



MEDIA RELEASE

21 July 2006

AUSTCARE RESPONDS TO THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN LEBANON

AUSTCARE has launched an emergency appeal in response to the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon.

Hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes in the current Middle East crisis. AUSTCARE urges all parties of the conflict to protect the lives of civilians and calls on the international community to take immediate action to resolve the crisis through peaceful means.

In Lebanon alone over 500,000 people have been displaced and there have been an estimated 300 civilian deaths and many more casualties.

"The humanitarian imperative to alleviate the suffering of civilians displaced by the current conflict is as great as in the natural disasters that continue to plague the world," said the Rt Hon Ian Sinclair AC, President of AUSTCARE. "I urge Australians to demonstrate their generosity yet again commensurate with the needs of the hundreds of thousands of people facing this humanitarian disaster."

AUSTCARE has worked Lebanon since 1981.

AUSTCARE's emergency response will include working with local partners, including Norwegian People's Aid, to procure and distribute emergency relief items. Funds raised will help provide food, water and non-food items including medicines, first aid materials and kitchen sets to people displaced in Beirut, Sidon and other affected areas. Our focus will be on children and those most vulnerable, including people with a disability, and on meeting the needs of the many people sheltering in schools and public gardens or unable to flee unsafe areas.

Donations to assist the displaced people in Lebanon can be made on-line at www.austcare.org.au or by calling **1300 66 66 72**.

Donations can also be made at any branch of ANZ, into the following bank account:

AUSTCARE LEBANON CRISIS APPEAL

BSB: 012 – 030

ACCOUNT: 8370 – 38596

As of 26 July 2006, donations can also be made at any branch of St. George Bank or Bank SA.

Any excess funds from the AUSTCARE Lebanon Crisis Appeal will be dedicated to our Emergency Fund, which enables us to respond immediately to future emergencies.

ENDS

Media please note: for further campaign information, visuals, or interviews please contact:

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AUSTCARE is a wholly Australian-based, independent, specialist humanitarian aid and development organisation that is non-profit, non-sectarian and non-political. Since 1967, AUSTCARE has worked in over 30 different countries to reduce poverty, build local capacity and enhance human security. AUSTCARE's mission is to assist refugees overseas, displaced people, returnees and those affected by landmines to rebuild their lives and to reduce poverty through the expert delivery of development programs in partnership with local communities and other agencies.

AUSTCARE is fully accredited with the Australian government aid agency AusAID, and a full member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

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