

STATEMENT ON BEIRUT EXPLOSION

The Board and staff of the Lebanese Transparency Association, supported by the Transparency International movement worldwide, wish to express our shock and deep sadness at the devastation and loss of life caused by the explosion in Lebanon's capital city, Beirut.

In these terrible circumstances, our first priority is to help our fellow citizens and to meet the immediate needs of the many thousands who have lost loved ones, been injured or made homeless by this catastrophe.

It is critical that the causes of this disaster are identified in an independent and transparent way as soon as possible. Once the facts have been established, those found responsible must be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law.

While the circumstances behind the explosion remain unclear, early indications suggest it is the result of negligence and systemic failures leading to thousands of tonnes of ammonium nitrate – which authorities believe to have triggered the explosion – to be stored without safety measures in a warehouse in Beirut's port for six years.

While we support the establishment of a commission of inquiry that is time-bound (5 days as announced by the government), we stress on the following principles:

The inquiry must be conducted openly and transparently;

The inquiry must include independent external observers and technical experts;

The inquiry should have far-reaching powers to investigate both the causes of the explosion, and establish legal, administrative and criminal responsibilities as well as accountabilities.

Beirut 5 August 2020