



الجمعية الخيرية اليونانية في بيروت
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΤΗΣ ΒΗΡΥΤΟΥ
GREEK COMMUNITY OF BEIRUT



Ta Nea

Volume 3
AUGUST 2020

Our beloved Beirut

Dear Member,

Images of destruction and distress haunt our memories. Each of the survivors has been witness of this tragedy. There are no words to describe how everyone feels. It happened in Beirut' Port and there are many eyewitness accounts and videos showing the intense blast as well as the aftermath from the ground, flattening the region with thousands of buildings damaged. It was a catastrophe that claimed well over 200 lives and injured 6,000 others. The cleanup and repairs will undoubtedly take years to complete.

Following the devastating explosion which brought mourning to our beloved city of Beirut, the committee board members wish to express its solidarity with the Lebanese people and community members, their deepest regret for this unprecedented disaster and hope your families, loved ones and friends are safe. We are convinced that Lebanon is capable of recovering. Hope is part of mourning and it is a message sent to



all our community members with confidence in the future, tolerance for others and mainly the conviction that Beirut will always be cherished. It is our duty to fight to get it back on its feet. All our thoughts are with you and your families. We will remain committed to supporting our Community and stand by your side.

BEIRUT BLAST: GREECE IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

In response to the disaster of Beirut blast, Greece has offered immediate assistance to Lebanon and has sent a Special Disaster Unit "EMAK" search and rescue team to Lebanon to take actively part in the operations. Wednesday August 5, the team arrived to Beirut in a C130 military aircraft accompanied by Greece Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Kostas Fragogiannis. The team was formed of 12 rescue workers, a sniffer dog, 2 vehicles and equipment, all with the purpose of locating any survivors and missing people that have disappeared after the blast.

On August 12, the Greek Navy IKARIA Land carrier ship arrived to Beirut port with three doctors, five nurses, medical and nursing supplies as well as humanitarian aid including generators and dry food collected by the Ministry of Civil Protection & Crisis Management. Also at the request of Cyprus, the ship was loaded with materials from the Port of Limassol with which the Republic of Cyprus assists the Government of Lebanon. Greece's Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis said *"On behalf of the Greek people, I want to express my deepest condolences to the people of Lebanon, especially to the families who have suffered losses, and wish a speedy recovery to the wounded. Our thoughts are with you. Greece stands ready to provide any assistance needed."* Greece's Civil Defence and Deputy Minister for Crisis Management, Nikos Hardalias, also wrote: *"We express our profound sorrow at the deadly explosions in the port of Beirut and our solidarity with the government and people of Lebanon. We also express our sincere condolences to the families of the victims and our wishes for a speedy recovery to those injured. Greece stands ready to assist the Lebanese authorities with all available means."*



August 4th, 2020

The Tragedy

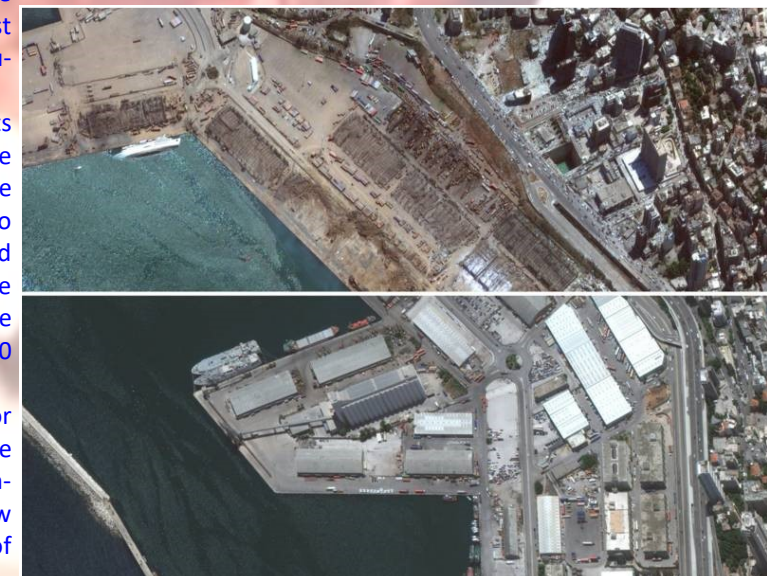
Almost three weeks after the massive explosion of incredible violence that destroyed a large part of the capital, the citizens while continuing to mourn their dead, to heal their wounds, to help each other in a tremendous outpouring of solidarity, are still struck by the scale of the disaster. The blast, 3rd most powerful explosion in the world after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, destroyed Beirut Port, and severely damaged Saifi, Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhael, Tabaris, Achrafieh, Rmeil Quarantina, and beyond. Among the wounded, eight were Greeks. Our cultural centre was not spared and suffered material damages. Four to five hospitals are completely out of order. According to the first estimations presented by the directors, the Saint Georges Hospital Medical Centre will cost no less than 44 million Dollars, the Getawi Hospital around 13 million, the Governmental Hospital of the Quarantine around 8 million and the same amount applies to the hospitals of Hotel Dieu and Wardiyeh!



