

PRESS RELEASE

Victims of the fire in Crans-Montana on 1 January 2026 can now seek support from the Fondation Beloved

Sion, 1 July 2026 – **Six months after the tragedy that cost the lives of 41 people and injured 115 others, the Fondation Beloved for assistance to the victims of the fire in Crans-Montana on 1 January 2026 is now fully up and running. The aim of the Fondation Beloved is to provide medium- and long-term financial support to the families of those who died, those who were injured, their relatives who were directly affected and emergency services personnel involved in managing the disaster. Christian Cardon de Lichtbuer, a former senior executive with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), has been appointed director of the foundation's Executive Office. The families of those who died and those who were injured have been informed that the Foundation is now ready to respond to requests for support.**

Set up by the Canton of Valais to create a sustainable framework for the outpouring of solidarity that followed the tragedy, the Fondation Beloved has completed its start-up phase and is now ready to respond to the requests for support submitted to it. The Foundation Board, chaired by Doris Leuthard, has met several times since March to adopt the governance and operational rules needed for the Foundation to act.

"The solidarity expressed in the immediate wake of the tragedy means we have a special responsibility. Our duty now is to transform that generosity into tangible, long-term support. Behind each request there is a story, a loss, a life to rebuild, a fragile balance. The Fondation Beloved is here to provide the right support for each situation and stand by those affected for as long as they need it," stressed Doris Leuthard, Chair of the Foundation Board.

The assistance offered by the Fondation Beloved is designed to be swift, targeted, non-bureaucratic and coordinated with other schemes, including insurance cover. It aims to meet – on either a temporary or permanent basis – a proven and urgent need to cover costs that are not covered by other organisations, or not covered quickly enough. The foundation allocates grants independently. It also supports initiatives to commemorate the incident and projects related to the fire, in accordance with its articles of association.

To date, the foundation has received donations or promised donations of around 24 million francs from the Canton of Valais, the Canton of Vaud (subject to approval by the Grand Council of the proposal from the Council of State), the Municipality of Crans-Montana and private donors. The Fondation Beloved thanks the institutions and individuals who have donated and will ensure regular and transparent reporting on its activities.

The Foundation Board is made up of leading figures from the areas of medicine, victim support, law, governance, humanitarian action and crisis management. Their backgrounds reflect the diversity of issues those affected may face, in medical, social, legal, professional or human terms. Such multi-

disciplinary expertise is a valuable asset for understanding the unique nature of each situation and ensuring rigorous, equitable and person-centred handling of requests for support.

The Foundation Board is supported by an Executive Office led by its director, Christian Cardon de Lichtbuer, who has over 20 years' experience with the ICRC. There, he was responsible for conducting humanitarian operations and managing complex crises, prior to his appointment as the institution's chief spokesperson.

The Fondation Beloved has already been in contact with the families of those who lost their lives and with those who were injured, to let them know that it is now ready to respond to requests for support. It invites all those concerned to get in touch, preferably via its website www.fondationbeloved.ch.

"Our priority, at this stage, is to meet those affected and their families, to assess their needs and be ready to respond as effectively as possible, both immediately and in the longer term," emphasised Christian Cardon de Lichtbuer, director of the foundation's Executive Office.

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