**Lebanon Prayer Update 15/01/2021**

Please continue to pray for Lebanon and our Christian brothers and sisters there. There is still no new government to be a credible partner for the international community to have confidence in to ramp up aid and monetary support. Rival factions in parliament need to be able to transcend their differences and put together a cabinet in which all are represented and corruption is put aside. At the moment they are accused of ‘fiddling while the country burns’. Although the World Bank did approve a loan on 14th January to enable emergency cash assistance (roughly £200 each) to be given to 800,000 of those suffering the worst effects of the economic crisis.

The churches of Lebanon continue to give sacrificially of their time, talents and funds to help support the one million plus Syrian refugees in the country (hundreds of whom lost their shelter when their tented camp near Tripoli in the north of the country burnt down on Boxing Day), as well as the hundreds of thousands of residents of Beirut made homeless by the huge explosion of a fertiliser warehouse last August.

But the life of the ordinary Lebanese man or woman in the street also continues to be made very difficult by the ongoing national political and economic crisis characterised by rampant inflation and shortages. On top of this a national CoVID lockdown was imposed on 4th January making it very difficult for the many daily-paid labourers to make a living. This was supplemented on 14th January by an 11 day 24/7 curfew being imposed making nearly all economic activity impossible. Even the supermarkets are not allowed to open, they can only make deliveries.

The security of the country is also under threat from the spill-over of regional tensions, with Iran threatening to bomb Israel via Lebanon using the Shiite party Hezbollah which is strongest force in the south of the country as their accomplice. Also Israeli warplanes are flying several sorties over Lebanon daily, sometimes doing mock dive bombing.

Please give thanks for the work of churches and NGOs to aid those suffering and also for the World Bank decision.

Also pray that the Lord would have mercy on Lebanon and that a resolution will be found to its crises on all levels – political, economic, social, health and security.