

Update from Colin & Audrey Gibson

Lebanon. October 2019



Police clearing protesters, Friday evening. (press photo)



Protestors clearing up and sorting rubbish on Saturday (press photo).

As I write this a fine layer of almost invisible black dust coats everything inside our flat – the outcome of burning tyres used to block many roads into Beirut over Thursday night and Friday. The roadblocks were part of ongoing street protests across the country against proposed taxes in the budget for 2020. The trigger was a (quickly rescinded) plan to tax mobile apps such as WhatsApp but it seems to have brought to a head many months, if not years, of frustration with politicians here. As a young colleague of Audrey's said in despair "I die a little every day I remain in Lebanon". There was some violence on Friday (with some killed) but Saturday saw a more carnival type atmosphere with protestors collecting (and sorting!) rubbish off of the streets. The Prime Minister has threatened to resign unless his 'coalition' Cabinet agrees to various reforms by Monday. Today one of the other political parties announced their resignation from the Cabinet risking a political crisis to add to the economic one.

We are far enough out of Beirut not to be directly affected (apart from the dust), and Audrey had an unexpected day off on Friday as all schools (and banks) were closed. Our church service today was also cancelled, not because of any specific danger, just the difficulties

caused by road closures. At work we are expecting a number of visitors to arrive this weekend and access to the airport can be difficult.

Please pray for a settlement that is fair to all people and that politicians will govern with wisdom and integrity.

Please also pray against any who would seek to exploit these problems for their own benefit.



Audrey writes: I am so pleased to report that positive changes are happening this year at St Georges school where I work 2 days a week (thank you for your prayers). The SKILD staff (Special Kids with Individual Learning Differences – the ministry I work with) are now supporting students in some of their classes in addition to teaching them 1 to 1 in separate sessions. At the moment, I am just getting to know Jawad (name changed) a 9 year old boy with language learning difficulties and ADHD. He is often nervous and really struggles with reading in his Gr 4 class and is constantly fidgeting. His teacher is already frustrated with him. Together we are introducing small 'fidget' items such as a stress ball to help him maintain his focus in class and to boost his self esteem through much praise for his efforts.

Please pray for Jawad and his teacher as we all work together to help Jawad in his learning. Please also give thanks for the improvements in teaching methods at the school.