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Ressort: Politik

Lebanon: Switzerland sends water and sanitation support

Bern, 11.12.2024 [ENA]

Since September 2024, developments in the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel have led to the displacement of thousands of people inside Lebanon, depriving them of access to drinking water in particular. Faced with this situation, Switzerland has decided to provide additional expertise and equipment to support ongoing activities in the Bekaa Valley. The aim is to maintain access to water for those affected.

More than 870,000 people have fled the fighting to other parts of Lebanon, including some 100,000 in the Bekaa Valley. This mountainous region, which runs along the border with Syria, was already home to a considerable number of Syrian refugees. With the arrival of newly displaced persons and the destruction of infrastructure, the humanitarian situation has worsened, particularly in terms of access to drinking water.

On site, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is running a project to ensure effective and sustainable water management. For several years, specialists from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) have been working with their Lebanese counterparts and the local authorities to ensure equitable access to drinking water for all the valley's inhabitants.

In response to the current crisis and growing needs, the SDC has provided additional expertise and equipment. It has sent five drinking water distribution modules.

Each module can supply water for over 5,000 people. The consignment arrived today in Tripoli and will be used in various localities in the Bekaa Valley. A water and sanitation specialist and a logistics officer from the SHA have travelled to Lebanon to support the small SDC team in Zahle. They will install the equipment and treat and analyse the water distributed. In the longer term, this equipment could also be used to prevent possible cases of cholera.

The SDC will also join forces with the NGO Oxfam, which will be installing ten 95,000-litre tanks near natural springs. Once treated, the water will be distributed by tanker. This will provide access to drinking water for around 60,000 people a day.

This work will be carried out over the next three months. It is part of the SDC's ongoing response to the current crisis in Lebanon. In September, the SDC had already released CHF 7 million.

(SOURCE: FDFA - Federal Department of Foreign Affairs)

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https://afro-europa.en-a.eu/politik/lebanon_switzerland_sends_water_and_sanitation_support-90448/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:

V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDSStV: ZéLuis F. Correia

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