Beyond the human and humanitarian aspects, a real race against time is underway to consolidate the structures of old houses in the disaster areas, of which about 60 are at risk of collapsing according to construction and restoration specialists. 300,000 persons lost their houses. The main building of the Sursok Museum is nothing more than a skeleton! The interior of the museum is almost completely destroyed, according to the museum's deputy director.

But the museum is only part of Beirut's vibrant arts and culture scene, the core of which was located where the explosion hit. Among the areas most affected are Gemmayzeh and Mar Mikhael. According to UNESCO, many of the estimated 8,000 buildings affected by the blast are concentrated in those districts. The United Nations cultural organization added that some 640 historic buildings were impacted, approximately 60 of which are at risk of collapse.

In Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhael, the port sector, Saifi or Clemenceau, art galleries are gutted, gaunt, and the gallery owners who have helped to create the new contemporary face of Beirut are seeing their dreams now evaporated. This region also had the largest number of fashion houses, the fashion showcase now shattered into a thousand pieces. Although damaged, the cultural sector and artists have joined the efforts of the city and put together the mosaic of a remarkable action of solidarity and mutual aid. Together, we will re-build Beirut for the 8th time.



Tribute to the Youth of Lebanon!

The tragedy of August 4, 2020 has not only claimed lives, it has also cost survivors their homes and businesses.

The first to be on site was the young people, equipped with brooms to help the victims cleaning the destroyed houses. Without fear, surpassing their emotions, the solidarity of young people towards their elders has been unrivaled. From morning until late in the evening, they were active, clearing away the piles of glass and destroyed walls and doors, debris and rubble. They rushed from everywhere, from the north, the south, the mountains, in small groups of friends, armed with sweeping brushes, shovels, gloves and bags, cleaning without speaking, without a leader or a coordinator, disorganized but with astounding effects; like bees working tirelessly, without criticizing, ready to comfort anyone who suffers, hugging, smiling, offering sandwiches, fruit, hot meals. Moreover, they were active in helping the elderly, to distribute food cooked by benevolent citizens, even offering water and food, paying with their own money or collected from friends and relatives.

The day before, the same evening of the explosion, accounts were created on social networks to help people find their loved ones. In less than an hour, some accounts saw more than 30,000 subscribers, each in turn sharing crucial information to help people.

In the absence of an efficient crisis unit, aid was created pell-mell; personal initiatives as well as countless NGOs have emerged and have hastened to help the most disadvantaged.



IMPORTANT NOTICE TO GREEK CITIZENS

Kindly contact our Center by phone or email informing us about any change of address, phone number or social status helping us to keep our data list updated.

Protect yourself and those you care for



As we all know, Covid 19 is spreading everywhere!

In the absence of an effective prevention strategy such as a vaccine, it is therefore recommended to actively remember barrier gestures in order to protect yourself and loved ones. Worldwide, new statistics show that the most affected currently, even if they are asymptomatic, are adolescents and young people. Therefore, it is recommended to wear a face mask, use gel or cleaning hands, respect social distancing and avoid public spaces. Stay safe.



News from our Greek Language Center

Greek language courses are starting on the 1st of October and finish by the end of May, being equivalent to one teaching school year. Registrations start on July 1st until the end of September 2020.

