

Beat: Travel

Twin suicide car bombings kill 7, injure 128 in Beirut

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USPA News - Two suicide car bombs exploded near an Iranian cultural center in southern Beirut on Wednesday, killing 7 people and injuring 128 others, the Lebanese Red Cross said. The explosion occurred at 9:25 am local time and was the sixth attack in a string of attacks targeting Iranian interests in Lebanon this year.

It was the first attack since the country announced a new government on Wednesday. The Abdullah Azzam Brigades, a jihadi group associated with al-Qaeda, claimed responsibility for Wednesday's attacks. Tweets from the organization called the bombings a "response to fighting alongside Iran's criminal regime in Syria, and the continued detention of Muslim youth in the prisons of Lebanon." The group also warned that attacks would continue unless Hezbollah were to withdraw from Syria, which is in the midst of a civil war. "Iran's party will not be living in security in Lebanon until security is restored in Syria," the group said. The Lebanese Army confirmed to the local Daily Star newspaper that two vehicles, a Mercedes located outside of the Iranian Cultural Center and a BMW near the European exhibition center, exploded almost simultaneously. The army also reported that the Mercedes had a fake license plate and was filled with 75 kilograms of explosives and shells. The other vehicle, the BMW X5, contained 90 kilograms of shells. The buildings and vehicles located in the area surrounding the attack suffered great damages and many of the people in the area were seriously injured by the twin bombings. The Islamic Orphanage, located close to the Iranian center, also suffered great losses during the attack. Eleven children and one supervisor were injured. The explosion also affected the building itself. A statement quoted in the Daily Star said that children were playing on the playground at the time of the incident. "May God punish them and not allow them to go to Heaven. Please God!", a child from the orphanage said, as quoted by The Daily Star. The leader of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, the group responsible for the bombings, was captured late last year. Majid al-Majid later died in prison of natural causes. The army also arrested the AAB's second in command, Jamal Daftardar. He was charged last month with connections to terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and Nusra Front.

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