

## Blast rocks Israeli chemical factory

*by UPI*

TEL AVIV, Israel -- Firefighters managed to contain a toxic leak Monday at a plant in the Negev Desert that is Israel's main producer and exporter of crop protection chemicals. Organophosphorus compounds were released into the air when an explosion of unknown origin damaged a tank used in the production of insecticides at the Makhteshim Chemical Works factory, Haaretz news agency reports. Three workers were slightly injured in the blast that occurred just before noon. Officials say the substance released from the tank could cause respiratory and nerve damage. Teams from the Environmental Protection Ministry found traces of dangerous chemicals in Bedouin communities near the plant.

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