IAEA Mission Detects No Radiation Increase in Beirut After Recent Blast

Friday 2 October, 2020

Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Environment & Nature :: Health ::

Scan Me:

Vienna, Austria - An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) team of experts has not detected elevated levels of radiation in areas surveyed during a mission to Beirut which was carried out in the aftermath of the massive blast two months ago. There were no artificial radionuclides in the measurements the team conducted during the visit in mid-September.

The team's findings confirmed those previously reported by Lebanese authorities which had requested the IAEA assistance mission to support their emergency response efforts following the explosion in the Beirut port on 4 August. Even though the mission took place more than a month after the explosion, it would still have detected any subsequent increase in radiation.

The team, comprised of four experts from Denmark and France as well as four IAEA staff members, also gave advice on nuclear safety and security matters during the mission conducted from 14 to 18 September.

In a report presented to the Lebanese Atomic Energy Commission (LAEC) this week, the IAEA said radiation surveys conducted during the mission did not find any unusual radiation levels, only natural background radiation.

"The IAEA assistance mission, with the involvement of experts from Member States, conducted radiation surveys and analysis at specific sites to confirm that there were no elevated levels of radiation following the explosion," said IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi. "The IAEA stands ready to provide further support to Lebanon as it strives to recover from the devastating explosion."

The IAEA team also assessed the impact of the blast on radioactive material and sources. They confirmed that radioactive sources at two hospitals were safe and secure.

The team recommended some actions to be taken in scrapyards, hospitals and the port to strengthen nuclear safety and security, including training for scrapyard workers, better signage to indicate the presence of radioactive material and increased security for the storage of such material. Supporting the authorities with equipment was an important part of the mission, and the IAEA team provided training on the use of handheld radiation detection equipment which was also donated to the country.

"As Lebanon faces this challenging period, after the Beirut explosion and in the presence of COVID-19, we welcome the support the IAEA assistance mission provided for the response efforts of LAEC," said Mr Bilal Nsouli, Director General at LAEC. "We look forward to continuing to cooperate with the IAEA as we strengthen nuclear safety and security in the country."

The assistance mission was carried out at the request of Lebanon with the involvement of Member States registered in the IAEA's Response and Assistance Network (RANET), a network of states which offers assistance to minimize the actual or potential radiological consequences of nuclear or radiological emergencies irrespective of the origin.

"We activated RANET based on the specific request of Lebanon to support response efforts in Beirut. After receiving offers of help from fourteen countries registered in RANET, the IAEA assembled and deployed an assistance mission to Beirut to monitor various locations throughout the city and to report official findings to Lebanon," said Elena Buglova, Head of the IAEA's Incident and Emergency Centre.

The IAEA has also supported Lebanon in other ways, including in the area of health, as many hospitals were damaged in the explosion.

Please see a short social media video about the mission here.

Company Contact:

_

Pressat Wire

E. support[@]pressat.co.uk

View Online

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.wire.pressat.co.uk