

For Immediate Release



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## **AUB confirms solidarity and collaboration** **with sister hospitals in Beirut**

In a gesture of solidarity and urging cooperation toward fast action, American University of Beirut (AUB) President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri toured and surveyed the damage at the Sisters of the Rosary (Wardieh), St. George (Roum), Geitaoui, LAU-Rizk, and Hôtel-Dieu de France of St. Joseph University hospitals (HDF-USJ). Accompanied by AUBMC Director Joseph Otayek, Interim Dean of Medicine Ghazi Zaatari; and special advisor to President Khuri, Ibrahim Khoury, Dr. Khuri collaborated with his partners towards generating common working document to present to international supporters to rebuild Beirut's devastated private hospital system.

The total damage within the visited hospitals and universities in Beirut was estimated at approximately 250 million dollars, requiring major international assistance and materials funneled directly to the hospitals. President Khuri commented on the extent of the damage to the hospitals and its impact in the current circumstances.

“Lebanon is in an incredibly fragile state right now,” said President Khuri. “With the extent of incapacitating damage to the Wardieh, St. George, and Geitaoui hospitals, and the additional serious damage that AUBMC, HDF-USJ, and LAU-Rizk suffered, particularly at a time when COVID-19 daily numbers are exceeding 600 cases a day, the loss of 800 of the approximately 2000 teaching hospital beds in greater Beirut represents a potentially devastating deficit for patient care.”

“The rest of the world is also under pressure and is changing fast. The circumstances are such that we at AUB must work together to care not only for our community but to help others we might not have understood as ours. But they are. Every one of them is ours.”

These hospitals, along with AUBMC, are the six major private, teaching, and academic hospitals in greater Beirut. Together, they offer approximately 1,800 beds and cater to the majority of

Lebanon's most seriously ill patients while the Hariri Public Hospital has led the way as the court of first resort for COVID-19.

During what he termed as an emotionally exhausting tour assessing damage of a devastating extent, Khuri noted that Wardieh, Geitaoui, and St. George hospitals have been completely incapacitated and are at least three to six months away from resuming remotely normal services.

“Despite this calamity, we will all persist, because we believe the people of Lebanon deserve much better, and because AUB and Lebanon need rare generous and inspiring leaders like all of you and the physicians, nurses, administrators and nuns working under duress to help these, our sister hospitals rise once more,” Khuri told the administrative and medical teams of the different hospitals.

Referring to the emotional impact of seeing a candlelight vigil at Wardieh for a nurse who died in the blast, or a mass being said at Gemmayze and the sacrament being given to volunteers at Geitaoui, Khuri urged that faith and hope are vital for Lebanon's diverse people in these dark and despairing times. He added that AUB must serve others who are less fortunate, and that it must lead humbly, graciously, and well, during these and other circumstances. It was time to step up to fill the void, he said, no matter how vast it sometimes seems.

“My most sincere respect, genuine thanks and love to all of you and to your families, my friends,” he concluded. “Today as every day, we must collectively take up the mantle of leadership, every one of us who can, to help rebuild not only a better AUB, but with our sisters and brothers in the hospitals and health systems of Beirut, a much better Lebanon, and a world that will better shield and appreciate it. It is in us to lead. We must not shirk the responsibility and we will not. Please make today, and every day, matter.”

**ENDS**

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## Note to Editors

### About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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