For registrations please contact us by Email: vasiliky@greekcommunity.org.lb or by phone on 961 1 493467/8

Adults' classes:

Level A1 (2 years)

Level A2 (1 year)

Level B1 (2 years)

Kids' classes (7-12 years old)

Level A1 (4 years): Basic user

Saturdays from 9:00am to 10:30am

Greek Language Official exams

The official exams of May have been postponed to the following dates:

Level A1: 13th of October 2020 (morning)

Level A2: 14th of October 2020 (morning)

Level B1: 15th of October 2020 (morning)

Kindly note that the exact time will be announced a month before the exams.

Please note that the schedule might be subject to change due to the COVID-19 developments and possible measurements

Memories, memories...

A wink from the past, bringing back memories alive!

Some of us might have lived those moments, some others may be too young. This section dedicated to the past helps the new generation discover how their parents or grand parents used to live.

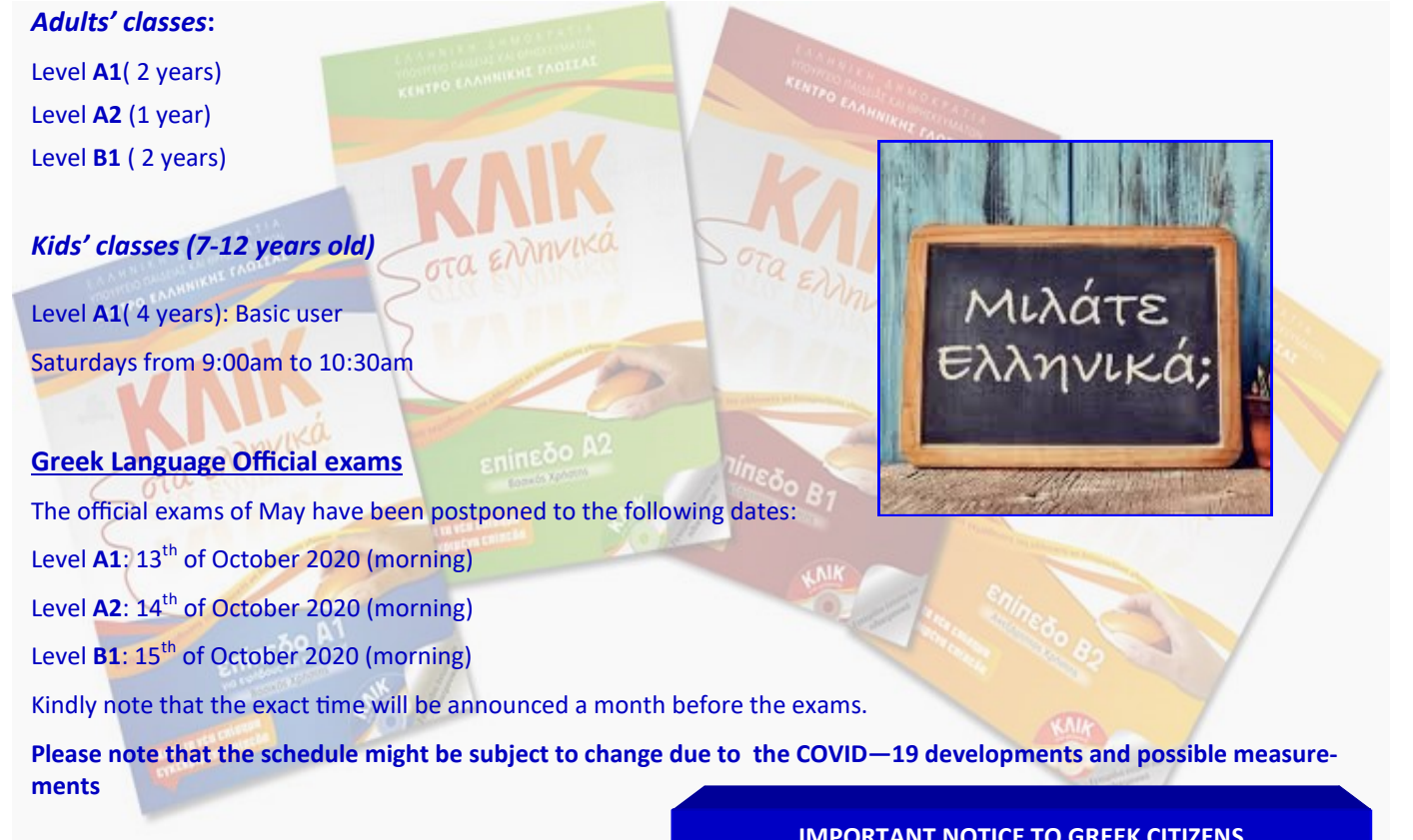
In this issue, we selected from our archive a picture dated 1959, showing students during a school play at the Greek school.

