

What if the Beirut Explosion Was an Attack?

By [South Front](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

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On August 11, 3 Israeli battle tanks crossed a technical fence on the Israeli-Lebanese contact line, the official Lebanese News Agency reported.

According to the Lebanese side, Israeli forces broke through the technical fence in the town of Mays al-Jabal and at least one of the battle tanks fired a phosphorous bomb was fired by one of the tanks.

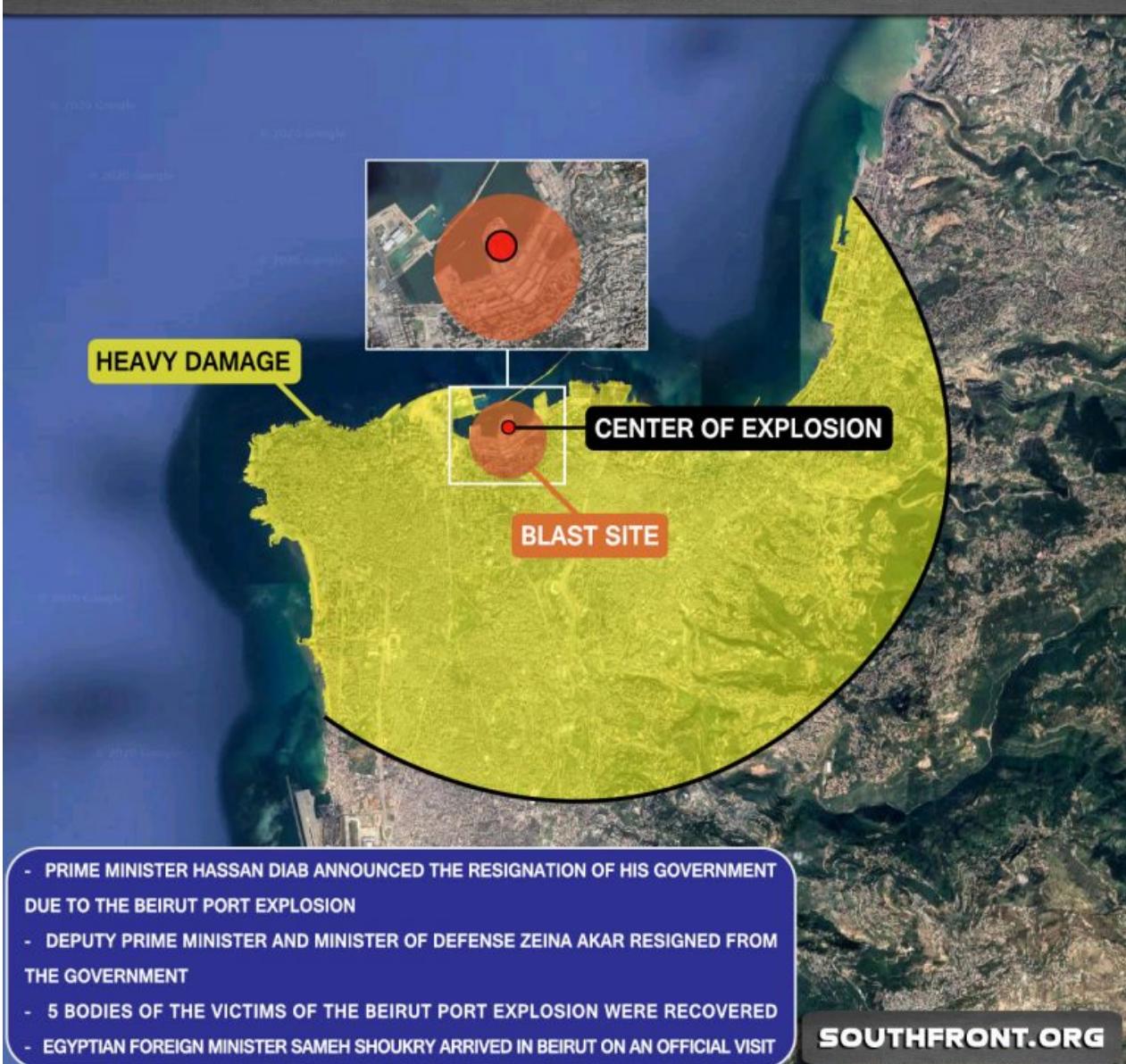
Later, the battle tanks withdrew from the area. No casualties were reported.

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) did not comment on the incident. The technical fence is an Israeli constructed fence along the 79 km contact line between Lebanese and Israeli forces.

In the recent weeks, [tensions between Israel and Hezbollah/Iran were especially high on the Lebanese-Israeli contact line and in the Israeli-occupied area of the Syrian Golan Heights.](#)

The IDF announced that it had deployed additional forces there and several times threatened Hezbollah with strikes inside Lebanon. An earlier Israeli strike also killed a Hezbollah member in Syria.

