prosecute themselves? I don't trust the current investigation. The Lebanese judiciary is under the politicians' pressure.
48. Also, I ask that all reports and findings of the foreign expert teams that were sent by the UK, France, USA, Russia, Germany and any other country or authority, be made public or accessible to us; in addition to all the pictures from the satellites and the information regarding the ship that carried the Ammonium Nitrate back in 2013.
49. Moreover, I would like our voice as victims to be heard all over the planet; this is why I ask to be given the chance to address the United Nations in person or speak directly to the UN Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres.

Witness signature \_\_\_\_\_



Interviewer(s) signature \_\_\_\_\_



Signature interpreter(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature others present \_\_\_\_\_



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Witness Statement of [REDACTED]

WITNESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My statement made on 03/11/2020 to Me. Marie Abi Antoun has been read by me, and it is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and recollection. I have given this statement voluntarily and am aware that it may be used by my lawyers Me. Nada Abdelsater and/or Me Serena Ghanimeh in submissions made to the United Nations, international and local organizations, international and or national legal proceedings.

Dated: 12-11-2020

Signature witness

Signature interviewer(s)

Signature interpreter(s)

Signature others present