

Lebanese MP asks army to protect Tripoli

by UPI

BEIRUT, Lebanon -- A member of the ruling alliance in the Lebanese parliament, worried about the city in the wake of violence in Beirut, Friday asked the army to defend Tripoli. Mesbah al-Ahdab expressed concern about moves "the opposition bloc was likely to make in Tripoli," calling on the army to prevent possible unrest in the city considered a stronghold for a government loyalists, reported KUNA, the Kuwaiti news agency. Three days of fighting between Shiite Hezbollah and pro-government forces in Beirut have left at least 11 people dead as anti-government troops seized Sunni West Beirut, shutting down the country's port, virtually closing the Beirut airport and blocking highways into the Lebanese city. "We hope that the ongoing conflict in Lebanon will not lead to incurable wound," he said in a statement. "Two-thirds of the people are against holding Lebanon hostage (by Hezbollah)." Meanwhile, the deputy chief of Lebanon's Supreme Shiite Islamic Council repeated his call for the government to reverse its decision to close Hezbollah's telecommunications network and restore Hezbollah supporters to positions at Beirut airport. Sheik Abdel-Amir Kabalan also urged political leaders to reopen communications with Hezbollah. "Dialogue is the only way out of the current unrest," the Shiite cleric said. "The painful experience seen by Lebanon over the last 35 years resulted from sticking to personal interests and shunning reason."

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