PROTESTS IN BEIRUT, 11 AUGUST 2020



The August 4 explosion in Beirut port contributed to [even further escalation of tensions in the region](#). The Beirut explosion, that left more than 200 dead and 6,000 injured, caused a deep political and social crisis in Lebanon. While the official version is still that it was a result of the accident with poorly stored 2,750 metric tons of ammonium nitrate, the version about some ‘attack’ or ‘sabotage act’ in Beirut has been becoming more and more popular. Probably, the most interesting fact is that this version is supported by the United States on the highest level.

US President Donald Trump was among first to say that the Beirut explosion may have been a result of the attack. Trump described the incident as a “terrible attack.”

“It would seem like it based on the explosion,” Trump said. “I’ve met with some of our great generals and they just seem to feel that it was not a — some kind of manufacturing explosion type of event. This was a... seems to be according to them, they would know better than I would, but they seem to think it was an attack. It was a bomb of some kind.”

Later, Defense Secretary Mark Esper also confirmed that the United States is considering this version.

"The bottom line is we still don't know" what caused the explosion, Esper told Fox News. "On the first day, as President Trump rightly said, we thought it might have been an attack, some of us speculated it could have been, for example, a Hezbollah arms shipment that blew up, maybe a Hezbollah bomb making facility, who knows?"

This stance of the United States contributed to the speculations with both pro-Iranian/Hezbollah and pro-Israeli sources accusing each others of the tragedy. According to the Israeli version of the events, the explosion may have been caused by some incident at a Hezbollah weapon depot that triggered a larger explosion of ammonium nitrate. In own turn, pro-Iranian sources even accused Israel of conducting a missile or sabotage attack that resulted in the August 4 tragedy.

If one theoretically accepts this hypothesis as true, it would be interesting to look what players may have been interested in such a scenario.

1. Hezbollah and Iran cannot be interested in staging any such situation because the ongoing crisis in Lebanon in fact undermined their positions in the country. There are no doubts that the wide social instability and political crisis will impact negatively the popularity of Hezbollah as one of the main powerbrokers in Lebanon.
2. The Sunni Lebanese elites also suffered negative consequences in the political and economic sphere. The entire government, including Prime Minister Hassan Diab, resigned.
3. Hamas and forces affiliated with radical Sunni groups and movements operating across the Middle East also do not look like a real suspect. The blast and the following crisis undermined positions of not only Hezbollah and Iran, but also the Sunni elites in Lebanon.
4. Turkey and Gulf states play own regional games, but they prefer the controlled development of the situation in this part of the region rather than the new point of spreading chaos.
5. In these conditions, the only parties that could be really interested in the destabilization of Lebanon is Israel and the United States.

Tel Aviv is not hiding that the cornerstone of its regional policy is to undermine positions of Hezbollah and Iran, and neutralize this 'threat' to the Israeli regional expansion, based on the full-scale and unconditional diplomatic support from Washington and the US military power.

The instability in Lebanon will also allow Israel and the United States to achieve their tactical geopolitical goals more effective because the crisis will draw resources and attention of their main adversaries, and set conditions for additional diplomatic, economic and even limited military actions against them. This will be especially effective after the US-Israeli bloc accuse Hezbollah and Iran of being responsible for the tragedy.

A one more opportunity for Tel Aviv and Washington is to exploit the political crisis to impact the forming of a new Lebanese government (through clandestine measures for example) in order to get a more ‘pro-Western’ variant of it.

The increasing diplomatic and military presence of the US and its European allies in Lebanon under pretext of the humanitarian mission is not even a secret. The UK Royal Navy survey vessel HMS Enterprise is officially deploying to Beirut to supposedly survey the damage to the city’s port.

The [@RoyalNavy](#) survey ship [@HMSEnterprise](#) has arrived in Beirut this morning having sailed from Cyprus.

Her crew will support the people of [#Lebanon](#) by offloading vital supplies of aid and surveying the damage done to the port. [@ukinlebanon](#)
<https://t.co/IYWRkz1Er8> pic.twitter.com/0cywXPyUsx

— Ministry of Defence  (@DefenceHQ) [August 10, 2020](#)

Another known ally of the modern United States, France is deploying the Mistral-class helicopter carrier Tonnerre. The warship with an additional force of about 700 troops on board is set to deploy in Beirut on August 13. More foreign forces are expected to come.

Therefore, if one wants to speculate about the possible attack on Beirut on August 4, it's easy to find what foreign forces may have been interested in it. Nonetheless, in this scenario, mainstream media outlets and the ‘democratic world’ will likely blame Hezbollah and Iran.

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