

Bomb rips Beirut, at least 7 hurt

by UPI

BEIRUT, Lebanon - A bomb believed secreted under or near a car exploded in Beirut, Lebanon Monday, wounded at least seven people and damaging nearby cars and buildings.

The blast occurred in an upscale, primarily Sunni, neighborhood. It came near the end of two days of heavy fighting in the Tripoli region between the Lebanese army and militants believed tied to al-Qaida that has left more than 70 people dead, SkyNews reported.

Abu Salim, a spokesman for Fatah al Islam, blamed the army for the breakout of fighting and threatened the violence could spread.

"If the situation stays like this we will not be silent and will definitely move the battle outside (the nearby city) of Tripoli," he said.

At least 27 Lebanese soldiers were killed and 39 injured on Monday alone, with at least 15 Fatah fighters killed, CNN reported.

"The blows dealt by Fatah al-Islam against the Lebanese army are a premeditated crime and a dangerous attempt to destabilize (Lebanon)," Prime Minister Fouad Siniora said.

Lebanese Economic Minister Sami Haddad pled for international help.

"We can hold out, but the help I'm requesting will be very important in speeding up our eventual victory," Haddad told CNN.

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