



Khaddit Beirut

Breaking the Cycle of Dependency: Actionable Demands for Lebanon's COVID Explosion

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Access to healthcare is a human right but like all rights in Lebanon it is overpowered by the interests of sectarian warlords governing the country since 1990. The surge in corona virus cases and deaths, much like the port explosion on August 4th, is a man-made disaster that could have been prevented. But the time for prevention has passed with tens of deaths reported each day. **We are calling on everyone to uplift patients' rights and support the health of the community.** Every voice matters. Together we can save lives.

When the economic crisis began in Spring 2020, healthcare workers and specifically nurses were the first to lose their job. In this moment, there are calls to activate bed capacity and fundraise for equipment and medication, but technical and bed capacity without human resources will be another short-sighted failure. To alleviate the immediate pain and suffering, we the undersigned, demand the following:

- For public and private hospitals **to re-hire qualified nurses** who lost their jobs while ensuring benefits and incentives for them to remain in the healthcare system.
- For public and private hospitals to work on **incentives and retention packages** that support nurses during this crisis and in the recovery phase.
- For public hospitals to **maximize capacity**, hire staff and purchase required equipments immediately.

The responsibility must be distributed equitably among hospitals, and all of us must assume the roles we have been entrusted by.

We also, join our colleagues in medical committees in various hospitals in asking for all their demands, and specifically in demanding the caretaker government and parliament to immediately undertake the following tasks:



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1. Share the plan that is being prepared about how the vaccine will be imported, stored and distributed with a clear timeline and division of roles between the public and private healthcare institutions.
2. Opening the field hospitals immediately to cater for COVID patients.
3. Pushing hospitals, who have not done so already, to open spaces and capacity for COVID patients.
4. Setting a plan to re-open the country in stages.
5. Planning for the summer season with minimal risk.
6. Advocating for the Central Bank to support purchase of medical supplies.
7. Responding to the demands of the Orders of Physicians and Nurses that the government acts upon the decree that would consider deceased healthcare workers as martyrs.