We would highly appreciate your contribution helping us keep those memories alive by sending us documents, photos or articles from your personal archive.



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2021, the bicentennial of the Greek revolution

As part of the commemoration of the bicentenary of the Greek revolution of 1821, we dedicate a new section. Each month we will present a story and a famous person who actively contributed to creating the actual Greece.



FILIKI ETERIA, (Φιλική Εταιρεία) the Society of Friends

Filiki Eteria was a secret nationalist organization founded September 14, 1814 in Odessa (Ukraine) where a thriving Greek community lived, with the purpose to overthrow the Ottoman rule of Greece. It played a crucial role in the uprising which led to Greece's War of Independence against the Turkish occupation on March 25, 1821, establishing an independent Greek State.

The three patriots' founders were Nikolaos Skoufas from the Arta province, Emmanuil Xanthos from Patmos and Athanasios Tsakalov from Ioannina. Soon after, Panagiotis Anagnostopoulos from Andritsaina joined the organization.

Two of its early outstanding members were Alexandros Ypsilantis, a prince and high-ranking officer of the Imperial Russian Cavalry and Theodoros Kolokotronis, known as the future leader of the independence war. In 1818, after the death of Skoufas, Alexandros Ypsilantis became the leader, started preparations for an armed revolt and set up a military unit named the Sacred Band. Odysseas Androutsos, Dimitris Plapoutas and the metropolitan bishop Germanos of Patras were also part of the society.

In October 1820, Ypsilantis decided to start the revolution in Iasi, Moldova. It was a catastrophic move, leading to the slaughter of thousands of fighters.

Nevertheless, the revolutionary seed of Filiki Eteria was planted, and the slogan "Freedom or Death" started playing on the lips of Greeks. They were determined to fight to the death for liberty. On February 24, 1821, Ypsilantis sent a prophetic letter to his colleagues asking them to start the fight or contribute by sending money and supplies for the armed struggle: "Future generations will bless your names and they will praise you as precursors of their freedom and bliss." His prophetic proclamation was verified by history. Filiki Eteria was the vehicle for the uprising and inspired the heroes who started the revolt a month later; it was "Freedom or Death" indeed.



Theodore Kolokotronis (1770-1843)

Theodoros Kolokotronis, (Θεόδωρος Κολοκοτρώνης) known as the ultimate symbol and leading figure of the Greek War of Independence, (1821 to 1830) was born on April 3 in Messenia, 1770, and died from a stroke, February 4, 1843. He became a Greek general and the pre-eminent leader of the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire. His father who participated in the rebellion supported by Empress Catherine II of Russia in 1770, was killed along with his two brothers by the Turks. As a result, Theodoros and his mother moved to her hometown in Arkadia, where he was raised. He soon entered the klepht groups of the area and became a captain when he was 15 years old. Having been a corsair at sea, in 1805 he participated in the naval missions of the Russian fleet, during the Russian-Turkish war. In 1806, a decree was announced for his persecution. He was chased by the Turks all over Peloponnese and managed to escape on a boat to Kythera. In 1810, he went to Zakynthos and was enlisted in the Greek corps of the British army. In 1818, he became a member of the secret organization Filiki Etairia. Kolokotronis's greatest success was the defeat of the Ottoman army under Mahmud Pasha at the Battle of Dervenakia in 1822. In 1825, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the Greek forces in Peloponnese. Today, Kolokotronis ranks among the most prominent figures in Greece's War of Independence. He is also known as the Elder of Morias.



Applications are Now Open!

Resumption of Greek language courses

Year 2020-2021

The Greek Community of Beirut announces the resumption of Greek language courses at its premises, Dekwaneh, "Parallel Towers", Block A, 3rd floor, on **Thursday October 1st**

Registrations will take place until Wednesday September 30, 2020

For any additional info, you can reach us by phone 01-493467/8 Monday to Friday, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

E-mail: vasiliky@greekcommunity.org.lb

Website: greekcommunityofbeirut.org

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